Report 2.1 on the 2015 MissionNext Launch Survey

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NEED

Ralph Winter, founder of the U.S. Center for World Mission
“Only about one out of a hundred ‘missionary decisions’ results in actual career mission service.”
INTRO

Email sent June 2015 to over 200 agencies associated with Missio Nexus and MissionNext:

“Hello from Don Parrott with MissionNext, an association of agencies to recruit and mobilize many into missions-related service. I need your help with a survey to learn how to more effectively launch people into long-term international missions by identifying the positive factors as well as the hindrances. I anticipate the results will help recruiters and mobilizers recognize blind spots and be more effective.”

Though the terms launch and long-term were not defined in the survey, the goal was to identify the factors which most helped people
- make a commitment
- and then follow-through to go their first time
- as the beginning of a missionary career.

DESIGN

• A workgroup at In His Image Int’l in Tulsa developed an initial open-ended survey and received 20 responses. Then that workgroup took those open-ended responses and created a Likert-scale draft survey. This draft survey was tested and revised using responses of an additional 12 current or recent long-term missionaries.

• Revised again after reviewing 253 answers from the survey of healthcare missionaries which included “When this survey is adapted for long-termers are not in healthcare, are there any survey changes you suggest to make it more effective?”

• Further revised after counsel from MissionNext and The Traveling Team
PRESENTATION

• Survey Monkey via a web address so others could take it who were not on the email lists
• Factors and hindrances were presented to each person in random order
• Survey did not use any Christian or mission words to protect those in restricted access countries

EXAMPLE

“When you were first deciding about going into long-term service internationally, there were likely factors that helped or hindered your journey. Please rate the following 18 factors as not significantly helpful or definitely significantly helpful for you launching long-term, e.g.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor(s)</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Did not help</th>
<th>Helped a little</th>
<th>Helped some</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Very helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supportive spouse (or potential spouse)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Did not help</td>
<td>Helped a little</td>
<td>Helped some</td>
<td>Helpful</td>
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</table>
DISCLAIMER

- Screening and retention are more important than launching. The ReMAP surveys have covered retention already.
- Two Launch survey comments:
  “For me, it's not about more people, it's about suitable people. I've been supervising missionaries for 15 years and would prefer less who stay longer and accomplish more.”

  “Launching is one thing. Sticking it out is another. You can launch a thousand ships, but if they all sink in the harbor, you just cluttered up the harbor and got nowhere.”

DISTRIBUTION

- Sent June 2015 to agencies who are members of MissionNext and Missio Nexus with request they send to all their missionaries
- Invited responses from readers of Brigada and Ask a Missionary e-newsletters
- Closed survey after receiving 466 responses over two months
RESPONSES NOT ANALYZED

• Only anticipated going one or two years when they launched
• Launched first to North America
• Duplicates (identified by email or IP address)
• Those over age 70 (23 respondents). But their comments were retained.

DEMOGRAPHICS

• 299 Responses
• Male 53%, Female 47%
• 46 Agencies Represented
• Passport country USA 85%, all others less than 5% each
• Destination Region First Launch
  Western Europe 18%
  Sub-Saharan Africa 17%
  South Asia 12%
  East Asia 11%
  Rest less than 10%
• Currently a long-termer: yes 77%, no 23%
GENERATIONS

Generational characteristics will not fit every person born during the same time period.

- Geography may make a difference. Attitude and values of a previous generation linger longer in rural areas.
- Personality types and family dynamics influence individual attitudes and behaviors
- Generations overlap at the end points, divisions are not hard and fast

GENERATION RANGES

- Millennials* 20-37 yrs. old as of 2015
- Gen Xers* 38-50 yrs. old
- Boomers born 51-69 yrs. old
- Builders 70+ yrs. old

* Note classic Millennial/Gen Xers are 3 yrs. different than above, i.e. 20-34 yrs. old/35-50 yrs. old
The adjustment was made for this report to have enough respondents in “Millennial” category for meaningful comparison
RESPONSES ANALYZED

- 60 Millennials
- 69 Gen Xers
- 170 Boomers
= 299 Total Analyzed

Margin of error 5.7%

LIMITATIONS

- Participants
  - Missed those in restricted access countries who did not want to risk being identified with survey
  - Different people and different generations understand terms like mentoring or coaching differently
- Recall bias
  - Difficult to remember accurately years later
- Analysis
  - Only did simple percentage comparisons of subsets
  - Potential for future: ANOVA comparisons, data mining
OTHER LIMITATIONS

• Survey options
  – Based on initial open-ended survey with 20 responses
  – May have missed factors such as passion for justice, call to domestic missions

• Culture
  – Most respondents middle class North Americans with university education
  – Thus, corresponding factors are more individualistic than group-oriented, e.g. decision making, support-raising

Positive Factors
FACTOR #1

98% Guidance or call from God
i.e. 98% of responses analyzed were Helpful or Very Helpful.

