Turning Teams Toward God's Mission Near and Far

Matt and Michelle Norman

cbf Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

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Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016933091

Cover design and layout by Travis Peterson

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
160 Clairemont Road Suite 500
Decatur, GA 30030
www.cbf.net

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FOREWORD

As a mission leader, people frequently confide in me their misgivings about short-term mission trips (STM), but they don't know what to do differently. That frustration always reminds me of a passage from Darrell Guder's *The Continuing Conversion of the Church* (2000), where theological reflection gives way to testimony:

> I have come to realize that one cannot address evangelization with theological integrity unless one approaches the subject missiologically, that is, within the context of the mission of the church as God's sent people. In a sense, it is like starting one's theological formation all over again.

For Guder, the shift from mission as the work of the church to the work of the Triune God—who calls, equips and sends the church into the world—changes everything. That pivot marks the difference between human projects and divine purposes. While the former sometimes may align with the latter, books like *Toxic Charity* by Robert D. Lupton and *When Helping Hurts* by Brian Fikkert and Steve Corbett remind us that we cannot take their alignment for granted. The church is the agent of mission, but God alone is its author.

Pivot explores the difference that this conceptual shift makes for STM. It is not so much a preparation guide for mission trips as it is a process to transform the way we see God's world and the church's missionary calling within it. That is, *Pivot* challenges us to think missiologically about mission trips. And that changes everything—from the way we approach short-term service to our essential pivot back to the mission field awaiting us at home.

Matt and Michelle Norman, the authors, serve as Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) field personnel near Barcelona, Spain. As they developed this material for use with visiting mission teams, they thought seriously about how missionaries think about their own contexts. Further conversations with staff members from CBF of North Carolina and CBF Global Missions led to this revision of those original materials for a wider audience.

My prayer is that *Pivot* will change how you think about the context(s) of your church's witness to Jesus Christ and how short-term trips may contribute to long-term transformation.

Godspeed,

D. Steven Porter
Coordinator of CBF Global Missions

INTRODUCTION

MATT: I am from North Carolina and when I hear or see the word "pivot," I immediately think of basketball. When one pivots, one changes the way they intend to continue toward a destination. It is not that the intention or the destination changes; it is the way by which one continues that intent. The biblical word most closely related to this idea is the Greek word *metanoia*. In reality, it is difficult to directly translate the meaning of *metanoia*. It is a word that offers a depth of meaning. It can mean a change of mind or perception; a change in character; a change in direction or a turning around. Peter Senge, lecturer at the MIT Sloan School of Management writes, "To grasp the meaning of *metanoia* is to grasp the deeper meaning of learning."[1] That is why I think *Pivot* is an appropriate name for this study.

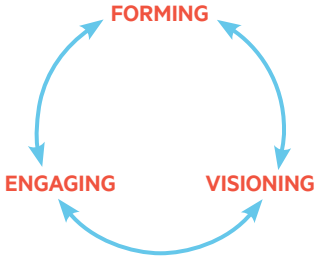
We are asking individuals and churches who want to engage in mission to pause for a moment, to pivot and then to continue on mission. The intent and the destination remain the same: mission engagement, but the perspective shift that happens with the pivot, well...we believe that it will change everything—our world, our communities, even ourselves.

Pivot is a leadership development resource that challenges our traditional thoughts and beliefs about God's mission in the world and our role in that mission. Many of us have participated in short-term "mission trips" and wondered both about the impact on the local community as well as on our team. From the mission preparation, on-site experience and pivoting back home, this resource will help train and equip individuals and congregations to think critically about our mission engagement internationally, regionally and locally.

These readings, activities, experiences and dialogues are designed to help individuals and congregations dive deeper into their discipleship as Christians and build their own theological foundation with regard to mission, or in other words, to build their own missiology. The late South African missiologist, David Bosch, reminds us that "mission is the total task of the Church. ...This mission may sometimes mean crossing physical borders and social, religious, cultural, economic, ethnic and ideological boundaries."[2] These crossings are more than mental exercises; they cut to the core of our Christian identity.

Pivot will challenge you to think intentionally about mission involvement and why it is necessary to cross borders. Together, your congregation will identify the boundaries that need to be crossed internationally, *but just as importantly*, in your own local community. It has been our experience that crossing local boundaries is almost always the hardest. These shifts in perspectives and practices (*metanoia*) create space for the Holy Spirit to transform us, our church and the world.

Like the CBF Dawnings process of Visioning, Forming and Engaging, *Pivot* begins this cycle at Formation. These movements in the process help define the goals for our experiences together.



1. Forming - Participants will learn from people of other cultures. They will seek to see the world with new eyes, to glimpse God from a wider horizon and to discover themselves anew.
2. Engaging - Participants will be led creatively in asset-based techniques. They will learn from trial and error, rethink success/failure, build consensus, serve and be served and discover their giftedness.
3. Visioning - Participants will be encouraged to create space for God's presence in reconsidering what mission looks like on the field as well as "back home."

These three goals are fleshed out over three stages of *Pivot*: Preparation, On-site Engagement and Pivoting Home. For some, this may seem a bit too extensive for simple mission trip preparation. That is because it is not simply mission trip preparation.

MICHELLE: *Pivot* is a process of making personal and congregational shifts in theology and practice. It is birthed out of Matt's and my joint experiences as ministers and lay people and recognizing the disconnect between many mission trips and the church's engagement in the world around them. In August of 2003, we packed our bags and headed north to fulfill our two-year service commitment as field personnel (missionaries) with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. As we served among international students in Toronto, Ontario Canada, we were struck by three things: 1) our work was fun; 2) our work was work that any church in a college town could initiate; 3) many churches were missing out on a huge opportunity that required neither large sums of money nor great expertise. Our ministry in Toronto began a process of considering the question: "How can church members take what they learn on mission and translate it into ministry in their own community?"

After serving two years in Toronto, life moved us to Atlanta. While Matt served on the CBF staff, I began volunteering with a refugee resettlement agency. An interesting series of conversations I had with a minister in Atlanta propelled the *Pivot* idea a little further. This minister had just returned from a church mission trip. The church worked with a missionary couple assisting refugees desperately caught between countries. Trying to make their way

to Europe, the refugees had fled their place in the midst of war, but had not yet completed their journey to a safe place. I was struck by the compassion of the minister. Her heart had been touched by her experience. She continued to hear heart-wrenching story after story from refugee after refugee, all in difficult situations.

A KEY ELEMENT IN BEING SENT OUT INTO THE WORLD AS AMBASSADORS OF THE GOOD NEWS IS THE RECOGNITION THAT, ALONG THE WAY, WE ARE TRANSFORMED AS WELL.

Naturally, this minister wanted to do more. Our conversation turned toward her plans to return to this faraway country and serve again among refugees. "This is great," I said. "God is at work. It sounds as though the team experienced something powerful. I wonder, though, how can we use this experience to help the team connect with the refugees who resettled in Atlanta? Let's apply what you've learned to help others here and not wait until next summer when you plan to go on another mission trip. "

As we continued to talk, my friend pushed back a bit. She emphasized again what she felt was the greater need to help refugees on their journey outside the United States. Even after connecting with refugees in Atlanta, she felt those far away had greater struggles and more needs. She remained convinced she could help more there.

I pressed on, reminding her that the refugees she met far away would one day be the resettled refugees in the U.S. or Europe—if their journeys were successful. I told her that here in the U.S., they faced as many struggles—different struggles, but just as many. We often consider them "safe" once in the US; but the families may not feel safe as they are often settled in areas of high crime because these are the only places they can afford. I shared the resettled refugees' struggles of financial insecurity, loss of community, loss of self, problems with children who adopt American values while the parents desire for them to hold on to their own culture. "It is hard here." I told her, "You have seen their journey; you have compassion; you can help."

I deeply respected her desire to serve overseas and I shared her passion. I was struck, however, by her reaction and that of the team's. In their pivot home, they struggled to do in "Jerusalem" what they had accomplished in going, "to the remotest parts of the Earth" (Acts 1:8). Does this sound familiar? Of course, it does. Most of us have experienced the gap between the experience of the mission trip and our everyday lives back home. Matt and I began formulating a mission experience that we hoped would one day bridge the gap. We worked on the concept periodically through the years we lived in Atlanta, originally calling it the "Mission Learning Lab."

In 2011, we were appointed once again to serve as field personnel with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. It was at a time when much was being written about the benefits and harm of short-term mission experiences. We were determined as we moved abroad not to perpetuate the negative aspects of short-term missions, but instead to build on the positive ones. *Pivot* was birthed from this concept.

Our goal is to have a mission experience in which teams learn about mission theology and practice prior to their arrival on the field. During their time "on the field," they practice some of what they learn, listen well to local people and see the world through new eyes. Finally, and most importantly, they have an experience when they return home where they engage in the same missional activities they did while on the field, but in their own neighborhoods. The hope is that the experience is one that propels the group toward a new vision and new engagement in their own community.

Blessings on your journey. Just remember—it is a roundtrip journey to where God has placed you right now.

— Matt and Michelle Norman
CBF field personnel
Barcelona, Spain

OVERVIEW

Pivot is a church resource for leaders and groups seeking to learn how to shift their mission theology and practice. Through prayer, preparation and discovery, groups are propelled to new directions of engagement in their own communities. There are three stages of interaction in *Pivot*: Preparation, On-site Engagement and Pivoting Home. This resource can involve a variety of participants, including church teams, individuals, students or clergy cohorts. Below are overviews of each stage.

STAGE 1: Preparation

Teams form together during a training program entitled "Why Practice Mission?" related to cultural learning, missiology, leadership, spiritual formation and the unique ways in which CBF engages on mission. This stage requires six unit studies with face-to-face meetings, including video conferencing with their field personnel. This stage should begin at least three months prior to your scheduled departure.

STAGE 1 GOAL:

Intentionally form a theology of mission that becomes a foundation for the team's mission service.

STAGE 2: On-site Engagement

Teams engage on-site with CBF field personnel on their short-term assignment. This is not a traditional "mission trip" as teams may have done in the past. Each day, the primary tasks of the team are to listen, learn and practice. In addition to possible service ministries, individuals will learn the context, read the community and map assets.

STAGE 2 GOAL:

Learn, listen, practice and reflect on the realities of mission ministry in an unfamiliar environment.

STAGE 3: Pivoting Home

After examining their theology of mission and having learned how to practice mission from a good theological foundation by visiting CBF field personnel, the team will set its sights on a vision of home. Over five unit studies, they will unpack what they experienced, having learned the stories of people from around the world. The team will discover together the ongoing impact on their everyday lives and ministries.

