

# ADVOCACY



## *Advocacy in Cross-Cultural Missions*

### SCRIPTURES

*“And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none.”* Ezekiel 22:30

*“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”* 1 John 2:1

*“Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.”* Colossians 4:12

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### QUOTES

*“I have always said that I have no idea how or why God has carried me over so many funny and hard places and made these hordes of people submit to me, or why the Government should have given me the privilege of a Magistrate among them, except in answer to prayer made at home for me. It is all beyond my comprehension. The only way I can explain it is on the ground that I have been prayed for more than most. Pray on, dear one — the power lies that way.”* Mary Slessor, Scottish missionary to Nigeria, in a letter to a friend who had faithfully prayed for her

*“Blessed is the influence of one true, loving human soul on another.”* George Eliot – pseudonym of English novelist Mary Ann Evan Cros

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

As a result of the readings, discussion and activities in this session, the candidate will:

- understand the importance of advocacy in the plan of redemption gain a

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perspective on how God has designed the church to fulfill the responsibility of advocacy

- observe what an advocacy process looks like
- recognize and successfully select individuals who naturally play an advocacy role in their lives and those who could in the future
- initiate a practical approach to the development of an advocacy team

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## ADVOCACY — TWO FACETS

An advocate is one who pleads the cause of another, who represents another and acts in his name. An advocate is one who uses his influence on behalf of another by his request.

Advocacy has two facets: (1) The missionary's role as advocate for the lost and (2) the church's role as advocates for the missionaries.

You serve as an advocate for the people you are called to minister to. Other people are to be enlisted to advocate for you.

As you think about the larger scope of God's offer of redemption to mankind, you will see that the advocacy theme permeates the missionary call.

Since the fall of man, the world has been in need of advocates. Woven into the fabric of God's redemptive plan is His calling forth of advocates. Scripture abounds with examples of advocates not only for individuals but for cities, for nations, for the world. Chief among advocates is Jesus. As Charles Wesley wrote: "Jesus, my Advocate above, My Friend before the throne of love."

## JESUS: OUR ADVOCATE

Jesus is the perfect example of advocacy. The Savior was God's way to reach us in order to offer cleansing from our sins, a restored relationship with our Creator, and eternal fellowship with Him. We were created for fellowship with God. We were designed for community. Yet, as we know, sin broke all relationships. It was then God began to look for an advocate.

*"I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none." Ezekiel 22:30*

In each generation, among various nations, God's eyes roamed to and fro looking for people through whom He could bring healing, hope, and deliverance. God established a priesthood through which sacrifices were offered up for the sins of the people. Then God provided the ultimate advocate. *"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* Romans 5:8

As our advocate, Jesus pleads our cause, represents us, acts on our behalf, intercedes for us, and uses his influence by our request. *"My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1*

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How does this bring us into the role of an advocate? God in His sovereignty has decided to work with people. He invites us to join His work of redemption. As believers, we then become advocates on behalf of the world. Jesus Christ is our example, and we follow His lead.

### WHAT DOES ADVOCACY ACCOMPLISH?

#### For a nation or people group?

- delays the hand of God from judgment to allow for repentance
- invites God into the culture
- reclaims land for God
- abolishes strongholds
- advances the kingdom
- influences the provision of resources
- thwarts the enemy
- becomes a contagion for those around you for awareness and engagement

#### For a cross-cultural worker?

- provides personal prayer cover
- a spiritual anchor for the candidate/cross-cultural worker
- brings encouragement, security, and stability
- spiritual counseling, mentoring, and someone to look to
- accountability
- generates a team mentality
- is a connector to the sending church, home culture and supporting communities
- mobilizes volunteer groups

#### We can conclude that being an advocate is...

- essential
- a part of God's redemptive plan
- following Christ's example
- important to people and nations.

#### REFLECT #1

1. Describe the importance of advocacy in God's redemptive plan.
2. Which people group do you sense God is calling you to be an advocate for?
3. Identify how you have been an advocate for someone or some people group. Describe the details of the role you played.

