

Month, Day, Year

Dear *Name*,

I would like to encourage you in the area of missions. I am writing you because either you or a pastor/leader who has ministered closely with you have indicated that you have an interest in missions. This area is vitally important for the advancement of the gospel and is a directive that we take very seriously and in which we are growing. We are trying to be more intentional in giving direction in missions especially as we see more students, young adults, and older adults experience short-term mission projects.

Many people participate in these projects and, after time, they sense a leading of the Lord to go into missions. But often they don't know what to do with this leading. "Is it indigestion? A bad burrito? Or is God really leading me?" Your questions might not go exactly like this but one thing is certain; you have an internal prompting but don't know what to do with it!

In the past, those who attend a Christian college would make an appointment with a guidance or mission's counselor and begin to make plans for their life. Although there is nothing wrong with seeking out wise counsel, ***the missing part of the equation is the church***. The church is the sending agent in the event that someone goes to the mission field (Acts 13:1-3). Maranatha recognizes that we have a responsibility to help you. Therefore, we are trying to do our part in coming alongside of you to give you direction.

Recently the elders that oversee missions have initiated a ministry called ***Next Steps in Missions*** as a tool to help you. Let me describe this new ministry and the practical steps you can take to be a part of this if the interest exists.

Next Steps in Missions is a three-month to a one-year mission exposure that will give you a more realistic picture of missions (move from the romantic to real), help you to understand that missions equals church planting, and give you a tool through which God can speak to you concerning His calling in your life. I can say from experience that it is far better to have a short-term (three-month to one-year) missions exposure before investing years of training (in missiology, linguistics, support raising, field assignments, etc.) only to determine that you are not cut out for missions. We believe that ***Next Steps in Missions*** could be vital in determining God's will concerning missions in your life. If this interests you, please join us in a faith walk by doing the following:

Faith Step #1 - Pray for God's direction. Ask God to affirm in you that *Next Steps in Missions* is the direction that He wants you to go.

Faith Step #2 - Fill out the missions application and questionnaire. This step alone will probe you and will either spark a greater interest or repel you from this process.

Faith Step #3 - Submit your application and questionnaire. Taking the time to put the stamp on the envelope and mailing your application is another step of faith in seeking God's guidance.

Faith Step #4 - Set up an interview. After giving at least one week for us to look over the application, you need to call the office and set up an interview with the missions pastor. You will notice that we want the initiative to be entirely on you since this is your journey of faith with which we are helping you.

Faith Step #5 - Tailor the mission. The interview will either further confirm your participation in *Next Steps in Missions* or will stop the process altogether. Our goal will be to hear how God is guiding you and then to help you get to the field. We have many avenues for tailoring a short-term exposure for you (partner church plants, mission's agencies, etc.). This will be the broad formation of a project for you.

Faith Step #6 - Count the cost. After tailoring a potential project, we then have the responsibility to lay out the details of this mission exposure. Once we are able to get all the details, we will arrange a follow-up meeting with you to lay out the cost of carrying out this mission. Please realize that this will cost you in some way: financially, living standards, culture shock, friends, and many other conveniences that you are used to. If the Lord confirms this mission in you, then the hard work begins to prepare for the field. Don't worry; you will have a comprehensive list of the things you need to do to get ready for being commissioned to the field.

Faith Step #7 - Commission to the field. After raising prayer and financial support and accomplishing all the items on your check list, you are ready to go to the field! Your church body will be behind you 100%. To symbolize this we will commission you by laying hands on you and praying for you after one of our worship services.

Now you know what *Next Steps in Missions* is all about. If you are interested, we would encourage you to start taking the steps of faith described in this letter. If this is not for you, please feel free to pass on this information to someone from our church who is interested. You will find a missions questionnaire enclosed with this letter to help you get started if the Lord is leading in this way.

In Him,



Steve Marshall