

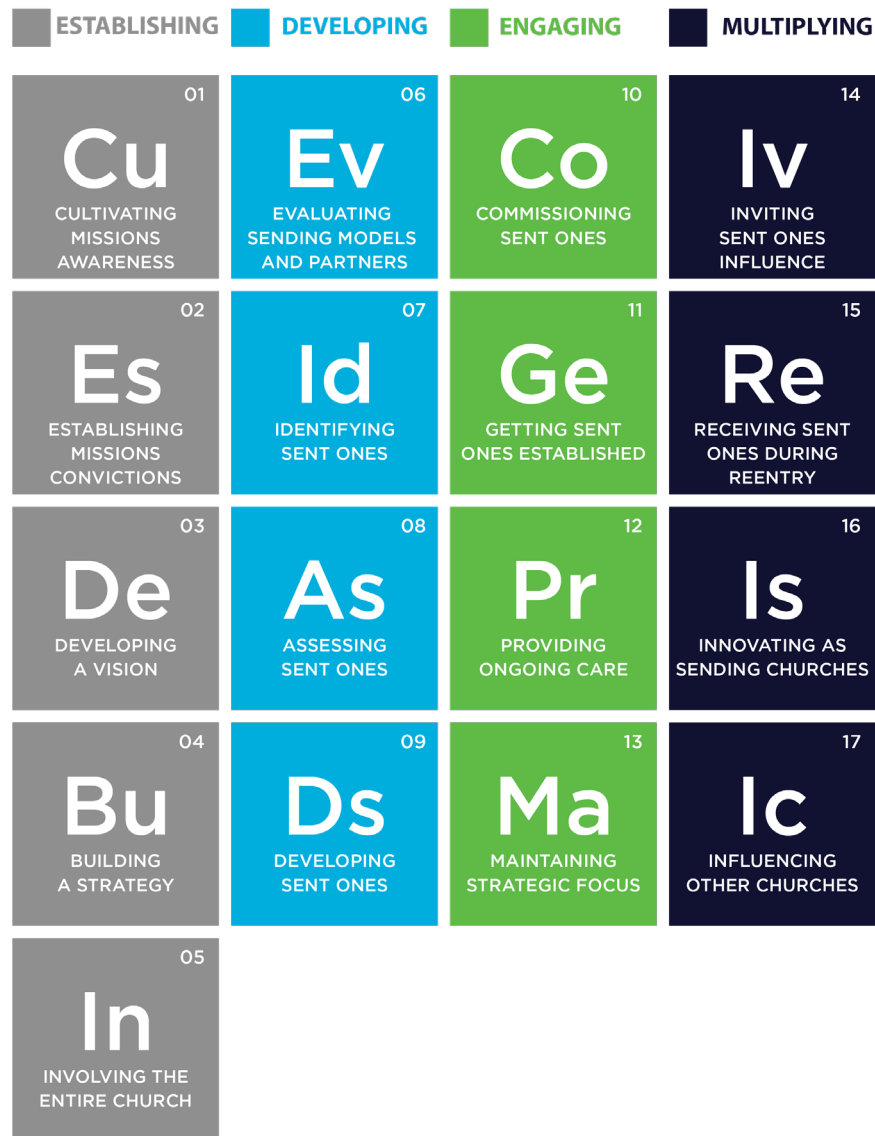
— THE  
— SENDING  
— CHURCH  
ELEMENTS



[www.theupstreamcollective.org](http://www.theupstreamcollective.org)

# INTRODUCTION

Thank you for downloading the Sending Church Elements Guide. To become a great sending church we have identified 4 phases divided into 17 elements. We call them the Sending Church Elements:



At Upstream we desire to see churches become great sending churches. From cultivating the awareness in Scripture of God's heart for the nations, to specifically identifying and developing future missionaries (we'll call them Sent-Ones in our material). We believe that the church is not to relegate global missions

to the experts, but to become a vital player in the movement of the Gospel amongst the nations. We want to help your church get “Upstream” in the process of sending Sent-Ones. To be vitally involved in their discipleship and sending process way before they go to a missions agency and to the field.

The Sending Church Elements have, from our beginning, been our guide to helping churches become great sending churches. Like the periodic table identifies the building blocks of all of life, the Sending Church Elements identify the key aspects of being a great sending church. They can serve as a map to your church as you develop your sending culture and a North star to help you re-evaluate your programs and strategies as a sending church. All Upstream resources, training, and strategy are organized according to the Sending Church Elements. This allows us to quickly identify where churches are in the process of becoming sending churches, and to guide them toward concrete next steps.

In this guide, we will walk through each of the Sending Church Elements. First giving definition to each of the elements on pages 4-5. Then giving a deeper definition of these elements and resources to help your church accomplish the main objective of each element. As you read the guide, we would encourage you to prayerfully consider what God is asking you to do as a church for each element. Do not be overwhelmed by the goals of each element. Ask the Lord, “what is the right next step you would ask us to take as a church?”

As you look through the elements, we also want to let you know of opportunities to gain further knowledge, resources and connection through Upstream.

## Membership

In each element description, you will notice further resources for that element. These are available to those who become Upstream Members. The Upstream Membership is \$10/month or \$110/year. Go to: [www.theupstreamcollective.org/join](http://www.theupstreamcollective.org/join) to become a member. With the Membership, not only will you receive all our resources, you will also be able to join our monthly Sending Church Online trainings and download our past trainings at no extra charge. These are normally \$25/training for non-members.

## Cohorts

Spring, Summer, and Fall we offer cohorts, which are small group learning communities for missions pastors. In our Foundations Cohort we walk through the Establishing Phase of the Elements, Elements 1-5. In the Advanced Cohort we walk through the Developing Phase of the Elements, Elements 6-9. We also offer cohorts on a wide variety of topics. You can check out our cohorts at: [www.theupstreamcollective.org/cohorts](http://www.theupstreamcollective.org/cohorts). As an existing Upstream Member, you can receive 10% off of any of our cohorts.

We are excited for your desire to become a great sending church. We would love to know how we can come alongside you and answer any questions you might have. Contact us at: [info@theupstreamcollective.org](mailto:info@theupstreamcollective.org) with any questions you may have.