STAGE 3 GOAL:

Reflect, transfer and practice what the team learned in your local community.

RHYTHM OF DISCERNMENT

The unit study for each stage follows a rhythm of discernment through prayer, preparation and discovery.

PRAYER

Pray each week's scriptures by reading them slowly aloud as many as three times in order to open oneself to the Holy Spirit's teaching.

PREPARATION

Read assigned readings and watch assigned videos in light of the spiritual openness.

DISCOVERY

Journal all reflections and gather for group discussion using the guiding questions from each unit study.

Why Practice Mission?

STAGE 1: PREPARATION

Introduction: Preparation Stage

Why Practice Mission?

Welcome to the Preparation Stage of *Pivot*. This is the first of three stages in a process intentionally designed to serve as an educational and ministry formation point for churches and individuals discovering what it means to practice mission in today's "global" environment. Here, we are seeking to develop a theology of mission that becomes a foundation for the team's mission service.

Dr. Jane Vella, a well-known educator and writer offers a wonderful truth in her book *On Teaching and Learning*: "We teach the way we have been taught until we stop long enough to examine how we are teaching and decide to do it otherwise."[3] This is also true as we practice mission. In our exuberance to serve on mission, we plow forward, wanting to help and offer what we can but, as we will see from our study of *When Helping Hurts,* sometimes we can do more harm than good. As Vella observes, it is time that we pause, examine our mission practice and see whether our practice helps us reach our mission goals or hinders our efforts. This first stage will help us start our evaluation of our mission practice.

IT IS TIME THAT WE PAUSE, EXAMINE OUR MISSION PRACTICE AND SEE WHETHER OUR PRACTICE HELPS US REACH OUR MISSION GOALS OR HINDERS OUR EFFORTS.

A way to begin this examination process is to recall and identify the basic theology that calls us to mission service. Knowing our mission theology is important because we then use it as a foundation and beginning place for all of our mission activities. We need to let our theology drive our mission passion rather than our passion drive our mission.

The suburban town of Barcelona, where we live, has a mayor who, like most Spaniards today, does not practice a religion. Once he commented to our Spanish Baptist pastor, "I am impressed by the work that you do with the impoverished in our community. You don't just push your religion, you seem to care deeply for the people you serve." The pastor responded, "You don't understand. That is our religion. Jesus cares more deeply for us than we can imagine. He calls us to do the same for our neighbors." Our work needs to reflect the God we serve.

This stage is designed to take three months and utilizes *When Helping Hurts* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. Each participant will need a copy of *When Helping Hurts* and *Pivot*. The leader should also consult the CBF Volunteer Manual for logistical help when planning a mission endeavor. Additionally, the leader will need to preview the Preparation Stage and schedule one planning meeting and six group sessions. The last group meeting is intended to include a video conference with the field personnel in preparation for the team's visit. The team leader will need to contact the field personnel in advance to schedule this video conference.

We have intentionally paired the book, *When Helping Hurts*, with the first stage of the training. *When Helping Hurts* offers a concise presentation of anthropological, community development and sociological concepts. The program shows how these concepts play out in real life and helps each group think through these concepts in their own context. The book is broad theologically and politically and speaks to the diverse body of believers that make up the Fellowship. Since it defies a simple liberal or conservative label, it should challenge readers who bring a variety of perspectives. You may also want to take advantage of additional training materials provided by the authors.

If your team members have already read *When Helping Hurts* or prefer an alternative, CBF suggests: *Discovering the Other* by Cameron Harder or *Serving with Eyes Wide Open* by David Livermore. Go to *www.cbf.net/pivot* for more info.

The Preparation Stage in *Pivot* also offers the theological perspective of CBF. This stage helps explain the theology that undergirds the purpose of CBF as well as "why" and "how" we are on mission in the world. This portion of the training will help participants to identify with and reflect on the missiology of CBF. We hope it will serve as the foundation for discovering your church's mission practice as well as your personal mission practice going forward.

For some, this stage is an orientation and for others it is a reorientation. The team should end this stage with many questions and with self-revelations related to mission practice. The team will be poised to begin practicing these concepts and see how they play out in the real world.

The purpose of this training is to begin to develop a solid foundation for mission service in the world—whether that is in an international or regional location or in your own backyard, by doing the following:

- Reading and discussing the book *When Helping Hurts* to:
  - Learn about culture and how culture affects the way we understand the world.
  - Learn about mission practices and how to help without hurting others and ourselves.
- Reading and discussing studies 1-6 on *Why Practice Mission?* to:
  - Learn about a theology of mission.
  - Discover the core purpose and attributes of CBF as well as the mission distinctives of CBF Global Missions in an effort to understand how the attributes and distinctives express themselves through mission service.
  - Reflect spiritually on God's leading in all of our lives and in your church's life, and how God has gifted us to serve from our strengths and passions.
- Meeting via video conference, we will:
  - Learn about the culture and ministry currently being led by CBF field personnel in the area where you will engage in the On-Site Engagement stage of *Pivot*.

PREPARATION STAGE TIPS

- **Start early and plan to spread your first seven meetings over at least three months.**
- **Remember that there are time differences based upon where your field personnel serve.**
- **Start a closed group on Facebook or Google in order to engage with each other between face-to-face meetings. (This is also a great way for field personnel to coach you along in your progress.)**
- **During each team meeting, take notes and keep them throughout this process.**
- **While the Preparation Stage, *Why Practice Mission?* can be completed without an on-site partner, your team will benefit much more if they know where they are going since each site context is different. Talk with the CBF field personnel to determine the length of time needed on-site.**

GOD'S STORY

This unit will help us begin to focus on God's story as well as expand our definition of poverty. We will reflect on God's work and our passion for mission service. It is important that we look at both from a biblical perspective. As you start, jot down your definition of poverty and the reason you want to serve on mission. Then, follow the rhythm of discernment through Prayer, Preparation *and* Discovery.

PRAYER

Take the time to pray this week's scriptures by reading them aloud slowly as many as three times in order to open yourself to God's Spirit.

Ask God to teach you through this openness each week.

- **Read Matthew 25:31-46**

PREPARATION Why practice mission? God's Story[4]

As we begin, take a moment to reflect on the story of God engaging with humanity in the Bible. Think of one of your favorite stories from the Bible. How does God engage in the story? In the journaling space below, list at least one example from the story you chose of how God is actively engaging as a missionary:

Our God is a God on mission. We may have never thought about this before, but the God that we discover as we read the Bible is a God on mission. We see this mission thread from the very beginning in the work of creation. God formed an unfinished world and created human beings as partners in its development (Gen. 1:26-31). After the Fall (Gen. 3), God carried on the work of mission through the lives of Abraham and Sarah and their descendants and by ultimately sending Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit for the redemption of the world (John 3:16-17; II Cor. 5:19). Now, God continues the mission of redemption toward its completion in the fullness of God's love (Rev. 21-22).

Central to this mission story is God's sending. God the Father sends the Son (John. 6:35-40); the Father and the Son send the Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15); and the Triune God, in turn, sends us into the world. "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John. 20:21 RSV). The church set in the power of the Spirit (Acts 1:8), is called to take up God's mission as an ongoing instrument of God's redeeming work. Through God's redemptive call, mission is not just one segment of the church's program. God's mission is the church's reason for being.

GOD'S MISSION IS THE CHURCH'S REASON FOR BEING.

Missionary God

Read the preface, introduction and chapters 1 and 2 of *When Helping Hurts*.
Watch the video entitled "Missionary God" at *www.cbf.net/pivot*, or scan the QR code above.

DISCOVERY Reflection Questions

Reflect on your relationships with God, self, others and the rest of creation. List one specific aspect that you would like to see improved in your four key relationships.

What motivates you to want to help people who are materially poor?

What surprised you about the video, "Missionary God"? Why?

If God's mission is the church's reason for being, how do you see your church joining in God's mission? List at least two possibilities:

What do you wish your church could do to enhance its practice of mission?

Additional Thoughts

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why Practice Mission?

- As a group, share whether you think God is on mission and, if so, how you see evidence of this in your favorite Bible stories.
- Share and discuss what you wish your church could do to enhance its practice of mission.
- What is your passion for Christian service and why do you want to participate in this mission learning experience?
- What do you think your church, as a whole, is passionate about?

When Helping Hurts

- As a group, answer the questions on page 19 of *When Helping Hurts* entitled "Opening Exercises".
- As a group, try to define poverty.
- How does thinking of poverty as rooted in broken relationships affect the way you view poverty?
- Invite each person to share one specific example of how understanding poverty in this way might change the way you address missions.

"Be careful not to assume that *all* of the broken relationships were broken by the person experiencing poverty. Often, the relationships are broken in a more profound way than just hurt feelings or scarred trust. Broken cultural systems that value some people more than other people naturally produce broken relationships."

–Jessica and Joshua Hearne, Field Personnel, Danville, VA

GOD'S MISSION

This unit will define missiology and consider the connection between the church and the community in which you live as it relates to where you've served on short-term mission. As we start, jot down one task that you think the church is called to do in the world. Then, follow the rhythm of discernment through Prayer, Preparation *and* Discovery.

PRAYER

Take the time to pray this week's scriptures by reading them slowly aloud as many as three times, in order to open yourself to God's Spirit.

Ask God to teach you through this openness each week.

- **Luke 4:18-19 and Isaiah 58:6-7**

PREPARATION Why practice mission?

Guiding Missiological Affirmations[5]

In Unit 1, we reflected on how God is a God on mission. In fact, we even considered the statement that God's mission is the church's reason for being. This theological understanding of God helps us formulate a missiology (a theology that shapes our practice of mission). This missiology becomes the foundation for the entire ministry that we do and helps shape our daily actions as we minister. The following assertions are classic guiding missiological affirmations. Read through the list and, as you read, circle or underline anything that stands out.

> **"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation." 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 (NIV)**

1. God is on mission creating, renewing, reconciling and restoring a broken and fallen world. God initiates and sustains this mission and calls all of humanity to participate in this mission.

2. The mission of God is most clearly expressed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As Christians and churches, we find new identities in Jesus Christ to such an extent that every decision of life, every action and every motivation emerges from this identity.

3. The Holy Spirit directs the mission of God so that the world is transformed into the kingdom of God. As Christians and churches, we work by the power of the Holy Spirit to invite persons into relationship with Jesus Christ and to create a just world where all of creation is reconciled to Christ.

4. The Church serves the mission of God. As Christians and churches, we seek to reflect the Kingdom of God in our ministries, our actions, our thoughts and our motivations.