### WILLIAM CAREY – ADVOCATE

William Carey, born in 1761, apprenticed to a shoemaker at age 12 and captivated by God as a young man, is known as one of the greatest advocates for the lost world. At a ministers' meeting in 1786, Carey raised the question of whether it was the duty of all Christians to

spread the Gospel throughout the world. One gentleman is said to have retorted: “Young man, sit down; when God pleases to convert the heathen, he will do it without your aid and mine.”

Often called the *Father of Modern Missions*, William Carey was driven to fight the resistance to missions as he founded the Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen (now the Baptist Missionary Society) in October 1792. The charter members of this little mission group concerned themselves with practical matters such as raising funds, as well as deciding where they would direct their efforts. Eventually, their efforts led to William Carey being sent to India to serve cross-culturally in a day when mission activity was unheard of.

The following case study written about William Carey’s life is an excerpt from chapter two of *Giants of the Missionary Trail* by Eugene Myers Harrison (<https://www.wholesomewords.org/missions/giants/biocarey2.html>).

As you read this case study, you’ll find it gives you a glimpse of two facets of advocacy: the missionary’s role as an advocate for the lost and the church’s role as advocates for missionaries. These two focal points for advocacy are woven into the missionary calling. The questions at the end of this excerpt will help you to consider the truths reflected in Carey’s life.

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#### CASE STUDY: THE COBBLER BECOMES DISCOVERER

The next episode in Carey’s missionary crusade was his deathless sermon at Nottingham, May 31, 1792. The occasion was the annual meeting of the Baptist churches of that district. Carey was to preach the opening sermon. As he rose to speak that historic morning, the woe and misery of an anguished world were surging through the channels of a single heart. He turned the searchlight upon two mighty truths of Scripture, particularly as enunciated in Isaiah 54. First, the Redeemer’s saving concern is as wide as humanity. “*Thy Redeemer ... The God of the whole earth shall He be called.*” Second, the Redeemer’s concern and the Church’s responsibility are co-extensive. When God says, “*Thy Redeemer,*” He is speaking to the Church and, therefore, to every individual Christian.

Spending most of his time on this second point, the cobbler-preacher rang out the challenge of God found in verses 2 and 3 of Isaiah 54: “*Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: ... lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes ... thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.*”

Carey was convinced that God was saying to the Church: “Rouse up from your complacency. Find larger canvas, stouter and taller tent poles, stronger tent pegs. Catch wider visions. Dare bolder programs. Rouse up and go forth to conquer for Christ even the uttermost parts and the isles of the sea.”

Carey’s soul was captivated by an epochal discovery. In consequence, he was dreaming of continents and empires to be brought under the sway of Christ. He was thinking not just of England or of Europe, but of the world. How the familiar scriptural expression burned in his soul!

“God so loved the world!”

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“Go ye into all the world!”

“Christ, the Savior of the world!”

“God in Christ reconciling the world!”

“A propitiation for the sins of the world!”

“Thy Redeemer ... the God of the whole earth!” All the passion of the inspired preacher’s heart was poured out in two stupendous exhortations: “Expect great things from God!”

“Attempt great things for God!”

Concerning the message, Dr. Ryland said, “If all the people had lifted up their voices and wept, as the Children of Israel did at Bochim, I should not have wondered at the effect; it would only have seemed proportionate to the cause, so clearly did Mr. Carey prove the criminality of our supineness in the cause of God!”

But alas! The people did not weep! They did not even pause to pray! To them, it was just another sermon, nice to listen to, but not to be taken too seriously. When Carey saw the people rising to leave, as usual, he seized Andrew Fuller’s hand and exclaimed in an agony of distress, “Are we not going to do anything? Oh, Fuller, call them back and let’s do something in answer to God’s call!”

