

# REPORT FOR THE NEXT GENERATION MISSIONS STUDY

*The Next Generation Missions Study is an initiative conducted by Singapore Centre for Global Missions, in partnership with: Bartley Christian Church, Church of our Saviour, Covenant Evangelical Free Church, Glad Tidings Church, Interserve Singapore, OM Singapore, OMF Singapore, Radion International and Woodlands Evangelical Free Church<sup>1</sup>.*

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## BACKGROUND

An Antioch of Asia.

This sense of Antioch calling has captured the mind and heart of the Church in Singapore for at least the last half a century. It has been reflected in the sending of long-term cross-cultural missions workers throughout Asia (and beyond), with the Church continuing to believe that we have a role to play in serving in God's global mission<sup>2</sup>.

Singapore Centre for Global Missions (SCGM) has been serving as a catalyst for the national missions movement. One way was by conducting research, with the most notable initiative being the National Missions Study. In the most recent NMS conducted in 2019 (NMS 2019)<sup>3</sup>, one of the key issues identified was the age profile of current Missions workers. The data suggested that we had an ageing missions force, especially among career missionaries.

This finding prompted the present study – The Next Gen Missions Project. How timely it was that we decided to embark on it shortly before the Circuit Breaker in Singapore<sup>4</sup> – this was going to be a season for research and for reflection on the future of the Church in Singapore for global missions.

## Research Aims.

The project steering committee (comprising missions leaders from all of our partner organizations) contributed substantially to shaping the focus and the content of the study – we were agreed that the key focus should be on the next generation. We were convicted that people of all ages can be on mission, but the next generation had clearer implications for the long-term future of the church in missions sending

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<sup>1</sup> This study was a collaborative effort between a group of churches and missions agencies (and a Christian NGO) – their leaders formed the steering committee and provided people to assist in conducting the research. This study could not have happened without their help.

<sup>2</sup> Read more at: <https://www.lausanne.org/tbd/country-profiles/singapore>

<sup>3</sup> A free-to-download copy of the report is available here: <https://www.scgm.org.sg/nms-2019/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/circuit-breaker-to-minimise-further-spread-of-covid-19>

and in mobilization. We also wanted to focus on the role of local churches in Singapore, yet not forgetting the important role that agencies play in partnership with churches.

Our primary research question was thus as follows: *How can Local Churches grow in their capacity to mobilize the next generation for long-term cross-cultural missions?*

We sought to uncover insights to help local churches adapt and grow in their work of educating, mobilizing and preparing the next generation (under 40 year olds) for long-term cross-cultural missions (“missions”). We were mainly interested in what happens *prior* to the next generation actually getting deployed. What happens during and after deployment are important issues in themselves, and are deferred to a later study.

### **Defining Long-term Cross-Cultural Missions.**

The whole church should be involved in bringing the gospel of the kingdom of God in all kinds of ways (even through short-term trips), but we believed that there remained an important place for missions workers to be an incarnate long-term witness in the neighbourhood especially when going to unreached or frontier peoples<sup>5</sup>.

We also understood cross-cultural to mean that the deployment was be outside Singapore, so this excludes missions at our doorstep or exclusively digital missions and short-term missions trippers – unless the person identified as an itinerant evangelist or equivalent.

## **STUDY METHOD**

### **Content.**

The project steering committee appointed a research team of local church and missions agency missions, as well as overseas missions workers. This team met regularly to develop a conceptual framework for issues in mobilizing young people and the role of the local church – issues that could be meaningfully studied throughout quantitative/qualitative research.

We arrived at 4 themes, believing that the local church can play an active role in response to all four themes:

1. The Demographic Profile of Next Gen missions workers (Our People)
2. Discerning the Call

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<sup>5</sup> For an understanding of unreached and/or frontier peoples and the state of global missions to these peoples, see for example: <https://joshuaproject.net/frontier> and <https://www.imb.org/research/maps/>

3. Teaching and Encouraging our People
4. The Process of Preparing to Go

### **Survey Frame and Method:**

We identified two populations of interest, and developed a separate survey for each, with questions pertaining to the four sections above. The Next Gen Missions Workers (Next Gen workers) are the ones who actually get deployed, while the Missions Leaders have a significant role in their church or agency in educating, mobilizing, and preparing people to go.

We created a list of churches and agencies based on information from SCGM, The Bible Society of Singapore's directory of churches, and private contacts. Through the months of March – May 2020, we invited every church and missions agency to participate by completing the *Missions Leader survey*. We allowed up to 3 per organization, recognizing that multiple persons in a church or agency have a role to play in mobilization.

In all, we had **129** missions leader respondents – 100 serving in a local church, and 29 from a missions agency or Christian NGO. They represented 81 churches and 13 agencies/NGOs, and were a mix of Senior Pastors, Missions Chairpersons, Agency leaders and Missions Mobilization staff. It turned out that the responses were quite similar across 'organization' or appointment and so we were assured to aggregate all the findings into one "missions leader" group.

Next, we asked these churches and agencies to extend the *Next Gen Missions* survey link to as many Next Gen workers they knew who fit our criteria. We also shared the survey link to as many next generation Christian networks that we knew of.

Our criteria for Next Gen worker was as follows:

They were deployed before the age of 40, or are preparing to go before the age of 40,

with a minimum 6-month commitment for cross-cultural missions outside of Singapore (may or may not be already deployed). Our impression was that many of the concerns faced by those going for 6 months to 2 years do not differ a lot from those going for over 2 years<sup>6</sup>. We wanted more data and so cast the net wider.

They could have been serving in any of a variety of capacities (as a career missionary, missional professional, NGO worker, itinerant evangelist and etc). We chose to adopt such a broad definition of missions worker, in keeping with

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<sup>6</sup> Following the National Missions Study, we have kept to the definition of long-term missions deployment being two years or more.

what we have observed in NMS 2019 – that people go in a variety of capacities.

In all, we had 153 *Next Gen Missions Survey* respondents<sup>7</sup>, coming from 79 churches. 59% of them had been sent through a missions agency/Christian NGO (usually in partnership with their local church); 25% were directly sent by their local church; 5% went on their own (without a supporting church or agency), while the remainder had not yet committed to a particular sending organization.