***MISSIOLOGY* IS A THEOLOGY OF MISSION OR, IN OTHER WORDS, OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE OF GOD THAT SHAPES OUR PRACTICE OF MISSION.**

5. The mission of God will be fulfilled when all of creation lives together in peace, justice and right relationship with God. As Christians and churches, we live in faith as if this future is happening on earth as it is in heaven.

Global Missions at CBF

Read chapter 3 of *When Helping Hurts*.
Watch the video entitled "Global Missions at CBF" at *www.cbf.net/pivot*, or scan the QR code above.

DISCOVERY Reflection Questions

What is the primary task of the church? Answer in your own words.

Consider your community, city or region. How might the economic, social, religious and political systems be unjust and oppressive to some people? If you are able, ask two people from your community and outside your congregation to offer their perspectives.

Name one action you can take to make systems more just and equitable.

Write down three ways that you think the video, “Global Missions at CBF” relates to the guiding affirmations from today’s reading.

The video expresses the idea that the methodology of mission in our world today is changing and requires new types of partnership from churches and missionary families living in places around the world. How does this compare to your experience?

Personally, what do you think is the most valuable part of these affirmations?

CBF’s core purpose is “partnering to renew God’s world.” Name one way you see these affirmations helping those in the Fellowship to achieve our core purpose.

Additional Thoughts

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why Practice Mission?

- Why do you think that having a list of guiding missiological affirmations is important as you practice mission?
- Does your church have a list of guiding missiological affirmations?
- As a group, create your own list of guiding missiological affirmations that will help shape your team's time together through this learning experience.

When Helping Hurts

- Ask team members to share thoughts on the importance of the local church's role.
- Define "poverty alleviation."
- As a member of the church and a believer, how might you be called by God to help transform unjust and oppressive systems?

"Our experience of God's mercy and compassion for all people moves us to engage in God's work of overcoming hunger and human misery, and our sacred traditions include visions of the world transformed."

–Suzii Paynter, Executive Director, CBF

WORD AND DEED

This unit will focus on the importance of word and deed. We will explore different types of ministry engagement and how to determine which engagement is needed in a given community or situation. As we begin this week, recall a time when you participated in a mission trip or a community ministry. Write down words that help describe how you felt. What did you do? What did you learn? Then, follow the rhythm of discernment through Prayer, Preparation *and* Discovery.

PRAYER

Take the time to pray this week's scriptures by reading them slowly aloud as many as three times, in order to open yourself to God's Spirit.

Ask God to teach you through this openness each week.

- **Luke 8:4-15**

PREPARATION Why practice mission?

Integral Mission

Guiding affirmations for our ministry remind us that God's mission includes both telling the story of the gospel and living the gospel in our daily lives through our actions. We are called to share the gospel in word and deed. In Spanish we call this *misión integral* or "integral mission." The word "integral" is used to describe wholeness. The church uses it to describe an understanding of Christian mission that affirms the importance of expressing the love of God and neighborly love through a variety of means.

- Look at the definition below of integral mission[6]. Underline words or phrases you think are important. Is this how you would define a holistic way to understand mission practice? Why?

> **Integral mission or holistic transformation is the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. Our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ.**

Sometimes we differentiate between sharing the gospel and meeting social needs, but when as Christians we combine the two in our everyday actions, we get a holistic practice of mission. We get "integral mission."

Implied by the definition is that you will be among people. You may be among them as you go about your everyday job, as you volunteer or as you meet friends. The point is to be among people, living life and actively asking God to show you where and in whom God is working so that you can join God in said work, share the gospel and meet needs.

Read chapters 4-6 of *When Helping Hurts*.

DISCOVERY Reflection Questions

Reflect on the definition of evangelism below. What strikes you about this definition?

> **Evangelism: Looking and listening for clues of the work of the Spirit of God in people's lives so that we can share who God is, how God works in the world and how God is working in our lives.**

How do you think the definition implies an understanding of evangelism that includes both sharing the gospel and meeting social needs?

Answer the questions at the beginning of chapter 4 from *When Helping Hurts*.

Think about your community. Do the people in your context need relief, rehabilitation or development? How do you know?

Review Table 6.1 on page 148 of *When Helping Hurts* regarding different types of mission participation. Which of these have you typically used? How was this type of participation helpful for the success of the ministry or activity? What is one aspect of your ministry that you would do differently after completing this reading?

Additional Thoughts

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why Practice Mission?

- As a group, look at the definition of "integral mission." Create a list of aspects of this definition that are important to the team.
- Together, draw a picture on a big sheet of paper. Try to imagine the witness of your church as a tapestry or collage. What are the various threads—components, activities, themes? What images would your tapestry or collage include?
- Is your picture representative of integral mission? Where are the holes? What can you do to repair any gaps or holes in your team picture?
- What do you think are your church's strengths when you look at your picture?

When Helping Hurts

- As you think about your community, what is the one most helpful thing you learned from the reading this week? Why is this learning helpful?
- Consider a past ministry that your church has had with people who are materially poor in your community. Did you focus on needs or assets? Once you have identified whether the focus was on needs or assets, discuss how the ministry would have been different if you had focused on the other? Identify differences between the two.
- Think about the place where you are going on mission. Do the people in that context need relief, rehabilitation or development? How do you know?
- Do you think your church is gifted more in relief, rehabilitation or development? Or is it gifted in all these mission approaches?

"In our experience, mission trips have never just been about painting a wall. They have been, we hope in most cases, about painting that wall alongside local folks, worshipping with them in their local context, learning about culture and language, being inspired beyond all measure to what God can do through committed people willing to "go", and taking these experiences and applying them to local settings."

–David and Julie Brown, Field Personnel, France

RENEWING GOD'S WORLD

In Unit 4, we will reflect upon practical examples of excellent mission practice. We will consider the core purpose and attributes of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in order to help us practice integral mission as we minister around the world. These attributes act as guides for us as we engage on mission to ensure that we practice evangelism that both shares the gospel in culturally relevant ways and meets social needs. Now, follow the rhythm of discernment through Prayer, Preparation *and* Discovery.

PRAYER

Take the time to pray this week's scriptures by reading them slowly aloud as many as three times, in order to open yourself to God's Spirit.

Ask God to teach you through this openness each week.

- **Matthew 12:1-12**

PREPARATION Why practice mission?

The Core Purpose and Attributes of CBF[7]

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"
Matthew 25:40 (NIV)

Read through the following and underline words or phrases that surprise or stand out to you.

Core Purpose of CBF: We are partnering to renew God's world.

God calls us and equips us to spread the hope of Jesus Christ to the least evangelized, most marginalized people on earth. Whether we're feeding the hungry, lifting up the voiceless, digging for water or helping families get back on their feet after a disaster, we and those with whom we minister experience renewal.

Attributes:

We strive to be Christ-like, innovative, authentic and global. We aspire to raise the bar on excellence with inspiring partnerships, ministries and missions and, like CBF partner-congregations, we are committed to being diverse — hearing and respecting different perspectives.

- Christ-like: First and foremost, we witness God's work in the world, both as a witness to others for Christ and as an observer of God's grace.
- Innovative: CBF is ever exploring ways to renew the church and the world—from how we start churches to our partnerships that bring clean water to impoverished areas.

- Authentic: We value and nurture genuine relationships that are built on respect, where we create opportunities for dialogue about issues facing the modern church and the modern Christian.
- Global: Our impact reaches every corner of the globe, with a CBF presence spanning from rural villages in Thailand to the United Nations Office at Geneva, Switzerland.

Sometimes we differentiate between sharing the gospel and meeting social needs; but when as Christians we combine the two in our everyday actions, we get a holistic practice of mission. We get "integral mission."

Implied by the definition is that you will be among people. You may be among them as you go about your everyday job, as you volunteer or as you meet friends. The point is to be among people, living life and actively asking God to show you where and in whom God is working so that you can join God in said work, share the gospel and meet needs.

Read chapters 7 and 9 of *When Helping Hurts*.

DISCOVERY Reflection Questions

Jot down your reflections on the "initial thoughts sections" before chapters 7 and 9 of *When Helping Hurts*.

List two things you have learned about the differences in culture through the reading.

In your own words, define “asset-based community development.”

Consider the attributes: Christ-like, innovative, authentic, global, excellence and diverse. These attributes are crucial to CBF Global Missions and to us as we minister around the world. They give us a framework within which to shape ministry and to approach our work with integrity. List two ways you think the core purpose and attributes can help you adopt a holistic mission practice on your upcoming mission experience.

List one attribute you see evident in your own church’s mission practice. Why did you choose that attribute?

Additional Thoughts

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why Practice Mission?

- As a group, brainstorm the values from which you engage your community and world. Then, create your own list of attributes that you hope members of your congregation will share.
- Why do you think it is important to have a list of attributes?

When Helping Hurts

- How might you use the information from the reading this week to reimagine a short-term mission strategy for your church in order to minimize its harm and maximize its benefit? List three specific action items.

"In our experience, it's critical to include directly affected people in our decision making about how we do mission and to ensure that we do it justly and lovingly. By involving people who know poverty, disenfranchisement and marginalization intimately in your decision making process, you strengthen your planning significantly."

–Jessica and Joshua Hearne, Field Personnel, Danville, VA

TRANSFORMING MISSION

In Unit 5, we will reflect upon the transforming power of God's mission. We will consider all we have learned thus far and think about how we might implement any new ideas into our mission practice. As you begin, jot down what you believe to be the most useful piece of information you have learned so far. Then, follow the rhythm of discernment through Prayer, Preparation, *and* Discovery.

PRAYER

Take the time to pray this week's scriptures by reading them slowly aloud as many as three times, in order to open yourself to God's Spirit.

Ask God to teach you through this openness each week.

- **Luke 16:19-31**

PREPARATION Why practice mission?

Transforming Mission

When we desire to love God with all our heart, soul and mind and to love our neighbors as ourselves, we begin to build a foundation of discipline that enables us to practice our desire. In short, we become disciples. There are several common practices that emerge to help us practice holistic mission.

Read through the following *Signs of Transforming Mission* and underline words or phrases that surprise or stand out to you.

We talk to God through prayer but, more importantly, we also listen to God in prayer (Romans 8:26). Prayer is a discipline. Effective prayer actually comes from God, not us. God wants to know us better. We ask God for motivation to pray and to teach us how. We ask God to reveal truth to us and for understanding our new life in Christ. We thank God for the way God has worked in our life and ask for eyes to see how God is working in our neighborhood.