# PHASE 1 - ESTABLISHING

The church lays a biblical foundation for sending by:

- Cultivating Missions Awareness: The church becomes progressively aware of the lost world around them, both locally and globally.
- Establishing Missions Conviction: The church is convinced of their need to personally engage this lostness through the truth of the Scriptures and the conviction of the Holy Spirit.
- Developing a Vision: The church prayerfully discerns and narrows the specific place(s) and people(s) that the Holy Spirit is leading them to engage both locally and globally.
- Building a Strategy: The church builds a strategy that employs a variety of ways to strategically and incarnationally fulfill the vision.
- Involving the Entire Church: The church embodies sentness by cultivating the involvement of every member in the sending vision and strategy through education, prayer, and onramps.

## PHASE 2 - DEVELOPING

The church moves toward sending by:

- Evaluating Sending Models and Partners: The church discerns the most effective pathway and partner organization for a sent one based on the church's vision and strategy, the sent one's gifts and vocation, and the context to which they are going.
- Identifying Sent Ones: The church proactively pursues members who exhibit local sentness and global conviction, inviting them into the global strategy by being assessed.
- Assessing Sent Ones: The church takes the lead with the assistance of a missions organization to assess the character, calling, and competency of candidates through a relational, communal process.
- Developing Sent Ones: The church prepares healthy candidates by investing in their knowledge, formation, and skills through coaching, equipping, and ongoing evaluation.

## PHASE 3 - ENGAGING

The church grows in sending by:

- Commissioning Sent Ones: The church affirms sent ones by publicly commissioning them to go, while also commissioning the church to support them.
- Getting Sent Ones Established: The church helps sent ones remain healthy during their first term by supporting them through the transition and acquisition of a new language and culture.
- Providing Ongoing Care: The church strengthens their structure and process for the nurture, care, and accountability of their sent ones.
- Maintaining Strategic Focus: The church ensures that maintenance and changes to the vision and strategy remain aligned with the work of their sent ones.

# PHASE 4 - MULTIPLYING

The church matures in sending by:

- **Inviting Sent Ones Influence:** The church maintains deep relationships with their sent ones, initiating ways for them to encourage and exhort the church in an ongoing manner.
- **Receiving Sent Ones During Reentry:** The church receives sent ones who are returning from the field indefinitely through planning, presence, and provision.
- **Innovating as Sending Churches:** The church takes time to reassess their sending strategies and systems through honest evaluation and missions research, leading to streamlined practices and new ventures.
- **Influencing Other Churches:** The church influences other churches in sending by sharing experiences, resources, and/or opportunities for partnership.

# INTRO TO CULTIVATING MISSIONS AWARENESS

## SENDING CHURCH ELEMENT #01

*A sending church cultivates missions awareness by instilling a holistic culture of God's mission rather than simply a missions ministry. Rather than beginning with activity, the church fosters a sent identity, a missional lens through which to see all of life. Church leaders first give attention to growth in their own missiology. Then they help their fellow leaders and members to know the local and global calling that flows from God's heart. - Upstream Collective Sending Church Element #1*

Cultivating Missions Awareness begins with just that, missions awareness. This awareness can be catalyzed by any member of a church. Maybe it's a missionary who wants his church to have a heart for the nations. Maybe it's a member who took a Perspectives on the World Christian Movement course or went to a conference and now has a passion for the world. It could be the new missions leader of a church, or the lead pastor of that church. God is likely at work in someone in most churches, instilling a heart for one of the key meta-narratives of Scripture—that God is preparing a people for himself from every tribe, tongue, and nation throughout history through Jesus Christ. (Revelation 7:9)

No better passage in Scripture teaches us this than Matthew 28:18-20:

*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

The missions statement of many churches is to "make disciples," but rarely does it include the object of this sentence, "Of all nations." We are missing too often this key meta-narrative of Scripture that the Gospel on mission is not just for our neighbors, it is for the nations. We get caught up in becoming marginally better churches with the increase of our people and resources, but neglect becoming great sending churches to the nations. Our churches today need a revival of missions awareness. If you're reading this, you may be that important person for your church.

Missions awareness starts with you. You can begin creating this awareness by helping those close to you understand God's heart for the nations. Consider leading a book study through *God's Heart for the Nations* by Jeff Lewis or *Finish the Mission* by John Piper. Grow in relationship and influence with the leaders and elders of your church, being a voice full of grace and truth, uplifting the importance of the church seeing God's heart for the nations.

As you grow in influence in your church, help the entire membership understand God's heart for the world, using means like: worship services; artistic communication; taking leaders on short-term trips; and giving small groups, student ministry, and kids ministry curriculum and opportunities to be in-

volved.

Upstream is here to help you Cultivate Missions Awareness in your church. Here are a few ways:

- Our book *Sending Church Defined* provides a vision for becoming a great sending church
- Resources in our Library for this element include, but are not limited to:
  - “Cultivating Awareness Worksheet”
  - “Cultivating Awareness Ideas”
  - “Resources for Cultivating Awareness”
  - “4-Week Missions 101 Class”
- Our book, *Sending Church Applied* (Fall 2021), will take a deeper dive into cultivating missions awareness in your church and leading your leadership to this heart and understanding.
- [The Foundations Cohort](#) will give extensive training and personalized coaching to help your church grow in Cultivating Awareness amongst all your members.

God will use you in your church. This will take patience to be sure. Church leadership has a lot on their plate. From youth ministry, to fundraising, to discipleship, and so on and so forth. Global missions are a vital part of the life of the church and mission of God, but it is not the only thing church leaders are concerned about. Take steps to lovingly cultivate missions awareness in your heart, in the heart of those close to you, and in the leadership of your church. We pray that God will bless your work and that we can play a small part in encouraging that work.

