



FOUNDATIONS
COMPANION GUIDE



**INTERNATIONAL
MISSION BOARD**



FOUNDATIONS
COMPANION GUIDE

INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD

Based on FOUNDATIONS v.4 (2022)

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CONTENTS

PREFACE | 5

Lesson 1

WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO | 11

Lesson 2

THE PURPOSE OF FOUNDATIONS FOR
THE IMB & LOCAL CHURCHES | 19

Lesson 3

THE SIX COMPONENTS OF THE
MISSIONARY TASK | 27

Lesson 4

CONVICTIONS & VALUES | 37

Lesson 5

SIX MARKS OF A TRANSFORMED DISCIPLE | 47

Lesson 6

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT | 61

Lesson 7

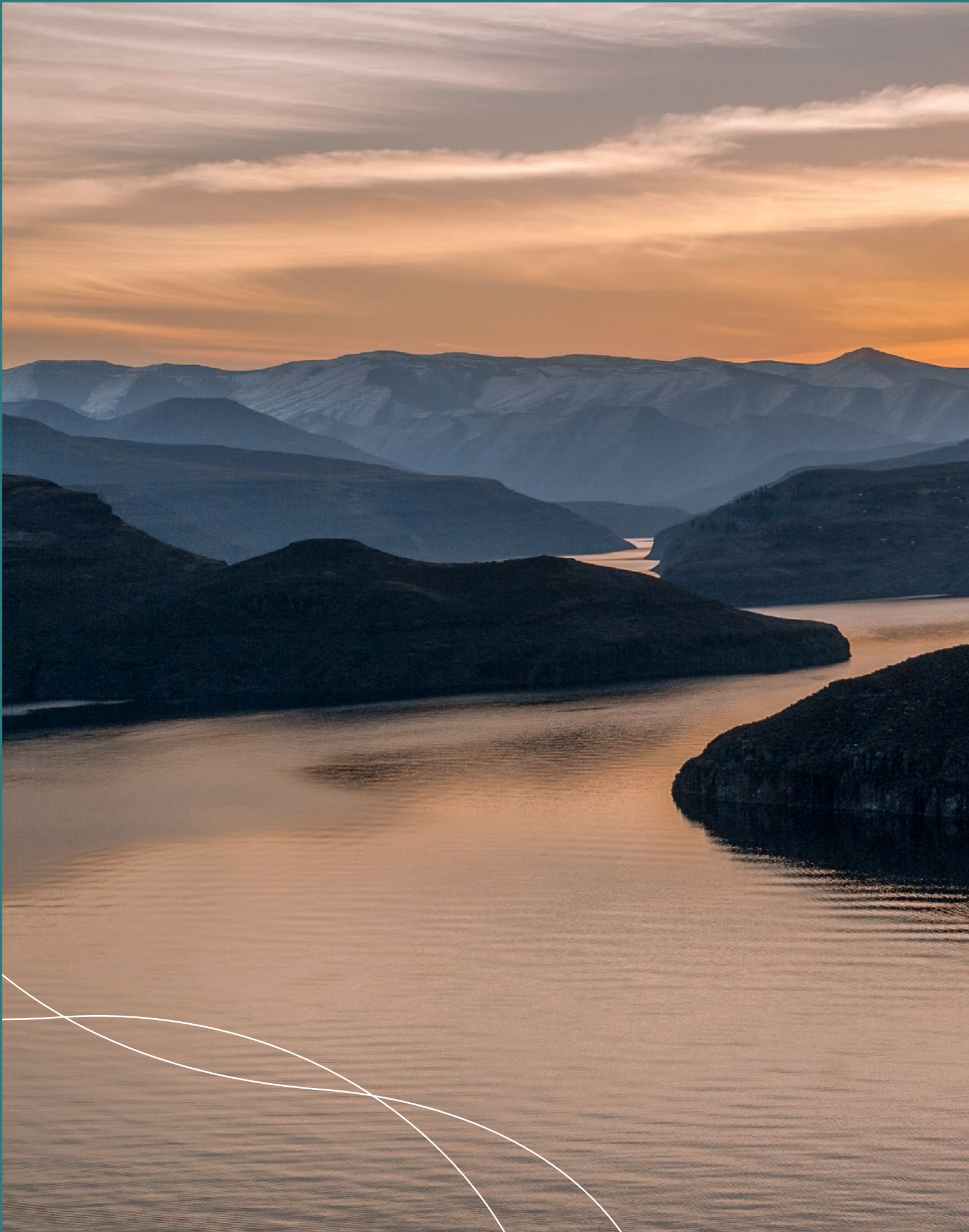
HEALTHY CHURCH FORMATION | 73

Lesson 8

PRAYING, SENDING, & PARTNERING | 83

CONCLUSION | 93

PARTNERING TOGETHER | 97





Preface

AN OVERVIEW OF THE
FOUNDATIONS COMPANION GUIDE

PREFACE

A Message from the International Mission Board

We believe the biblical, theological foundations of missions are critical not only for missionaries, but also for the churches who send and support them. In view of Christ's command to make disciples among all the nations, pastors and members of churches alike need to know who missionaries are, what missionaries do, why the church must send missionaries, and how the church can help them succeed.

Consequently, we offer these foundations in hope that they will help not only missionaries but also pastors and church members play their God-given part in seeing the gospel of Christ known, the grace of Christ enjoyed, and the glory of Christ exalted among the nations, particularly among the billions of men, women, and children who have never heard His name. —*Foundations*, p. 5.



THANK YOU

FOR PICKING UP THE *FOUNDATIONS COMPANION GUIDE!*

The *Foundations Companion Guide* was created in response to requests from our Southern Baptist churches for a supplemental resource to accompany *Foundations*. This companion guide assumes that you've read, or are currently reading, *Foundations*.

The primary purpose of the companion guide is to help pastors, leaders, and church members learn how the principles of *Foundations* apply not only to International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries and overseas work, but also to their own congregations and communities as we reach the nations, together.

The *Foundations Companion Guide* is designed to help pastors and church members:

- Understand how *Foundations* informs what the International Mission Board does globally and how the local church can also be active in the six components of the missionary task locally.
- Reflect with others on and apply *Foundations* principles and concepts in action steps locally and globally.
- Gain and use a common vocabulary to assist in praying for and strengthening partnerships with IMB missionary teams.
- Focus on three components of the missionary task and create active practices or habits based upon Scripture to grow in the six marks of a transformed disciple, develop leaders, and cultivate the characteristics of a healthy church.

Our desire for this companion guide is to support pastors and church members as you serve alongside IMB missionaries and your overseas partners and play your God-given part in seeing the gospel of Christ known, the grace of Christ enjoyed, and the glory of Christ exalted among the nations (*Foundations*, p. 5). We also hope this companion guide will support local church leaders and members as you pray for your overseas missionaries and partner with the IMB and IMB missionary teams.

This guide is designed for you to work through slowly, taking time to pause, reflect, and plan next steps. It's not really about discussion without reflection or reflection without prayerful next steps and actions. We recommend working through the companion guide's eight lessons with another church member or a small group of members from your church.