## OUR PEOPLE

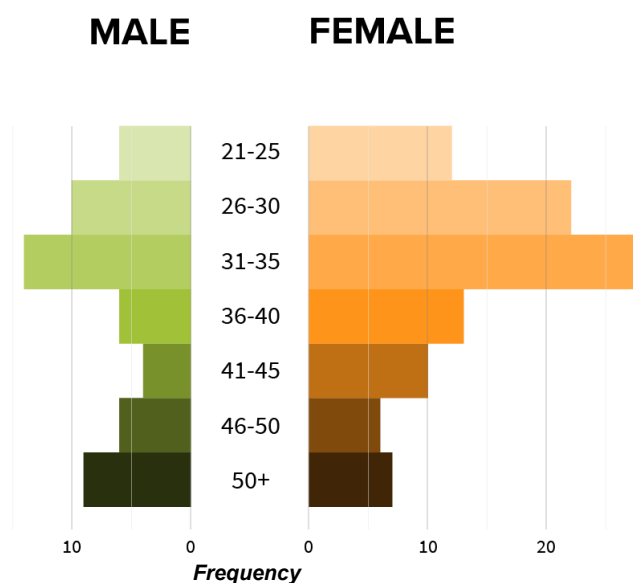
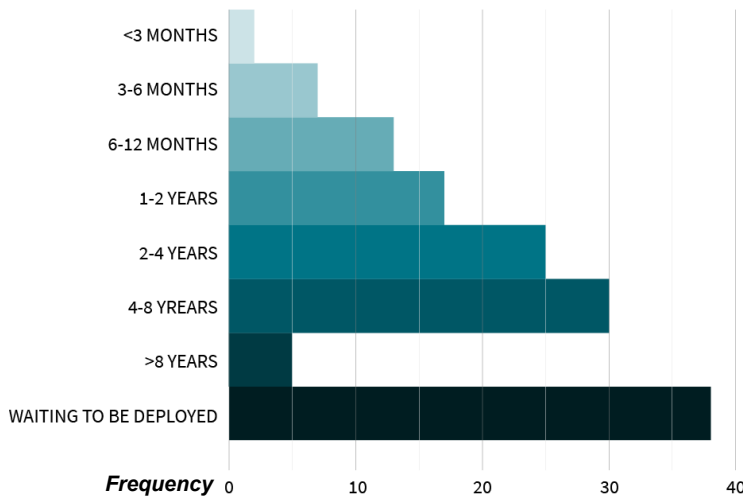


Figure 1. Age and Gender Distribution of Next Gen Missions Workers

Out of the 153 Next Gen worker respondents, 137 were under the age of 50 (all of them were deployed when under 40, but for some that was up to a decade ago). We excluded the 50+ year olds since they would have been deployed over a decade ago (a different generation!). We did analyse the data with the 50+ year olds included and noted that their exclusion would not have changed most of the findings.

66% of the remaining respondents are female. This is higher than the gender distribution for career missionaries in NMS 2019 (56% female, 44% male).

<sup>7</sup> Later in this report, you will read that we excluded some of these respondents as they had gone on mission more than 10 years ago.



**Figure 2. “How long have you been deployed for long-term cross-cultural missions?”**

It is worth noting that over 40% of our respondents have been deployed for more than 2 years so far (some for as much as over 8 years). This assured us that our data responses were based on a fair bit of long-term experience. Only a small fraction of Next Gen workers have been deployed for under 3 months so far, while 28% were waiting to be deployed.

LEVEL OF STUDY	FREQUENCY
None	84
In process of study	10
Some Education – e.g. Certificate/ informal courses	9
Grad Dip/ Bachelor of Arts or equivalent	18
Master of Arts/Ph.D. or equivalent	16

**Table 1. Level of Formal Theological Education**

The majority of our Next Gen workers do not have formal theological education. We wondered if there were significant differences between long-termers (i.e. those who have already gone out and have served for at least 2 years) and the others.

Among those deployed for less than 2 years: Roughly 2/3s of them have no theological education (roughly  $\frac{2}{3}$ ), while the remainder have or are in process of acquiring it.

Among those deployed for more than 2 years: 1/2 of them have no theological education. It may be that some in this category pursued theological education after being first deployed.

PROFESSIONAL / WORK BACKGROUND	FREQUENCY
Education	27
Social Service / Counselling	23
Christian Ministry Work	12
Healthcare	10
Media and the Arts	9
Technical	7
Finance	6
Others (e.g. pilot, public relations, sports)	22
Nil (Went Straight into Missions)	22