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*EXPECTING GREAT THINGS FROM  
GOD, WILLIAM CAREY INSPIRED  
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That was a portentous moment in the history of Christ’s redemptive purpose. Deep called unto deep. Fuller, too, heard “God’s sigh in the heart of the world” and joined with Carey in demanding action. Before the meetings closed, a motion was passed to this effect: “Resolved, that a plan be prepared against the next Ministers’ Meeting at Kettering, for forming a Baptist Society for propagating the gospel among the heathen.”

Expecting great things from God, William Carey inspired others to join him in attempting great things for God.

This marks the birth of the modern Protestant missionary movement, which, during the succeeding century and a half, has sent many tens of thousands of consecrated heralds of the cross “into all the world” with a message of redemption and of social transformation through Christ.

### THE COBBLER DISCOVERS THE REDEEMER IS CALLING HIM TO FOREIGN SERVICE

Several months after the Nottingham meetings, the proposed missionary society was formed, subscriptions amounting to about \$65.00 were taken, and the group of subscribers looked around for missionaries, as well as for additional donors. They had also to decide in what field they would commence their missionary efforts. Their attention was forcibly directed toward India by contact with a Mr. Thomas who had returned to England after spending several years

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in India as a surgeon. He had also put forth considerable effort to spread the gospel and he had a stirring story to tell of conditions and missionary opportunities in India.

In the light of developing events, Carey kept asking the question, “What is now my part in this expanding enterprise?” With a wife and three children to support, should he not continue to shepherd the church now thriving at Leicester and to stir up missionary concern throughout England? Or did God desire him to become the leader of the overseas mission which he had so urged upon his brethren? Turning again to Isaiah 54, he discovered six startling words which immediately followed — indeed, were a part of his great text. These six words which stood out in letters of fire were these: “For the LORD hath called thee.”

The Holy Spirit confirmed in his soul that these words did constitute the divine call to him to cross the seas as a witness of the Redeemer’s concern for a lost world. The Cobbler who turned discoverer had made some phenomenal discoveries. None was more magnificent than this. “Columbus” was now highly resolved to sail the seas and to discover and claim for his Lord a vast new world of infinitely precious souls.

When Andrew Fuller, Secretary of the newly-formed missionary Society, read the account given by Mr. Thomas of conditions and gospel opportunities in India, he remarked that there was a gold mine in India, but it seemed almost as deep as the center of the earth. “Who will venture to explore it?” he asked. Carey was quick to reply, “I will venture to go down, but remember that you — you who remain at home must hold the ropes”. And by “holding the ropes” he was referring to the support of prayer and heart-concern, even more than of money. *Used with permission from [www.WholesomeWords.org](http://www.WholesomeWords.org).*

### REFLECT #2

1. Whom did Carey believe he was an advocate for and why?
2. What were the obstacles Carey had to overcome as an advocate?
3. What brought Andrew Fuller into the picture?
4. What relationship expectations are there between advocate and the one being advocated for?
5. What are two main binding connections in “holding the ropes”?

## THE CHURCH: LED BY THE SPIRIT

God has uniquely designed the church to answer the call of advocacy. We are a kingdom of priests, ministering as His agents to the world and bringing the world before Him.

*“So Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.’” (John 5:19)*

The Church is to join God in what He is doing. God is about the task of restoration; thus, the Church is to be about the task of restoration.

### Advocacy affected William Carey in two ways:

1. He became an advocate for those who didn’t know Jesus, which drew him eventually to answer the call to be “the one” who was sent out to bear witness in a cross-cultural setting.
2. He also asked someone who was walking with him and whose heart was equally stirred to join him as an anchor connecting him to his sending source.

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This is how the God of community transforms lives. One person connected to the heart of God, connected to a community, and sent out bearing witness. As William Carey was transformed, so was his home landscape, colleagues, family, and ultimately the world.

We read about a similar time when someone was “sent out” in Acts 13:2-3: “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.”

Here the Spirit of God was actively calling workers to His fields, keeping them deeply connected to their sending source for the purpose of redeeming the world. As we live in community and seek God’s wisdom, we too can naturally find ourselves both advocating for others as well as seeking out faithful men and women who will advocate for us.