OVERVIEW

Foundations Companion Guide

Each lesson will guide you through four parts:

1. **READ & LEARN:** This content-heavy portion expands upon principles or concepts you read about in *Foundations*.
2. **REFLECT & CHANGE:** This section transitions you into considering how the content of *Foundations* might be applied and implemented in your local church context. You'll reflect on strengths, challenges, and opportunities for your church and your church's partnership efforts with stateside and overseas congregations and missionaries—and how to further strengthen those connections.
3. **GO & DO:** In this section, you'll be invited to take small, yet specific steps toward application of the lesson content.
4. **PRAY:** At the end of each lesson, you'll be given prompts to guide you in a time of prayer.

You will notice how the “Reflect & Change” and “Go & Do” sections are divided into two categories:

1. For pastors/leaders
2. For everyone (for anyone in the church, including pastors and leaders)

The eight lessons of the companion guide do not cover every topic addressed in *Foundations*, but will periodically point you back to portions of *Foundations* for reflection and review, so we recommend keeping a copy of *Foundations* nearby. You may purchase a printed copy or download a free digital copy at the [IMB Store](#).

To access more *Foundations* resources or to talk with someone from the International Mission Board, visit imb.org or email us at info@imb.org.





Lesson 1:

Who We Are & What We Do

DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST SERVING
SOUTHERN BAPTISTS IN CARRYING
OUT THE GREAT COMMISSION

WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO



STORY

Some local believers and a missionary team partnered with a volunteer team from a church in the U.S. to look for new villages of an unreached people group. They looked for hours without success. Unsure of where to go next, they stopped and prayed. As they traveled down a dirt road, they saw a young woman wearing a bright yellow shirt from the volunteer team's state. They stopped to talk with her and learned she was from the people group they were seeking. Not only that, her husband was the village leader and invited them into the village where they spent the rest of the day making new friends and sharing the gospel.

LESSON OUTCOMES

- Identify and explain who the IMB is and what the IMB does.
- Understand how the IMB relates to the local church.

INTRODUCTION

After meeting someone, we often ask, "What do you do?" We don't usually ask, "Why do you exist?" However, let's start with why the IMB exists and then consider who the IMB is and what the IMB does.

"God is our supreme passion and His glory is our ultimate motivation ... We urgently need to capture the centrality of glorifying God in our lives and work"
(FOUNDATIONS, P. 35-36).

Why does the IMB exist? The mission of the IMB is to serve Southern Baptists in carrying out the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations. And our vision is expressed in Revelation 7:9, where we read of a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, knowing and worshiping our Lord Jesus Christ.

Every IMB missionary is sent out as a member of a local Southern Baptist church in North America. At the most basic level, an IMB missionary is a “sent one” who goes out from a Southern Baptist church in the power of the Spirit as a representative of Christ. The **Lottie Moon Christmas Offering®** and **The Cooperative Program** fund the work of the IMB and those sent out from our churches as we seek to make disciples of all nations.



READ & LEARN

WHO WE ARE

Fundamentally, the IMB consists of disciples of Jesus Christ. We need to grow as disciples of Jesus through faithfulness to Christ and to the church.

Faithfulness to Christ | Effective gospel missionaries must walk faithfully with Jesus Christ, abiding in Him and growing as His disciples. Abiding in Christ is necessary for our personal lives as disciples and for our strategic effectiveness as missionaries.

Faithfulness to the Church | Every IMB missionary needs to be disciplined, examined, affirmed, and sent by a local Southern Baptist church in North America. We believe God uses the local church to disciple believers, to discern their giftings and callings, to train potential cross-cultural missionaries in the basics of Christian evangelism and discipleship, to assess their readiness for service, and to send them out to the nations (Ephesians 3:10).

Ideally, all who serve overseas should maintain a relationship of accountability and partnership with their sending church. Not all churches understand how to send missionaries or to partner well with them, so the IMB recognizes our responsibility to provide training to churches in missionary sending and support.

On the missionary field, IMB missionaries need active involvement in a local church, even as they seek to multiply new churches (Hebrews 10:24–25). This local church involvement can and will take a variety of forms, but should always demonstrate alignment with the theology, ecclesiology, and missiology of the churches they are planting. Whatever the form, no believer is above the need for involvement in a local church.

WHAT WE DO

The IMB exists to serve Southern Baptists in carrying out the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:16–20).

We will glorify God through:

- Biblical Faithfulness
- Fervent Prayer
- Walking in the Spirit
- Proclaiming the Gospel and Making Disciples
- Advancing the Church

We also work alongside other evangelical missionary organizations and evangelical churches who are committed to the gospel, engaged in global evangelization, and focused on making disciples and multiplying churches among those who need to hear the good news of Jesus Christ.

We work as teams, wisely stewarding the resources God has given us for the missionary task.

The IMB is committed to doing missions in teams. Missionaries need the fellowship, encouragement, and accountability that come with the presence of co-laborers, and it is unwise to go without it.

The IMB provides necessary training and support to every IMB missionary so they can fulfill their unique role with excellence and diligence (1 Corinthians 15:58).

GOD’S GLORY MOTIVATES OUR MISSION

As we play our parts on missionary teams and steward our resources, we do so because God is holy, majestic, exalted, and worthy of the praise of everyone and everything He created (Psalm 145:3). He is the sovereign ruler (Psalm 115:3) and judge of all creation (Psalm 50:6). All people everywhere are accountable to Him for every thought, word, and deed, and His justice is absolute. No evil, no sin, and no impurity can stand before Him.

We believe that God now commands all people everywhere to repent of their rebellion against Him and to trust in Jesus alone to save them and to rule over their lives (Acts 17:30). All who put their trust in Jesus are saved, but all who do not put their trust in Jesus are justly judged for their sins (John 3:16–18). There is no other means of salvation. We are convinced from Scripture that people must receive, understand, and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ in order to be saved (Acts 4:12).



REFLECT & CHANGE

For everyone: As it pertains to your own life and work or ministry:

- Who are you?
- What do you do?
- Where does the local church fit into your life and identity?

For everyone: As you read through this portion of *Foundations*, do you notice how much of “who we are” and “what we do” at the IMB relates to and is a part of the ministry of the local church? Make a short list of what is the same and what is different.

SAME	DIFFERENT

For pastors/leaders: The IMB is not the only sending agency, but the IMB has a part or role to play in the Great Commission. The IMB pursues like-minded partners as it seeks to fulfill its mission. Besides your local church, make a list of other like-minded churches in your area. How might your church pray for other churches? Check with your Baptist association for a list of SBC churches in your area.



A large, leafy tree is silhouetted against a warm, orange-hued sunset sky. In the background, a village with several traditional huts featuring conical thatched roofs is visible. The overall scene is peaceful and evokes a sense of community and tradition.

Lesson 2:

The Purpose of Foundations for the IMB & Local Churches

APPLICATION FOR LOCAL
CHURCH LIFE AND MINISTRY

THE PURPOSE OF FOUNDATIONS FOR THE IMB & LOCAL CHURCHES



STORY

Although Foundations was created with the work of the IMB in mind, it contains many helpful principles that are useful in local churches as they seek to be and make disciples in the context of healthy reproducing churches. Foundations can also be a resource to give strategic direction to local churches sending mature disciples and partnering with IMB missionary teams.

LESSON OUTCOMES

- Understand the purpose of *Foundations* and reflect upon similar guiding principles or convictions for local church ministry.