We study the Bible and observe our community and world (1 Peter 2:2). Put simply, the Bible is the story of God interacting with humanity. God is eager to teach those who want to learn and God will teach us about God's attributes, power, truth and love as we study the Bible. God is also at work in our community and world right now. We study the Bible and pray so that we can begin to see how and where God is working in our everyday community and so that we can join God in this work.

We spend time with other believers (1 Cor 12: 12-14). God's design is for all people to be in relationship. No person functions properly apart from fellowship with God through Christ, and other people. As Christians, we are to be dependent on one another. We are to help each other understand biblical truth, counsel one another regarding situations in life, encourage one another, hold one another accountable and work together in meeting physical and financial needs. We partner with each other to enable each other to practice our faith in our everyday lives.

We engage our communities and world by participating in everyday societal matters (Romans 12:1-2, read from The Message). We grow in relationship with God and others so we can serve each other with love. That is why we engage our communities and strive to make all lives better. We have received the love of God so we can give the love of God. Through our everyday engagement, we embody God's message of reconciliation through hospitality, mercy, inclusiveness, compassion and justice. We build relationships across ethnic, racial, cultural and socio-economic lines because we want to see the Kingdom of God fulfilled on earth as it is in heaven.

Read chapters 10, 11 and "A Final Word" of *When Helping Hurts.*

DISCOVERY Reflection Questions

Are you receptive to positive changes that God wants to make in your life? Write a prayer asking God to shape and form you through this mission experience.

Write down one point from the *Signs of Transforming Mission* that you think you do well in your everyday life. What do you need to work on?

Create a list of three ways you see your church or people in your church and community practicing holistic mission.

Jot down your reflections on the "initial thoughts" sections of chapters 10 and 11 of *When Helping Hurts*.

Additional Thoughts

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why Practice Mission?

- As a group, discuss the *Signs of Transforming Mission*. Which are present in your church and which need work? How might your team help the church incorporate these signs after you complete this mission experience? List two ideas to pray about as a team.

- As you think about your upcoming mission trip, think of it as an opportunity to learn and glimpse the transforming signs at work in the world. What would your team like to learn or discover from this trip? List three things.

When Helping Hurts

- Are there any changes you would like to ask God to make in your church or ministry in order to apply the principles from this training?
- Share how you might apply one of your ideas generated through this training in your local church and in your own life.
- Name one thing that you have learned from this study you hope to practice as you travel on your short-term mission.

"Our goal is long-term impact and we do that, in part, through long-term presence, which means that we have the opportunity to establish ties between those who send us and those to whom we are sent so that the knot created allows the rope to pull both ways. That is sustainability and that gives meaning to our presence. Bearing witness alongside others wherein God has not left us alone but dwells among us in body and in spirit."

–Sam Harrell, Associate Coordinator of Global Missions & former field personnel, Kenya

OUR MISSION IDENTITY

In Unit 6, your team should expect to participate in a video conference in order to preview the history and culture of the area you will visit. You will learn about the ministry already taking place there. We will finish our review of the core purpose and attributes of CBF, as well as the mission distinctives of CBF Global Missions, in an effort to understand how these express themselves through mission service. Before you begin, jot down what you think is important to know about the local context of a community when you are going to practice your faith on mission. Now, follow the rhythm of discernment through Prayer, Preparation *and* Discovery.

PRAYER

Take the time to pray this week's scriptures by reading them slowly aloud as many as three times, in order to open yourself to God's Spirit.

Ask God to teach you through this openness each week.

- **Luke 17:7-10**

PREPARATION Why practice mission?

Mission Distinctives

As CBF endeavors to fulfill its core purpose of partnering to renew God's world, our mission distinctives offer Cooperative Baptists common language for our common witness of the Triune God. The *commitments* reflect the mission engagement of CBF field personnel, congregations and partners, while the *contexts* focus more intentionally on our formal Global Missions enterprise[8]. In other words, the *commitments* reflect what we will do together on mission as a Fellowship while the *contexts* guide us in Global Missions as we send and do mission work as field personnel. Read the commitments and contexts below and underline or circle ideas or words that stand out.

Our Mission Commitments:

1. **Cultivating Beloved Community.** We cultivate communities of reconciliation and hospitality that serve as instruments, signs and foretastes of the Kingdom of God.

   The gospel compels us...

   - To offer radical hospitality to strangers and aliens because we were once strangers and aliens.

- To reconcile all peoples because Christ has broken down the wall of hostility between us.
- To demonstrate the Kingdom we proclaim through the character of our life together in the local church.

2. **Bearing Witness to Jesus Christ.** We bear witness to the gospel through words that invite faith in Jesus and actions that embody the way of Jesus.

   The gospel compels us…
   - To practice the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.
   - To confess Jesus Christ as Lord to the glory of the Triune God.
   - To follow the example of Jesus who healed the sick, fed the hungry and befriended sinners.

3. **Seeking Transformational Development.** We seek to transform systems that suppress the capacity of individuals and communities in order to recognize, claim and celebrate the God-given gifts of all people and places.

   The gospel compels us…
   - To celebrate the image of God in every human life and to recognize and honor the gifts of every community.
   - To develop sustainable local assets with community stakeholders through advocacy, education and solidarity.
   - To make long-term commitments to transform cultures that systematically oppress people and degrade God's creation.

CBF Mission Contexts:

1. **Global Poverty.** In a world where one in eight people suffers hunger, 2.8 billion live on less than $2 per day, 1 billion lack access to clean water and 35.8 million are enslaved, Cooperative Baptists seek sustainable responses to systems of poverty that devalue life and diminish the image of God.

   For example:
   - With half the world's population living in cities, CBF field personnel move into urban neighborhoods from Nairobi to New York City and Macau to Marseille.
   - Together for Hope, CBF's rural poverty initiative, draws together neighbors, congregations, CBF state and regional organizations, practitioners and other partners to map assets and make long-term investments in the future of rural communities in the United States.

- Through longstanding work among the Romany in Europe, the Dom in the Middle East and the Banjara in India, CBF congregations, partners and field personnel advocate for the most economically marginalized peoples in the world.

2. **Global Migration.** With more than 232 million migrants in the world, including 16.7 million refugees, we live in an age of unprecedented human mobility. Such movement affords Cooperative Baptists the opportunity to extend hope and hospitality to those who are driven by circumstance or drawn by opportunity away from their homes.

   For example:

   - Heeding the call to welcome the stranger, CBF field personnel and Together for Hope practitioners befriend newcomers from urban Houston, Texas, to the rural border of Mexico.
   - With 70,000 Bosnians calling St. Louis, Mo., home, CBF field personnel with relevant cultural and linguistic skills address the spiritual and material needs of refugees through a network of partner congregations.
   - Committed to care for the displaced and to free the captives, CBF field personnel in Malaysia and Indonesia offer disaster relief and combat human trafficking.

3. **Global Church.** We live in the era of a global church where no single tradition or culture can lay claim to the center of Christianity. Cooperative Baptists befriend Christians from around the world to share and receive gifts and to engage in God's mission together through worship, fellowship, education and service.

   For example:

   - A CBF theological education partner in New Bern, N.C., and partner congregations in Richmond, Va., and Louisville, Ky., have experienced spiritual renewal when they welcomed Christian refugees from Burma into their midst.
   - In Chinese cities like Chengdu, where Christianity is experiencing rapid growth, CBF field personnel assist in starting new churches and training lay and pastoral leaders.
   - Spanish Baptists invited long-term CBF field personnel and short-term mission teams to help them reach sub-Saharan Africans who have immigrated to Spain.

DISCOVERY Reflection Questions

As you reflect on the mission distinctives, how do you think they relate to integral mission? Write down one way you see in which they relate.

Cultivating beloved community, bearing witness to Jesus Christ and seeking transformational development are distinctive values of the mission of CBF. What do you consider to be the distinctive values of your congregation regarding mission?

After considering the three major contexts in which CBF works, do you feel drawn to a particular context for your mission service? Have you noticed your church gravitating toward one context or another? Write an example for each context from your experience.

You may have some big questions about short-term mission service at this point in your study of *Pivot*. Write those down in the space below.

To learn, listen, practice and reflect on the realities of mission in a non-familiar environment

STAGE 2: ON-SITE ENGAGEMENT

Introduction: On-Site Engagement

"Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God.
But only he who sees takes off his shoes;
The rest sit round and pluck the blackberries."
-Elizabeth Barrett Browning[1]

Often the traditional mission trip is focused on how we can help or how we might bring God to a specific place or people. What we often miss while we are busy "plucking the blackberries," is that God is already at work in and among the people we are attempting to serve. If we slow down and listen, we might actually find ourselves on holy ground.

GOD IS ALREADY AT WORK IN AND AMONG THE PEOPLE WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO SERVE. IF WE SLOW DOWN AND LISTEN, WE MIGHT ACTUALLY FIND OURSELVES ON HOLY GROUND.

During the On-site Engagement section of *Pivot*, we hope that you are pushed to the place of discomfort—where God is most often easily found—and pulled back to a safe place to process the work of God in your own life. You will have new experiences and be given opportunities to listen to people with different perspectives. Take time to listen and observe.

You may find yourself wanting to pluck the berries or "fix" the situation. But remember, you are entering holy ground. God is already at work, and this experience is not about what you can bring but about the experience with God you will take home.

The On-site Engagement stage is intentionally designed to serve as a global educational and ministry formation point for churches and individuals discovering what it means to practice mission in today's global environment. It follows the same cycle as the first stage.

Forming — Learning from people of other cultures and faiths and seeing the world with new eyes, glimpsing God from a wider horizon discovering oneself anew;

Engaging — Encouraging creativity; employing asset-based techniques; using trial and error; rethinking success/failure; consensus building; serving and being served; and discovering giftedness;

Visioning — Participants will be encouraged to create space for God's presence in reconsidering what mission looks like on the field as well as back home.

OVERVIEW

When your team arrives on-site with CBF field personnel, you will have the chance to practice and reflect upon what was learned during the Preparation stage of *Pivot*. This stage is very tangible and practical and will allow your team to continue to develop the perspective, skills and tools necessary for mission service in the world by engaging in a non-familiar cross-cultural environment. CBF field personnel will customize this stage of *Pivot* to enable your team to:

- Experience other cultures
- Practice missiology
- Reflect on and discuss the learning through journaling, group discussions and activities

During this stage, CBF field personnel will help the team build a solid missiological foundation you can then use in your own mission engagement in the world. With field personnel, you will have time to practice how to learn about a community and how to see the community as a missionary. Additional area leaders will be your local experts and aids for navigating this new community. The team will think through socioeconomic issues, paternalism, differing worldviews and even be given opportunities to hear how they are perceived in the community as a mission team and as Christians. The team will reflect on all these experiences through prayer, journaling, one-on-one discussions and group discussions.