Table 2. Professional Background

## DISTRIBUTION

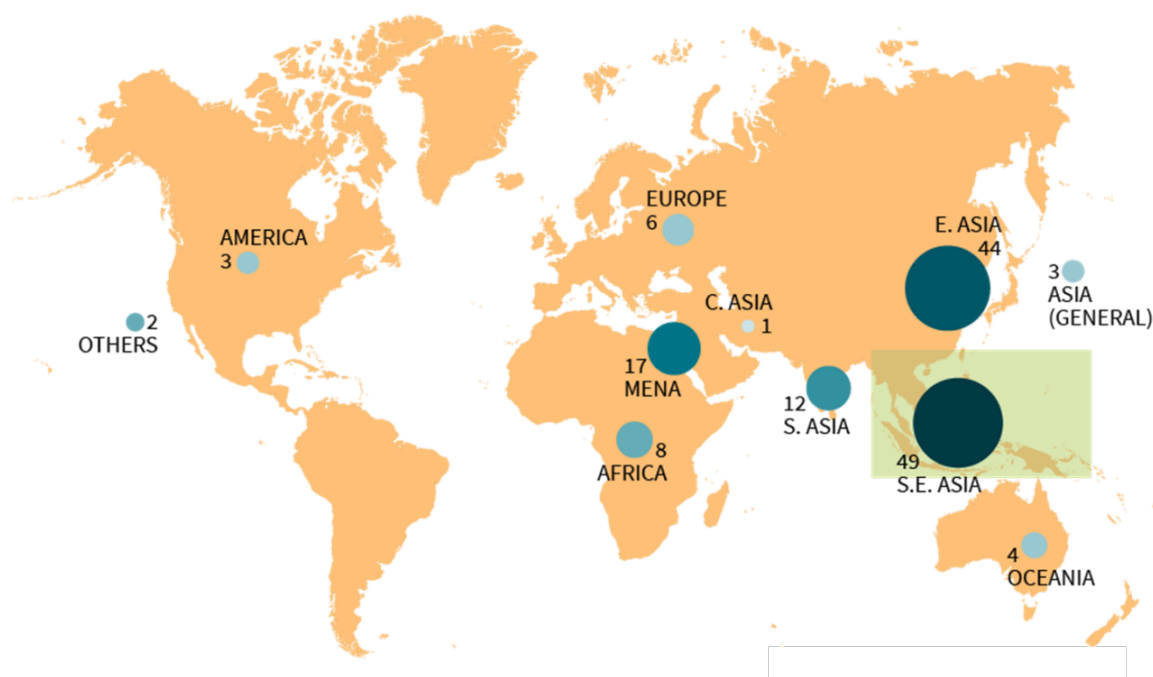


Figure 3. Global Distribution of Next Gen Workers

*Note: Numbers indicate number of Next Gen workers deployed to that region.*

The most common regions of the world where our Next Gen workers have gone to are South-East Asia, East Asia and MENA<sup>8</sup> (or West Asia) in that order. The prominence of MENA is interesting because we did not observe this in the NMS 2019 which looked at missions workers of all ages but who had gone or are going for over 2 years. The Next Gen study instead focused on those who went when they were young and allowed for as short as 6 months deployment.

There were notable differences in the nature of missional work being done in the top three regions:

South-East Asia – Just under half of the Next Gen workers were doing exclusively community / marketplace (“Community”) work; 40% did a mix of Church and Community work. Only 13% did exclusively Church work.

East Asia – More than half (57%) did a mix of Church and Community work. 24% did exclusively Community work while 19% did exclusively Church work.

MENA – 53% did a mix of Church and Community work, while 47% did exclusively Community work. None were doing exclusively Church work.

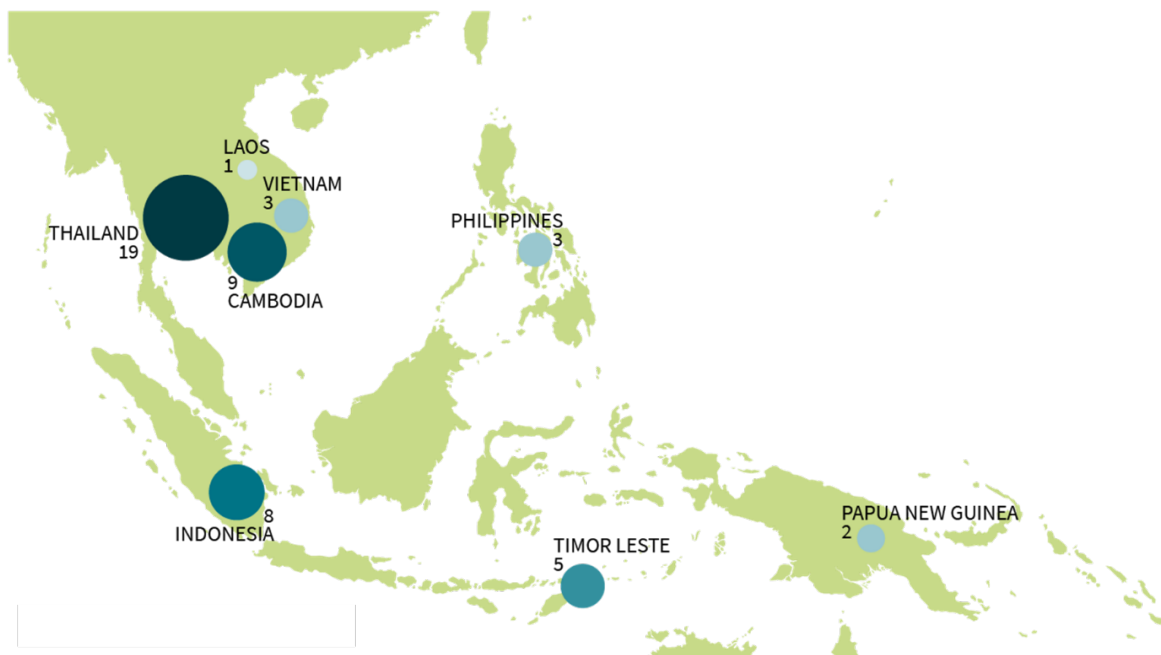


Figure 4. Next Gen Deployment within South East Asia

*Note: Numbers indicate number of Next Gen workers deployed to that country.*

<sup>8</sup> Middle-East and North Africa.

This distribution, with the concentration of deployment to Indo-China countries, is consistent with what we found in NMS 2019.

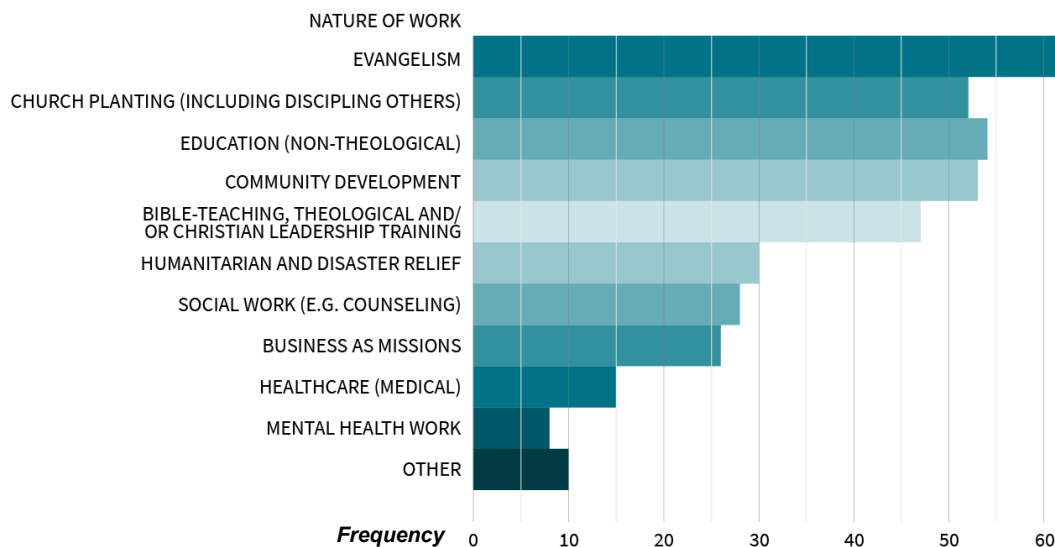


Figure 5. Nature of Work in the Field

More than half of the Next Gen workers (71 people, or 53%) are involved in a mix of Church and Community/Marketplace work. It can be said then that most of the Next Gen workers go as bi-vocationalists - wearing ‘two hats’. This may be a matter of gaining access to the field, but also about being a holistic witness in the spirit of integral mission.