# INTRO TO ESTABLISHING MISSIONS CONVICTIONS

## SENDING CHURCH ELEMENT #02

*A sending church embraces spiritual conviction when it moves from general knowledge of God's mission to ownership of its unique missional role. This depends primarily on the use of Scripture and prayer, so that the result is Spirit-filled rather than man-made. This also includes defining the church's particular missions convictions, which are a combination of the church's biblical convictions and its unique identity. These then serve as a guide and filter for all of the church's missions activity. - Upstream Collective Sending Church Element #02*

The process of establishing missions convictions begins with a church leadership team coming together and searching the Scriptures, looking for verses that capture their attention and hearts as a team. Together they come up with four to six statements based directly on Scripture that bubble to the top of importance for their church. In this exercise the church is answering questions like: What do we think about Matthew 18:18-20 and its implication on our missional vision? What do we think about reached and unreached people groups? What do we believe about the eternity of those who never hear the name of Jesus? And certainly much more.

As the church embraces its theological convictions about missions it will also need to identify its uniqueness as a church. This is an important exercise for a church. Will Mancini in his book, *Church Unique*, says,

Consider what God does when fifteen people come together in His name. How much uniqueness is in those fifteen individuals? How about a church of a hundred people, or a thousand? Is it possible that the uniqueness of these groups far outweighs the uniqueness of a small water crystal blowing in the winter wind? Wouldn't each church, however small, carry a unique collective soul, because each church is a different subset of one-of-a-kind saints? Doesn't each locale present its own growth conditions that affect the pattern and development of God's people? If every snowflake that was ever created in the universe differs, is it so hard to conceive that every one of the more than three hundred thousand churches in North America is unique? These questions drive us to the essence of recasting vision. The starting point for vision—for thinking about our church's future—is not deciding where we want to go or exploring what is working for other churches but understanding how we are unique.<sup>1</sup>

While this is important foundationally for the church to do, it is also valuable for the missions department to identify, out of the church's uniqueness, what it should be uniquely focused on. With thousands of missions opportunities around the world, what are we uniquely called to do? A church discovers this by asking questions like: What are the demographics of our church, our city, and especially in regards to internationals & refugees? What is the mission of our church and how could the global missions vision

<sup>1</sup> Mancini, Will. *Church Unique* (Jossey-Bass Leadership Network Series) (p. 6). Wiley. Kindle Edition.



flow from that uniqueness? What are our members involved in already that we could boost?

Upstream is here to help you Embrace Missions Convictions in your church. Here are a few ways:

- Resources in our Library for this element include, but are not limited to:
  - “Examples of Missions Convictions”
  - “Developing Your Missions Convictions Guide”
- Our book, *Sending Church Applied* (Fall 2021), will take a deeper dive into how to Establish Missions Convictions with your missions team and church leadership.
- The [Foundations Cohort](#) will give extensive training and personalized coaching to help your church grow in Establishing Missions Convictions with your leadership and communicating it to your members.

# INTRO TO DEVELOPING A VISION

## SENDING CHURCH ELEMENT #03

*A sending church develops a vision when it takes into consideration both its missions convictions and the uniqueness of its context to develop a short and clear vision statement. This then leads to discerning and narrowing the specific place(s) and people(s) to engage both locally and globally. Although the vision is God-sized, the church encapsulates it in a simple and compelling statement that can be embraced by all of its leaders and members. - Upstream Collective Sending Church Element #3*

Words can capture the hearts and emotions of people. It can help them rise beyond their slumber and into a vision that is beyond themselves. But that doesn't happen without time and attention given to the words chosen, the order of them, and the tone in which they are delivered. This is an art form, one that takes time to develop, but with the right effort has incredible impact. It is amazing how a short phrase can prick the heart in a way lengthy prose cannot.

Journalists, advertisers, and motivational speakers all know the power of words. They spend their lives crafting short messages to get readers to read their article, to buy their product, or set people's hearts on fire. The time and attention they give and expertise towards it is admirable. But their vision for their words is too small. We have the greatest message ever told. We have the greatest mission in human history. Yet we seem to be either unwilling or unable to craft vision in the way these professionals can. It's time for our churches to do this better, clearer, and in a more compelling way.

The Sending Church Element of Developing a Missions Vision gives importance to defining a clear, simple, and compelling vision statement that draws your church members into God's global mission. This vision statement flows from the awareness that has been cultivated and the convictions that have been embraced. It pieces it all together, provides a North Star for your missions vision to run to and be realigned to after missions drift.

Upstream is here to help you Develop a Missions Vision in your church. Here are a few ways:

- Resources in our Library for this element include, but are not limited to:
  - "Examples of Vision Statements"
  - "Developing a Vision Worksheet"
- Our book, *Sending Church Applied* (Fall 2021), will take a deeper dive into how to Develop a Missions Vision with your missions team and church leadership.
- The [Foundations Cohort](#) will give extensive training and personalized coaching to help craft and finalize your church's vision statement and communicate it clearly and compellingly.

## INTRO TO BUILDING A STRATEGY

### SENDING CHURCH ELEMENT #04

*A sending church builds a strategy by creating a clear sending process and defining a field strategy for the church to ultimately fulfill its vision. The sending process creates a mobilization strategy for short-, mid-, and long-term sent ones. The field strategy gives direction to the impact sent ones are expected to have. This includes a budget that reflects sacrificial giving and intentional planning. - Upstream Collective Sending Church Element #4*

At many Christian camps they play a game called “Ultimate Chaos.” In this game soccer, ultimate frisbee, and ultimate football are all played at the same time. While this game is a blast, it accomplishes nothing and is wildly dangerous. You can’t keep score, it’s hard to remember who is even on your team, and you are going to get a flying object to the head at some point in the game.

Too much of our church’s efforts are the same—different games being played on the same field. This can be fun and it can give the facade of activity, but it lacks the clarity and synergy that makes real impact. Building a strategy around that vision brings definition and implementation to that vision. It defines the values that motivate your missions vision and how your missions team will conduct their business. It provides the strategy for a clear sending process as well as a strategy for what type of impact your church wants to make around the globe. It provides measures of how you judge success and failure, so that your church can learn and grow towards the future. Strategy gives you 90 day, 1-year, 3-year, and beyond goals that you can plan and work towards under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We’ve all heard it said often that “culture eats strategy for breakfast.” There is no doubt that this is true. Through cultivating missions awareness, establishing missions convictions, and developing a vision we have begun to create and communicate culture to our people. Culture without strategy, however, just leads to ineffectual talk. Strategy brings guidance to that culture and narrows its focus towards sending people and resources to make real field impact.

