

On Mission 2020

Topic Focus: Mobilization

Dave & Lorene Wilson - Avant Ministries
Engaging the Church in Missionary Mobilization

[Dave:] We are Dave and Lorene Wilson and we serve the Lord through Avant Ministries in Kansas City. We engage with nearly 1000 churches across the United States, which sends and support missionaries by equipping them to be good senders. We focus on intentionally caring for their sent ones, and also by proactively preparing the next generation. Having a well established discipleship pipeline is essential for churches who want to make Christ known among the nations both now and into the future.

[Lorene:] Today we will share with you some things we've seen in our favorite globally engaged churches. Things that they're doing well and why it matters. We regularly connect all types of churches: small, rural ones; historic, urban ones; as well as suburban megachurches. Some have a long legacy of sending missionaries to the nations and others, or church plants that are just beginning to discover the joy of raising up their own people who've sensed God's call to the mission field. In this audience, we know there are primarily Church Leaders, Sending Agency Leaders and Missionaries who are interested in this topic. You are the three strands of the Great Commission route we will be addressing. With the primary emphasis on the church.

[Dave:] So for you, Church Leaders, we've been where you are. For more than twenty years we've served the local church in the role as missions pastor, preparing missionaries and caring for them through the church. We know that we had to create a proactive and intentional missionary mobilization pipeline. Nothing good just happens without a plan. It all begins with prayer as Jesus reminded us in Matthew 9:38 and 10:2. Now everybody can participate in that act - missionary mobilization.

[Lorene:] Once God's people begin to pray, it would be wise for your mission leaders in the church to be ready to receive and disciple those whom God is calling out to go and serve. That is where the missionary pipeline begins to take shape.

[Dave:] So why should your church create a pipeline for missionaries? Well, the easy answer is because Jesus gave us the Great Commission. But you know as well as we know, in every church, there's a vocal few who say, "Why do we need to focus so much on the nations when there's so much need right here at home? When, one church that person's name was Don. He couldn't understand why so much time, money and effort was spent on missionaries going overseas. Here's how I responded to Don. "Now, down that's a valid concern. If your church is not reaching out and making disciples here at home, why would you want to export that kind of

ministry model overseas?" You say sending missionaries overseas it has the exact same desired outcome as sending church members into their local community. Making disciples, that's our outcome. Missionaries, they require more training, more funding, more capacity for cross-cultural barriers, but at the end of the day church members and missionaries desire the exact same thing. Souls transformed by the gospel and disciplined into ministry. So if your church is actively engaged in reaching the losts in your home community, well the natural outcome will be that a few members of your church will sense God's call to go to the nations. But the sending of missionaries cross-culturally, cross boundaries, that is going to require more experience and more special attention.

[Lorene:] We love seeing churches that pray biblically for their neighbors but some seem to stop their churches that we know that are really making an impact in their community are including the nations as well. That old saying that White House that shines the farthest shines, the brightest back at home. The Lord does answer prayer that is according to His will. Therefore, be prepared for the Lord of the harvest to start sending workers to to His harvest. Sending missionaries is not a choice that a church can make but a command from our Lord that we must obey.

[Dave:] That's right. Now, what is this pipeline that we mentioned look like? Well, many churches that we know, they have a very comprehensive strategy. They developed it from the Great Commission passage in Acts. Acts 1:8 says that we are to go to Jerusalem - your hometown, Judea - that surrounding region. Samaria - those who are close to you but their different in some way, different language, different place. And then they went to the ends of the earth, the nations. Now, once I shared all these things with Don and his church and explained to him what his church was doing locally to reach those who are lost, working with people who are overlooked in the community and those who struggle with their faith. Well, he admitted he had not thought about the Great Commission in terms of here, there and everywhere.

[Lorene:] A Missionary Pipeline is basic Discipleship 101. I spent almost 30 years in the corporate world and we use the word pipeline as a way to evaluate our goals, clarify our strategy and define our outcomes. We can use the same principle in the church. We make disciples. That is our business. And disciples are a product. Sometimes they stay in the community and sometimes they move away. A disciple that crosses a culture, learns the new language, lives sacrificially in another land and makes disciples there, that is who we call a missionary. Steve Sweatman with MTI said it well, he said, "In every church, what we need is a fully integrated global supply chain -a pipeline- that has disciples as the precious commodity as well as an effective infrastructure to distribute and replicate them around the world." So to make that happen our churches need to invest a little differently, and more heavily to accomplish the ends of the earth portion of that Great Commission. Disciples, who go to the nations need specialized training, a higher degree of funding and a clear and compelling sense of God's divine calling.

[Dave:] So the churches that we partner with at Avant, they do so because we offer that specialized training that a missionary may need. The world is becoming increasingly more complex and the missionary-sending enterprise is something that we just can't do on our

own. We need specialists to guide us through some very complex terrain in the world. In the same way that our partner churches aligned with Bible schools and seminaries to provide their theological training, we at the missionary-sending agency can provide cross cultural adaptation, language acquisition, church planting methodology and many other needed services.

[Lorene:] So how can you get started? The pipeline begins with the church praying and the Lord answers by calling out His people to serve Him. Then the church is proactive in anticipation of the Lord's provision by preparing a discipleship path for those people to walk through. There are many discipleship training pathways to choose from so, you really don't have to invent your own. We have listed some on our website from churches which freely share their resources. So, just do a little research, to find the one that fits your church the best.

[Dave:] Finally, we want you to think outside of your church. Ministry is most effective when you're fully invested in relationships and partnerships. The church, the agency, the missionary, we all have roles to play in this pipeline- seek to develop a relationship with a sending agency that you trust to help you train your disciples. I serve as the Director of Church Engagement at Avant and I would love to have a church leader called me up and say, "Hey, we would like to have a missions mobilizer come and speak at our church for sending missionaries. And I know that all the other mission agencies within the Missio Nexus network they have people in the same role as me. They would drop everything to build a relationship with church leaders who want to join in partnership with the Lord's mandate to go to all the nations. And just a word of encouragement to my colleagues and other missionary-sending agencies, when I was a Missions Pastor at a local church, I had some wonderful relationships, great relationships with sending agencies. I always appreciated those agencies, which included the church in more than just the funding of a missionary.

To some, the church was merely just a financial partner. That's just not a proper place for the bride of Christ. The church needs to be a highly valued partner in the missionary care, mobilization as well as even making major decisions while they're on the field.

[Lorene:] So, in summary, the pipeline begins with the Lord answering the prayers in His people. Then the mantle of responsibility rests upon the foundations of the church to make disciples. The seminaries, and bible schools help these disciples develop a working theology. The sending agencies give them the tools necessary to thrive in ministry across borders and boundaries. And then there are a variety of coaches and consultants who specialize in strategy, methodology, crisis intervention and all sorts of missionary care.

[Dave:] So that's the pipeline. Missio Nexus has a saying worth considering, "The Great Commission is too big for anyone to accomplish alone and too important not to try to do together." If you're looking for more information on how to partner and build relationships within this pipeline, go to our website, <https://threestrandpartners.org/>

[Lorene:] Join us in the Pipeline.