INTRODUCTION

For the IMB, the Scriptures are always our final authority and guide as we seek to serve Southern Baptists in carrying out the Great Commission. *Foundations* is not to replace the Bible as our final authority, but rather to explain and clarify the missionary convictions and practices of the IMB. Rooted in the Bible, *Foundations* is to guide the stewardship, strategies, methods, tools, and decision-making of the IMB as it seeks to fulfill its Revelation 7:9 vision.



READ & LEARN

*“The word of God is our ultimate, controlling authority”
(FOUNDATIONS, P. 38).*

Foundations is not a new approach! Much of *Foundations* represents a consensus of convictions within the IMB and our attempts as an organization to answer critical questions that missionaries have asked for centuries. It defines our understanding of the specific role we should play within the broad spectrum of good things that Christians can do in the world, and is intended to encourage, strengthen, and bless the missionaries of the IMB.

Review the following six purposes of *Foundations*:

01

To Articulate

in clear terms our understanding of missionary identity and the missionary task to ourselves, to the churches that support us, and to the larger evangelical missions community.

02

To Enable

prospective missionaries and the IMB to know if the organization is a good fit for them.

03

To Shape

the training we give our missionaries and our supporting churches.

04

To Guide

strategic planning and decision-making.

05

To Define

the parameters of our stewardship of resources.

06

To Provide

the criteria for creating, evaluating, and strengthening strategies and tools for the missionary task.

Foundations is also consistent with the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000* and is not intended to replace it. *Foundations* helps the IMB clarify its missionary convictions and practices.

“In our church planting and teaching ministries, we will seek to lay a foundation of beliefs and practices that are consistent with the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 ...”

(FOUNDATIONS, P. 78).



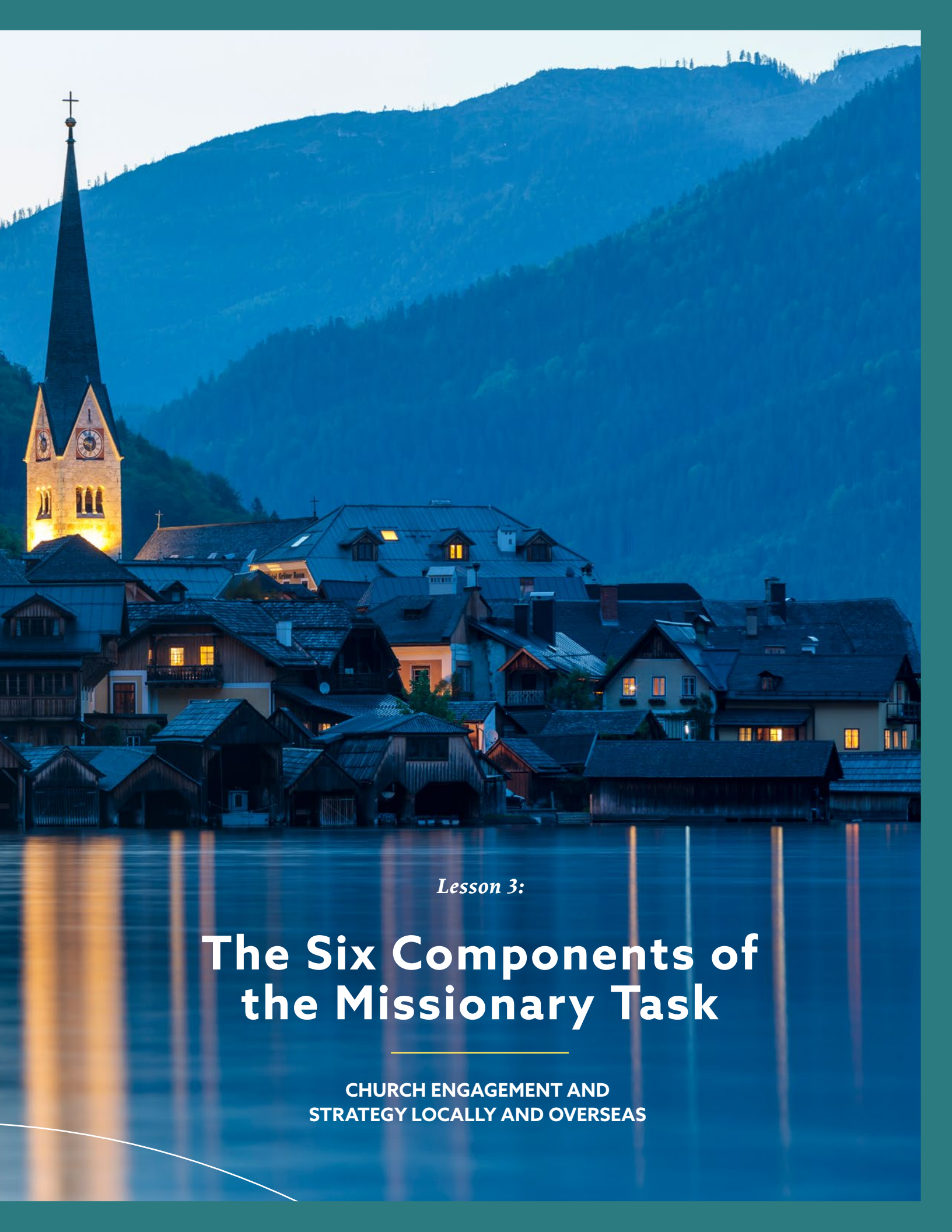
REFLECT & CHANGE

While *Foundations* was not written for local churches, there is much that applies to local church life and ministry.

For everyone: What is your church’s mission statement? Or, asked another way: What purpose statement guides the life and practice of your local church? Gather together with at least one other church member and take a look at your church’s mission or purpose statement. Reflect upon how you fit into that statement. If you’re not sure, ask your church leaders to help as you reflect.

For everyone: How might you use *Foundations* to encourage your church to pray for and support IMB missionaries?





Lesson 3:

The Six Components of the Missionary Task

CHURCH ENGAGEMENT AND
STRATEGY LOCALLY AND OVERSEAS

THE SIX COMPONENTS OF THE MISSIONARY TASK



STORY

IMB missionary teams seek to prioritize the missionary task as detailed in the section of Foundations: “The Missionary Task” (p. 93–121). A careful look at the six components of the missionary task shows us how local churches are also engaged in the components. Some churches are already using the six components to help shape the strategic ministry priorities of their church and IMB missionary teams overseas.

LESSON OUTCOMES

- Review the six components of the missionary task.
- Recognize how these six components overlap and are not always sequential.
- Reflect on how faithful Christians might look at their own ministries through the lens of these six components.