Building a Strategy is where the sending pipeline also begins. Before sending long-term missionaries or even identifying them, we need to consider how we will move members in our church from not knowing anything about missions, to understanding God’s heart for the nations, and starting to take small steps towards making an impact on the nations.

Upstream is here to help you Develop a Missions Vision in your church. Here are a few ways:

- Resources in our Library for this element include, but are not limited to:
  - “Building a Strategy Worksheet”
  - “Developing a Sending Pipeline”
  - “Developing a Focus & Funding Strategy”
  - “Missions Budgeting Tool”

- Our book, *Sending Church Applied* (Fall 2021), will take a deeper dive into how to Build a Strategy with your missions team and church leadership.
- The [Foundations Cohort](#) will give extensive training and personalized coaching to help craft and finalize your church's global missions strategy and communicate it clearly and compellingly.

# INTRO TO INVOLVING THE ENTIRE CHURCH

## SENDING CHURCH ELEMENT #05

*A sending church involves the entire church by clearly and consistently teaching its missions convictions, vision, and strategy. This is done in such a way that every member understands their roles and opportunities to participate in God's mission through the church. This also includes developing an infrastructure of missions leaders who help execute the sending process. - Upstream Collective Sending Church Element #5*

John 20:21 says, "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." Every believer is a Sent-One. Acts 1:8 gives direction to this vision of being a Sent-One. Jesus, before he ascends says, "And you will be my witnesses to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

Matthew 28:18-20 gives clear direction that Sent-Ones are to be making disciples of all nations. Global missions is not just for the missionary who crosses cultures to bring the Gospel to those who haven't heard, it is also for kids, students, plumbers, teachers, engineers, everyone!

Not everyone in your church is going to go overseas long-term. If so, you'd have no church left! And realistically, not all are equipped to cross cultures to bring the Gospel. However, everyone has the opportunity to be involved. Think of these categories and how your people could be involved:

- **Caring** for Sent-Ones.
- **Praying** for Sent-Ones and the nations.
- **Giving** towards the church and the church mobilizing the funds to the nations.
- **Welcoming** internationals & refugees in your city. Church members don't need a passport or a plane ticket to reach the nations.
- **Mobilizing** future Sent-Ones by teaching God's heart for the world, identifying Sent-Ones, and coaching them as they are sent.
- **Going Short-term** to see firsthand what God is doing around the world and for some, choosing to be involved.
- **Going Mid-term** through studying abroad, or temporarily transferring your job overseas.
- **Missions Leadership** Team in your church to give vision in all these areas.

Finding ways to help your entire church be involved in global missions will help your people flourish personally as followers of Christ, will give your church missional vision, and will make a real impact on the mission field for the sake of the Gospel.

Upstream is here to help you Develop a Missions Vision in your church. Here are a few ways:

- Resources in our Library for this element include, but are not limited to:
  - "Building a Missions Leadership Team"
  - "Creating an International Ministry"

- “Leading & Designing Short-term Trips Effectively”
- “Taking a Vision Trip”
- “Virtual Short-term Trips”
- “Establishing Advocacy Teams”
- Our book, *Sending Church Applied* (Fall 2021), will take a deeper dive into how to Develop a Missions Vision with your missions team and church leadership.
- The [Foundations Cohort](#) will give extensive training and personalized coaching to help you identify ways to Involve Your Entire Church in ways that are unique to your context.

# INTRO TO EVALUATING SENDING MODELS & PARTNERS

## SENDING CHURCH ELEMENT #06

*A sending church evaluates sending models and partners when it proactively seeks out strategic models and partnerships that align with its convictions, vision, and strategy. This means overseas partners and missions organizations who not only help facilitate sending, but also align theologically, remain relationally accessible, and uphold the centrality of the local church. - Upstream Collective Sending Church Element #6*

A sending model in its simplest form is the mode in which the Sent-One will enter the country. There are 5 considerations when choosing a sending model:

- Accessibility - Gaining access to the country and the people the Sent-One wants to engage.
- Flexibility - Giving the time and space to minister to the people.
- Sustainability - Having a financially viable way to stay in the country & community long-term.
- Credibility - Having a model that brings value to the community and opens doors to Gospel proclamation being received.
- Geography - The Sent One being in close proximity to the people they are trying to reach.

These five considerations help Sending Churches to guide Sent Ones to traditional vocational missions pathways, or alternative pathways like Job-Taking or Job-Making.

Once the sending model is established it is now time for the Sending Church to guide the Sent-One towards a partner organization. This organization is not simply a partner for the Sent-One, it is a partner for the Sending Church. Mature sending churches understand the importance they play in the life of the Sent-One, as well as the importance of the Sending Organization. Too many churches fully delegate the role of Sending to the organization, when in fact sending is to be done in unison between three entities: the Sent-One, the Sending Church, and the Sending Organization.

Choosing this sending organization follows similar patterns to a relationship. You begin dating the organization, getting to know them, maybe even going on a few trips together to really see what they are like. You visit their missionaries to get to know their “family.” You get engaged by agreeing upon a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). And finally you’re married when you have a Sent-One going with that organization. As in any marriage, proper time needs to be given on the front end to make sure this is a good fit. And once you’re married, you want to stick with that partner for life. While you won’t feel that same weight of commitment to a missions organization as a marriage, it’s important to recognize that leaving an organization is messy and difficult for the sent one. You want to get into a relationship with a sending organization slowly, be fully committed when you are, and slow to break ties because of the implications of that investment on your kids (your Sent-Ones).

Enough with the over-blown analogies! Upstream is here to help you Evaluate Sending Models & Partners. Here are a few ways:

- Resources in our Library for this element include, but are not limited to:
  - “Evaluating Sending Models”
  - “Evaluating Sending Organizations”
  - “The Pros and Cons of CPM”
  - “Traditional vs. Alternative Pathways in Sending”
  - “Vision Trip Questions”
- Our book, *Sending Church Applied* (Fall 2021), will take a deeper dive into how to Evaluate Sending Models & Partners with your missions team and church leadership.
- The [Advanced Cohort](#) will give extensive training and personalized coaching to help you identify ways to Evaluate Sending Models & Partners in ways that are unique to your context.



