



SEND EM ALL!

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The largest commodity college students have is time. They say they're busy but that is because they have no idea what busy actually is. Students are send-able and train-able. Once this is leveraged, collegiate ministries can be the greatest launching pads for global missions in the world. In order to reach this potential our ministries have to look at the process and the person. We have to consider the big picture of how our ministry does missions and the individual picture of how we engage particular students for missions. Borrowing some language from Matt Chandler's Explicit Gospel, we will call this Missions from the Air and Missions on the Ground.

MISSIONS FROM THE AIR

We need to start with the big picture first before we engage students to go. This is how we approach missions. What is the process for students to go on missions? Who gets to go? How do we decide where to send them?

SCREEN STUDENTS

Make sure the right student is going on the correct project. What are their spiritual gifts? Felt and demonstrated passions? Do they have the experience and maturity level? Telling a student to wait is better than sending a student not ready. We can use the reasons we wouldn't send them to be discipleship points to work through with them so they can be in a place to go next missions opportunity!

HOLISTIC PICTURE OF MISSIONS

What do we want our students to experience the 3-4 years they are involved in our ministries? Is missions just service projects? \ Is it only high-intensity evangelism? We must help our students be exposed to the many ways we serve as well as the church globally and locally. It would be a shame for our students to graduate from our ministry and think missions is only disaster relief or only church planting. How can we provide a variety of missions experiences for our students? There needs to be projects for the new believer and the veteran, the servant and the evangelist.

SEND THEM TO PEOPLE YOU TRUST

Nothing can sour a students' perspective on what missions is or isn't faster than a cruddy field supervisor. However, nothing will springboard students on to the mission field long term like a great field supervisor. One of the ways a ministry can do this is partnering with people over a long period of time. By doing this we get to know the field and the needs there and they get to know us and our students.



STUDENTS LEAD THE CHARGE

Let the face of missions be students sharing their experiences - the life change and the laughter. How did they know God was calling them? How did they raise the funds? Most of the obstacles individual students will have to overcome in order to serve have already been encountered by other students. Seeing another student who has overcome that roadblock and "lived to tell the tale" can be one of the biggest encouragements for missions for our students.

DON'T JUST GRADUATE THEM, SEND THEM

Recent college graduates are some of the most mobile missionaries on the planet! What would it look like for us to ask graduating seniors to consider giving 1-2 years to the mission field before entering their careers? I heard it said before, "Give a year. Pray about a lifetime!" We ask our graduating leaders to pray about serving a year on mission on a college campus after they graduate. They are all going to leave anyway, might as well help them leverage their lives for the kingdom of God.

MISSIONS ON THE GROUND

Whereas Missions from the Air deals with the system of engaging students in our ministry to be involved in missions, Missions on the Ground is how our ministries recruit and mobilize specific students for missions.

WEIGH EXCUSES WITH SCRIPTURE

Just because a student gives an excuse doesn't mean the conversation is over. Is summer school a need or a want? Can God provide the money needed? It's funny how we as humans can be so persistent to try to hear from God when it's something we want to do, but when it's something that requires faith and scares us a little we become so fatalistic at the first signs of opposition and throw our hands up and bemoan (secretly grateful) how "God shut the door." We have to learn to discern God's voice and help our students do the same.

PERSONAL INVITATION

Ask them in person for a particular trip. Acknowledge their gifts and their strengths. Personally as we approach mission trips I make a list of students I know who would be good for that particular project or who would grow from going and I personally ask them to go on it. The power of personal invite!

EXPECT IT, IT'S PART OF DISCIPLESHIP

Jesus expected his disciples to go and make disciples. Shouldn't we do the same? I understand that "go and make disciples" does not explicitly mean "go on a mission trip." But when our students go most of them come back changed. Missions are a spiritual pressure cooker for our students and the fruit from those projects often spill out into our campus ministries. Our international ministry was birthed out of a student going on a mission trip! What if as a part of our ministry goals we said we wanted every student in our ministry to be able to go and thrive on a mission trip in their time with us? How would that change our local mission field on our campus? How would that change our ministries worldview. What if missions involvement was expected because it was part of our discipleship pathway?



DEBRIEF AND PROCESS WHEN THEY GET BACK

Help them process their experience and walk through culture stress. The more a student acclimates to the culture and ministry they do on the mission field the harder it is for them to acclimate to the culture they came from. For every going there is culture shock. For every coming home there is culture stress - even ministering in the U.S. can produce culture stress in our students. Nothing will ruin what God did in a student's life faster than a student coming back bitter and poisoning our ministries with how lame the American church is or how lazy our ministry is, etc. We have to take time to help each one of our missionaries process their experience when they get home as well as be available to help them walk through their emotional, ideological, and spiritual frustrations after coming back.

If we can provide the structure and vision and then be intentional about engaging individual students where they are at it can be a powerful global force for the advancement of the gospel. What are some ways you do missions and encourage students to be involved?