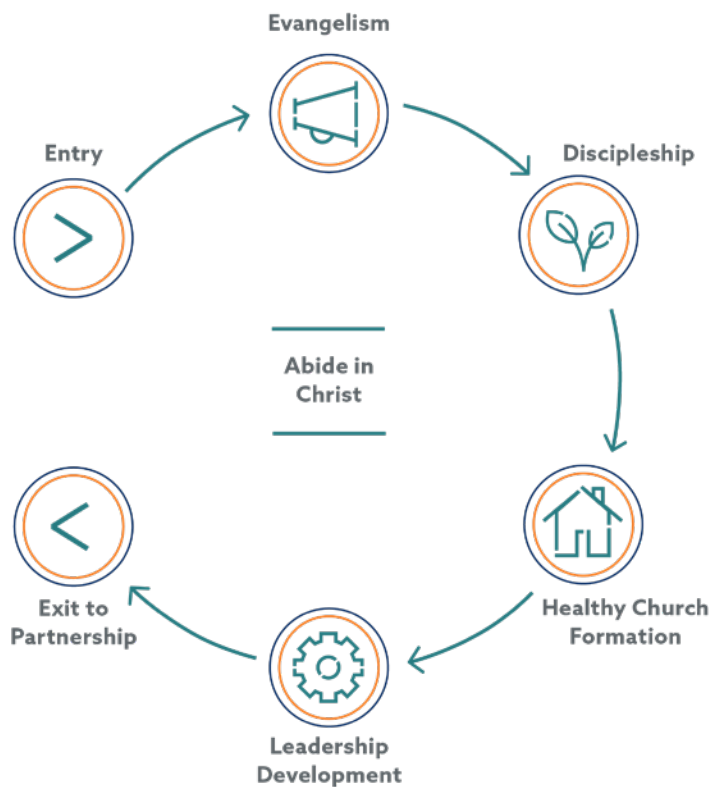
INTRODUCTION

We often think of the missionary task as evangelism alone or maybe evangelism and discipleship. We see in *Foundations*, and it’s supported by Scripture, how the missionary task has at least six components. We must not think of these six components as a chronological sequence of steps or stages in which one component is completely finished before the next can begin. Instead, effective missionary teams will usually find themselves addressing and readdressing several components at a time over the course of their time overseas.



READ & LEARN

The six components of the missionary task are listed below with brief notes. Please review the explanations for each component in *Foundations* on pages 93–121. As you review, consider which ministries of your church and your life fit into each of the six components. Reflect also upon your church’s missionary partners—local and global. How do the six components describe their ministries?



Prayer must permeate every aspect of the missionary task. It is not a separate component of the task, but rather an essential element in every part.

- **ENTRY:** In order to carry out the missionary task, we must have access to people who need to hear the gospel. This part of the task includes four elements: research, presence, identity, and communication ability.

- **EVANGELISM:** Evangelism is the responsibility of every follower of Jesus. Make sure evangelism is tied to discipleship; those who believe in the gospel should immediately receive training and encouragement to share the gospel with others.
- **DISCIPLESHIP:** The Word of God is essential to discipleship. Discipleship is more than the transmission of information; it is the transformation of every area of life. Discipleship that does not lead to the obedience of faith is not biblical discipleship.
- **HEALTHY CHURCH FORMATION:** The 12 Characteristics of a Healthy Church are not a checklist for exit to partnership, but rather a summary of what a sustainable church should be.
- **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:** Leadership development should have a strong connection to the life of a local church. One of the measures of completion of the missionary task is the development of those who can train other leaders and even systems for training those trainers within the churches in a given people group or place.
- **EXIT TO PARTNERSHIP:** Our goal is to complete the missionary task in each people group or place and then to exit with the new churches from that place or people as our partners in the ongoing task of global evangelism.

REMEMBER: A missionary team (or local church) is never really finished with evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, and healthy church formation. Even after exiting, a missionary team continues to partner with, encourage, and develop leaders from afar, checking in from time to time to continue promoting healthy, local church doctrine and practices. IMB missionaries focus on various components at the same time.



REFLECT & CHANGE

For everyone: Have you ever met someone who is particularly effective in carrying out all six components? How might a team of people be more effective than an individual at the six components? Can you see how a missionary team might need to give special attention to several components at one time?

- **EVANGELISM:** Who in your life needs to hear the gospel right now? Come up with a practical plan to share with them this week. Recruit a partner(s) to pray for you as you share the gospel with them. Do you need to refresh your gospel-sharing skills? How can you do that? Could you ask someone to join you as you share the gospel?

- **EXIT TO PARTNERSHIP:** Think about some of your current ministry activities. Who else might you train or involve now to "carry on" if you have to exit due to illness, relocation, or for another reason? Prayerfully include others in at least one ministry, training them, encouraging them, and sharing responsibility as you partner with them in reliance upon the Holy Spirit.

For everyone: In order to assess your understanding and application of the six components, see how many of them you can write down from memory (order is not important). Then consider how you might go about explaining them to a five-year-old.

For pastors/leaders: Make a plan with steps to reach out to people and resources who could help your church grow in one or two of the six components. Take the first step in the next seven to ten days.





Lesson 4:

Convictions & Values

CORE CONVICTIONS
CORE VALUES
MISSIOLOGICAL CONVICTIONS

CONVICTIONS & VALUES



STORY

People and local churches have values and convictions. Sometimes these are stated clearly. Sometimes they are assumed. In Foundations, the IMB chose to state explicitly our core convictions, core values, and missiological convictions. Many of these values and convictions were already part of our IMB mindset and practice. Now, they are clearly stated and we can remind one another of them and align with them more consistently. Many of our IMB core convictions, core values, and missiological convictions might serve to guide local church ministry as well as our IMB efforts.

LESSON OUTCOMES

- Reflect upon the IMB's core convictions, core values, and missiological convictions. Then, engage in prayerful self-assessment asking God to show you areas where you need to grow and develop. Share that insight with a prayer partner and plan personal development steps in that area(s).

INTRODUCTION

We discussed earlier the answer to who the IMB is and what the IMB does, focusing on the mission and vision of the IMB and essentially answering the question, “Why do we exist?” Now, taking this a step further: how will we display this mission to the world?

Reflecting on this question brings us to the core of our organization or our churches and to the beliefs and convictions we value. Our core convictions, core values, and missiological convictions continue to establish the foundation of who we are and what we do as they guide us to **how** we will operate.



READ & LEARN

Below, you will find a summary of the core convictions, core values, and missiological convictions from *Foundations*. To read these sections in their entirety, go to pages 33–61 in *Foundations*.

Core Convictions

We will glorify God through:

BIBLICAL FAITHFULNESS

- 2 Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture is breathed out by God ...”
- The Bible is true, clear, sufficient, and authoritative.
- Our strategies and tactics must be derived from the principles of Scripture; and every teaching, method, and result must be evaluated based upon the principles of Scripture.

FERVENT PRAYER

- Prayer is central to all our strategies, and it must permeate through all of our work.
- We are unashamedly supernaturalist in our worldview, and we believe God works supernaturally through our praying.

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

- Apart from the presence and work of the Holy Spirit, there can be no Christian life and no Christian ministry or mission.
- Since the Spirit who inspired the words of the Bible will never guide anyone to believe or do anything contrary to the Bible, we look to the Holy Spirit for guidance in the many areas of life where the teaching of Scripture gives general parameters/principles but no specific commands/instructions.

PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL AND MAKING DISCIPLES

- Salvation from sin is the greatest need of every human being, and given the heavy realities of sin and judgment, we must be unapologetically evangelistic.
- Biblical evangelism should not just result in converts; it should lead to disciples—lifelong learners/followers of Jesus. It leads to the six transformations of a disciple.





Lesson 5:

Six Marks of a Transformed Disciple

EXPLORING SIX MARKS OF
TRANSFORMATION IN CHRIST

SIX MARKS OF A TRANSFORMED DISCIPLE



STORY

Abner and Sarala* are currently living in a global city making disciples among unreached peoples as part of a growing church that is intentional about reaching all the peoples in their city. Abner and Sarala first learned to be and make disciples as part of a healthy church in the U.S.*

While in the U.S., they saw themselves as disciples sent to their workplaces and were faithful and fruitful ambassadors of Christ. Their local church came alongside them, trained them, prayed for them, and encouraged them when they were making disciples at work and in their neighborhoods. Abner and Sarala shared the gospel with their neighbors and co-workers, and then disciplined new believers in relational ways that connected them to the local church.