# INTRO TO IDENTIFYING SENT ONES

## SENDING CHURCH ELEMENT #07

*A sending church identifies sent ones by deliberately calling members to take the next step of obedience in God's mission. Instead of waiting for volunteers, church leaders mobilize the congregation by affirming and challenging those with the potential to be sent cross-culturally. Candidates are thus called to intentionally enter the next phase of the sending pipeline. - Upstream Collective Sending Church Element #7*

Most missionaries in the world were not sent by their church. They may have asked the church for money, they may have been commissioned by their church, but they weren't really sent by their church. They weren't inspired, assessed, or developed by the church towards global missions. They instead likely went to a conference, or read something online that got them excited about global missions. The church, in this instance, is a funding source, not a sender.

In Acts 13:1-3, the church at Antioch gives us the model for proactive—not reactive—sending. This church sent out two of their five best leaders in Paul and Barnabas for the work of spreading the Gospel to the ends of the earth. They did this through investment in the lives of Paul and Barnabas, through prayer and fasting, and by proactively seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Your church can become the type of church that actively identifies Sent-Ones. Churches that do this are not simply caring for the day-to-day needs of their member's spiritual lives, they are actively developing the leadership potential of their members. In this active development members are given opportunities to lead in small groups, in service in the community, in the Sunday-morning gatherings, in decision-making teams, in short-term trips, reaching internationals in their community, and much more. Through this leadership development and through leadership opportunities the leaders and elders of the church are proactively praying, seeking, and identifying potential Sent-Ones. These Sent-Ones, as a part of a church that Cultivates Missions Awareness, are already being challenged to find ways to give their lives for the sake of the nations. When they demonstrate this to leadership in their church, that can affirm and strengthen the inner calling they sense.

What a beautiful picture, right? How often does this happen in our churches? If we're honest, probably very little. Upstream is here to help you Identify Sent-Ones. Here are a few ways:

- Resources in our Library for this element include, but are not limited to:
  - "Character Qualities of Sent-Ones"
  - "Helping Potential Sent-Ones Discern Calling"
  - "Honoring Parents Through the Sending Process"
  - "Initial Missions Questionnaire"
  - "Keeping the Nations Heartbeat While You Wait"
  - "Proactively Identifying Sent-Ones"
  - "Walking Through Calling with a Potential Sent-One"

- Our book, *Sending Church Applied* (Fall 2021), will take a deeper dive into how to Identify Sent-Ones with your missions team and church leadership.
- The [Advanced Cohort](#) will give extensive training and personalized coaching to help you Identify Sent-Ones in ways that are unique to your context.

# INTRO TO ASSESSING SENT ONES

## SENDING CHURCH ELEMENT #08

*A sending church assesses sent ones by taking the lead (with the assistance of a missions organization) to evaluate candidates' strengths and weaknesses. In the security of covenant membership and authentic relationship, the church partners with candidates to holistically assess their knowledge, character, and skills. Candidates are then called to intentionally enter the next phase of the sending pipeline. - Upstream Collective Sending Church Element #8*

It's often said that there is no "plane transformation." Missionaries do not become missionaries simply by getting on a plane. They have to have been doing it where they are at. Yet, we see very few missionaries going to the field who have had actual experience reaching out to internationals on anything but a short-term trip. Worse yet, we observe countless missionary applicants that have clearly had their church simply sign their church endorsement with no real look at their character and no real sense of sending. The stakes are too high in global missions for the church to not take seriously their role in assessing potential Sent-Ones. For the sake of the nationals they will reach, for the team they will join, for the sending church themselves, and for the health of the Sent-One, assessment must be done by the home church. David L. Frazier in his wonderful resource *Missions Smart* says,

*To summarize, no theological school, cross-cultural training institute, expert agency screening system, ideal team environment, or well-staffed member-care group can make someone thrive and be effective overseas if their character, giftings, and skills have not already been developed, tested and proven over time in a home church and local international community.<sup>1</sup>*

Part of the reason this happens is because churches assume that missions agencies will be able to do this better than they will. While missions agencies certainly have expertise in the qualifications for sending and tools to reveal areas of strength and weakness, the church knows their people. The church sees how potential Sent-Ones treat their family, what their co-workers say about them, and how they live out their faith day by day. The missions agency should be a partner, but should not allow the church to outsource the assessment of their Sent-Ones.

One of the measures of a church assessing and developing Sent-Ones well is to see strong candidates breeze through the application process of any sending organization because of the evaluation and coaching that the church has already provided. No church is going to bat a thousand on this. But why not try?

Upstream is here to help you Assess Potential Sent-Ones. Here are a few ways:

- Resources in our Library for this element include, but are not limited to:
  - "Self-Assessment & Interview GuideQuestionnaire"
  - "Assessment Questions for Missionary Candidates, Marketplace Workers, and Team Lead-

<sup>1</sup> Frazier, David. *Mission Smart* (pp. 9-10). David Frazier. Kindle Edition.

ers”

- Our book, *Sending Church Applied* (Fall 2021), will take a deeper dive into how to Assess Sent-Ones with your missions team and church leadership.
- The [Advanced Cohort](#) will give extensive training and personalized coaching to help you Assess Sent-Ones in ways that are unique to your context.

# INTRO TO DEVELOPING SENT ONES

## SENDING CHURCH ELEMENT #09

*A sending church develops sent ones when it uses the results of the assessment to help candidates grow in their readiness to be sent cross-culturally as effective disciple-makers and multipliers of the church's vision. This includes producing a customized development plan for each candidate in the categories of knowledge, character, and skills. It also involves ongoing coaching and evaluation as sent ones move toward the field. - Upstream Collective Sending Church Element #9*

Assessment and Development are not necessarily linear processes. Development has been happening for a person throughout their life and especially in the life of your church. As you assess potential Sent-Ones, many of the assessment tools are also useful for development as well. The characteristics that you are assessing are the same qualities that will provide the foundation for the personal development plans that you work on throughout the assessment and development process for Sent-Ones.