The CBF field personnel's role here is as a mentor and guide. They will facilitate and guide discussions, offer perspective and be a place of safety for the team throughout what can be a very challenging experience. At the same time, field personnel are slowly shifting the discussion back to the home community of the team. At the end of the on-site visit, the team will be asked how they envision this learning as it applies to their home, to the area surrounding their church, even to their everyday lives.

Over the course of your on-site experience, you will draw away each day to pray, prepare and discover as you did in the first stage. Use this book as your journal and reflect on all aspects of your endeavor. You will listen during the day to the voices around you. Then, you will come together at the end of each day for group discussions with your field personnel where you will reflect upon cultural learning, mission skills and practices. The group discussion time enables you to hear from each other, learn from and teach each other from your experiences.

Of course, the point of this training is to improve your mission engagement and to honor God's calling to the best of your ability. Your journaling experience is important. Plan to capture your reflections and ideas as well as some action items for reflection during the next stage.

PIVOT ON-SITE ENGAGEMENT UNIT SESSION AGENDA:

- **Reading a Community:** This section's aim is helping teams understand how to gather information about a local community. The team is taken to a local neighborhood, divided into small groups and then guided through the neighborhood. Field personnel will guide the team as you use the content from each unit. At the end of this session, the groups come back together and form a word picture of the community based upon how well you "read" the community. Field personnel then help the team evaluate how well you did by sharing more about the neighborhood related to the attributes from the "Reading a Community" units.

- **Voices:** During this section of your on-site experience, the team will learn to listen to people you would not normally hear. This can be coffee with a person of another faith, listening to the story of a believer in the local context, meeting with college students or refugees, etc. The idea is to have opportunity to listen, ask and learn.

- **Learning Culture:** These activities are intentionally designed with opportunities to learn about the culture(s) of the area. This can include visiting tourist sites, museums, eating local food or any other activity that helps the team reflect on the specific culture and how culture shapes a person's worldview.

- **Worshipping:** This session is an opportunity to experience worship in a different place with local believers. It is important that the team not take part in the service by preaching, singing or any other type of leading. Because this is a learning trip, the team needs to simply sit and experience worship, and then later reflect on your experience.

- **Serving:** (optional based on location and opportunities available) The team will engage in a service project with local leaders. It is important that the team not lead, but use the opportunity to experience how other cultures organize their time and activities.

- **Asset Mapping:** After meeting together and discussing asset mapping, the team will break into groups, explore a neighborhood and list all the assets you see. After the team returns to the meeting place, you will work together to fill in a blank map of the neighborhood. With field personnel, you will discuss the map and the assets discovered. The team will then apply the concepts learned as you think about your home community and what assets are available there.

BEFORE YOU GO

Review the Mission Brief *provided by your field personnel. It contains additional information regarding the ministry context of your upcoming mission experience. Read the next section and be prepared to journal questions for your team or field personnel.*

PRAYER

Take the time to pray and open yourself to God's Spirit.

Ask God to teach you this day.

PREPARATION Voices[2]

As you make the turn toward your on-site experience, it is important to reflect on how to listen to the voices around you. While on site, there will be multiple opportunities called "Voices sessions," where the team learns to listen to people that they normally would not hear. This can be coffee with a person of another faith, listening to the story of a believer in the local context, meeting with college students or refugees, etc. These experiences of the On-Site Engagement stage of *Pivot* are opportunities to sit and engage with people that come from various cultures and who have different worldviews.

Usually, when we encounter a worldview different from our own, we respond in one of four shared ways. These four responses all have something in common because in each, we listen from a vantage point of power. In three of the four responses, we listen from the assumption that our perspective is right and the opposing perspective is wrong. These three ways to listen are:

- **Consumption**
  We try to incorporate the ideas and the person into our group and worldview. In this response, we subconsciously try to fit the ideas we hear, or people we see, into a version of ourselves. We try to shape what we encounter into our own likeness.
- **Pushing Out**
  Anything that we cannot fit into our group and worldview is pushed out. We reject, exclude and shield ourselves to avoid mixing ideas that seem incompatible.
- **Toleration**
  We attempt to accept the ideas and the people into our group and worldview, even though they seem strange to us. We accept their presence as long as the differences in ideas and worldview do not directly confront us.

The fourth response is a bit different.

- **Agreement**
  The idea that beneath all our little differences, we are the same. We may give different names to things, but we see the world broadly from the same perspective and hold the same values.

In all four, we judge the outsider from our position. These experiences encourage us to practice what we call "listening with ears to hear."

- **Listening with ears to hear**
  Listening that allows another person's ideas and worldview to challenge and unsettle our own worldview.

Normally, when we listen to someone, we filter what a person is saying through our own experiences. This leads us to miss or misinterpret what the other person is saying because the information that we hear has to make sense to us within our current value system, life experience, beliefs and practices. If the information we hear does not make sense to us, we filter the information until it does make sense. We try to fit what we hear with our own underlying assumptions and, most of the time, we do this without even consciously realizing it.

DISCOVERY Reflection Questions

As you prepare to listen to other people during this experience, especially in the *Voices* sessions, you should aim to intentionally allow what you hear to impact you and destabilize your understanding of the world. Mentally prepare yourself and remind yourself to listen to the other person. Make note of what surprises you, and ask further probing questions about these surprises. Try not to worry about agreeing or disagreeing, and try not to defend yourself or your worldview; these are safe places for you to learn.

In your daily life, how often do you encounter people from different cultural backgrounds?

If you could ask those with whom you engage with today one question, what would it be? Write it down and be ready to ask it later.

Think about to the last experience you had with someone from a cultural background different from your own. What was the purpose of the encounter? What words were spoken? Besides your words, what were each of you communicating to the other? Journal your reflections below.

Additional Thoughts

READING A COMMUNITY: PART 1

This day will focus on experiencing and learning culture by observing, asking and listening. Remember, learning the culture of an area requires one to have eyes to see and ears to hear.

PRAYER

Take the time to pray and open yourself to God's Spirit, asking God to teach you this week. Sitting quietly, become conscious of how your body and mind are responding to your new context.

What can you hear and smell?

What thoughts are racing through your mind?

Thank God for this important information and ask for the Spirit's peace to wash over you so that all you may experience today will be made useful.

PREPARATION Reading a Community[3]

When was the last time you slowed down and took a walk through your community? In today's busy lifestyle we zip here or there and rarely stop to really observe our communities. We may recognize when a new restaurant opens or a new shopping center is developed, but we rarely notice subtle shifts in our community that occur over time that affect people, socioeconomic levels and the overall culture of an area.

This is especially true the longer we have lived in a community. Day-to-day life becomes so normal that we don't even have to really look as we journey to and from work, school, church and the grocery store. If we want to be a missionary in our community, we need to look intentionally at the community and be aware of changes that are taking place. Our task is to look and know our community, asking all the time, "Where and how is God working in this community?" So, to "read a community" means that we seek to discover the organizations, people and cultures in the community so that we can begin to understand the make-up of the community in the present. By doing this, we can begin to discern how God is working to transform the community.

To do this, we have to decide to intentionally connect in our neighborhoods, taking the time to meet people and build relationships with them. This enables us to learn who the people are, their histories and what they consider most important in life. When we discover these, we learn what is actually shaping the community. And as we discover what is shaping the community, we begin to learn what is important for the community and this knowledge opens up pathways for mission ministry.

Another reason we need to read the community in which we live is that we need to find the best way to be the presence of Christ in the real context in which people are living. This means that as we live alongside people in the community, we begin to discover how God is working in their lives in real everyday relationships, problems, joys and hopes. We look and listen for opportunities to "point out" God in their midst and to share God's transforming love. Sometimes this means that we listen to people as they share life moments with us; we eat together and laugh and play. At other times, this means we pray with them and share our own stories and vulnerabilities and, in doing so we model what it means to be a Christian living a life of faith.

How do we read a community?

To read a community, we need to enter the area looking for some of the key elements of any culture. As we look for and identify these elements, we try to develop an understanding of the community, forming a cultural word picture that helps us begin to grasp the social intricacies that exist in the community. There are six basic questions we can ask to gain a good understanding of a particular community:

1. **Language**—What languages are spoken in the community?
2. **Historical artifacts**—What artifacts are important in the community and why?
3. **Worldview**—How does the community see the world and understand themselves in relation to the world?
4. **Customs**—What are the core practices in which people engage that shape their identity and sense of purpose in life?
5. **Institutions**—What are the primary influential institutions in the community, and how are they shaping the identity and purpose of the people?
6. **Ethics**—How does the community define success?

Take the time to walk, observe, read about, inquire and listen to the people who live in a community while trying to answer these six basic questions. If you do so, you will slowly grow to understand the culture of the community. The more we understand the culture of a community, the better we can begin to see where the spirit of God is working in the community. We can also discover how to use our gifts and skills in the transforming work of God in the community.

DISCOVERY Reflection Questions

From your learning and experiences so far, write a definition of culture. List one specific factor that you believe helps to form culture.

Why is it important to discover the culture of a community before starting mission work or ministry?

If you could ask the local leaders with whom you engage today one question, what would it be? Write it down and be ready to ask it later.

Tonight before bed: Record a story or event that particularly stands out to you from today's experience. Why does this memory stand out and what can you learn from it? Be prepared to share with the group tomorrow.

Additional Thoughts

THE STORY OF A CULTURE: AN EXPERIENCE

This day will focus on listening to and learning about the local culture. A community's way of life has been shaped by the history of an area, its people and its culture. Take time to listen and learn the stories behind the community in which you minister in order to help you better understand the people. This will make you a better minister. You should become aware of what makes the gospel good news to this community and begin to have eyes to see how and where God is working in the community. Take a moment to review your definition of culture from the previous unit. Write down what you hope to learn today about the local culture. Then, follow the rhythm of discernment through Prayer, Preparation *and* Discovery.

PRAYER

Take the time to pray and open yourself to God's Spirit.

Ask God to teach you this day.

PREPARATION

Read Matthew 9:9-13.

DISCOVERY Reflection Questions

Think of two reasons why it is important to share life and build relationships with people in your mission site neighborhood. List them here:

Relationships can often best be formed in the living of everyday life. Take time today to engage your teammates in conversation and learn more about them and their hopes and dreams. Write what you learned about each of your teammates below.