Although Abner and Sarala now live far away from their U.S. church where they first learned and practiced discipleship, by God's grace they are able to still partner with their sending church. Using the discipleship processes and marks they developed alongside their sending church, Christ continues to use Abner and Sarala overseas as they live out and grow in discipleship, following Christ in a new culture among unreached people.

**Names changed.*

- Healthy disciples are believers who model well what it means to be a transformed follower of Jesus and who seek to “make” more disciples who show all six marks of a transformed disciple.

Charles Spurgeon said, “Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter.” This could be adapted to, “Every Christian is either a [disciple-maker] or an imposter.”

It might be useful to think about disciples as the person or the people, and discipleship as the process by which the people are formed or made.

Discipleship is about a relationship with God through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Abiding in Christ is foundational! The Holy Spirit gives growth as followers of Jesus take steps of obedience and trust God and His promises more and more. Those promises as well as encouragement and instructions for training in righteousness are found in Scripture: the Word of God.

Discipleship begins when our relationship with God is restored as we turn from a self-centered rebellious existence to a Christ-centered life.

6 MARKS OF A DISCIPLE

<p>01 <i>Transformed</i> Heart</p>	<p>02 <i>Transformed</i> Mind</p>	<p>03 <i>Transformed</i> Affections</p>
<p>04 <i>Transformed</i> Will</p>	<p>05 <i>Transformed</i> Relationships</p>	<p>06 <i>Transformed</i> Purpose</p>

You have already read in detail about the six marks of a disciple in *Foundations* (*Foundations*, p. 73–75). Now, take a moment to read and reflect on the summaries below:

1 TRANSFORMED HEART

To be a disciple, you must first be born again. Evangelism resulting in biblical conversion is the essential first step in biblical discipleship.

2 TRANSFORMED MIND

Disciples of Jesus are passionate about the Bible. It completely reshapes the way they think as the worldview of the Bible becomes their worldview. They approach the Bible with a precommitment to believe, understand, and obey everything it teaches. They learn the big picture of the Bible, and they interpret individual parts in the context of the whole.



REFLECT & CHANGE

For everyone: Consider yourself and your local church: does our discipleship focus primarily on knowledge-transfer or are we also helping others be transformed in their heart, mind, affections, will, relationships, and purpose? What needs to change? How can it change? What are some practical, specific next steps you can implement now?

For everyone: Are there or how have you seen disciples making disciples in your church? How might you get better at encouraging others to do spiritual good to their brothers and sisters in Christ? Who models this well in your local church?

For everyone: What do I/we need to stop doing in order to give more time and attention to being and making disciples who display all six marks of a transformed disciple?

For pastors/leaders: How can you aim more of who you are and what you do as a local church so there is greater purposefulness in both being and making transformed disciples? Who or what resources might be able to help?

For pastors/leaders: Does your church celebrate intentional, life-on-life Christian friendships whose goal is greater Christlikeness? Do the “extra” programs on your church’s calendar take away time from regular life-on-life discipleship times or serve to help make the relational connections that can lead to life-on-life discipleship?

- A missionary/sent-one must be a growing, healthy disciple.
- A missionary/sent-one must know how to disciple others who disciple others.

At the IMB, we have observed some of those sent out by local churches—even recommended by local churches—are not yet growing, healthy, faithful, and fruitful disciples. Some applicants describe a “call” they have to work overseas, but have yet to demonstrate faithful, fruitful ministry as part of a local church here in the U.S. They sometimes have almost no cross-cultural experience. They haven’t been intentional about reaching out to internationals or immigrants as part of a local church ministry. Even some of those already sent out have not been disciplined, nor do they have real experience discipling others.

Our local churches have a vital role to play in the missionary task by developing, equipping, and sending out disciples and disciple-makers who are directly engaging in Great Commission work. On a local level, this includes releasing people out to your city to minister to lost neighbors, co-workers, and family members. Believers won’t do overseas what they do not do at home. The starting point for missions must begin in local churches and local communities.

Before they are sent across an ocean to make disciples among the nations away from your church, disciple them and observe their faithfulness and fruitfulness in your local church context.

The IMB depends on our SBC churches to assess, develop, and disciple people well and to send out faithful disciples. The IMB’s orientation and training process can equip them in cross-cultural skills, but the local church is the discipleship center for candidates who are sent out. The churches send the IMB faithful disciples, and the IMB connects them to unreached peoples and places to be and make more disciples.

Disciples who are sent are those who model well what it means to be a follower of Jesus with a transformed heart, a transformed mind, transformed affections, a transformed will, transformed relationships, and a transformed purpose.

We need our churches to make disciples who are making disciples and to send them out well-equipped to abide in Christ and His Word, teaching and displaying the Word to others through the power of the Holy Spirit as they are encouraged and prayed for by your church.





Lesson 6:

Leadership Development

KNOWING, BEING, DOING

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



STORY

Developing leaders is a core missionary task for IMB missionaries and for local churches. The Bible gives us a model of leadership development focused on character transformation as well as faithful implementation of knowledge. Healthy leadership development pays attention to knowing, being, and doing.

LESSON OUTCOMES

- Recognize that healthy churches develop their own leaders of various kinds and transfer leadership to emerging leaders.
- Reflect upon and apply the “**Know, Be, and Do**” categories for leadership development in the local church.
- Adjust leadership development practices accordingly.

INTRODUCTION

We often default into looking for local church leadership from outside our church and not within. We often outsource leadership development to conferences or other resources. What if we sought to work within and disciple believers with the expectation that God would raise up leaders from within our local churches? What if our default posture was to disciple everyone in our local church as if they could become church leaders one day? When making disciples of all believers becomes a local church priority, IMB missionaries have found that God regularly provides leaders.

Healthy churches need healthy biblical leadership. And biblical leadership promotes the health of the church. Because these are overlapping components, we will consider Leadership Development first and then Healthy Church Formation (please note how *Foundations* walks through Healthy Church Formation before Leadership Development).



REFLECT & CHANGE

For everyone: In your experience, how have leaders been developed for the local church? How might the local church be a more active participant in leadership development?

For pastors/leaders: How can you ensure emerging leaders are being disciplined, assessed, and trained within the context of the local church even when some development is outsourced to seminaries or Bible schools?

Biblical Qualifications for Developing & Training Leaders



READ & LEARN

As we develop leaders in local churches, we prioritize two offices described in the New Testament—pastors/elders/overseers and deacons. That being said, we also recognize there are many in the New Testament who led in local churches in a variety of unofficial but essential ways. For example, Aquila and Priscilla accompanied Paul (Acts 18:18; Romans 16:3), hosted a house church in their home (1 Corinthians 16:19), and corrected faulty theology (Acts 18:26), but the New Testament never gives them a specific title.

We believe both men and women have vital roles in the ministry of the church. While the role of pastor/elder/overseer is exclusively assigned to men in the church and not to women, leadership in the local church is not exclusive to the overseers and elders (1 Timothy 2:11–12) (*Foundations*, p. 116). Titus exhorts women to be teaching and training other women, and the pastors are to be equipping the flock, young and old, male and female, to be sharing ministry to build up the local church and reach the lost.