So why should you do development as a church for your Sent Ones? Won't they learn all they need to through the sending organization? Certainly any missions will have great training, but character cannot be developed in the five to six weeks of training a Sent-One receives through the organization. The reality is that anything that's a yellow light stateside will be a red light overseas. The stress of moving cross-culturally and having most of one's foundations of communication, sense of home, how to buy food, and a new routine bring out the worst in the best people. Therefore, working hard to develop character prior to going overseas is best for the Sent-One and for the team receiving them on the field. And character development doesn't happen overnight. It takes time and personal interaction that cannot be manufactured in a short time, but is best done in the life of the church from the moment the Sent-One shows interest in going overseas.

There are a few important avenues of development. The first is to establish a mentoring relationship for the Sent-One. The Sent-One and the Mentor will work through a personalized development plan. Walking through exercises and resources the Sent-One will work through areas of growth in their character. The second avenue, for those who are support raising, is coaching through that process. Again, missions organizations will provide great help in this arena, but support raising is hard! It can often be more stressful than going overseas! This process needs shepherding. Encouraging their personal mentor or designating a specific person in your church to help guide those who are fundraising both logistically and pastorally is a great way to love your Sent-Ones.

Upstream is here to help you Develop Potential Sent-Ones. Here are a few ways

- Resources in our Library for this element include, but are not limited to:
  - [Tradecraft](#) by Larry McCrary & Caleb Crider
  - "Coaching Missionary Candidates"
  - "Leaving Well Checklist"

- “Mentoring System for Potential Sent-Ones”
- “Personal Development Plan Template”
- “Resources for Personal Development Plans”
- “Training Sent-Ones to Relate Well to their Sending Church”
- Our book, *Sending Church Applied* (Fall 2021), will take a deeper dive into how to Develop Sent-Ones with your missions team and church leadership.
- The [Advanced Cohort](#) will give extensive training and personalized coaching to help you Develop Sent-Ones in ways that are unique to your context.



# INTRO TO COMMISSIONING SENT ONES

## SENDING CHURCH ELEMENT #10

*A sending church commissions sent ones by publicly setting them apart for the work to which God has called them. This communal recognition in obedience to the Holy Spirit involves worship, prayer, and the laying on of hands. It also clarifies the church's sending responsibilities and reminds the entire church of its sent identity. - Upstream Collective Sending Church Element #10*

As the Sent-One gets close to their launch date the church has the opportunity to Commission the Sent-One overseas. This is an opportunity to encourage the Sent-One, highlight God's heart for the nations, provide a launching prayer, and to cultivate missions awareness in the church. Going before the Sending Church in large group and small group settings is incredibly encouraging for the Sent-One. Having the opportunity to share their vision, thank the church, and to say goodbye to the members of the church brings about important closure to help them move towards their next step.

Commissioning also provides a wonderful opportunity to involve the entire church in Sending. By providing an opportunity for corporate prayer, members are able to participate in God's Kingdom purposes. Through sharing the vision and story of the Sent-One being Commissioned the church has a greater understanding of God's heart for the nations and the missions vision of the church.

Upstream is here to help you Commission Sent-Ones. Here are a few ways:

- Resources in our Library for this element include, but are not limited to:
  - "Examples of Commissioning Services"
  - "Helping Missionaries Have a Sent Identity"
  - "Sending Covenant for Marketplace Workers"
  - "Sending Responsibilities Checklist"
- Our book, *Sending Church Applied* (Fall 2021), will take a deeper dive into how to Assess Sent-Ones with your missions team and church leadership.
- The [Advanced Cohort](#) will give extensive training and personalized coaching to help you Commission Your Sent-Ones well in ways that are unique to your context.

# INTRO TO GETTING SENT-ONES ESTABLISHED

## SENDING CHURCH ELEMENT #11

*A sending church gets sent ones established in partnership with their missions organization by staying in close communication during the first term. Aware of the likelihood of attrition, the church encourages them to remain faithful during the rigors of language and culture acquisition rather than returning home prematurely. - Upstream Collective Sending Church Element #11*

The first six months of going overseas can be some of the hardest for Sent Ones. This is where the sending church staying in vital connection with the Sent-One is important. As the Sent-One walks through the transition of losing their relationships, and losing their stabilizing foundations of being able to communicate easily, buy food, move about freely, etc, connection with familiar relationships from the Sending Church is vital for making a transition.

Beyond flourishing personally, it is also important to help Sent-Ones live out the right rhythms for ministry from the start. Sent-Ones need accountability, encouragement, and shepherding to take the often humiliating steps of learning language, culture, and getting to know locals. Additionally, the Sending Church provides encouragement to map the city for cultural adaptation and ministry targets. These are all areas even the average overseas supervisor will help the Sent-One to do. But shepherding their heart through these challenging tasks is something the Sending Church can play a vital role in early in the overseas process.

Upstream is here to help you Get Your Sent-Ones Established on the Field. Here are a few ways:

- Resources in our Library for this element include, but are not limited to:
  - [First 30 Daze](#) by Larry & Susan McCrary.
  - [Tradecraft](#) by Larry McCrary & Caleb Crider
- A subscription to the resources on our website gives you access to practical ideas for Getting Sent-Ones Established. Resources include:
  - “Becoming a Regular”
  - “First 30 Daze Checklist”
  - “Sending Responsibilities Checklist”
- Our book, *Sending Church Applied* (Fall 2021), will take a deeper dive into how to Get Sent-Ones Established.
- The [Advanced Cohort](#) will give extensive training and personalized coaching to help you Get Sent-Ones Established on the field.



## INTRO TO PROVIDING ON-GOING CARE FOR SENT-ONES

### SENDING CHURCH ELEMENT #12

*A sending church provides ongoing care in partnership with a missions organization by building a relational structure that nurtures the health of sent ones for as long as they are afield. This involves both church leaders and members in advocating holistically for sent ones through prayer, communication, accountability, logistics, visits, and crisis care. - Upstream Collective Sending Church Element #12*

Providing on-going care is a great area to work in tandem with a sending organization. A quality sending organization will provide supervision that will guide the mission and care for the Sent-One. Even though this is provided by the on-field supervisor, receiving shepherding and wisdom from their familial roots—their Sending Church—provides courage, confidence, and a personalized touch to shepherding that will take the supervisor time to grow into.