Tonight before bed: Record a story or event that particularly stands out to you from today's experience. Why does this memory stand out and what can you learn from it? Be prepared to share with the group tomorrow.

Additional Thoughts

WORSHIP IN ANOTHER CULTURE

This day will focus on listening and learning culture through a local church. Experiencing faith lived out in cultures different than our own enables us to see how the gospel is translated differently—depending on language, geography, history and a host of other factors. Can you think of a practice in your church's worship each Sunday that you would miss if you moved to another church or area? Write down what that practice is and why it is important to you. Do you think the practice is a cultural practice?

PRAYER

Take the time to pray and open yourself to God's Spirit.

Ask God to help you worship this day.

PREPARATION

Read Acts 10.

DISCOVERY Reflection Questions

The Gospel comes to us from a particular place and time. What do you think it means to separate the gospel from any one particular culture?

Given the Jewish culture and religion of the time, if you were in Peter's sandals, what would have been your thoughts and private prayers when asked to eat the unclean food on the sheet (Acts 10)?

Write down one reason you think makes it so difficult to separate culture from the gospel.

How do you think culture is communicated in times of sharing stories and food?

Tonight before bed: Record a story or event that particularly stands out to you from today's experience. Why does this memory stand out and what can you learn from it? Be prepared to share with the group tomorrow.

Additional Thoughts

READING A COMMUNITY: PART 2

This day will focus on reading a community. Review Reading a Community from the second study (p. 52). Reading a community refers to how we experience a community in an effort to learn more about the culture. This practice will help us learn to create a more accurate conception of the culture in the community so that we can more effectively share the gospel. Think about your home community and write what helps shape the culture of your community. Then, follow the rhythm of discernment through Prayer, Preparation *and* Discovery.

PRAYER

Take the time to pray and open yourself to God's Spirit.

Ask God to open all of your senses in order to experience the joy of this day.

PREPARATION

Read Acts 17: 22-33—one of the classic texts related to reading a community. As you read the passage, pay close attention to possible clues of how Paul interacted with the people of Athens.

DISCOVERY Reflection Questions

Why it is important to discover the culture of a community before starting mission work or ministry?

Tonight before bed: Record a story or event that particularly stands out to you from today's experience. Why does this memory stand out and what can you learn from it? Be prepared to share with the group tomorrow.

SERVING THE COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

This day will focus on evaluating our mission service by ministering alongside people in the community. The way we serve, organize, volunteer and even the ministry projects that we choose to undertake are deeply connected to our culture and worldview. As you serve alongside others today, take special time to reflect on the work you are doing in light of your reading and discussion during the Preparation *stage of this workbook. Does your church or community participate in a ministry like that you are experiencing during this* On-Site Engagement *stage? Think about the time and commitment necessary to coordinate such a ministry. Jot down why you think this ministry exists and list two ways in which you think that the ministry is an expression of the local culture. Then, follow the rhythm of discernment through* Prayer, Preparation *and* Discovery.

PRAYER

Take the time to pray and open yourself to God's Spirit.

Ask God to teach you this day.

PREPARATION

Review your journal entries during the *Preparation* stage of this workbook. Recall what motivates you to serve.

DISCOVERY Reflection Questions

List two ways you think the type of ministry in which you participated today can impact a community and the way a community views the church.

List one way in which you might organize the ministry differently. Reflect on your answer and determine if this change is a difference stemming from your culture or the culture in which you are visiting.

How might organizing the ministry from the perspective of your culture help? How might it hurt?

Tonight before bed: Record a story or event that particularly stands out to you from today's experience. Why does this memory stand out and what can you learn from it? Be prepared to share with the group tomorrow.

Additional Thoughts

ASSET MAPPING

This day will focus on asset mapping a portion of the local community. This practice will help us learn how to discover the assets of a community and then to reflect theologically about what types of ministry are needed in a community. Think about your home community and write down what you feel is a major asset of the community.

PRAYER

Take the time to pray and open yourself to God's Spirit.

Ask God to teach you this day.

PREPARATION Asset Mapping

Looking for blessings in the community

It is easy to become overwhelmed by the needs that we see in a community. If we were to approach a community by asking about and listing all the needs that we observe and that others in the community point out, we can become paralyzed by the weight of it all. Our response might be to do nothing because we don't know where to start. Or, we might be tempted to act as "savior" for the community, bringing in outside help and resources and doing all the work while those who live in the community are simply bystanders, passively watching.

When we start with just the needs of the community, we usually focus only on issues such as unemployment, poverty and crime. We can easily ignore the assets or blessings that exist in the community. Working from a "needs-based" perspective generally leads to seeking external funds and services to help the community. There are many positive outcomes that can result from this type of help and it may be that in a relief situation, this type of help is needed. But a problem exists in the fact that most communities are not in a relief situation. When this is the case, a needs-based approach can lead to mission practice and services that may not be appropriate to the culture and dynamics of the community. This approach may be detrimental to building the capacity of the community and empowering individuals in the community to

be the people God created them to be. Needs-based mission has a tendency to lead to community dependence rather than community development.

The approach of CBF ministries is to believe that God is on mission—creating, renewing, reconciling and restoring a broken and fallen world. God initiates and sustains this mission and calls all of humanity to participate in this mission. This means that we believe that God is at work in every community around the world. God goes before us and, as we enter into a community as missionaries, our job is to look for the "blessings" in the community. Where do we see God working through people and organizations? Who is God calling to be leaders and assets in the community?

GOD IS AT WORK IN EVERY COMMUNITY AROUND THE WORLD. GOD GOES BEFORE US; AND AS WE ENTER INTO A COMMUNITY AS MISSIONARIES, OUR JOB IS TO LOOK FOR THE "BLESSINGS" IN THE COMMUNITY.

By looking for where God is at work in the community and by discovering these assets, or blessings, we are practicing our CBF attribute to be Christ-like: *First and foremost, we witness God's work in the world, both as a witness to others for Christ and as an observer of God's grace.* It is by engaging and dialoging with these assets that we are living out our CBF attributes to be innovative and authentic *(CBF is ever exploring ways to renew the church and the world—from how we start churches to our partnerships that bring clean water to impoverished areas. We value and nurture genuine relationships that are built on respect, where we create opportunities for dialogue about issues facing the modern church and the modern Christian.)*

In *Pivot*, we call this process ***asset mapping***: Looking for blessings in the community. Community asset mapping is an approach to building strong communities, developed by John Kretzmann and John McKnight, of the Asset-Based Community Development Institute at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. The community asset mapping process defined by Kretzmann and McKnight in their guidebook *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Towards Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*[5] details the process of mobilizing a community to use its ***assets*** to develop a plan for solving community problems and improving quality of life. By using this practice as we serve on mission, we are able to work toward our CBF Global Missions commitment of **seeking transformational development** in which we *seek to transform systems that suppress the capacity of individuals and communities in order to recognize, claim and celebrate the God-given gifts of all people and places.*

Incorporating the recommendations of Kretzmann and McKnight and remembering our missiology of serving a God on mission, our mission practice should start with a "clear commitment to discovering a community's capacities and assets."[6] This approach does not remove the need for outside resources, but makes their use more effective because it starts with what is present in the community. It focuses on the agenda-building and problem-solving capacity of the residents while stressing local determination, investment, creativity and control.[7] If we truly believe that God is at work in a community even before we show up on mission, then we need to use this process to discover blessings in the community and discern how God is working and guiding us to move forward. This is also how we make sure that we learn the local culture and listen to diverse perspectives. In so doing, we practice our CBF attribute of diversity: *Cooperative Baptists are strongly committed to hearing and respecting different perspectives, and to creating sacred space to hear God in multiple ways*.

When we start our mission practice using this asset mapping approach, we discover that each community has assets to be preserved and enhanced. These assets can be used as the foundation upon which to build future mission work so that we live out our commitment of **cultivating beloved community**: *We cultivate communities of reconciliation and hospitality that serve as instruments, signs and foretastes of the Kingdom of God*. This mapping process is bigger than a simple inventory. It is designed to promote connections or relationships between individuals, between individuals and organizations, and between organizations and organizations. Seeing community through these positive connections creates a synergy that increases the capacity of the community to meet its own needs. This is what leadership development looks like in mission work. As we recognize those in the community in whom God is working and who are acting on their calling, they are offered the opportunity to mature in their faith.

What Are We Looking for?

Community assets include skills, knowledge, talents and the experience of local people. **Assets** can also include businesses, community associations, schools, churches, libraries and other institutions that operate within the community. As we collect information through this process, we must practice the CBF attribute of being **innovative**: *CBF is ever exploring ways to renew the church and the world — from how we start churches to our partnerships that bring clean water to impoverished areas*. The information that we discover can be used as the foundation for many spiritual and social processes such as strategic planning, community mobilization and community economic development. When we practice mission in this way, we are practicing integral mission.

A Basic Way to Map a Community

When we talk about mapping a community, we are trying to discover the connections and relationships between individuals, organizations and the geographic area in which they live. By creating a map of the community and the organizations and groups that are in the community, we begin to discover a holistic picture of a community. We can then take this map and begin to cross reference it with the individuals that we discover in the community. We are looking for points of connection that can form the basis of our mission practice in the community. The following further explains each step in the process.

Creating a Map

Maps are good visual aids that help us see information about a community. When we look at a map of a community and begin to fill in aspects that are assets in the community, our understanding and insight of the area are often increased. There are several ways to go about mapping community assets in *Pivot*. We suggest you find or create a large street map of your community with few other markings. Then mark with a dot, or tag, or push-pin (maybe color-coded by type) the geographic location of the groups, clubs and organizations in the community. The patterns that emerge may surprise you.

Discovering Groups, Organizations and Institutions

What types of groups, organizations and institutions are in your community, and what are their purposes? To reach a place where we can begin to see the connections between individuals, organizations, passions and purposes, we need to know what groups are in the community. This is research work which will be fun for some and not for others. The best way to get started is to get out a notebook and begin writing.

Begin with what you know. Write down anything that comes to mind. You can always correct your list later. Work on this as a team so that you can examine the information together and see connections as you discover entities in your community and create your physical map. Consult sources such as the yellow pages, town directories, lists of organizations from the local newspaper, newsletters and other print sources, physical bulletin boards and community-calendar type listings. Use internet searches to discover blogs, clubs, etc. There are apps such as Nextdoor and Facebook that can assist. Ask your friends and colleagues; they may know about other available lists or about groups, organizations and community assets that are not on anybody else's lists.

Once you have a good list, try to learn more about each organization you have identified. Find out about available staffing, space, equipment, expertise and organizational interests in community projects and nonprofit endeavors. Try to discover what the group is passionate about and how it wants to give back to the community.