### REFLECT #3

In William Carey’s story, the writer reflects, “Carey’s soul was captivated by an epochal discovery. In consequence, he was dreaming of continents and empires to be brought under the sway of Christ.”

1. Go back and reread the familiar scriptural expression that burned in Carey’s soul. Rewrite those sentences below.
2. What did the writer of Carey’s story mean by “deep called unto deep” in referring to Carey and Fuller’s connection?
3. What are some practical things you can do to begin to consider who could be part of your advocacy team?

## ADVOCACY TEAMS: BEYOND THE NORM

You will be asking people to join you in your advocacy task. They will be your home team, supporting you and your work in a variety of ways. For most, it will be something “beyond the norm” of anything they have ever participated in. It should be the norm, but it isn’t. It won’t be status quo, complacent, or for the faint of heart. It will be exciting, stretching, challenging, and worth it! Praise God!

“Sign me up, where do I start?” There are several steps you need to go through. First, realize you are not alone! This will bring you to an awareness of the enormity of the task God has called you to. From there, God will deepen your desire for a connection with His body—the church. And it ends with allowing God to use your life to ask the question: “Who will hold the ropes with me?”

### Individualism

Although you each answer the call of God as an individual, you are not a Lone Ranger or Tarzan. There is a balance that we must pay attention to in answering the call of God and living in community. Scripture bears out in many places this kingdom principle:

*“For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself.” Romans 14:7*

*“And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.” Ecclesiastes 4:12*

You don’t live independently of other believers. That’s not how it works. God has created you to work with other believers. You take your gifts, abilities, and heart, and match them with

others. God then takes all of us together and uses that for His glory. There the “I” becomes “we” and you find we can accomplish more in a team than is possible individually. Solomon said:

“One person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, ‘For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?’ This also is vanity and an unhappy business. Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!” Ecclesiastes 4:8-10

### **Awareness**

You will go through many stages and emotions as a part of being sent-out: “Normal” living, awareness for the heart of God, a calling to your role, the church’s approval, preparation for going, anticipated departure, honeymoon period, culture stress, ministry of love, life adjustments, blessings, disappointments, anticipation of return, cultural stress in reverse, and re-entry adjustment—just to name a few. This cycle may be repeated many times in the life of a cross-cultural worker.

### **Desire for Connection**

Companionship and the desire God placed within you for connection and teamwork can’t be taken lightly, but must be prayerfully entered into with a spirit of unity between the cross-cultural worker, sending churches, and the national church. Such unity displays the presence of the Holy Spirit and will become the bond that inspires each participant to long-term personal commitment and sacrifice. Unless there is good communication between the cross-cultural worker and the sending church, they will not be able to link their strategies. A dynamic of this teamwork is the cultivation of deep, personal relationships with long-term advocates.

### **Resolve to Act**

Once you’ve abandoned any isolationism, become aware of your great need for intentional community and advocacy, you must resolve to act in ways that will lead to the goal of establishing your own Advocacy Team to join you as you are sent out. Having a clear purpose in your own heart and mind, you must actively seek others in your fellowship who will bind themselves with you in the task of claiming the nations. For some, this may happen naturally in the course of your walk. For others, extra intentional efforts may be required. Sometimes it’s as simple as opening your eyes to those around you.

### **Calling Others to Join**

This “Calling Others to Join” will look different for each candidate, but the principles remain the same.

- Look for vibrant Christians who don’t seem to accept “the norm” as the path to accomplish the mission of God.
- Look for people whose hearts are stirred by people of other cultures, yet they haven’t heard a calling to go themselves.
- Look for people who have told you as you’ve spoken before the church that there was a special quickening in their pulse for the work of God as you shared your heart. (Implicit in this is that you are pursuing opportunities and avenues to share



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your heart with a variety of groups within your church. This must not wait until you are out the door. Begin this week.)

- Look for people who know God has directed them to be here at home, but He's also drawing them toward "something" more.