Beyond regular connection with the Sent-One, the church should consider ways that they can provide specialized support. This can be through creating advocacy groups at the Sending Church for prayer and care, sending short-term trips for mission, or more importantly, trips that are simply centered around care and enjoyment with friends. The Sending Church can provide personalized care that keeps the Sent-One energized for the challenging work they endeavor upon.

In times of crisis, the Sending Church can work alongside the Sending Organization to provide for physical needs like funding, housing, and transportation, as well as shepherding through the trauma the Sent-One may have faced in their crisis.

Upstream is here to help you Provide On-Going Care for Your Sent-Ones. Here are a few ways:

- Resources in our Library for this element include, but are not limited to:
  - “Editing Creating Advocacy Teams”
  - “Monthly Calls to Sent-Ones”
  - “Providing Missionary Care in Crisis”
  - “Sent-One Health Diagnostic”
- Our book, *Sending Church Applied* (Fall 2021), will take a deeper dive into how to Provide On-Going Care with your missions team and church leadership.
- The [Advanced Cohort](#) will give extensive training and personalized coaching to help you Provide On-Going Care for your Sent-Ones in ways that are unique to your context.
- Upstream also has a regular Specialty Cohort for Missionary Care. Keep an eye out for that opportunity.

# INTRO TO MAINTAINING STRATEGIC FOCUS

## SENDING CHURCH ELEMENT #13

*A sending church maintains strategic focus by regularly reevaluating the effectiveness of its field strategy, and ensuring that its strategy is not relegated to missions organizations. Sent ones are kept accountable to the church's strategic focus, and partnerships are evaluated for their effectiveness in supporting the church's strategic focus. - Upstream Collective Sending Church Element #13*

While providing on-going care is important for your role with your Sent-Ones, you haven't sent members of your church simply to live overseas, have a good quiet time, stay emotionally healthy, and have fun with their team. You have sent them to accomplish the mission that is before your church and the Sent-One. Part of being a great Sent-One and great supporting Sending Church is to take time to re-evaluate how ministry is going for the Sent-One.

While it's likely that day-to-day supervision of your Sent-Ones will have been delegated to a partner organization, this does not mean that the Sending Church has no role in maintaining strategic focus cross-culturally. The Sending Church has been a part of guiding the Sent-One to their vision and strategy. Alongside the Sending Organization the Sending Church should provide insight and admonition to the way the vision and strategy are being carried out. With the historical understanding of the Sent One that the on-field supervisor may not have totally gotten to know, the Sending Church can provide unique insight and encouragement to help the Sent-One live out the vision and strategy that is before them.

Sending organizations and partnerships should be regularly re-evaluated. Sending organizations' and partnerships' purpose are to create speed, synergy, efficiency and support in global missions. If they are not doing this, but rather creating sideways energy for your sent ones, the partnership needs to be re-evaluated. This is important so that Sent-Ones are not stuck in partnerships that take them away from the goal they were sent-out to do. Sending Churches should not be afraid to challenge partnerships and discontinue relationships if this is found to be true.

Upstream is here to help you Maintain Strategic Focus. Here are a few ways:

- Resources in our Library for this element include, but are not limited to:
  - "Partnership Agreements"
  - "Strategic Questions Sent-Ones Should Ask Regularly"
- Our book, *Sending Church Applied* (Fall 2021), will take a deeper dive into how to Maintain Strategic Focus for your church and for your Sent-Ones.
- The [Advanced Cohort](#) will give extensive training and personalized coaching to help you Maintain Strategic Focus in ways that are unique to your context.

## INTRO TO INVITING SENT-ONES INFLUENCE

### SENDING CHURCH ELEMENT #14

*A sending church invites sent ones' influence when it eagerly desires the unique encouragement that comes from sent ones, as modeled in the New Testament. Whether the sent ones are on field or furlough, the church initiates opportunities for them to influence through presence, reporting, and exhortation.*

*- Upstream Collective Sending Church Element #14*

In Acts 14:21-28 we see Paul and Barnabas reporting back to the church of Antioch. It says in this passage that they, “told all the works that God had done,” and “spent no little time there.” Sent-Ones have unique experiences that can help Sending Churches improve their ministry to their city. Like any culture, many churches’ programs, strategies, and efforts are based on traditions and are heavily influenced by cultural blindspots. Whether we are aware of it or not, some of these have influenced our view of Scripture. We have all elevated ideas that are simply cultural to Biblical ideals because that’s the lens we have seen the world through all our lives.

Sent-Ones have a unique perspective. By simply living overseas, some of their cultural blinders have been removed and they are able to see the diamond of Scripture from a different light. This gives them a unique perspective that can greatly bless the church. By Inviting Sent-Ones’ Influence the church is able to better see its blind spots and adjust its practices to align more closely to the heart of Scripture.

Beyond recognizing our blind spots, Sent-Ones returning and having influence is also one of the best mobilization tools for your church. When Potential Sent-Ones have the opportunity to get to know and build relationships with your church’s Sent-Ones, they are more likely to commit to going overseas. People can get excited about the idea of missions and even a place and go. But the people a Sent-One works with is important. Knowing and loving the people they could be sent to can help a Potential Sent-One make the commitment to go wholeheartedly.

Upstream is here to help you Invite Sent-Ones’ Influence in the life of your church. Here are a few ways:

- Resources in our Library for this element include, but are not limited to:
  - “Influencing Your Sending Church”
  - “Tips for Inviting Sent-Ones’ Influence”
- Our book, *Sending Church Applied* (Fall 2021), will take a deeper dive into how to Invite Sent-Ones’ influence in a way that’s encouraging to the Sent-One and influential to your church.
- The [Advanced Cohort](#) will give extensive training and personalized coaching to help you Invite Sent Ones’ Influence in your church in ways that are unique to your context.