There may be as many as eighty co-workers mentioned by Paul or Luke, including a number of women designated as “co-workers,” “ministers,” and even “apostles.” Phoebe, Euodia, Syntyche, Apphia, Priscilla (Prisca), and Junia exercise leadership locally and serve as traveling co-workers or sent-out ones. Assisting Paul in a variety of ways, these women serve as benefactors providing resources and lodging or hospitality. Others host gatherings in their homes of the local church.

When Scripture speaks to general qualifications for leaders, it primarily addresses issues of spiritual maturity and exemplary living. For example, Moses's father-in-law encouraged Moses to find "able men ... who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe ..." (Exodus 18:21). In Paul's letter to Titus, he wrote of the need for elders to be above reproach, not arrogant, or greedy for gain (Titus 1:5–9).

Of special note is the need for elders to be doctrinally sound (Titus 1:9), able to teach the Word (1 Timothy 3:2), and not a recent convert (1 Timothy 3:6). While the directives in 1 Timothy 3:1–13 and Titus 1:5–9 are specifically written for evaluating potential elders and deacons, the principles apply to those who serve in numerous types of leadership positions. In 1 Peter 5, the elders are exhorted not to be domineering but to be examples to the flock.

Qualified pastors/elders are essential to the missionary task and the qualifications for these are clearly explained in Scripture in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. We see in the New Testament (Acts 14:23) that the apostles appointed elders in every church while deacons (servants) seem to be chosen on an as-needed basis.

Disciples who lead in the local church have demonstrated faithfulness and fruitfulness in **being** disciples, **knowing** Scripture well, and **doing** ministry.

- **BE** an example to others of what it means to be a faithful follower of Jesus.
- **KNOW** the gospel and Scripture and doctrine well enough to teach truth and refute error.
- **DO** the work of the ministry—praying, explaining the Word, evangelizing and discipling others, teaching and modeling for others what it means to be a faithful follower of Christ with a heart for the nations.

We want to raise up more pastors/overseers who challenge their churches to fulfill the Great Commission. As we develop local church leaders, we look to the clear qualifications in Scripture. Those leaders have a biblical "office" like pastors/elders and deacons. We also develop other leaders (without a biblical "office") based upon general biblical principles and practical wisdom. Both kinds of leaders are essential for healthy church life and for reaching the lost by planting new churches. All kinds of leaders are needed as we engage in the six components of the missionary task.



REFLECT & CHANGE

For everyone: Except for the ability to teach faithfully, the Christian character qualifications for pastor/elder/overseer are simply the character of a mature Christian disciple. How might you pray for and seek to develop or grow these character traits in yourself and fellow church members?

For everyone:

BE: What kinds of leadership development activities can a person engage in to develop the character needed to serve in a church leadership role?

KNOW: What opportunities does your church provide for people to know the gospel well and study deeply in Scripture and doctrine so they can teach truth and refute error? How might your church confirm a person's gospel understanding, doctrinal knowledge, and ability to refute error?

DO: What are the skills required of the pastor/elder/overseer or to be a leader within your church? How could you and your church provide opportunities for church members to develop and test these skills?

For pastors/leaders: Which other Scripture passages could be read and applied as you disciple believers to embody the characteristics listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1?

Identifying & Developing Local Leadership for the Missionary Task



READ & LEARN

“One of the characteristics of a healthy church is biblical mission. As we develop leaders in local churches, we also prioritize training missionaries” (FOUNDATIONS, P. 114).

Here at home, our SBC churches should be identifying and developing leaders who will challenge their churches to fulfill the Great Commission. But that’s not all. As part of the missionary task, we also aim to train up another type of leader as well—leaders who can be sent out. As we will see in the next lesson, one of the characteristics of a healthy church is biblical mission. As we develop leaders in churches, we must also prioritize identifying and developing those whom we will send out as cross-cultural missionaries among the nations nearby and overseas.

These sent-ones shouldn’t just include your “average church member.” They should include your church leaders—even the most faithfully fruitful and most valuable among your church members. Be sure to observe not only those who teach and are outwardly leading ministries, but also those who are consistently present and humbly serving behind the scenes. When sent out from Antioch in Acts 13, Paul and Barnabas were not the average church members but some of the most faithful, humble, and consistent in that local church.

Similarly, on the field, the normal role of a cross-cultural missionary is not to plant a church and then pastor it, but rather to plant a church and seek to raise up, nurture, and train local leaders—as modeled by the Apostle Paul (Acts 14:23).

“Therefore, we [IMB missionaries] will foster local leadership and walk alongside them as needed, but we will not seek to establish ourselves as the long-term leaders of indigenous churches we plant overseas” (FOUNDATIONS, P. 111).

Whether at home or on the field, we aim to develop and encourage leaders who emerge from among the local believers and who have an “eye for the nations” from the start.

Have you ever thought about leadership development as a relay race?

A wise relay team knows that the true key to success is not how fast its runners are, but how well they’ve mastered the baton hand-off. Dropped batons and bumbled handoffs add crucial seconds to a team’s time—seconds that can make the difference between winning and losing.

In kingdom terms, the true key to success is intentional, thorough leadership development and theological education from one generation of leaders to the next. Guiding those individuals through the process of leading those new churches cannot be an afterthought if the goal is a flourishing, organic spread of the gospel among lost peoples and places through healthy, reproducing churches.

What are you doing to “pass the baton” by developing and encouraging the next generation of pastors, deacons, cross-cultural missionaries, writers, Bible teachers, theologians, church planters, etc.?



REFLECT & CHANGE

Reflect on these questions with a local and global mentality.

For everyone: Are there leaders in your church whom God has clearly given an eye and heart for the nations? How have they been equipped and able to put this passion to work within the local church, the community, and beyond?

For everyone: If you are a faithful leader in a local church who desires to be sent out, have you talked with other church leadership about what that could look like?



GO & DO

For pastors/leaders: Prayerfully identify and create a list of trainable members or people you know well who are growing in Christ but need more intentional character or leadership skills development. Share that list with appropriate people in your local church.

BEGIN to research how other local churches are developing leaders from within. Reach out to your association and state convention leadership to connect to other churches and pastors in your area.

For everyone: Pause and brainstorm ministry activities or opportunities that would help you or other disciples grow in leadership as you faithfully take steps toward cross-cultural discipleship. Then turn that list into your prayer guide for the next month or two, and partner with one or more fellow believers.



PRAY

- Use the list of ministry activities or opportunities you created as a prayer guide in the "Go & Do" section for the next one to two months and partner with one or more fellow believers.
- Pray that your local church leadership would continue growing in all three of the Know, Be, and Do categories. Then pray the same for yourself and ask God to give you opportunities to trust Him more as you step out in obedience to Scripture.





Lesson 7:

Healthy Church Formation

DOCTRINE, LIFE, PRACTICE

HEALTHY CHURCH FORMATION



STORY

The IMB wants to plant churches that understand and apply what the Bible says about healthy church doctrine, life, and practice. Healthy churches are more likely to reproduce healthy churches and mature disciples.

LESSON OUTCOMES

- Understand how the IMB aims to plant and develop healthy churches. Prioritize, understand, and practice how to model and coach church leaders/overseers to identify the healthy church gaps and address these gaps through modeling, teaching, training, and pointing to examples.