46 (35%) are involved in exclusively Community/Marketplace work, while only 16 (12%) are doing exclusively Church work (e.g. Church planting, discipleship, evangelism work). Those involved in Healthcare / Education / Social Work are equally likely to do exclusively community work or both church and community.

For those going exclusively for community / marketplace work – they may see their work as missional, but one challenge is to help them see how to integrate their work with an intentionality for making disciples (where possible).

**Reflection for Local Churches.** Many local churches cultivate their own missions partnerships and projects, and so tend to prioritize channelling their members’ time and energy to these particular fields. These fields usually accommodate a limited range of professional work skills. But if we take the view that members may and do get called by the Lord to serve in a wider span of geography and capacities, then local churches must consider: *How does our Missions Policy and Strategy allow and enable more of our members to go on mission as the Lord calls each of them?*

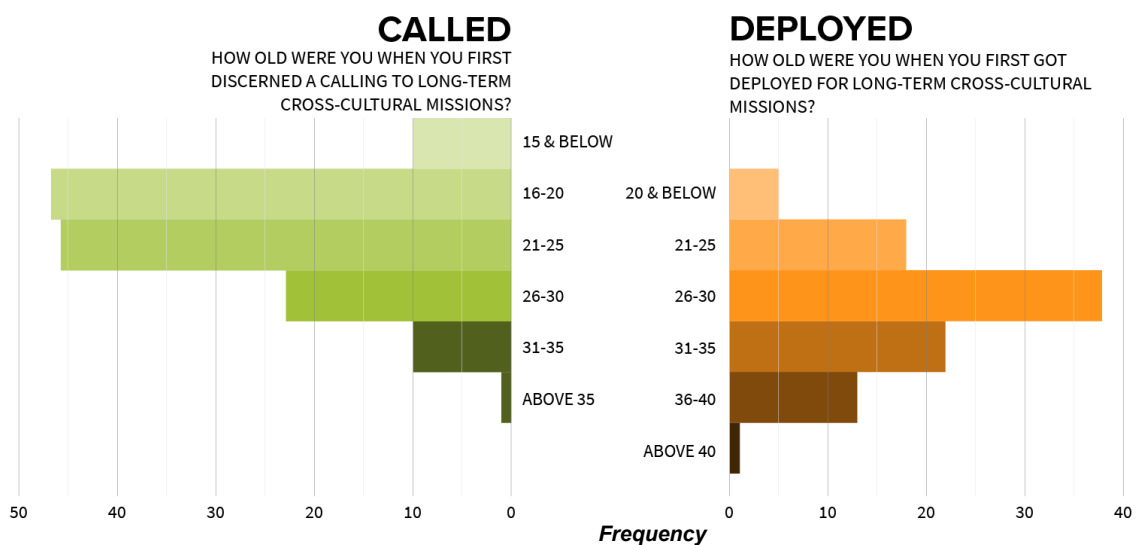


## DISCERNING THE CALL

We explicitly defined the call as the time “when you first seriously considered that God was calling you to cross-cultural missions.”

For many Next Gen workers, everything started as a general call to be fully surrendered to the Lord – but within that call was a conscious awareness that going cross-cultural was a real possibility in God’s purpose for that person. From thence comes a journey of clarifying. We were interested in gaining insights on that journey, up to the point when they got deployed.

We began by looking at what age people first received the call:



**Figure 6. Age of Calling and of Deployment**

Over 40% of the Next Gen workers were first called as teenagers (up to 20 years of age). The next most common age category was the early 20s (21 – 25).

The age category when most young people get deployed is 26 to 30 years.

If we mapped this onto the typical life journey of young people in Singapore – this may translate to most young people discerning the call post-secondary school, during their tertiary education and within their first few years of work. Subsequently, most of these people would get deployed after a few years of work before they hit the age of 30 - the typical age when major life events such as marriage occurs in Singapore<sup>9</sup>. This makes sense when we consider that the decision to go on long-term overseas mission must be reconciled (or integrated) with one’s other major life commitments.

<sup>9</sup> The 2019 median age for Singaporean males and females to first get married was 30.4 and 28.8 years respectively (source: [https://www.singstat.gov.sg/-/media/files/visualising\\_data/infographics/population/marriages-and-divorces-2019.pdf](https://www.singstat.gov.sg/-/media/files/visualising_data/infographics/population/marriages-and-divorces-2019.pdf))

This finding alone has implications for youth ministry (and of course, young adult ministry) where teaching and encouraging Christians about global missions is concerned<sup>10</sup>. We get more details when we look at the length of time individuals took between receiving their first calling and when they got deployed.