Comments:
“The only thing to overcome all the obstacles is a deep conviction of God's leading plus the opportunity to see real needs and practical ways to meet them. A half-hearted conviction is not enough.”
“Does deep conviction come through prayer and/or other means?”

FACTOR #2

91% Desire to share the good news
83% Millennials
90% Gen Xers
94% Boomers

One millennial wrote:
“At first sharing the gospel sounded like proselytizing on the street, which I don’t like. But I am drawn to using my skills to build relationships and sharing the good news through authentic conversations.”
FACTOR #3

80% Supportive friend(s)

For singles, this varied some by generation:
  83% Millennials
  75% Gen Xers
  86% Boomers

Suggested application: encourage missionaries on home assignment to mobilize their friends.

FACTOR #4

68% Supportive spouse (or potential spouse)
  50% Millennials
  63% Gen Xers
  76% Boomers

which closely reflects the % married when first went
  50% Millennials
  62% Gen Xers
  82% Boomers

and this is probably related to average age when first went
  27 yrs Millennials
  32 yrs Gen Xers
  36 yrs Boomers
WHICH IS FACTOR #5
THAT IS, “THE SWING VOTE”?

Consider these seven factors and check your estimate of the next factor respondents found most helpful ...

- Conference(s) about international opportunities
- Mentor(s)
- Personal interaction with long-term worker(s)
- Reading biographies of long-termers
- Sermon(s) or worship or other with my church
- Short-term trips two months or less
- Supportive agency, leader or team to join

Please choose your answer to the previous question before continuing.
FACTORS #5-11

The factor in below list respondents found most helpful...

- 39% Conference(s) about international opportunities
- 51% Mentor(s)
- 64% Personal interaction with long-term worker(s)
- 46% Reading biographies of long-termers
- 52% Sermon(s) or worship or other with my church
- 51% Short-term trips two months or less
- ✔️ 69% Supportive agency, leader or team to join

FACTORS #5-6

69% Supportive agency, leader or team to join
64% Personal interaction with long-term worker(s)
CONFIRMED BY AUSTRALIAN STUDY

In 2013 semi-structured interviews of 42 missionaries between 24 and 49 years old were done by three faculty at Sydney Missionary and Bible College.

*In deciding to launch long-term,* 100% of interviewees were influenced by missionaries. No other factor was over 50%.
- informal talks after home assignment presentations.
- short-term trips to see missionaries in their day-to-day ministries and how they too could be missionaries

*In selecting an agency,* more than half of the interviewees chose on the basis of a positive relational connection with missionaries and agency representatives. “The thing I really liked was that he never pressured us to join his agency.”

PERSONAL INTERACTION AND CCHF SURVEY

Christian Community Health Fellowship (CCHF) in USA did surveys of students in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2014.

Over 80% of students who
- did a rotation *early in their training* with a Christian physician who is practicing quality medicine and integrating his/her faith in their medical practice and who
- attended a healthcare missions conference
chose a path to serve the poor through missional medicine for a significant portion of their careers.
SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS

69% Supportive agency, leader or team to join
64% Personal interaction with long-term worker(s)

1. Missionaries on home assignment may be more effective at mobilizing than stateside based mobilizers.
2. Missionaries who host short-term teams should build in small group or one-on-one time with those willing to explore long-term
3. Missionaries who meet an aspiring long-termer should continue that relationship via long-distance mentoring

HOW DISCOVERED AGENCY?

Consider these seven connection points and check your estimate of the one that *millennial* respondents checked most often about how they discovered the agency they joined…

- Conference(s) about international opportunities
- Friend or family member
- Pastor, mentor, leader or teacher
- Personal interaction with long-term workers with that agency
- Short-term international trip with that agency
- Social media
- Web browsing
HOW DISCOVERED AGENCY?