INTRODUCTION

When we think of church, sometimes we think only of the Sunday gathering or the worship service. The missionary task is about planting healthy churches, and not about planting a worship service or a once-a-week gathering.

Jesus, the Head of the Church, wants His bride to be healthy and holy. Healthy churches bring God great glory as they live out the Great Commandments and the Great Commission. Healthy churches matter to God and they matter to the missionary task. The Scriptures give us instructions for planting healthy churches that will plant more healthy churches. Healthy churches will have a passion for multiplying more healthy churches.



READ & LEARN

“Making disciples means planting healthy churches ... so our aim must be healthy churches that exhibit the characteristics of a biblical church as soon as possible”

(FOUNDATIONS, P. 43, 44).

The 12 Characteristics of a Healthy Church flow from the Great Commandments and the Great Commission. Take a minute to read over the 12 Characteristics of a Healthy Church in the following visual.



Evangelism



Discipleship



Membership



Leadership



Preaching & Teaching



Ordinances



Worship



Fellowship



Prayer



Accountability & Discipline



Giving



Mission

“The 12 Characteristics of a Healthy Church are not a checklist for exit but rather a summary that describes what a sustainable church should be” (FOUNDATIONS, P. 110).

“As we plant churches, our doctrinal foundation will align with the Baptist Faith and Message 2000”

(FOUNDATIONS, P. 110).

Look again at all twelve of the characteristics. Some of these are displayed when the church gathers and others when the church scatters, and some characteristics are shown all the time as church members live the life of Christian disciples 24/7 wherever they are!

No church is fully healthy in all twelve characteristics. Churches tend to pass through seasons of greater or lesser health. *Foundations* reminds us to keep aiming for greater health and to be teaching and training toward healthy churches.

Since twelve characteristics can be challenging to manage, let's group the twelve into three "buckets"/circles. Take a minute to look at the next visual called "Church Circles."

This is just one way the twelve characteristics could be arranged. How would you organize or rearrange them?

CHURCH CIRCLES

Gospel Word & Worship

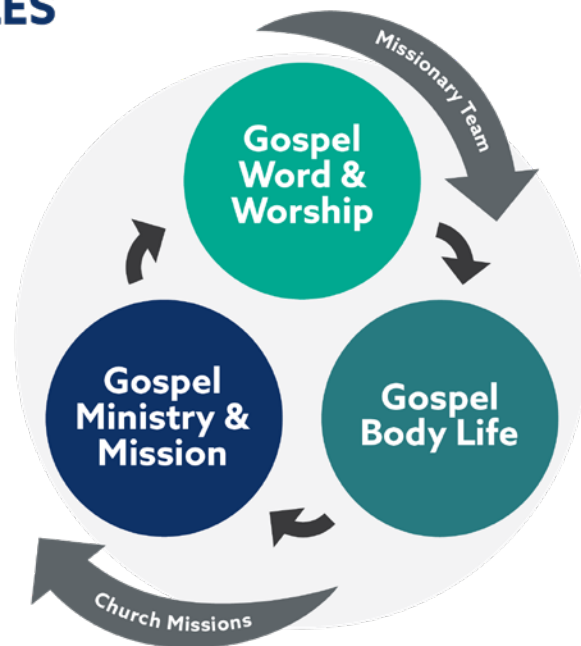
- Evangelism
- Prayer
- Worship
- Preaching & Teaching
- Giving

Gospel Body Life

- Membership
- Fellowship
- Leadership
- Accountability & Discipline
- Ordinances

Gospel Ministry & Mission

- Discipleship
- Mission



For everyone: Which of the twelve characteristics refer mostly to the church gathered for corporate worship and ministry? Which are more about the church scattered to be and make disciples all week long?

For pastors/leaders: Which of these qualities/characteristics do you think your church is exemplifying well right now? In which area(s) does your church need growth?

For pastors/leaders: Thinking about your church partnerships overseas: Which of these characteristics have you seen exemplified well in them? Which of the characteristics are areas of growth in the overseas churches you partner with? How could you support them in these?

Women & the 12 Characteristics of a Healthy Church:

As we discussed in Lesson 6 on “Leadership Development,” we believe that while the role of pastor/elder/overseer is exclusively assigned to men in the church (1 Timothy 2:11–12), women play an integral role in the formation of healthy churches.

“We believe both men and women have vital roles in the ministry of the church” (FOUNDATIONS, P. 116).

“... we strongly affirm that women must be evangelized, disciplined, fully incorporated into the church, and developed appropriately as leaders” (FOUNDATIONS, P. 116).



田地里的庄稼 福音布道
 田地里的庄稼 一片片的成熟，见不到收割人
 遍野都是迷失路的群羊，见不到牧羊人
 焦急，焦急如同火烧，寻不见同心人
 而死，被兽践踏吞吃，流离飘荡流离
 费时费力为已，并不是专爱神
 人仍推脱逃避，怎叫主心欢喜？
 用时无入，怎不叫主伤心？
 到几个合神心意的人
 谁体贴主的心？
 心欢欣！

Lesson 8:

Praying, Sending, & Partnering

CONNECTING WELL WITH
LOCAL CHURCHES

PRAYING, SENDING, & PARTNERING



STORY

When the IMB connects well with local churches, both the IMB and churches benefit and there is often greater fruitfulness and faithfulness. Partnering with IMB missionary teams is a great opportunity to apply Foundations principles and concepts in prayerful, strategically-purposeful ways.

LESSON OUTCOMES

- To understand and reflect upon IMB guidelines for partnerships with others in the missionary task and to pursue more effective partnerships by applying the six essentials to existing and future partnerships. To engage more purposefully and fervently in prayer for partnership efforts.

INTRODUCTION

This section applies mostly to pastors, missions staff, and missions advisory teams or committees. Nevertheless, when more Christians understand how mission partnerships can effectively work, they will pray for and support those partnership efforts more fervently.



READ & LEARN

“IMB missionary teams pursue partnerships with individuals, churches, ministries, and other organizations on different levels depending on the different components of the missionary task” (FOUNDATIONS, P. 129).

The process of getting an IMB team to an overseas field location requires significant amounts of partnership—not just between IMB and those missionaries, but between those missionaries and their own local sending churches, between the missionaries on the team itself, and between the IMB and other like-minded evangelical missionary organizations and evangelical churches who are committed to gospel proclamation, disciple formation, and church planting around the world.

When the IMB team has finished its work in their field location and is preparing to exit to partnership, that exit does not mean abandonment. While our full-time presence in those churches is no longer needed, we are still committed to walking alongside them in a new phase of partnership. We will continue to support the local leadership as they identify, equip, and appoint leaders who will faithfully shepherd the church. As we press on together to complete the Great Commission, we will continue to help these churches implement processes whereby they can be intentional in developing their own leaders and in sending out some to start new churches both in their own context and cross-culturally.

From the beginning to the end of the missionary task, whether stateside or on the field, healthy partnerships are vital to the gospel’s advance throughout the world. For the IMB, these partnerships include collaboration between IMB missionaries engaged in the missionary task and like-minded local churches, organizations, human needs ministries, seminaries, etc. Depending on the different parts of the missionary task, the depth of these partnerships will be pursued on varying levels. The visual on the next page shows some of the varying levels, goals, and guidelines that the IMB considers in its partnerships with non-IMB entities:





Conclusion

DEDICATION TO THE
MISSIONARY TASK

CONCLUSION

Reaching the Nations, Together

As we partner together, we can advance God's kingdom through our dedication to the missionary task. You and your church can be actively involved in each component of the missionary task locally while partnering with missionary teams and sending missionaries from your church to engage in the missionary task globally.