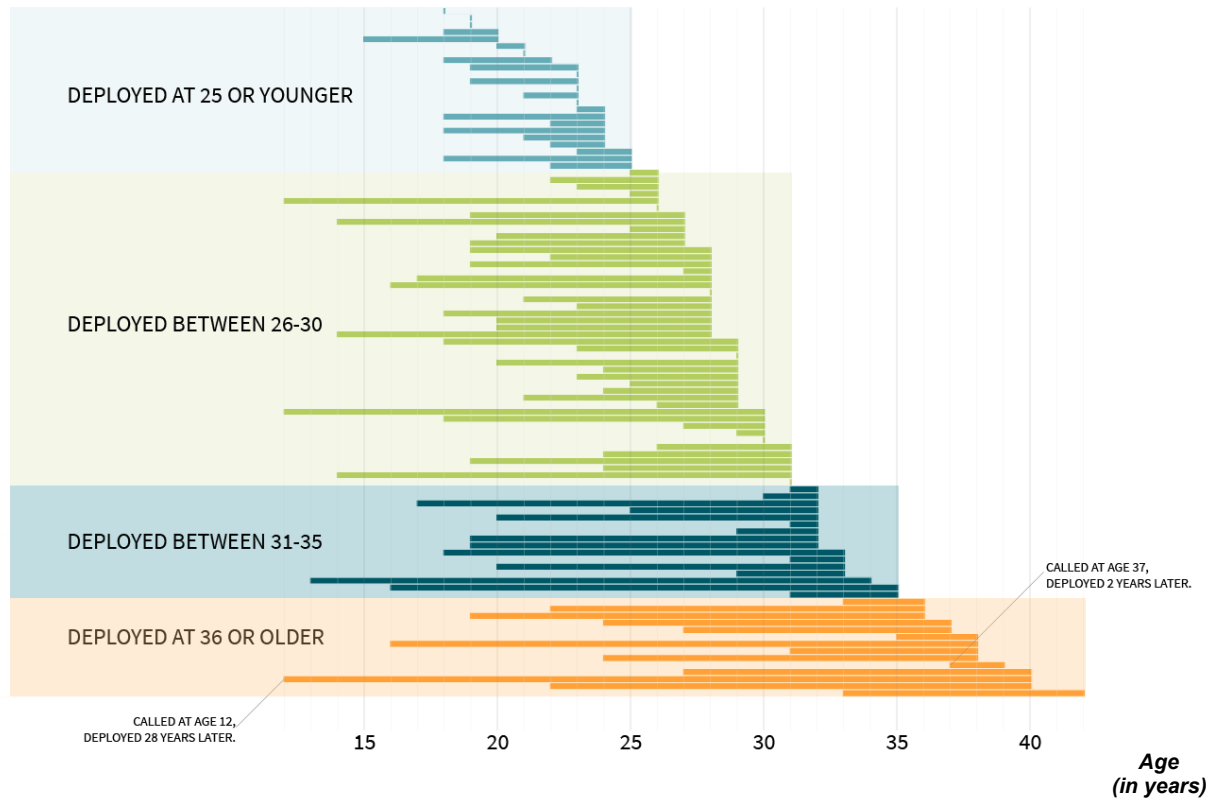


Figure 7. Number of Years between First Calling and Actual Deployment

How long did it take between a young person's first serious calling and actual deployment for long-term cross-cultural missions? Consider the example of the next gen worker who was called at the age 12, and was deployed 28 years later! And then there's the case of a worker who was called at age 37, and was deployed 2 years later!

In general, we find that for the next gen workers who first discerned a call between 16 – 20 years old, most of them took 9 years ( $\pm 5$ ) before getting deployed<sup>11</sup>.

If they first discerned a call between 21 – 25 years old, then it's  $5 \pm 4.7$  years.

And if they first discerned a call between 26 – 30 years of age, their average age of deployment is  $30.5 \pm 2.8$  (i.e. most went between the age of 28 and 33 years).

<sup>10</sup> Some may also make a valid point about the place for global missions in pre-teens' discipleship!

<sup>11</sup> Statistically speaking, this means an average of 9 years with a standard deviation of 5 years.

Consider the duration that the mobilization journey can take. This calls for intentionality and perseverance on the part of the local church in journeying alongside these young people, no matter how long it takes, and however early or late it begins.

These findings are descriptive rather than prescriptive. But some may query whether the length of the journey could be shorter than it is, in which case the question is whether there were obstacles that ‘unnecessarily’ delayed a person’s deployment – and what local churches could do to help. We turn now to the question of the local church’s role in helping people discern the call.

### Church’s Role in Discerning the Call.

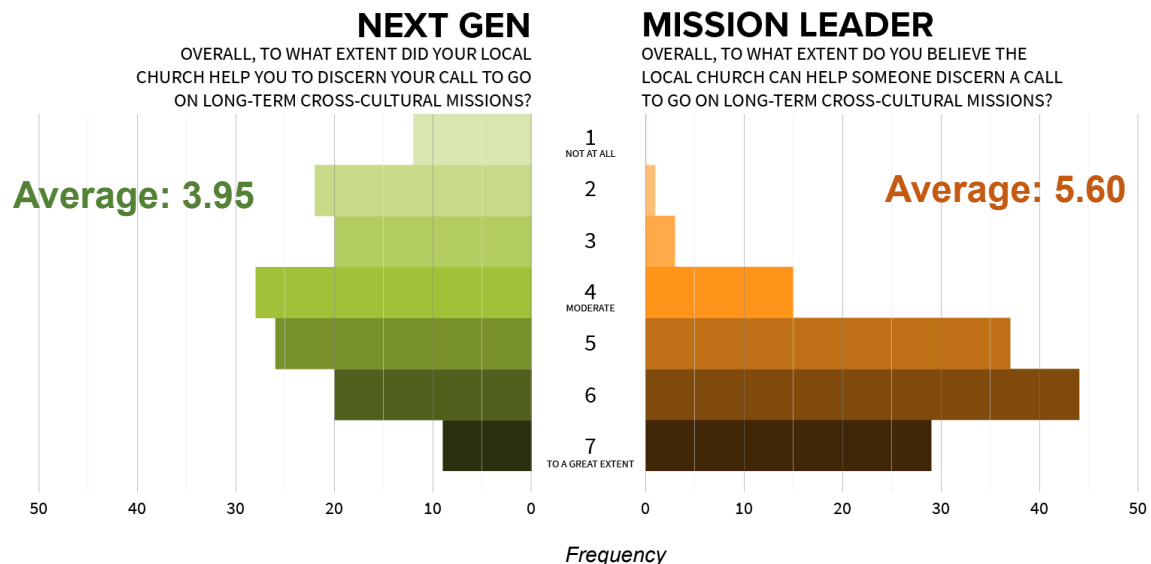


Figure 8. On Discerning One’s Calling to Missions

This was an evaluative question that was posed to the Next Gen workers as well as to the Missions leaders. All our evaluative questions were on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (“Not at all”) to 4 (“Moderate”) to 7 (“To a great extent”).

Looking at the distributions and average rating, we can see that Mission Leaders agree that much can be done by local church (average rating of 5.6), but the experience of the Next Gen workers who went out had “mixed” experiences – roughly as many gave a below-4 rating for their church as those who gave an above-4 rating.

Those who went through a missions agency or Christian NGO gave lower ratings for their local church (average rating of 3.68) than those who were directly sent by their church (average rating of 4.86)<sup>12</sup>.