There are several things an Advocacy Team and the Sending Church will provide:

- prayer
- moral support
- logistical help
- financial support
- spiritual replenishment
- strategic thinking
- communication facilitation
- re-entry care

Solomon says he pities the one who falls and has no one there to support him. You need to be involved in kingdom work. You need to be involved with other people in your life, and take your giftedness, strength, and abilities, and unite them with others in the body of Christ. You need the mutual support this brings. When you unite with others, it's amazing how strong you can be and what you can accomplish.

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*...YOU ARE NOT A LONE RANGER OR  
TARZAN...*

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## ASKING THE QUESTION

The team of supporters, your advocacy team, will be your answer to the question: "Who will hold the ropes?" The greatest aid to abandoning isolation in order to embrace your mission is to know what you need, where to get it, and who can help you.

"There is a tremendous need for senders. And the need goes far beyond the traditional token involvement of showing up for a farewell party or writing out a check to missions. A cross-cultural worker needs the support of a team of people while he is preparing to go, while he is on the field and when he returns home.

A careful reading of Paul's missionary letters will reveal how much time he spent talking to his support team those who were involved with him in the ministry. Sometimes he complimented them, sometimes he expressed his loneliness in being away from them, sometimes he exhorted and challenged them. But he always thanked God for them.

"A support team of senders is just as critical to a missionary today." – *Serving as Senders* by Neal Pirola

*"For the Scripture says, 'Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they*

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*to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!'" Romans 10:11-15*

You may go through these six steps over and over in your calling to cross-cultural ministry. Each time allow God to reaffirm your role as an advocate as well as calling others to your advocacy team.

### REFLECT #4

Determine which step you find yourself at right now. Write a paraphrase of each of the steps, using it as a planning guide to lead to the development of your own advocacy team. 1. Individualism 2. Awareness 3. Desire for Connection 4. Resolve to Act 5. Calling Others to Join God asks us to join Him in kingdom work. Let's do something in answer to God's call. Begin this week to ask others to join you! Who will you ask?

## ADVOCACY TEAMS – A BIBLICAL POSITION

Moses was called by God to be an advocate for the nation of Israel. Repeatedly we find Moses acting on their behalf, pleading their cause, representing them, and using his influence for them. But Moses needed an Advocacy Team, too, and it was his father-in-law Jethro who told him so.

*"Moses' father-in-law said to him, 'What you are doing is not good. You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone. Now obey my voice; I will give you advice, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God, and you shall warn them about the statutes and the laws, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do. Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace.'" Exodus 18:17-23*

Moses remained on a learning curve until he could recognize for himself the job of an advocate was too heavy a burden to be carried alone.

*"I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness.'" Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone.'" Numbers 11:14-17*

This illustrates not just of the role of an advocate but of an Advocacy Team as well. We are given a keen reminder of the partnership and community necessary. We are reminded that cross-cultural workers on the front lines cannot do the work alone. There is a part we must each play in the work of God.

**REFLECT #5**

1. In what ways did Moses advocate for the people of Israel?
2. Summarize the practical plan Jethro provided to Moses to help him build a support system.
3. Describe the various actions taken as well as the results surrounding the day's events in Exodus 17:8-16.

ADVOCACY IN ACTION — EXAMPLES TO FOLLOW

**Old College Mates**

Some years ago, the record of a wonderful work of grace in connection with one of the stations of the China Inland Mission attracted a good deal of attention. Both the number and spiritual character of the converts had been far greater than at other stations where the consecration of the missionaries had been just as great as at the more fruitful place.

This rich harvest of souls remained a mystery until Hudson Taylor, on a visit to England, discovered the secret. At the close of one of his addresses, a gentleman came forward to make his acquaintance. In the conversation that followed, Mr. Taylor was surprised at the accurate knowledge the man possessed concerning this China Inland station. "But how is it," Mr. Taylor asked, "that you are so conversant with the conditions of that work?"

"Oh!" he replied, "The missionary there and I are old college-mates. For years we have regularly corresponded. He sends me names of enquirers and converts, and these I daily take to God in prayer."