Through our partnership, we can pray for our missionaries and for all people who have yet to hear the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We can intentionally disciple leaders within our church to share this gospel hope with those in our community and around the world. We can develop leaders here and everywhere who have a Revelation 7:9 vision. We can commit to sending and sustaining an IMB missionary presence that leads to missionary engagement through the missionary task. And, one day, we will rejoice to see a multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, knowing and worshipping our Lord Jesus Christ as we reach the nations, together.







Partnering Together

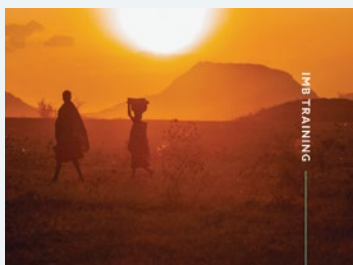
RESOURCES FOR TAKING
YOUR NEXT STEPS

PARTNERING TOGETHER

IMB Training Courses

As you prepare to train your local church, IMB Training equips churches with essential tools for raising up faithful cross-cultural missionaries. As you've discovered through this companion guide, so much of missionary training is basic discipleship—loving and following Christ. IMB Training resources work with the discipleship efforts of local churches. Our materials and courses are practical, current, and culturally informed. We draw upon the experience and wisdom of practicing missionaries from around the world to equip local churches to fulfill God's calling at home.

Visit imb.org/training to find additional training courses focused on discipleship, the mission of God, the mission of the Church, the missionary task, short-term trip training, and more! Below are descriptions for some of our featured courses available for free online:



GET TO KNOW THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD (IMB)

Learn how SBC churches are sending and sustaining a missionary presence—through the International Mission Board—that leads to missionary engagement through the missionary task. You will discover what's unique about the IMB, hear more about our vision, mission, and organizational structure, and explore ways your church can partner with us to impact lostness through the missionary task. Join us as we give ourselves to this mission every day—reaching the nations, together—so all tribes and peoples and languages will know and worship our Lord Jesus Christ.



DEEPEN DISCIPLESHIP

Deepen Discipleship is a six-month, interactive discipleship process and course that will prepare Christians for both local and global disciple-making in the context of local church community. This course provides an overview of the New Testament and is meant to be done in community, preferably with fellow church members. This aspect is important because it's the committed community of a local church that best enables connections for both loving God and loving others well.

Available in English and Spanish as an online course or as a downloadable and printable PDF.

"Together, we get to do the most important work in the world to address the problem of lostness. Together, we get to share the good news of Jesus with people and places who have never heard the gospel. Together, we send, sustain, and support missionaries to be steadfastly present around the globe to share that message and plant healthy churches."

—DR. PAUL CHITWOOD, IMB PRESIDENT

Team Roles:

TEAM MEMBER:

Team Members are missionaries who are fully funded by the IMB and, as IMB employees, receive full benefits and services. Team Members participate full-time in the missionary task.

TEAM ASSOCIATE:

Team Associates are self-funded (i.e., non-IMB funded) IMB missionaries who come alongside an IMB missionary team through their jobs, as retirees, or as ministry professionals. While most Team Associates do not give their primary focus to the missionary task, they contribute to the overall church planting strategies of an IMB missionary team and engage in the missionary task as they are able in their respective platforms. Team Associates are assessed and approved both by the IMB and their sending church and serve a minimum of one-year. They also receive a variety of benefits, as well as access to consultation services on a number of issues.

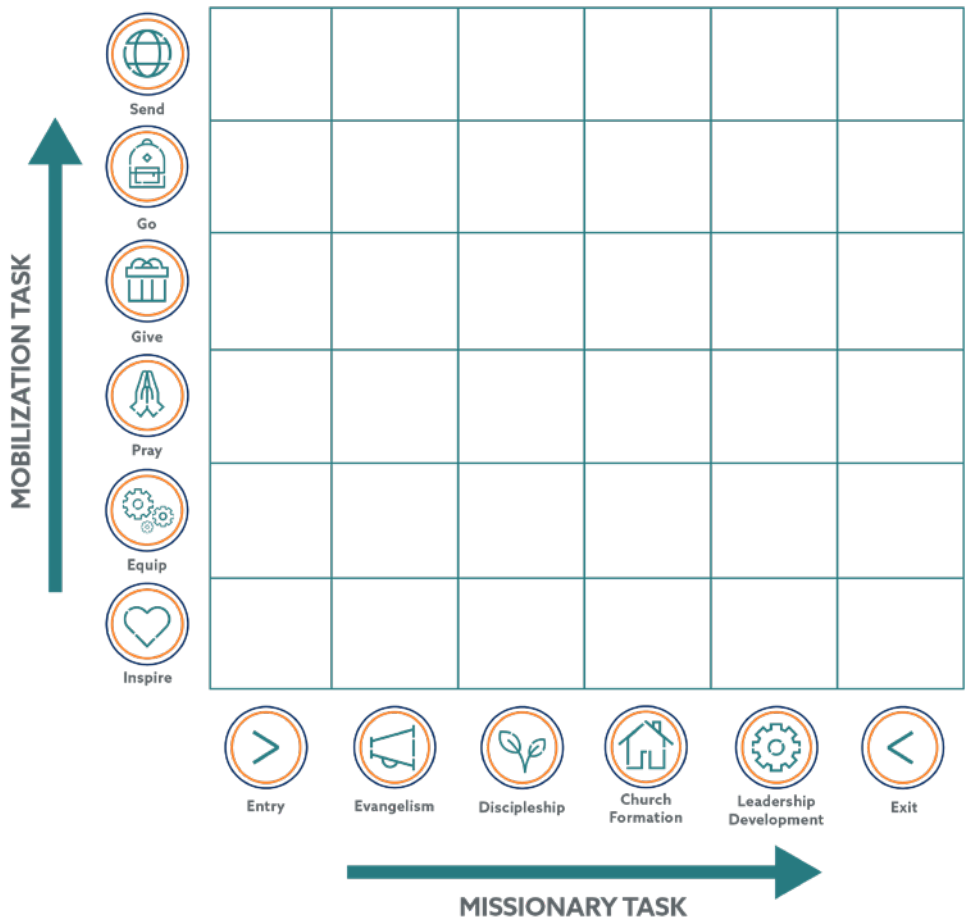
FIELD SUPPORT:

Field Support personnel are missionaries who are fully-funded by the IMB to provide a critical support service on behalf of the IMB in an international location. Field Support missionaries engage in the missionary task, but their primary responsibility is to provide a professional service and support to IMB missionary teams.

The Missionary Task and The Church's Mobilization Task

As you consider the various ways your church can mobilize to be a part of the missionary task, the IMB Mobilization Team can help your church partner more effectively as you mobilize for the missionary task. Take a look at the chart below that shows the relationship between the missionary task and the church's mobilization task.

The church's mobilization task includes things like inspiring your people to know God's mission and to be a part of the mission of the Church, equipping your church through training and discipleship, praying for unreached people groups and missionaries, giving to missions, going on mission trips or getting involved in your community, and sending missionaries as you partner with them.





INTERNATIONAL
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