### Significant Events and Influencers for Discerning and Clarifying the Call.

TYPE OF EVENT	FREQUENCY
<b>Mission Trip</b> (can be by church, agency, parachurch or self-organized) of varying lengths	<b>134</b>
<b>Christian Event</b> (held apart from one's local church) e.g. Conference, bible study, other sermons, talks and courses	<b>72</b>
<b>Personal Encounter</b> e.g. hearing God in a vision or prophecy, or a personal moment of reflecting on one's inclination, burden and skills	<b>59</b>
<b>Local Church Event</b> e.g. discipleship, camp, the missions committee, missionary sharing at their church	<b>44</b>
<b>Person of Influence</b> e.g. pastor/ mentor/ missionaries/ biographies/ spouse	<b>37</b>
<b>Missions Agency/ NGO Event</b> e.g. training, staff engagement or prayer meetings organized by a missions agency of Christian NGO	<b>37</b>

Table 3a. "Significant events in my life where I grew more convicted about going on long-term cross-cultural missions."

SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCER	FREQUENCY
A Missions Agency / Christian NGO Staff	<b>71</b>
My Mentor	<b>56</b>
My Friend	<b>49</b>
My Church Pastor	<b>46</b>
My Church Missions Leader/Staff	<b>41</b>

Table 3b. "Which of the following persons had a significant role in helping me discern my calling?"

The local church is very much about organizing events and activities to sustain community life and discipleship. We recognize that these are platforms through which the Spirit may work to craft defining moments in the lives of individuals. But beyond events, there are also persons. It's heartening to note that many cited their

<sup>12</sup> This difference in averages is statistically significant,  $p < .05$ .

church pastor or missions leader or staff as a significant influence, though we would have loved to see more of this to be the case.

We should also add that the significant role of Missions Agencies and NGOs can be embraced by local churches— partnership with agencies can rightly be said as a local church initiative that can create more opportunities for mobilizing people.

Finally we may not forget the place of prayer in God's work of mobilizing His people. Recall Jesus' command to His disciples to pray earnestly to the Lord of the Harvest to send laborers into the harvest field.

Here are actual quotes from our Next Gen survey respondents:

*I prayed about this "calling" (to West Asia) as I wasn't sure if it was simply a moment of impulse, I wanted clarity from God. CL, 32 years old*

*I joined a 40-day prayer event for the unreached at the age of 19. GG, 30 years old*

*Experienced God's love pouring into my heart through a moment of prayer in the cinema after watching the Passion of the Christ in 2004. N, 35 years old*

*At the age of 22, I thought about my life so that God could use me. I prayed for almost a year. LYF, 31 years old*

*I was at an overnight church prayer meeting in 2002. Had fasted and prayed, and somehow felt a burden for the nations. AY, 39 years old*

*I was praying and seeking specifically for cross-cultural work when I was 37. GN, 45 years old*

May all our local churches live up to the call to be houses of prayer for the nations (Isaiah 56:7).

## **CHURCH TEACHING & ENCOURAGING**

When it comes to mobilizing, even if the local church is not in the business of directly sending people for missions, it can teach its members about the mandate for missions, and encourage them to be personally involved. We asked both the next gen and missions leaders about this.

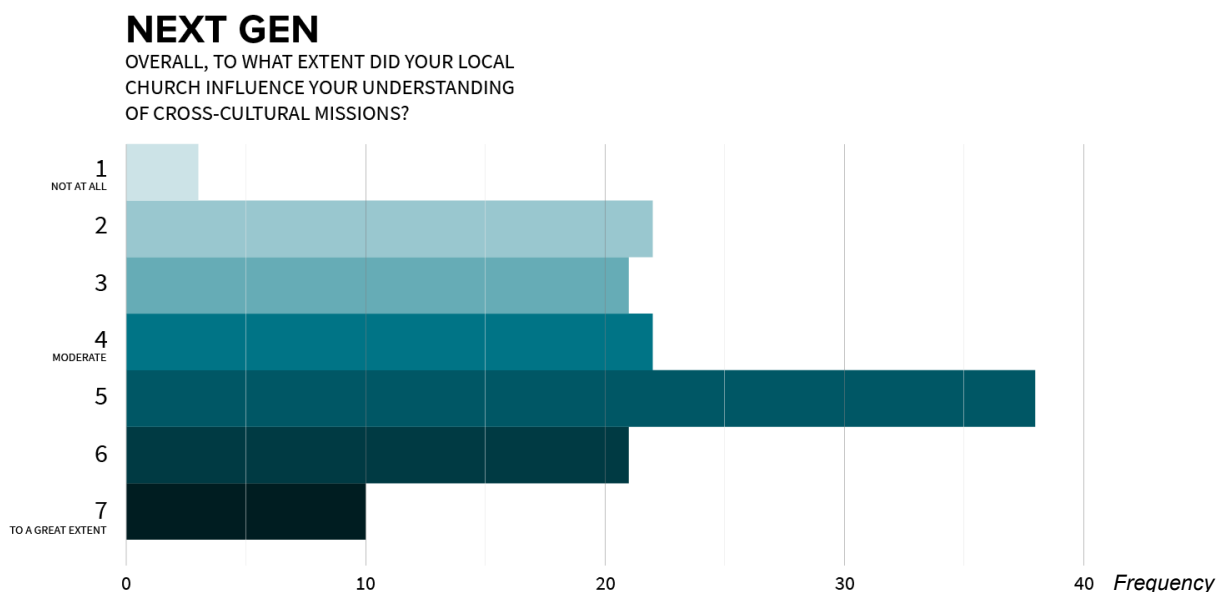


Figure 9. Local Church Influence on One's Understanding of Cross-Cultural Missions

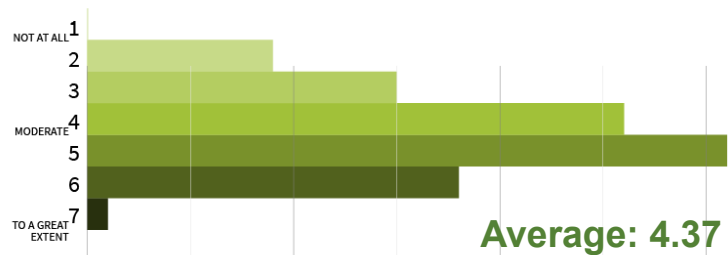
Concerning the shaping of the Next Gen workers' understanding of missions, 49% gave a 5 – 7 rating for their church, while 35% rated their church as having a limited influence (rating of 1 – 3).