Consider these seven connection points and check your estimate of the one that *millennial* respondents checked most often about how they discovered the agency they joined…

- 13% Conference(s) about international opportunities
- 29% Friend or family member
- 21% Pastor, mentor, leader or teacher
- 39% Personal interaction w/ long-term workers that agency
- 23% Short-term international trip with that agency
- 2% Social media
- 11% Web browsing

MOBILIZER EFFECTIVENESS

For those who joined an agency when first launched, estimate how many respondents considered the mobilizer-recruiter helpful in the decision process to go:

A. 0-25%
B. 25-50%
C. 50-75%
D. 75-100%
MOBILIZER EFFECTIVENESS

For those who joined an agency when first launched, estimate how many respondents considered the mobilizer-recruiter helpful or very helpful in the decision process to go:

A. 0-25%
B. 25-50%
C. 50-75%
D. 75-100%

Answer: 41%

36% Millennials
33% Gen Xers
45% Boomers

MOBILIZERS AND MILLENIALS

Possible reasons some mobilizers are less effective

1. Many mobilizers are Boomers and may not relate well with Millennials who are not drawn to long-term commitments or to serving many years with little obvious spiritual fruit.
2. Mobilizers who are Millennials may not be equipped to serve as a mentor to their peers.
3. A numbers emphasis or a list of contacts so large that most only get occasional contact is not relational. In contrast, the survey results indicate fewer and deeper contacts result in more recruits. Email and social media is not enough. In person meetings and live phone calls are important to build relationship.
MOBILIZER HELPED

Survey Comments

“I was very impacted by the humility and approachability of several of the career missionaries I met with my organization, as well as their genuine interest in what God was doing in my life at the time. It was a large factor in my choosing to join this organization.”

“The recruiter was very patient and walked with us over the course of several years of discernment.”

MOBILIZER DID NOT HELP

Survey Comments

“I contacted workers from two agencies, one didn't have time to answer my questions and the other did. I ended up with the one who had the worker who fielded my questions. I would strongly suggest that all workers be ready to help people interested in missions.”

“Had contacts with multiple mobilizers, they were more obstructive than helpful.”

“Our mission has definitely improved in their recruiting process.”
MULTIPLE MOBILIZERS

Survey: If you joined an agency, did you have previous contact with a mobilizer/recruiter from a different agency before you had contact with the agency you later joined?
A. 0-25%
B. 25-50%
C. 50-75%
D. 75-100%
Answer: 42%
   48% Millennials
   31% Gen Xers
   44% Boomers

PERSONAL CONNECTION

What percentage of respondents indicated they had personal connection to long-term workers before they launched themselves e.g. parents, relative, close friend...
A. 0-25%
B. 25-50%
C. 50-75%
D. 75-100%
Answer: 57%
10% Parents
17% Other Relatives
14% Close Friends & Went to Join Them
41% Close Friends Somewhere Else
SURVEY CONCLUSION #1

Effective launching is more relational than informational

FACTORS #7-16

62% Practical service for the underserved
61% Supportive parents
52% Sermon(s) or worship or other with my church
51% Short-term trips two months or less
51% Mentor(s)
46% Reading biographies of long-termers
39% Short-term trips two months or more
39% Conference(s) about international opportunities
37% Perspectives course or other m. course
26% Sermon(s) or worship or other with a campus ministry
PRACTICAL SERVICE

62% Desire for practical service to underserved
  83% Millennials
  54% Gen Xers
  58% Boomers

SUPPORTIVE PARENTS

61% Supportive parents
  75% Millennials
  64% Gen Xers
  54% Boomers
MENTORS

Mentor Helpful/Very Helpful 51%
  70% Millennials
  37% Gen Xers
  50% Boomers

No Mentor 17%
  5% Millennials
  19% Gen Xers
  20% Boomers

MENTORING NEEDED

Survey Comment
“Mentorship, mentorship, mentorship; There are too many siren songs to pull those who indicate a desire to serve away from their track. This is the HUGE opportunity to bring 10 times the number to service.”
MENTORING/COACHING

Recommendations:
Assuming that any experienced missionary can mentor is like assuming anyone who speaks English can teach it effectively. Much of this can be coaching - may need more than one coach for different areas.
Mentoring: Follow mentee’s agenda
Good match of mentor and mentee so expectations are in harmony
Long distance: start with practical topics. Later deeper issues.
In person: frequent, listen well, find a book to work through together, discuss heart issues, be available by phone, text, social media

COACHING

Example: The Journey Deepens weekend retreats

The weekend consists of worship, large-group teaching sessions, small-group sessions, one-on-one appointments, mission agency interaction with prospective missionaries, and quiet time breakouts. Attendance is intentionally limited to create personal interaction between individuals, coaches and fellow sojourners with the Holy Spirit's guidance.
LONG DISTANCE MENTORING/COACHING

Example: www.medicalmissionsmentoring.com

This mentoring ministry seeks to match a mentor with someone who aspires to become a healthcare missionary. This will not be time consuming. Connect monthly by phone, Skype, email or in person. After six months decide to continue or not.