At last the secret was found, a praying saint at home, praying definitely, praying daily, for specific cases among the heathen. That is the real intercessory missionary. (Excerpt from *The Purpose of Prayer* – 1925)

"The greatest thing anyone can do for God and man is pray. It is not the only thing; but it is the chief thing. The great people of the earth today are the people who pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer; nor those who say they believe in prayer; nor yet those who can explain about prayer; but I mean those people who take time to pray." (S.D. Gordon)

**Will You Be Our Advocate?**

I was quite unprepared for the question as I sat in the small conference room at a spiritual retreat we were hosting for missionaries in West Africa: "Will you be our advocate?" My thoughts were instantly chaotic: What's an advocate? What are you asking? What does it involve? Who are you, anyway?

In the days to follow, many of my questions were answered. This missionary family was asking me to take the lead in praying for them and the people they worked among, learning about their people group in order to enlist others to join me in partnering with the work being done in that region of the world. I was being asked to build a network of supporters whose primary focus was prayer cover.

Just as S.D. Gordon spoke of the priority of prayer and its unparalleled place to both God and man, Oswald Chambers said, "Prayer does not fit us for the greater work. Prayer is the greater work." Nothing draws a person (or nation) into our hearts more than to pray for them. There

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is a mysterious bond woven by God connecting our heart to another in concern, compassion, and love when we pray for them. It unleashes the powers of heaven into their lives and ours.

### MAKING IT UP AS YOU GO ~ NUTS AND BOLTS OF AN ADVOCACY TEAM

The following is a model for advocacy.

First Baptist Church of Arlington (FBCA) is my home church. Formal advocacy for an FBCA church member who senses God's calling to cross-cultural missions begins after they have been officially accepted into the Global Learning Laboratory (GLL), which is the training branch of GCPN. The candidate will identify one or two church members to become their **Lead Advocate(s)**. These will be people who have exhibited wisdom, spiritual maturity, and have influenced the candidate's faith-walk as a mentor or shepherd. A Lead Advocate agrees to support the candidate in prayer, encouragement, and in a variety of ways as the candidate pursues his or her calling.

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*PRAYER DOES NOT FIT US FOR THE  
GREATER WORK. PRAYER IS THE  
GREATER WORK.*

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Once God begins to clarify the where, when and how of the work the candidate is being called to, then a handful of other close friends, mentors, prayer warriors will be selected by the candidate to form their **Advocacy Team**. These additional advocates do not have to be members of the

candidates' sending church. This volunteer Advocacy Team walks with the candidate through the preparation stages prior to commissioning and serves as supporters for the cross-cultural worker during their term of service and for stateside seasons.

In the case of FBCA, Advocacy Teams are informal groups which are linked to the Direct Mission Sending Council (FBCA's elected entity) through the Advocacy Support branch of the Council. This branch helps the teams with training, coordination, developing a prayer network, and providing for the needs of the cross-cultural worker on the field.

Advocacy Teams also help keep the cross-cultural worker connected to their sending church by relaying messages and news from the sending church. They serve as a voice for the cross-cultural worker from the field through relaying messages, needs, and prayer requests in a variety of ways (e-newsletters, sharing with classes and various groups, etc.).

#### Start-up Guidelines: An Example

- Formal advocacy begins after the candidate is officially admitted into training.
- Typically, one or two advocates will be chosen individually by each candidate to be the Lead Advocate(s).
- The term of the advocate's service will generally be consistent with the preparation stage and the agreed-upon initial term of mission service.
- Lead Advocate must be a member of the sending church.
- Advocates must use discernment in maintaining confidentiality of the candidate/cross-cultural worker's prayer concerns. While the church's Minister of Missions or pastor should be informed of concerns that threaten the life or well-being of the

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worker, private matters should seldom be communicated widely, even in the form of prayer requests.

- Advocates can aid in fund-raising activities as decided by the policies of the sending church.