Those who went through a missions agency or Christian NGO gave lower ratings for their local church (average rating of 4.01) than those who were directly sent by their church (average rating of 5.11)<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> This difference in averages is statistically significant,  $p < .05$ .

## TEACHING

OVERALL, TO WHAT EXTENT DOES YOUR CHURCH TEACH ITS MEMBERS ABOUT CROSS-CULTURAL MISSIONS?



## ENCOURAGING

OVERALL, TO WHAT EXTENT DOES YOUR CHURCH ENCOURAGE ITS MEMBERS TO BE PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN LONG-TERM CROSS-CULTURAL MISSIONS?

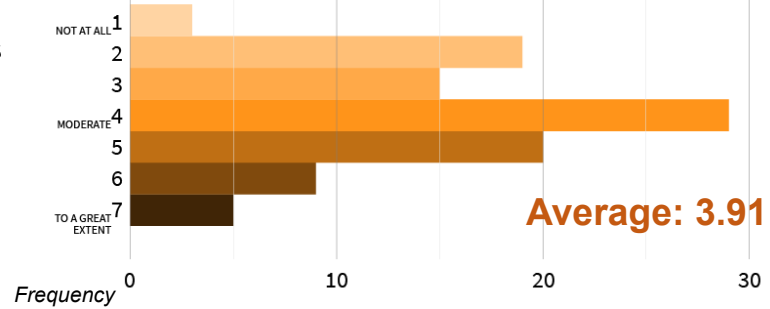


Figure 10. Local Church Missions Leaders' Self-Evaluation on Teaching and Encouraging ( $n = 100$ )

While it is true that all are called to kingdom mission wherever they are, there must be some place for talking about incarnational mission where Christ is not witnessed to. That there is room for improvement in such teaching and encouraging can be seen from the perspective of local church missions leaders themselves<sup>14</sup>. They were fairly moderate in their rating of their church's teaching on cross-cultural missions, and even less so when it comes to encouraging their members to be personally involved in long-term cross-cultural missions.

CATEGORY	FREQUENCY
Missions Events (Seminar, Courses, 'Missions month')	48
Short Term Mission Trips	46
Provide Support (Prayer, Financial)	32
Working with Missions Agencies	13

Table 4. "Please describe the main ways by which your church encourages its members to consider personally going on long-term cross-cultural missions." ( $n = 100$  local church missions leaders)

Most of the responses by missions leaders concerned organizing missions related events, and securing financial or prayer support for potential goers – these matter as

<sup>14</sup> Parachurch missions leaders who did the survey did not answer this question.

they indicate the extent to which time and resources are devoted to global missions. In short, they express the priority that local churches give to emphasizing missions.

## PREPARING TO GO

This final section is by no means the least important. It deals with the role of the local church for the ‘last-mile’ of the pre-deployment phase<sup>15</sup>. We examine here the issues involved in helping someone who has committed to go and is actively preparing for it. Here, there are once again many ways for the church to be involved.

### Issues in the Preparation Journey.

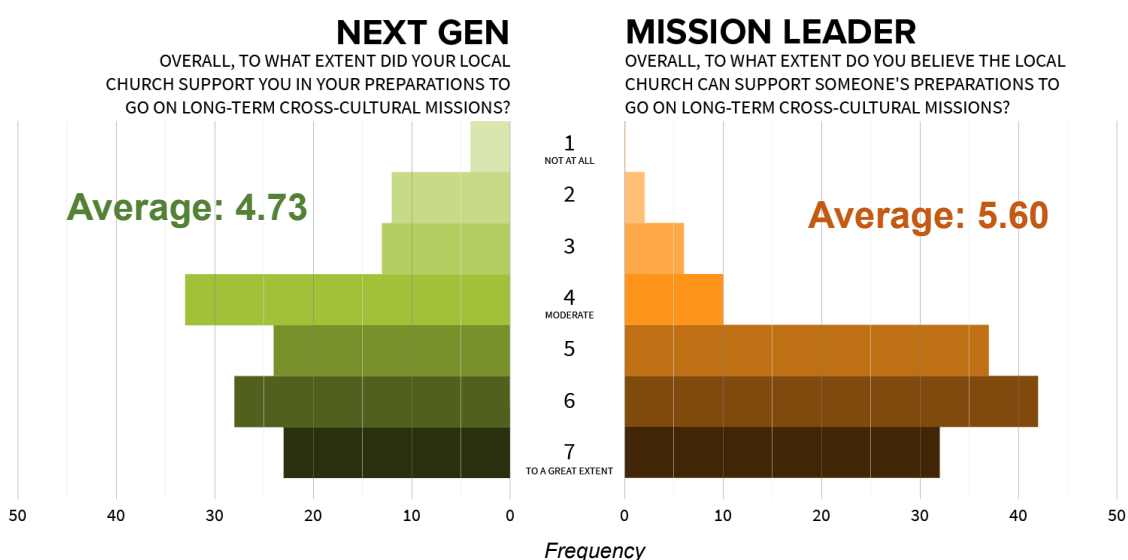


Figure 11. Local Church Involvement in Preparing the Next Gen

The Next Gen workers gave fairly positive ratings of their church in helping their preparations – this was regardless of whether they were directly sent by this church or through an agency<sup>16</sup>. Recall that most of these workers went through an agency but their local church did not adopt a “hands off” approach, but were active in supporting the preparation process. Nonetheless, we should be concerned about the 21% of next gen missions workers who gave a 1 to 3 rating for their local church.

The missions leaders gave a more positive rating that the Next Gen workers did – in other words, missions leaders had higher expectations of what the local church can do, compared to the experience of Next Gen workers. It may be a good exercise to

<sup>15</sup> This of course by no means suggests that local churches may not also be involved in the lives of the Next Gen workers during and post-deployment!

<sup>16</sup> There was no statistically significant difference between the average ratings of preparation support by Next Gen workers who were directly sent by their local church (Mean = 5.24) versus who were sent through an agency or NGO (Mean = 4.72).



listen to the voices of the next gen themselves, so that we can do better in journeying with them as a supportive church community. The bulk of our findings in this section are based on open-ended responses.

