

On Mission 2020

Topic Focus: Mobilization

David Jacob - Center for Missionary Mobilization and Retention **Seven Keys to Effectively Use Missionaries as Mobilizers**

Hi everyone. I'm Dave Jacob, the Founder and Director of the Center for Missionary Mobilization and Retention based right here at Trinity Bible College and Graduate School, where I also serve as the Missionary in Residence and Chair of the Intercultural Studies Department.

If you've been around the missions world for any length of time, specifically mobilization, you've probably heard someone at some point say, "Missionaries are our best mobilizers." And that's what I wanted to talk with you a little bit about today.

There's been several studies that demonstrate that indeed missionaries are great mobilizers. The first one, is called the Launch Survey. You might have heard of this before, John McVeigh and his team researched several missionaries through agencies. A lot of missionaries in fact, and one of the things that they discovered as they asked missionaries, "What helped launch you to the field" was that missionaries that are on home ministry assignment may be more effective mobilizers than stateside mobilizers.

An additional study was done on Assembly of God World Missions' missionaries and they asked their missionaries, "What influenced your decision to become a missionary?" What they found was the top answer was prayer. The second answer was Bible study. So obviously, we know that prayer and Bible study are vital when it comes to missionary mobilization and are certainly important factors. But here's the thing, the third factor that helped missionaries decide, "I think God's calling me to become a missionary," was hearing a sermon preached by a missionary or having a conversation with a missionary.

So again this shows that missionaries have strong influence when it comes to mobilizing others and third, Jay Matenga and Malcolm Gold, you may be familiar with their text *Mission in Motion*, they studied and surveyed missionaries from all over the world, it was a phenomenological study. And what they did is they asked missionaries about the different influences and even barriers to them getting to the field. And they also noted that missionaries have strong influence and so I want to mention *Seven Keys to Effectively Utilize Your Missionaries as Mobilizers*.

And the first thing is that when missionaries do come back for a home missionary assignment, or itineration, or furlough, however you refer to it, it's important that missionaries are trained in this area and that they understand the deep mobilization impact that they can make as their traveling

around and speaking. Yes, I know missionaries are here to primarily fundraise and then to get back to the field. But what we're finding is missionaries who primarily prioritize mobilization, that actually helps their fund-raising efforts.

Secondly, as they are out and about speaking, is there anyway that missionaries can stay in host homes as opposed to hotels? You know it's cheaper, but also it has a lot of impact when it comes to mobilizing others. The more connections that missionaries can make with people in the congregation. I just interviewed Abby, who is a High School senior and an aspiring missionary and I asked her, "So Abby, what factors led to your decision to become a missionary?" The very first thing she said was, "Well, all growing up my parents had missionaries stay in our home whenever they would come and speak at our church. There they were staying at our house and I remember those conversations that we had over dinner and those late nights in the living room." So again, I know that if you're an introvert like me, it's sometimes better for us and we prefer to go stay at a hotel but if we can have missionary stay in host homes, this is an effective way to mobilize others.

Number Three, -missionaries who travel and speak- it's important that they go to children's church and speak in youth groups, as well. The data shows that most missionaries are first called to the mission field between the ages of 14 and 19. And so having them come to speak to these youth and to get to know them. Then again, I understand missionaries are on the field and they come home and they feel like they can't relate to youth or they don't fit in to their home culture anymore. But even so, this has an important impact when it comes to mobilizing others.

Number Four is making sure that we keep the long-term in mind. In other words, what defines success for missionary mobilization. Of course, we keep track of contacts and we keep track of applications that come in, but can we also keep track of conversations that missionaries have or those connection points is what we refer to them as. So, a missionary who gives a missionary biography to a young person or recommends a missionary podcast to someone, these are connection points that have good and important influence when it comes to mobilizing others. Just a couple months ago, I was in a class training my interns as they were getting ready to launch out into the field and a student before class looked at me quizzically and he said, "Wait a minute, did you come to our church?" He said, "I remember you and your kids. You guys came to children's church and your kids sang for us." And so this was his first kind of exposure to missionaries and here we were ten, eleven years later. So again, here is this long-term effect and he is now as I speak, studying abroad in Cairo, Egypt preparing for the mission field.

Number Five. Can we get missionaries to go to youth conventions and youth camps? Whether or not they're the speaker or not doesn't matter because we can also have them do other things like being a camp counselor and/or just even having a booth, rubbing shoulders with the youth of today is powerful and God seems to use it to mobilize others.

Number Six is that missionaries can volunteer at church events. They can help paint a nursery. They can help serve a meal anyway that we can connect missionaries to those supporting churches, not only helps the missionaries budget of course, but also helps to mobilize others.

And finally, Number Seven - Is there a way that we can establish more missionary mentorship programs? You know the data shows again that sustained connection with missionaries helps propel people to the field. Can we use technology like Skype or FaceTime or other avenues to have this sustained relationship and a long-term relationship between missionaries and aspiring missionaries?

We know that God often uses missionaries as powerful mobilizers. Just a few months ago, I was speaking at a church and afterwards a sixty-three-year-old lady came up to me and she was crying. And she said, "I'm sixty-three years old, and I'm going to retire in a couple years and I don't want to waste my life anymore. I feel God calling me to the mission field." And so I was able to pray with her and help her on those initial steps of getting to the mission field.

So by best positioning our missionaries as mobilizers, we are going to see God use them in powerful ways to inspire, to educate and to help propel the next wave of missionaries around the world.