### Ten Responsibilities for a Good Advocate

1. Spend time investing in the candidate/cross-cultural worker on their journey.
2. Build strong, encouraging, honest friendships with him/her.
3. Offer spiritual counseling and mentoring support.
4. Engage in mutual prayer support. (Candidates want to pray for the Advocacy Team, too!)
5. Look for opportunities to encourage. Keep up with special events in the candidate's life and ensure they are recognized. Send cards, emails, phone calls, and gifts as the Lord prompts and enables.
6. Serve as a "connector" between the cross-cultural worker and the church.
7. Participate in, promote, and lead, when possible, educational efforts for the sending church to know the people group, nation, and culture which are the cross-cultural worker's heart people.
8. Establish a network of others who are committed to pray for the candidate/cross-cultural worker and the people group.
9. Be sensitive to the security situation in the country where your cross-cultural worker is serving.
10. Visit frequently with the candidate while they are stateside. When on the field, go see your cross-cultural worker, if possible.

Making it up as you "Go" gives cross-cultural workers and their support team a certain flow and flexibility. Our church's first candidate went through this process very quickly, causing us to be on a high learning curve. It could not have been much different for the early church. As we follow God's prompting and focus on the task of sending and being sent, it is amazing what God can accomplish.

### ADVOCACY ALERT: WARNING LABELS

Advocacy comes with warning labels. It is important to be aware the job of an advocate (whether it is for a nation, a people group, or an individual) will bring you into a spiritually vulnerable position.

Here's what I would say about this warning label: You are inviting people into something that is dangerous and, frankly, a lot of work. Have high expectations of your advocates, but be honest with them.

Cross-cultural work can be like jumping out of an airplane. Advocates are like parachutes. They should always be with you even if it's just the ministry of their presence. Going to work cross-culturally in answer to God's calling without an Advocate Team would be like jumping out of an airplane in flight without a parachute!

### **1. The Enemy Will Attack**

Satan has declared war on the ways of God, the purpose and mission of God, as well as on any sense of unity which believers experience. Satan can't stand to see God's people brought together. He will seek to destroy the unity of a church, a team, and your partnerships. He will seek to take out your prayer cover in a variety of ways. Though he may not be creative, he will be persistent. Satan wants to thwart anything that God is doing.

#### **About the enemy...**

- Acknowledge we're engaged in warfare.
- Remember the enemy hates God, anyone who belongs to God and anything godly.
- Satan is powerful and persistent.
- He will attempt to disrupt unity, deceive, disorient, distract and distance you from God, His purpose and calling.

### **2. United We Stand**

Think about the establishment of the Church. Jesus said, "I'm going to build the church. The gates of hell will not prevail against it." His followers took the same model, went all over the ancient world, and they built teams, churches, and partnerships. That's how they did missions and ministry. The church of Antioch partnered with Paul and Barnabas to send them out on mission. They stayed home and supported Paul and Barnabas. They blessed them, prayed for them, encouraged them financially, spiritually, emotionally, and in every other way. Paul and Barnabas went out, did the work and came back home to the church where they gave a report.

An advocate should be marked by fervent devotion for a person, a cause, or a people. Pray that you will be this kind of advocate. Pray God will bring similarly devoted people to partner with you.

#### **About You and an Advocacy Team...**

- We are uniquely designed for alliances.
- Teams can accomplish more.
- Teams provide an opportunity for mutual support.
- Teams offer relational blessings.
- The unity of Christ expressed by teams is powerful.
- Learn what it takes to keep a good advocacy team.

Advocacy comes with another warning label. But this time, it's good news! We don't ever need to get too far from these truths: We belong to God, and the Lord our God is a consuming fire!

*"Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire."* Hebrews 12:28-29

When the enemy attacks, the "going" seems slow, ministry/mission isn't coming together, and

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when it feels like your whole life is just being shaken to the core, we stand firm in the truth God has given us, something which can't be shaken. It's the foundation of the kingdom of God and a relationship with Him. It's the kind of life He offers us, one that will last when everything else is destroyed.

