



How to plan a rural mission.

Step 1

Selection of place

God's ways for dealing with His people cannot all be listed here. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than our ways (Is 55:8-9). Suffice it to say that we need to depend on divine wisdom to show us the way that we may walk in it. Having said this, the Bible chronicles numerous ways in which God leads His servants.

Our first important lesson to consider in mission work is mentioned almost in passing in the 16th chapter of the Acts of the apostles, verses six through nine. Though Paul was equipped, willing and excited to take the gospel message to the people of Asia who had it not, the Bible records that he and his companions *were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia*. Prompted once more by his desire to bring salvation to a dying people, he attempted to go into Bithynia as he passed by Mysia. He was an able missionary for God, a willing servant who had put himself at God's disposal and yet, *the Spirit suffered them not*. It was in a vision given him in the night that Paul received his marching orders from God: go into Macedonia and help the brethren there.

It is in that night vision that God directed Paul to the specific mission field that He had prepared for them in His divine providence. Paul's response to God's clearly outlined map was almost instantaneous for, *immediately (they) endeavoured to go into Macedonia*. From this we learn that the need of the people, coupled with their willingness and readiness to receive the Word motivate the call.

Do notice that in Jonah's case also, it is the Lord who speaks to Him to *arise and go to Nineveh*. The impetus in this case was the high levels of wickedness in Nineveh. Another reason for choosing a particular mission field in which to labor is the absence of the Word of God – which often manifests itself by abounding sin and wickedness (Jonah 1:1; 4:11).

The guiding principle in selecting a field is God's leading. Neither physical proximity nor remoteness, neither beautiful sceneries nor harsh natural conditions, neither the notoriety gained due to prevailing evils nor the desire to impress with presumptuous zeal should be the primary reason for setting out on a journey to labour in any corner of God's vast vineyard. It is God's Work and His plan of salvation. We are but tools in God's hands to bring His good news to His children. He does the calling and we respond by going for His every bidding is an enabling.

Step 2

Fact finding

1. Obtain all the necessary clearances for the missionary group from all the relevant authorities in the target area: king, chief, district administrators, local SDA conference and churches, etc.
2. Draw up a detailed budget for the mission project: transportation expenses, accommodation, food, community service projects, logistical equipments, etc.
3. Take note of whatever piece of information about the target area that may affect either the mission project or the missionary group: hazard spotting, landscape and geography of the area, prevailing diseases, insects and animals to watch out for, weather patterns, availability of food stuffs and logistical accessories, accessibility of water and other basic necessities, etc.

4. Collect information about the people of the target area: language(s) spoken, lifestyle and habits, culture(s), literacy levels, predominant religion(s) practiced, denominations and practices, etc.
5. Determine how much of the target area will be covered: distances, how to access water and other consumables, mode of transport, population size, number of homes, schools, orphanages, hospitals and other organizations, etc.
6. Identify the specific needs of the community and prayerfully strategize means and methods of penetration and evangelism: size of the mission team, type of missionaries, door-door, literature, media, friendship, teaching in schools, public campaigns, medical mission work, community service, etc.
7. Establish contacts with people and organizations to work with there. Should there be an SDA presence (whether a single individual, a family, a company or an actual church congregation) sell the mission project to them and find a way of working with them. God gave them residence in that mission field, like Paul, you were called there to *help* them.
8. Consider a risk management strategy so as to not be caught off guard. All bases must be covered.

The fact finding mission must accomplish the following:

1. *The draft budget for the entire mission.
2. List of the missionaries.
3. List of what needs to be carried on mission: equipment, consumables, materials, etc.
4. Mission code of ethics and mission requirements specific to the mission project.
5. Out of bounds areas should have been determined (rivers, bush, forest, etc).
6. The evangelism method for the mission project.
7. All mission sites (both for the crusade and for the missionaries' camp).
8. Communication with all interested parties.
9. All risks should have been determined and proposed ways of managing them.

*An aggressive fundraising strategy must be an integral part of the entire mission planning process.

The fact finding mission can also be used as a pre-campaign mission to prepare the people for the evangelism effort that will follow. It is the first contact between the people and the mission group, and must be viewed as an entering wedge. Once this feasibility study has been done effectively, detailed planning can commence. Hence, the battle would have been won on paper already. Remember Joshua and Caleb's fact finding mission report in Numbers 14:7-9 (study Numbers 13:1 - 14:38, esp. 13:17-20).

Step 3 *Planning*

Refer to the attached documents (listed below) for specifics.

- * The Chilubi Island International Mission Planning Document.
- * The Chilubi Island International Mission Leaders' Manual: a work plan and strategy on how to carry out and organize a rural.

Both documents will inform your Mission Planning Committee: composition, roles and duties.

Step 4 *Pre-campaign*

The pre-campaign is not just for the souls to be reached but also for the outreach team and the local church members.

- Prepare the missionaries and, as far as possible, the mission field: training sessions, practicals, over-night prayer meetings, fasting, week of prayers, etc.
- Prepare missionaries thoroughly for the mission and its work.

Step 5

Actual Mission

Step 6

Follow up

After baptism, the bigger work of nurturing and grounding the souls in the truth has just begun. Mission reports and baptismal certificates are not ushered in to the pearly gates. The souls that would have been reached must not be left to fend for themselves. Another lesson to learn from Paul is his profound love and sense of responsibility towards the souls he ministered to during his life. It is indeed a work of months and years, a lifelong process which if neglected may prove fatal. Steps one through five are but the tip of the iceberg, here lies the real mission work.

Do feel free to contact any members of the IMPACT Missionary Movement Executives Committee for more information or should you have any queries. You may get in touch with any one of us at impact.missionary@gmail.com.

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. – Jude24-25.

In Christ,

The Executive Committee

IMPACT Missionary Movement
c/o The Lusaka Central SDA Church
P.O. Box 36010
Plot 9221, corner of Independence Ave. and Burma Rd.
Lusaka, Zambia