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Book Notes -- David Mays, ACMC

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SEND ME!

Your Journey to the Nations

Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1999, 136 pp., \$7.99

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HokSend

Available from ACMC. Call 1-800-798-ACMC.

There are not many helpful career planning guides for missionaries. This one really hits the spot. Introduced at the ACMC National Conference this past July, *Send Me!* is a very practical and helpful guide for becoming a cross-cultural missionary - or for helping someone else become a missionary. It is totally revised and updated from *You Can So Get There From Here*, initially published by MARC in 1979 and updated through ten editions by 1986. The book is quite attractive and well formatted. Each chapter includes guidelines and suggestions, real-life examples, a check-up sheet, and practical exercises. The interactive planning tools (such as an excellent church planting profile (26-7), personal assessment inventories, and journal worksheets) make the book truly useful.

The book is divided into four sections.

- 1) A Personal Fitness Assessment
- 2) Getting Ready – Stretching (spiritual formation, experience at home, exposure to other cultures, basic education)
- 3) Getting There – Linking (the sending church and agency, ministry assignment search, hands-on missionary training)
- 4) Getting Established – Bonding (apprenticeships and internships, lifelong learning, finishing strong)

It also includes four helpful appendices:

- 1) models of mission career paths of several sending agencies,
- 2) a list of resources for World Christians,
- 3) a directory of missions training schools, and
- 4) web resources.

Some points and quotes from the book.

“But in order to see heaven packed with the final ingathering of worshipers from all the nations, we need a strong, new, international army of long-term, cross-cultural workers.”

19 “They are the ones who will have the inexpressible joy of seeing those whom they served join the vast multitudes already surrounding the throne of God and worshipping the Lamb.” 20

Definition of Missions

“The New Testament affirms that the apostolic messenger (the missionary) becomes the person authoritatively sent out by God and the church on a special mission with a special message, with particular focus on the gentiles/nations.” 20

“...’missionary’ is simply not a generic term for all Christians doing everything the church does in service to the kingdom of God. We do a disservice to the ‘missionary’ by universalizing its use.” 21

Format for the book. “After the background of each step is discussed, you are asked to respond to a number of questions. These will guide your reflection on what you have been thinking and will help you keep a journal of where you are on this exciting journey.” 22

Equipping Guidelines for Adequate Pre-field Training:

1. Seek equipping/training specifically applicable to your ministry goals.
2. Seek equipping/training that will shape you in character, skills, and knowledge.
3. Seek equipping/training in non-formal, formal, and informal contexts. 29-30

Seven learning contexts: home, job, church, formal school, mission agency, future national church, interpersonal relationships. 30

“Missions, then, is ‘His-story’ – God’s process of calling disciples from every nation to follow Him and give Him glory as ‘true worshipers.’ So as we go and make disciples, our essential task is to call the peoples and nations of the world to worship Him too.” 34

Personal Formation 34-5

- ◆ Are you learning to pray?
- ◆ Are you studying God’s Word?
- ◆ What is your sense of God’s ‘call’ on your life?
- ◆ Are you involved with other Christians?
- ◆ Are you telling the story of the reality of Christ in your own life?
- ◆ Is there a fragrance to you life, an unmistakable evidence of the presence of God?

How does God lead or ‘call’? pp. 36-7

Excellent recommendations for getting good ministry experience at home. 39 ff.

“..the more ministry experience you have at home, the more effective you’ll be in a foreign context.” “The most important way to prepare yourself for the rigors of missions is to live a life of service at home first.” 42

“I’m for short-termers. But there are some things that can only be done by the career, long-term missionary. That’s why we still need many more ‘lifers.’” 69

“Short-termers may leave a legacy, but the one who stays longer is able to invest over the years in lasting discipleship and leader development.” 69

“But the church will be established among unreached peoples primarily by the long-term missionaries who are willing to invest at least 10 to 20 years of their lives....” 70

Some Key Questions and Issues: 71

1. What are your deepest motives
2. In what ways have you been tested spiritually?
3. What aspects of the global mission task seem to require longer-term missionaries?
4. What does your interest and gift inventory report?
5. What kinds of specific education and training do you need?
6. In what ways is your church committed to these same passions?

The Missionary Preparation Matrix – a summary grid of mission roles/careers and steps of preparation. P. 74

“Christian decision-making can be divided into two categories. The first involves areas that are specifically addressed in the Bible. ... The second category involves areas where the Bible gives no command or principle to follow.” 75

Indicators for the second category: 76-7

1. Common sense
2. Spiritual counsel
3. Personal desires
4. Circumstances
5. Scripture
6. Prayer
7. Previous experience

“It is difficult to really understand a culture until you can *think* in its terms – until you can use its idioms, laugh at its jokes, weep at its pain.” 81

“Mission internships in urban centers throughout North America provide ideal preparation for incarnational living among city dwellers, especially the urban poor.” 82

“If North Americans are weak in speaking other languages, they are even weaker in understanding and being sensitive to other cultures.” 82

“Missions is going to be tougher than you imagine, but hang in there. It’s worth it!” 92

“...setting aside intentional time for personal growth and development should be a vital component of every missionary’s ministry plan.” 97

The Section on developing a personal development plan is good for anyone. pp. 97-99

“...I personally need ongoing encouragement to keep my eyes on the Ultimate Goal, not the management goals of my organization, not the false, self-imposed goals of a society that

values high productivity, measurable and tangible outcomes, an ever-increasing profile of apparent success (whether you get there by the humble route or not!).” 101

Finish Well. “It means coming to the end of life race with integrity, not fame.” 101

“Vision – the ability to see God’s preferable future – is the heartbeat of the personal mission statement. Vision is a word picture that describes what you believe God desires to accomplish. It flows from the heart of God as He invites us to participate in the redemptive work of His kingdom. Our task is neither to invent the future nor our calling; our task is to discover what God is doing and join Him in it. Vision describes that work.

Vision involves passion! It motivates and captivates the leader. It is what the heart yearns to see accomplished. Healthy vision is specific, not general. Personal vision answers this question: If you knew that you would not fail, what would you do, in your lifetime, for the glory of God?” 109

“Ask these questions as a means of sharpening your work on vision.

- ◆ Can you see it? (True vision is a word picture that describes what God will accomplish. The more vague it is, the less motivating.)
- ◆ Is it bigger than you? (Godly vision demands faith, and faith implies risk.)
- ◆ Is it anchored to God’s work in your past?
- ◆ Does it engage your passion?
- ◆ Would you do it if you didn’t get paid, or would you pay for the chance to do it?” 110