

On Mission 2020

Topic Focus: Mobilization

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Partnerships in Mobilization and Preparation

My name is Jeff Boesel, I'm the Director of Prepare For Impact, The Mobilization Department for One Challenge. Today I'd like to take a couple minutes and just talk to you about the topic of Partnering Together: Individuals, Churches and Agencies in the area of Mobilization and Preparation For Cross-cultural Work. I think we would all agree that to move forward from where we are now we need better partnerships. We need to work together in better ways. And so I just like to talk about some of the ways that that could happen.

Let's take mobilization first. The individual needs to understand that, there really -at the core of this- the worker is who carries out the work. And you know, as God starts to lead you in this, as you start to feel the Holy Spirit nudging you towards cross cultural work, you need to go to your local church leadership right away that is step one. Don't go anywhere else. Don't talk to anybody else. Besides maybe your family, mentors, those kind of things to understand your leading that God's giving you. But when you take an actual first step that should be with your local church.

So agencies, if somebody comes to you and they have not talked to their local church, just turn those people around, tell them to go back to their local church and say talk to them first and then come and see us.

Churches, you need to understand that you're the incubation for cross-cultural workers. You're the place where they grow up and learn to minister and learn who they are in Jesus Christ. So you should be about trying to identify these people as they're growing up in your location through your ministries. Give them opportunities to get involved, and as they get involved, watch them and try to sense what God is doing in their lives and how God is leading them. Because you can help in this mobilization process in a significant way.

Organizations, we need to understand that for us, it's about helping people understand what the opportunities are, how they can get involved cross-culturally. We should also help them understand what our strategy and philosophy are like, what our values are like, what is our agency's heart when it comes to ministry, and how that will play out when they get cross-culturally. Will they be working on a team, will there be member care? What would that look like, will there be education for their children? Those kind of things need to be part of, our part of mobilization as well as helping them understand what steps to take.

So mobilization is important, and will do a better job if we partner together. But I'd like to spend more of our time today, speaking about preparation and how we can partner together to prepare people in four distinct ways.

The first way is spiritual preparation. This is the first area that we need to partner together in. And I think a lot of this rests with the individual. In other words, the individual needs to understand that their own spiritual maturity is important, and really it's their responsibility to work on that, to spend time on that, to spend time in the word, in time in prayer, in time growing in their own maturity in their own faith. They need to be able to live out the Gospel in their daily lives.

The second thing is, they need to understand how to feed themselves spiritually because when you get to another country and they're speaking in another language and you go to church in that language, you're not going to get a whole lot. So it's important that you understand how to dive into the Word and how to feed yourself and how to grow spiritually on your own because for a while, at least, that might be the only way that you are fed. It's true. You might get some video stuff for online stuff but you can't always depend on that. So learn to feed yourself spiritually.

And churches, this isn't something that's necessarily intuitive to a person on their own. So, a lot of that learning to feed yourself spiritually needs to come from training that they receive in their local church. Agencies, we can also be involved in this in our short-term opportunities for people, we can help them understand what it's like to -in a cross-cultural setting- to be able to actually feed themselves and feed each other spiritually in a smaller group. So spiritual preparation is critical.

Ministry preparation is the second area where we need to partner together. Individuals, again, you're the one living this out. You need to get involved in things, in ministry, in your own community, in your own country whether that's ministry inside your church or outside your church. That ministry experience is the best training you're going to get for what you're going to do cross-culturally. Trust me on this. You need to get involved. It's not just going to happen magically when you get in an airplane. God doesn't, you know, like, feed you through the seat of the airplane for what you're going to do. Now, it's not that He hasn't done that in the past, He has. But in general, we need to take the responsibility upon ourselves. To be trained well. Churches, you need to provide opportunities both inside your church and outside your church for your people to learn and experience ministry. If possible, have some of that ministry be an ethnic group, you know, different cultures that are in your community where you can get those people involved in that kind of ministry. Watch them. See where their strengths and weaknesses are. And then come alongside them to help grow in those areas.

And agencies, our role basically here is with short-term mission opportunities. And in those ministry opportunities, I think we want to focus on, "What is this going to be like if you stayed?" "What is ministry going to be like in this country?" "What is having to learn a language like in this country?" "What are relationships like in this country?" "How do these cultures differ?" So, we could invest in those areas.

A third thing that we can be partnering together on in preparation is emotional preparation or emotional health. Again, the individual has the core piece here. You need to be in a place of good emotional health before you take it cross-culturally because trust me, when you get into that other culture, that cross-culturalness, that cultural stress, cultural shock is going to rip away a lot of the coping mechanisms that you have created for yourself in your own culture. So you really need to find a place of emotional health.

Churches, we need to come alongside people in this. We can recognize them. We know them. And so we need to help them into these places, maybe it's their marriage relationship, or maybe it's just them understanding and being healthy as a single or maybe it's a family and parenting in those kind of things. The church needs to be important in this role.

And then agencies in the area of emotional preparation, most of us have psychological evaluations that people go through, but don't let it stop there. Provide opportunities for emotional growth, whether that's through counseling or through member care in some way. So, we want emotionally healthy people in ministry overseas for sure. And partnering together, that will happen in a better way.

The final area would be financial health and financial preparation. You know, individuals, you need to understand that, though, you don't like this, it's a necessary part of most missionary work. So we need to depend on God for this. This is something where we need to rest in Him and be dependent on Him. And, we're not in it alone. You're going to have your church alongside.

You churches, you need to provide as much training as possible in this area and understanding what the biblical bases are for raising support and giving that training and helping them understand. Maybe it's getting some experience or raising support for a short-term work.

And agencies, we need to come alongside people as they start to raise support and help them understand that they're not alone and help them understand that maybe there's coaching available from other missionaries who have gone before them. Because all of us have. We have experience. And maybe there are other companies that come along side and help in that coaching area, and help them create a message, and help them work towards an ask, and understand how that can be done in a sensitive but yet direct way to where people can see how they can partner together with you. And maintaining that support is also a key thing that agencies can get involved with.

I hope in these few minutes you've seen how partnership together - individuals, churches, and agencies - if we could partner together in better ways we could see more workers in our Kingdom force both locally and globally. And that those workers would be more effective because they have better training. Thank you for listening and will talk to you again soon.