Here are the steps to get started

1. Update your MedicalMissions.com profile  
   Optional first step in the profile: check "I work in a secure area" so your information can only be accessed by mentors and mentoring administrators.

2. Tell us about your interests and experiences

ASKAMISSIONARY.COM

175+ questions  
600+ answers to those questions  
8,000 unique web visitors per month  
2,000 subscribers to quarterly e-newsletter

Answers from experienced missionaries about:

- **Guidance**: calling, country choice, fear, obstacles, parental opinions
- **Funding**: support raising, financial need, retirement, debt, options
- **Mission Agencies**: how to select, denominations, going independently, why join
- **Singles/Families**: spouse differences, children, dating, single on the field
- **Training**: preparation, degrees, bible, language, cultural, mentors
- **Professional Skills**: healthcare, education, business, engineering
ASKAMISSONARY SAMPLE QUESTIONS

How can I know if God is leading me to become a missionary?

What perspective should I take towards raising prayer and financial support?

Why do many missionaries join agencies?

What types of training should I consider?

What do missionaries wish they had known before they first went?

How do I handle my debts and still go into missions?

CONFERENCE(S)

39% Conferences about international opportunities
   33% Millennials
   25% Gen Xers
   47% Boomers

Mobilizers should see those they meet at conferences as just beginning the journey. Success is beginning a supportive relationship and does not need to be receiving an application to join.
PERSPECTIVES OR OTHER M. COURSE

37% Helpful or Very Helpful
   42% Millennials
   30% Gen Xers
   38% Boomers

39% No course
   32% Millennials
   39% Gen Xers
   41% Boomers

SHORT-TERM TRIPS TWO MONTHS OR LESS

Average number of these trips 2.2 / 28 % did zero trips
   3.4 Millennials / 7% did zero trips
   2.6 Gen Xers / 21% did zero trips
   1.7 Boomers / 39% did zero trips

Helpful/Very Helpful 51%
   63% Millennials
   64% Gen Xers
   41% Boomers
SHORT-TERM TRIPS TWO MONTHS OR LESS

Hong Kong study facilitated by WEC

A total of 193 respondents from 16 missions organizations who went on trips Oct 2012 – Sep 2013. Average age 33. Most single and had university degree.

Surveyed how likely was it that participants would go onto long-term before the trip – and after the trip.
Result: the short-term had only a minimal effect on their sense of calling to long-term

SHORT-TERM TRIPS TWO MONTHS OR LESS

Hong Kong recommendations:

• Participants go as an individual rather than in a team;
• Participants live with the missionary on the field;
• Give the greatest possible exposure to the three most challenging elements of long-term missionary work – culture, language and interpersonal relationships;
• Keep realistic expectations of the short-term in terms of God’s guidance.
SHORT-TERM TRIPS TWO MONTHS OR LESS

Suggestions from CMDA Medical Mission Summit:

• Don’t just use short-termers to only do menial tasks, but take train them in concepts about global missions and transferrable skills. Respect their time and investment.
• Provide some fulfilling interaction with nationals
• During the short-term interact with missionaries and long-term opportunities
• Multiple follow-ups after trip

SHORT-TERMS TWO OR MORE MONTHS

Average number of these trips 0.6 / 59 % did zero

Helpful/Very Helpful 34% (which was almost everyone who did one)

17 of 19 Millennials in a two year program indicated Helpful/Very Helpful
“Thanks to Samaritan’s Purse Post Residency Program for quickly connecting us to a location, providing financial assistance and reliable support, easing the visa application, and so much more.”

Other comment about that same program:
“Somehow convince those who go that they should go indefinitely, not ‘We'll go for two years and see how it goes.’ Or the two years just ‘inoculates’ them: ‘Been there, done that.’
Hindrances

HINDRANCES #1-10

Indicated Concern or Strong Concerns, e.g.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>55. Raising financial support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not have to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

36% Raising financial support
24% Concerns about being far away from family and friends
18% Long process/time before launching
18% Concerns about needing to learn another language
14% Concerns for child(ren) or future children
11% Fear of isolation or loneliness
11% Difficult to find a good fit with a location or team
10% Difficult to find a match with an agency/organization to send us
  8% Objections from parent(s) and/or concerns for their health, aging
  8% Health issues - personal or in my family
HINDRANCES #11-20