Discover Individuals

Who are the people living in the community? Remember that God is working in the community through people. These people are in all aspects of society: teachers, business professionals, government workers and students. Some of these people are aware of the calling that God has on their lives and are living it out every day. Others might not even be believers and have yet to realize how God is working in their lives and the purpose for which they were created. The only way for us to discover the abilities and passions of the people who live in a given community is to get to know them. We need to build relationships, which takes time—especially when you are crossing cultures and social barriers. This is why missions requires long-term presence in a community.

Different methods can be used to get to know the people in a community. Taking time and listening are crucial. Personal time talking one-on-one with long-time community members will give you in-depth information and cultural understanding. This relational approach should be the foundation of our methodology. Although we need information, we are not trying to impartially study people who live in a community. Christ calls us to follow his lead and to "move into the neighborhood."

Remember, we are asset mapping to help our community discover who we are in Christ and how our purpose contributes to the transformation of our community by God. Asset-mapping is an "us" activity. It must be done by the people who are living in and invested in the community. You can develop opportunities for relationships while dropping off surveys door-to-door, explaining how you are seeking to serve the community by meeting with businesses in the area and listening to their dreams for the community by meeting with people in groups or listening sessions where you ask open-ended questions about dreams and hopes for the community; and by asking the people with whom you come into contact how they wish they could be involved in serving the community.

DISCOVERY Reflection Questions

Why do you think it is important to begin by discovering the assets of a community rather than the needs?

List one way an asset map might help you as you plan for new ministry in a community.

Tonight before bed: Record a story or event that particularly stands out to you from today's experience. Why does this memory stand out and what can you learn from it? Be prepared to share with the group tomorrow.

Additional Thoughts

PIVOTING HOME

This session will focus on reflection, discussion and transfering of what you have learned on the field to the next stage in this process, the Pivot Home *stage. If you could sum up your experience on-site this week in one word, what would that word be? Why?*

PRAYER

Take the time to pray and open yourself to God's Spirit.

Ask God to help organize your thoughts in clear images in order to help you begin a sincere reflection of your time.

PREPARATION

Scan through your journal and recall all that you have experienced and learned this week.

DISCOVERY Reflection Questions

Write two lessons you learned about God this week.

Of all you have learned about culture and mission practice, what do you believe are the most important leadership traits or principles that must be developed in the people in your church? Write this down to share with the group.

Each day, you have been recording a story or event that is memorable to you. Look over these and choose one that you can share in a short two-or-three-minute story with your church about your experience on this trip. Be clear and concise so they can also learn from your experience.

Additional Thoughts

Practicing what you have learned in your own community

STAGE 3: PIVOT HOME

Introduction: Pivot Home

"To climb ever closer to God is not to move away from our troubled and troubling neighbors, but closer to them."[7]

Although I (Matt) am from North Carolina, I grew up in Virginia, Uganda and Greece. Mine was a pastor's family and then a missionary family, and home was wherever we were along the way. Michelle had a completely opposite experience. She lived in the same house from kindergarten on, where her parents still reside.

Sometimes, when we think of mission, we think of something that happens "out there" in a faraway exotic place. Home seems boring; it is our safety zone, and mission is not needed.

Through this Pivot process, you have identified and learned a mission theology and practiced listening, spiritual reflection and service in a place far away from home. Now you have the opportunity for your last pivot, to take what you have learned and bring it home.

One of my favorite reminders of the importance of living out our mission call in our home community is from the book, *The Wisdom of Stability: Rooting Faith in a Mobile Culture* by Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove. In this book, Jonathan writes, "We learn to dwell with God by learning the practices of hospitality, listening, forgiveness and reconciliation—the daily tasks of life with other people."[8]

Pivot Home is about discovering how we can be on mission wherever we are. If our idea of mission is thinking only about where our next mission trip will be, we have failed. If our stories of mission service are stories only from remote locations with people we will never meet again, we've missed our opportunity for growth and transformation. Our calling is to serve God with our lives, and our lives happen where we live. Our lives happen in our home.

In this stage, learning will take place primarily through group work and discussion. You will continue to write your reflections in this workbook. Your written reflections will be responses to a set of questions related to your assignments each week. The reflection journal is for your own personal use and learning. It is important to take the time each week to do the assigned reading and journaling. You should schedule three to four hours of time each week for the assignments. The assignments follow the same rhythm of the previous stages: *Prayer*, *Preparation* and *Discovery*.

As you move through each unit, think about what you have learned so far and how you can use this knowledge in your church, in the community in which you live and in the locations that your church serves on short-term mission.

This third stage of *Pivot* includes in-person meetings to discuss the activities and reflections with your team. This will occur on a bi-weekly basis for a total of six sessions over 12 weeks.

At each in-person meeting, your group will convene to reflect upon the weekly discussion questions, sharing your reflections, questions and ideas. The group discussion time invites you to hear from each other, to learn from and to teach each other from your experiences. Weekly discussion is vital! The more you participate, the more you will learn from each other. *It may be tempting to skip this portion of Pivot, but remember, the home connection is the goal of this process. To skip these weeks of learning and application is to miss the point of the process.*

The point of this section of the Pivot training is to improve your church's mission engagement and to honor God's calling to the best of your ability. A great way to capture your reflections and ideas is to write them down as they emerge in the discussions. Write your ideas on large paper hung around the room for the group to see. Form some action items for what you would like to accomplish with what you learn so that you can use your experiences in your local community.

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this portion of *Pivot* is to use the skills and insights gained in stages one and two to develop a strong foundation for mission service in your own community. During the *Pivot Home* stage, you will:

- Discuss your community and what you have discovered about culture, assets and possible opportunities for mission practice.
- List ideas for mission practice and detail the training needed to help you implement these ideas.
- Discover and experience various cultures in your community by identifying different people groups (ethnic, cultural, religious, etc.) and interacting with them.
- Practice missiology by fully illuminating your community and developing a community cultural profile.
- Use the "Mapping Community Assets Workbook" by Diane Dorfman to map the community.
- Reflect spiritually on God's leading in your life and in your church's life. Note how God has gifted you to serve through your strengths and passions by journaling, group discussions and other activities.
- Review the purpose, attributes and distinctives of CBF Global Missions in an effort to understand how these can be expressed through mission service in your community.
- Create a list of practices to implement in current or new ministries at your church.

BELIEF TO ACTION

Here, we will review and discuss the core purpose and attributes of CBF as well as the mission distinctives of CBF Global Missions. Now that you have studied and experienced mission in the CBF context, how do you see these being lived out in real life? How might you relate these ideas to your church and its future mission practice? Before you begin, write here what you think the vision of mission for your church might be. Then, follow the rhythm of discernment through Prayer, Preparation *and* Discovery.

PRAYER

Take the time to pray this week's scriptures by reading them aloud slowly as many as three times in order to open yourself to God's Spirit.

Ask God to teach you through this openness each week.

- **Read Psalms 135:13-17; Micah 6:8; Amos 5:24**

PREPARATION Why practice mission? God's Story

Review units 4 and 6 of the *Preparation* stage (pp. 60 and 66), focusing on the core purpose and attributes of CBF as well as the mission distinctives of CBF Global Missions, in an effort to understand how these express themselves through mission service.

DISCOVERY Reflection Journal — CBF Overview

Review your thoughts on the "Guiding Missiological Affirmations" found in stage 1, unit 2 (p. 22). In light of your mission study and engagement so far, what are two points that you think are crucial for your church?

Additional Thoughts

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- On a white board or flip chart, list at least three ways you have seen the purpose and attributes of CBF lived out in real life through this experience thus far.
- Reflect on your church and its mission practice locally and globally. List the ways that you see connections to the CBF purpose and attributes being lived out by your church.
- List at least three action items your group would like to implement to help the church engage on mission in your community and world.
- What additional training do you need in order to practice mission in your community? With whom do you need to speak to offer this training in your church? Save these ideas for the last meeting of this stage.

OUR CULTURE

This unit focuses on discovering and experiencing cultures in your own community by identifying and interacting with different people groups (ethnic, cultural, religious, secular, etc.) As you begin, look back in your workbook for your notes and reflections on culture in Reading a Community *(p. 54). How would you adjust your definition of culture? Write your answer below, then follow the rhythm of discernment through* Prayer, Preparation *and* Discovery.

PRAYER

Take the time to pray this week's scriptures by reading them aloud slowly as many as three times in order to open yourself to God's Spirit.

Ask God to teach you through this openness each week.

- **Read Luke 10:25-37**

PREPARATION Why practice mission? God's Story

- Scan your local newspaper for clues about the multiple cultures within your community. View the online version of this paper. What do you notice about the ads associated with the different articles or sections?
- Make a plan to eat at restaurants or to shop in stores that are new to you and that might be of a culture different from your own.
- Look at signs and advertisements in your community to try and determine what cultures are present in the area.
- Bring a list of the different cultures you find to the group meeting.

DISCOVERY Reflection Question

What surprised you about your community as you searched for different cultures? Why do you think you found this surprising?

Additional Thoughts

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- As a group, make a list of all the cultures you observed (even cultures within the same ethnic groups) in your community.
- What surprises you about this list?
- In what ways might this information be helpful?
- What actions or strategies might you use to learn more about the people of different cultures in your community?

OUR COMMUNITY

This unit focuses on practicing missiology by reading the community and developing a community cultural profile. As you begin, review your notes from your on-site visit about reading a community and write down one influence you think shapes the culture of your community (pp. 52-55, 64-65). Then, follow the rhythm of discernment through Prayer, Preparation *and* Discovery.

PRAYER

Take the time to pray this week's scriptures by reading them aloud slowly as many as three times in order to open yourself to God's Spirit.

Ask God to teach you through this openness each week.

- **Mark 4:35-71**

PREPARATION Why practice mission? God's Story

Reconsider "Reading a Community" units from the on-site stage (pp. 52-55, 64-65).

DISCOVERY Reflection Questions

Look at the work you did during your last group session on culture in your community. How do you think this information will help you as you start mission work or ministry in your community?

Additional Thoughts

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- As a group, review and refine, if needed, your group's working definition of culture for your on-site context.
- Review the six elements of culture—language, artifacts, narratives, rituals, institutions and ethics. Construct a list of questions that can be used today to read your community.
- Create a list of attributes in the community that you feel shape the culture.
- Read your neighborhood.

After reading your neighborhood:

- What did you learn? Sketch a cultural picture.
- How could you improve the picture?
- What do you need to ask, do and be aware of to better understand the culture?
- How might this information be useful?