We do not have data on Next Gen people who wanted to go but ended up **not going**. As a proxy, we asked Missions leaders who have engaged young people to share their observations of what prevents the Next Gen from going.

BARRIERS TO GOING	FREQUENCY
Financial Considerations	40
Family Commitments	34
Lack of Clear Calling	32
Lack of Support from Family / Spouse	22
Unwilling to give up life in Singapore / Costs of Going	17

*Table 5. "From your experience of encouraging people under the age of 40 for long term cross-cultural missions, what do you think are the main reasons why people do not go?" (n = 129 Missions Leaders)*

These issues circle around the key theme of Conviction and Commitment – part of this is a matter of personal discipleship for the person, but we can also ask the question of what the local church can do to help 'remove' or 'lower' these barriers. For example, through its philosophy and teaching of Christian discipleship, through its engagement of the parents, through its preparedness to help secure financial support, and its commitment to journey alongside individuals as they seek clarity on their calling.

CONCERNS OF NEXT GEN WORKERS	FREQUENCY
Clarity of Calling	95
Personal Finances	82
Getting Adequate Cross-Cultural Training / Experience	72
Support of Parents	70
Support of Spouse / future Spouse	62

*Table 6. "From your experience of preparing people under the age of 40 for long term cross-cultural missions, what do you think are their main concerns?" (n = 129 Missions Leaders)*

These concerns were observed by the missions leaders, but they were also shared by local church missions leaders when ‘wearing their organizational hat’ (i.e. as the church, what concerns did they have for their members who were preparing to go). In addition to the above, local church missions leaders were also concerned that the Next Gen worker be ‘emotionally ready’ and that he or she maintains a good relationship with the church.

On the matter of getting adequate cross-cultural training / experience, we may not expect every church to have the means to directly provide such training, but partner mission agencies may be able to step in and fill the gap.

CONCERNS OF NEXT GEN WORKERS	FREQUENCY
Personal Finances **	77
Getting Adequate Cross-Cultural Training / Experience **	77
Clarity of Calling	75
Support of Parents **	73
Getting Adequate Vocational Skills / Experience	52

Table 7. “Recall the time when you were/are preparing to get deployed for long-term cross-cultural missions. Which were your main concerns?” (n = 137 Next Gen workers)

*[\*\* these factors were also rated by already-deployed Next Gen workers in retrospect as being important for ministry effectiveness in the field. Two other factors that were found in retrospect to be important for ministry effectiveness in the field were: **Getting specific mission field knowledge** and **Getting a supportive home church community.**]*

The stated concerns of our Next Gen workers overlap very much with the perceptions of the missions leaders (so there is no significant misalignment in understanding what the Next Gen are concerned about).

Consider too that for the Next Gen workers who have been deployed, in retrospect many of them highlighted how important it was that they had a supportive home church community – this kind of support is mainly built before deployment even if this issue is not fully appreciated by the Next Gen workers during pre-deployment! We are hopeful that most churches would happily want to be that kind of community, now that they know this.

We look now at the ways by which the local church can support the preparation process.

## Local Church Role in Preparing the Next Gen worker.

WAYS TO SUPPORT PREPARATION	FREQUENCY
Training and Equipping	64
Journeying with them (Prayer and Emotional Support)	62
Journeying with them (Mentoring and Discipling)	49
Provide Ministry Exposure in Church	43
Provide Financial Support	41

Table 8. *“How do you think the local church can be involved to prepare someone for long-term cross-cultural missions?”* (n = 100 local church missions leaders)

There are concrete ways to support the preparation process – note that local church missions leaders did not just highlight activities or training but also the more relational aspects of journeying, mentoring and discipling.

Finally, we asked a similar question to the Next Gen workers: “In retrospect, what do you think your local church could have done more in preparing you prior to deployment?”

The top 3 responses were as follows:

### **1. Consistent and Committed Support**

*e.g. Pastoral/ emotional/ mentorship/ discipleship/ guidance. [29 responses]*

### **2. Deeper connection with home church**

*e.g. prayer, platforms to share, cell group. [20 responses]*

### **3. Training**

*e.g. What to expect, what to do; educational - theological, cultural; administrative. [20 responses]*

When reading the open-ended responses, we got the clear sense that the Next Gen workers want to go with the blessing and support of their local churches. Indeed those who have gone generally spoke positively of their sending church. Some however have had to lament the lack of involvement of their local church.

## CONCLUSION

The findings from the Next Gen Missions Study have reaffirmed our conviction that there are many ways for the local church to be actively involved in every step of the process of mobilizing and equipping the Next Generation. But for local churches to grow in their capacity and capability to play such a role, a thorough review and reform of its ministry may be required.

This is because missions mobilization is a whole-of-church responsibility, and may not be reduced to just a single team or department within the church. It must be tightly integrated with the church's teaching and practice of discipleship:

1. Missions teaching starts with the youth (or even earlier); Such teaching should include the challenge to be personally involved in cross-cultural missions, as well as engage the family members of those seriously considering to go. The teaching ministry of the church should be paired with a church culture of prayer.
2. The missions policy of the local church articulates the church's missions philosophy and strategy, and be should be broad and flexible for enabling as many of its members to take decisive steps forward in pursuing God's call to long-term cross-cultural missions. Some members may be called to serve in places and in ways that are apart from the local church's own involvement in missions – the local church needs to seriously consider how it can be best support under such circumstances.
3. Seeing members from calling to going may involve a long-term journeying alongside individuals; And should they commit to go, there are important ways for the local church to support the person's preparation to help him or her be effective in the field. These may come in form of providing financial support, preparing family members, providing theological and other forms of education and training (including cross-cultural expertise).
4. The good news is that local churches need not undertake missions mobilization alone, but can be a part of a community of missions-minded churches, missions agencies, Christian NGOs, and etc. These partnerships can be helpful for sharpening one's own missions strategy and policy, gaining access to resources for missions education and training, and even be platforms for deploying individuals to wherever God calls them. We encourage a spirit of collaboration, so that different parts of the Body of Christ may supply what is lacking in one another and spur each one on to fulfil our unique roles in the Great Commission. This study is itself a testimony of that spirit.

May God be gracious to us and bless us  
and make his face to shine upon us,  
that your way may be known on earth,  
your saving power among all nations.  
Let the peoples praise you, O God;  
let all the peoples praise you!

*Psalm 67:1-3 ESV*