8% Feelings of inadequacy
7% Attracted by future opportunities (position, salary, etc.) if I stayed
6% Concerns about being a single and going long-term
5% Unsure of God's guidance or confirmation to go long-term
5% Fear of burnout
5% Established where I was and I did not want to leave
5% Concerns for safety
4% Objections from spouse (or potential spouse)
3% Student loans
1% Objections from friend(s)

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

36% Concerns about Raising Financial Support
   44% Millennials
   32% Gen Xers
   34% Boomers
CONCERNS FAR AWAY

24% Concerns about being far away from family and friends
   32% Millennials
   17% Gen Xers
   23% Boomers

FEAR OF BURNOUT

5% Concerns
   16% Millennials
   3% Gen Xers
   2% Boomers

One millennial wrote:
We value work/life balance. The concept of rest is Biblical as shown by God in creation and throughout Christ’s ministry.
STUDENT LOANS

3% Concerns
- 7% Millennials
- 3% Gen Xers
- 1% Boomers

78% No Loans
- 61% Millennials
- 80% Gen Xers
- 83% Boomers

STUDENT LOAN COMMENTS

Income Based Repayment is too new for results to appear. Here are comments from medical missionaries about the MedSend missionary physician loan repayment program which began 1992.

Comments:
“I do not know if we would have made it to the field if it were not for MedSend! I could see us getting established at home as we paid off loans and then comfortable, even though we had a strong call to go into missions.”

“We need more options for loan repayment while serving overseas. Many colleagues are delaying going overseas until loans are paid off as they are not comfortable with the duration of loan repayment with MedSend.”
HINDRANCES SUMMARY

Note: none above 40%

Comment:
“Ask Christians who aren’t going into long-term service internationally why they aren’t.”

One mobilizer estimates the main hindrances are:
- Unsupportive spouse
- Family health issues which arise
- Losing vision during years of training (especially long for physicians)
- Becoming entrenched in North America while paying off school debt

SURVEY CONCLUSION #2

Need multiple *Relocating for the Gospel* Surveys in 2016 to identify strong concerns that kept many from going, i.e. those who wanted to go and never did because of insurmountable obstacle(s) missed in this 2015 *Launch* Survey.

If you have a group to survey please contact launchsurvey@inhisimage.org
## Decision Stages

### DECISION STAGES

58. Which stage(s) of your life were most significant in making the decision to go long-term? (check all stages that were significant)

- 56% Undergraduate
- 42% Teenage Years
- 32% Career
- 27% Childhood
- 15% Grad school
- 14% Zero to 2 Years Before Launching
- 4% Postgraduate Training e.g. Medical Residency
- 2% Retirement
MULTIPLE STAGES

Comments:
“What helped me launch most was my desire to fulfill the commitment I made to God to serve Him as a child wherever He would send me. I was holding nothing back even after the many years of preparation.”

Average number of stages checked 1.9

COMMENTS ABOUT STAGES

“Get the children early talking about missions before their minds get cluttered up by other stuff. Missionaries who will be honest about their struggles with teenagers. Appropriate short-term apprentices with long-termers instead of vacation teams.”

“Challenge young people before the ‘buts’ begin. Encourage conferences and web sites to see what God is doing already - those things all contributed strongly to my call.”

“We need more active recruiting by mentors, churches, other leaders of potential candidates. In high school, college, medical school, the usual path is ‘I’m good at x, maybe I’ll try this profession’ What if at each phase others were watching, approaching, challenging students and professionals personally. ‘I noticed that you are strong in faith and good at x; have you considered cross-cultural missions as a career?’”
SURVEY CONCLUSION #3

Launching is like a marathon.

WRAP UP
FOR MORE ON THIS SURVEY

Presentations Scheduled
- January 21 MissioNexus Webinar
- Article on this survey to be submitted to EMQ for possible publication

www.launchsurvey.wordpress.com
- MissionNext Launch survey: slides and executive summary
- Healthcare Missionary Launch survey: slides and executive summary

References Cited

Acknowledgements
- All comments entered by survey respondents
- Leave additional comments or questions
- Enter your email address to receive
  - future revisions of this Launch Survey report
  - report on upcoming 2016 surveys Relocating for the Gospel

LAUNCH SURVEY CONCLUSIONS

1. Effective launching is more relational than informational

2. Some obstacles may be almost insurmountable so in 2016 do multiple Relocating for the Gospel Surveys

3. Launching is like a marathon
IMPORTANT SURVEY COMMENTS

Pray for God's insight into the problem of too few workers.

Pray specifically and intentionally.

Pray. Revival is preceded by committed prayer.

Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send workers into His fields.