OUR ASSETS

This unit focuses on using the "Mapping Community Assets Workbook" by Diane Dorfman to map your community. As you begin this week, review your notes from your on-site visit on asset mapping (pp. 70-77). Write down words that come to mind when you think of assets in your community. Then, follow the rhythm of discernment through Prayer, Preparation *and* Discovery.

PRAYER

Take the time to pray this week's scriptures by reading them aloud slowly as many as three times in order to open yourself to God's Spirit.

Ask God to teach you through this openness each week.

- **James 1:19**

PREPARATION Why practice mission? God's Story

Read the "Mapping Community Assets Workbook" portion of the ABCD Toolkit by Diane Dorfman (free download) and be prepared to work through this as a team. Download this at *abcdinstitute.org/toolkit*, or by scanning the QR code below.

ABCD Toolkit

DISCOVERY Reflection Question

In a couple of sentences, explain what an asset-based approach to ministry means.

Additional Thoughts

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- You may want to invite a select group of people from your church to complete this workbook with you. If so, remember that asset mapping may be a new concept to the congregation and some training may be necessary.
- Complete the workbook together, taking as much time as needed.
- Later, review the material and develop an asset map of the community.
- Divide the team into smaller groups and walk or drive through the community in ways and directions that you would not normally take. Search for assets in the community. Record these on your asset sheet.

After walking or driving through your neighborhood, consider these questions:

- What did you learn? Do the information from the workbooks and the actual journey into the community intersect? Sketch an asset map.
- How could you improve the map?
- What do you need to ask, do and be aware of to better understand the community?
- How might this information be useful?

OUR VISION

In this unit you will reflect upon everything learned thus far and begin to plan how these new ideas can be implemented into your church's mission practice. Visioning, *the first movement in CBF's* Dawnings *resource, is a process of being open to hearing and seeing the dreams of God for your church and for God's world. Begin the reflection by writing down what you consider to be the most useful piece of information or lesson you have learned so far about your community. Then, follow the rhythm of discernment through* Prayer, Preparation *and* Discovery.

PRAYER

Take the time to pray this week's scriptures by reading them aloud slowly as many as three times in order to open yourself to God's Spirit.

Ask God to teach you through this openness each week.

- **Acts 9:1-19**

PREPARATION Why practice mission? God's Story

- Review *When Helping Hurts* by reading chapters 10, 11 and "A Final Word".
- Review "*Why Practice Mission?*" from the *Preparation* stage (pp. 15-17).

DISCOVERY Reflection Questions

Review your reflections on the "initial thoughts" portion before each chapter in this section and review your prayer asking God to shape and form you through this mission experience. What difference has this experience made in your life?

How has your understanding of what you see around you changed in light of your new way of looking at your community?

What kind of vision do you believe God has given you?

Additional Thoughts

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- This group meeting will include a video conference with the CBF field personnel. Tell them about your community and what you have discovered about its culture, assets and subsequent possible opportunities for mission practice.
- Reflect as a team, sharing an important leadership trait or principle that is necessary in order to serve missionally in the community. Using a whiteboard or flip chart, list what you have learned.
- How might these leadership qualities be developed in the church?
- Reflect as a team and share what you learned about God, noting it alongside your list.
- Review the reading the community exercise and asset map. What did you learn about the community through these exercises?
- What would you like to ask for as you make changes in your church or ministry to apply the principles from this training?
- Share how you might apply one of your ideas generated through this training in your local church and in your own life.
- As a group, discuss the list from *Why Practice Mission?* in unit 5 of *Preparation on pages 22-23*. Which conditions are present in your church and which ones need work? How might your team help your church after you complete this mission experience? List two ideas to pray about as a team.
- Think about the culture of your community. What are the narratives, rituals, institutions and ethics that shape the culture? As a group, describe your culture in a couple of sentences.
- Think about the assets in your community. Does your community recognize the assets it possesses? Why or why not?
- As a group, brainstorm possible ways that your learning can be applied at home.
- What was the most valuable part of this experience? Share it with the group.

THE FINAL TURN

By now you should have made a shift toward a more missional lifestyle with a deepened awareness. Your group has conceived various possibilities for mission in your own community and, fortunately, much of the work of designing a new ministry is now complete. The final turn of Pivot *is to plan a creative space among the stakeholders of your congregation in order for them to hear from you about where your group senses God is leading. Now follow the rhythm of discernment through* Prayer, Preparation *and* Discovery.

PRAYER

Take the time to pray this week's scriptures by reading them aloud slowly as many as three times in order to open yourself to God's Spirit.

Ask God to teach you through this openness each week.

- **Matthew 2:1-12**

PREPARATION Why practice mission? God's Story

Watch the following short videos featuring noted missiologists Alan Roxburgh and Mark Lau Branson. As you watch, note any concepts or words that stand out to you. Find the clips at *www.cbf.net/pivot*, or scan the QR codes provided.

Luke / Acts: The Work of the Spirit

Pentecost: A Geriatric Movement?

Luke 10: So Now What?

DISCOVERY Reflection Question

Find a quiet place where you can be alone with God to think and reflect. In the space below, imagine what your church will be like 20 years from now.

How do you think these videos are relevant to “missional leadership?” How do you think they relate to you, your community and this training?

Additional Thoughts

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Invite a handful of leaders from your church who have not been a part of *Pivot* to be listeners in your final meeting. This may be your pastor, deacons, elders or Sunday school teachers. You may want to convene a small group of additional stakeholders of your congregation to hear where your "star" is leading (Matt. 2).
- Reviewing the group's earlier brainstorm, make a list of no more than three ideas for ministry that the group feels have emerged from the study of *Pivot*. Be brief, asking everyone to pray and think about these ideas.
- Allow the individuals in the group to voice which of these three ideas they relate to most. How do you see your gifts relating to that focus area?

CONCLUSION

Through this study, you have been guided on a roundtrip journey back to where God has placed you right now. We hope that through this process, you have experienced a personal and congregational *metanoia*—pivoting in your character, your perceptions and your direction. As we stated earlier, the goal is to have a mission experience in which teams reflect on their mission theology and practice. During your time "on the field," you practiced some of what you learned; you listened carefully to local people; you saw the world through new eyes. Finally, and most importantly, you have experienced a pivot home, engaging in many of the same activities in reading your own neighborhood. It is our hope that the experience of *metanoia* that has begun will continue to inform and inspire your group in your community long into the future.

Once, during a time of discernment and difficulty, Michelle and I were mourning what seemed at the time to be a loss of our mission calling. While we felt deeply called to mission service, we could also see clearly that God was leading us to Atlanta and into a position in the CBF offices there. Such a movement seemed to be a step away from our formal work as CBF-commissioned field personnel. As we prayed and tried to make sense of how our mission calling and "normal" office work would fit together, with God's help, our understanding of mission increased and evolved with two simple words: **JUST BE**.

During our eight years in Atlanta, we came to realize that "just being" encompassed more than we could have imagined. It was passive—calling us to stillness, reflection and spiritual growth. It was also active—calling us to learn our community, to meet our neighbors and to serve where planted. Those two words—**JUST BE**—changed everything. We were reminded that we serve a God whose name, as offered in the third chapter of Exodus, can be translated into English as "being there, being present." And that is the call to mission which God places in our hearts.

In Romans 12, Paul tells us: "So here is what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking around life—and place it before God as an offering."

As you live in your own community, we offer to you these two words: **JUST BE**.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are thankful both for the journey that has brought this resource to maturity and for those who have journeyed with us. For us, it is a joy to see this resource come to fruition. It combines our calling to serve abroad in a mission context with our call to resource the North American church in its own mission context.

First, thank you to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Thank you for being a Fellowship that allows us to discover, grow and serve. From interns to communications staff, thank you for producing this resource so that it can reach a larger audience. To Steven Porter who put the production process in motion and to Ryan Clark who labored hours to edit and bring to print the resource, thank you.

To the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina who envisioned what the then-called "Mission Learning Lab" could be and encouraged the first stages of development, thank you. Special thanks to Larry Hovis, Linda Jones and Rick Jordan who participated in early Barcelona Mission Lab experiences as well as the other brave souls who ventured to come along on the first Mission Labs experience, unsure of what this "non-mission trip" mission trip would be.

Thanks to Fuller Theological Seminary which provided Matt with the missiological training which is the basis of this resource and, at the same time, for being an educational institution that embodies and encourages innovation in ministry.

To those mission partners who make up Partnership Catalunya and who have stood alongside us prayerfully and financially in a way that enables us to live out our mission calling, thank you! You are all a part of this endeavor and a part of each day we minister in Barcelona.

Finally, thank you to our family and friends who support us as we live far from their everyday lives. Your love and encouragement help sustain us. To our children, Cayden and Aaron, who are more resilient than we ever imagined, who have transitioned to life in Barcelona beautifully, who endure endless visits to church after church in the United States, listening to their parents speak, thank you! T'estimem.

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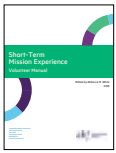
Additional Mission resources from CBF:

PilgriMission



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- For individuals, Dawnings is a rhythm of daily and seasonal living that helps individuals orient their personal lives to God's dream for the world and God's mission in it.
- For everyone involved, Dawnings is a shared way of life that anticipates our future while honoring both our recent and ancient past.

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PIVOT

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Pivot is a leadership development resource that challenges our traditional thoughts and beliefs about God's mission in the world and our role in that mission. Many of us have participated in short-term mission trips and wondered both about the impact on the local community as well as on our team. From the mission preparation, on-site experience and pivoting back home, this resource will help train and equip individuals and congregations to think critically about our mission engagement internationally, regionally and locally.

About CBF

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is a Christian network comprised of individuals and churches that work together to spread the hope of Christ. Our diverse community includes partners all over the globe, and our fellowship supports a wide range of missions and ministries that give people meaningful opportunities to put their faith to action. With a deep respect for freedom, diversity and equality, we encourage autonomy while inviting collaboration.

About the Authors

Matt—a missionary kid who grew up in Africa and Greece—and Michelle—from Raleigh, N.C.—met as students at Gardner-Webb University. In 2003, they became Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) short-term field personnel to Canada. They left Canada in 2005 and moved to Atlanta, Ga., where Matt worked as CBF's Education Development Specialist and Missiologist. He completed a Masters in Global Leadership from Fuller Theological Seminary. In addition to freelance project management, Michelle continued ministry among internationals in Atlanta. In 2011, they were again commissioned by CBF, and now live in Barcelona, Spain.

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