So even though Satan has declared war on all advocates, we know God will ignite us with the fire of His presence and purpose.

### REFLECT #6

1. What are the dangers of advocacy?
2. Where does the power of advocacy come from?
3. How will you summarize these two warning labels to your Advocacy Team?

## SO WHAT?

### Training Activities Before You Go

We often experience a huge disconnect between what we say we believe and what we do. There are times we look at the task before us and overwhelmingly realize the enormity of the mission. The people we would advocate for are messy, messed up, and sometimes vastly unlovable. But because we are called to advocate for them, nothing will release us from this great task.

However, the flip side of the coin reveals (if we look deeply enough into ourselves), we are messy, messed up, and sometimes vastly unlovable as well! So, the thought of inviting an individual, let alone an entire Advocacy Team, into the inner halls of our life can be extremely intimidating. You may ask yourself:

“Who do I ask?”

“How can I trust them?”

“Do I have to be totally honest?”

“Will they continue the journey with me if they come to know the real me?”

“What if I don't know anyone that well?”

As you think about the following questions and activities, remember the well-known advice on how to eat an elephant: One bite at a time. Pick one or two things from this study and focus your attention there for a season. Record your questions, struggles, successes, and failures in your Learning Journal.

### Imagine

Consider a day when you might stand on a hilltop and shout out the refrain: “You are no longer estranged from God. Your heart is no longer desolate and barren. Therefore, sing!” Imagine the sweetness and wonder of the redeeming grace you have experienced in your Master propelling you into concern for others who need restoration and the new life of Christ.

What will it take for you to become that advocate?

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### **Lifestyle**

What changes in priorities should you make to become an advocate? Whom do you wrestle in prayer for? Allow yourself to become an advocate as you seek those who will advocate for you. It will take sacrifices for you to pray for others “that they may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.” And it will take intentionality on your part to find those who will pray the same for you. How will you begin deliberately pursuing those who will become your advocates?

### **Formation**

Reflect on what has captivated your soul. How can you answer the call of God to join the fight?

Describe how God and kingdom objectives have captivated your soul. What will you do today to fan that flame?

### **Language and Customs**

How will you initiate the education of your sending church and other supporting churches so they may come to know your heart people? Consider the steps it will take to engage them in learning to love your people.

As you advocate for an individual or a nation, you must be fluent in at least two languages in order to excel in the role of advocacy: The language of “knowing your people” (of communicating who they are and God’s heart for them to your supporting churches), and the language of your God.

What is the language of your God?

Risk reaching out.

Are you presently involved with a mentor?

Who have you asked to speak truth into your life?

What would it take for you to be completely honest with your core support group?

Once you have advocates on board, what will you do with them?

Develop a plan of action for engaging your advocate(s) in your life, heart passion, and calling.

Stop talking about it or wishing for it. Risk reaching out for it! You will be blessed.

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## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS AND PRINCIPLES

**The following are the key thoughts highlighted in this session to reflect upon:**

- God looked for a man to step into the gap of advocacy so He could save the world.
- Advocacy is integral to God’s redemption plan.
- Jesus is our Advocate and example for us to follow.
- Be resolved to the pivotal importance of the role of an advocate.
- Consider the blessed influence of one true loving human soul on another.



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- Learn to recognize how deep calls to deep in selecting your Advocacy Team.
  - Form a team because you cannot do this alone.
  - Great power lies in prayer.
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## QUALITIES TO LOOK FOR IN ADVOCATES

- Devoted disciples seeking to know Jesus (not just about Him but experientially)
  - Men and women who have been faithfully on mission serving in a variety of ways within the kingdom and the sending church, desiring to make Jesus known through words and acts of service
  - People with teachable hearts
  - People of prayer
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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR *ADVOCACY*

Pirola, Neal. "Serving as Senders." In *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*. San Diego: Emmaus Road, International, 1991.

*SIM Serving in Missions* (<https://www.sim.org/>). Information for caring for your missionaries while they are preparing to go, while they are on the field, when they return home.

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## AUTHOR

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