# INTRO TO RECEIVING SENT-ONES DURING RE-ENTRY

## SENDING CHURCH ELEMENT #15

*A sending church receives sent ones during reentry by planning to meet their sent ones' needs (including children) when they leave on furlough, transition indefinitely, or retire. Aware of the unique challenges of reentry, church leaders and members give special attention to formal and informal debriefing. They also seek to help sent ones assimilate back into culture and reintegrate into the church's local mission. - Upstream Collective Sending Church Element #15*

Trying to live within two different cultures is challenging. While Sent-Ones find their roots in their Sending Church, they quickly find their home in the city they are sent to. Their friends, their team, their new favorite restaurants and all their possessions are in the city they are sent to. While going Stateside or returning home for good might feel exciting for family and friends, Sent-Ones have mixed emotions when returning “home.”

The Sending Church can make this transition easier by providing for tangible needs like housing, transportation, or schooling opportunities for missionary kids. Beyond these tangible needs, Sent-Ones likely need the space and opportunity to reflect and re-evaluate their next few years of ministry overseas, or their next step in life back in the States. Giving Sent-Ones time with key leaders in your church that are great at counseling people through life decisions is a helpful step. Providing the opportunity to go on a missionary debriefing retreat, and/or covering the costs with a pre-selected counselor that understands culture re-entry is a great way to love your Sent-Ones.

As Sent-Ones come back they can often face a greater culture shock than when they first went overseas! Consider how you can serve and love the Sent-Ones from your church as they make this difficult re-entry for a short period of time or permanently.

Upstream is here to help you Receive Your Sent-Ones During Re-entry. Here are a few ways:

- Resources in our Library for this element include, but are not limited to:
  - “Crafting the Perfect Furlough”
  - “Preparing Sent-Ones for Re-Entry”
  - “Providing for Sent-Ones During a Crisis”
  - “Returning Sent-Ones & Financial Support”
- Check out Upstream’s book, [Receiving Sent Ones During Re-Entry](#) by Zach Bradley.
- Our book, *Sending Church Applied* (Fall 2021), will take a deeper dive into how to Receive Your Sent-Ones During Re-entry.
- The [Advanced Cohort](#) will give extensive training and personalized coaching to help you Receive Your Sent-Ones During Re-entry in ways that are unique to your context.

# INTRO TO INNOVATING AS SENDING CHURCHES

## SENDING CHURCH ELEMENT #16

*A sending church innovates by honestly reevaluating itself according to the sending church elements, while also researching new missions trends and practices. This provides the opportunity to assess its entire approach. Based on this assessment, church leaders then make necessary changes, and communicate those changes to church members and sent ones. - Upstream Collective Sending Church Element #16*

We all love self-aware people! They are living in their strengths, able to laugh at their weaknesses, and are open to making changes. A self-aware sending church, likewise, has taken the time to evaluate their strengths, their weaknesses, and is willing to make changes and adjustments to become a stronger sending church. Sending Element #13: “Maintaining Strategic Focus,” admonishes the Sending Church to take time to look at the impact their vision has on-the-field and make adjustments accordingly. Sending Element #16: “Innovating as Sending Churches” challenges churches to look back on all the elements and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses to make improvements. From Cultivating Missions Awareness, to Developing Sent Ones, to Guiding Sent-Ones Upon Re-Entry, every aspect of being a Sending Church should be evaluated regularly. The impact of the Gospel and the participation of your church’s people in God’s divine victory is at stake. We do not want to let our traditions, our strategies, or our missions drift get in the way of what we desire to accomplish.

A great way to do this is to take each of the categories of the Sending Church Elements and spend some time with your missions team evaluating the four phases:

1. Establishing (Elements 1-5)
2. Developing (Elements 6-9)
3. Engaging (Elements 10-13)
4. Multiplying (Elements 14-17)

Take a Phase of Elements a week and walk through an evaluative process for sending from those elements. Gather a group of people together to evaluate the elements. Ask the question, “What should we start, stop, and continue?” in each element.

Upstream is here to help you Innovate as a Sending Church. Here are a few ways:

- Resources in our Library for this element include, but are not limited to:
  - “Tools for Innovating as a Sending Church”
  - “Sending Church Elements Assessment Tool” - This tool asks questions of each Sending Church Element by which your missions team can evaluate your strengths and weaknesses as a sending church and principles to help you grow.
- Our book, *Sending Church Applied* (Fall 2021), will take a deeper dive into how to Innovate as a Sending Church.
- The [Advanced Cohort](#) will give extensive training and personalized coaching to help you Inno-

vate as a Sending Church in ways that are unique to your context.

# INTRO TO INFLUENCING OTHER CHURCHES

## SENDING CHURCH ELEMENT #17

*A sending church influences other churches when it pursues relationships with like-minded and/or neighboring churches who haven't matured in sending. The church thus multiplies its sending capacity by sharing experiences and resources with other churches, possibly even leading to strategic partnerships. - Upstream Collective Sending Church Element #17*

The missions leader role can be a lonely one. Most every church in town has a lead pastor, a worship leader, youth leader, secretary, someone in charge of kids ministry, etc. But churches do not often have a paid missions leader with the capacity to really focus on the task of sending. It's more likely in the average church that missions would be 1/10th of the youth pastor's job. As your church walks through all the elements, we hope this has an incredible impact on your church. And when you have been given this blessing, it becomes something you now need to steward well. As God works through your church, how might He be wanting to take what you are learning and implementing in your church and help others to do this as well?

Certainly one of the ways you can influence other churches is by passing on resources to them and recommending conferences and cohorts that they can be a part of to become a better Sending Church. We hope that one of the ways you could influence other churches is by encouraging them to participate in one of Upstream's Cohorts! But you can have a direct impact on other churches that you have a relationship with as well. Consider a few of these ways:

- Share your partnerships with other churches. There are few partners overseas that do not want relationships with more churches. Consider ways that you can do trips with other churches in your city and support Sent-Ones together.
- Consider a regular missions leader prayer and encouragement meeting. Many mid to large sized cities have missions leaders that are at least part-time. Gather them together monthly for prayer, encouragement, and trouble-shooting.
- Do a missions class that is for multiple churches in your city. Maybe there are some churches that couldn't host a 4-week missions class or a Perspectives class. How could you do so?
- Tell other missions leaders about Upstream's Cohorts. This is a bit of a shameless plug, but we believe the cohorts provide the necessary tools to help a missions leader develop their church into a great sending church. Your recommendation will be a blessing to them!

God has blessed you and with that blessing there is the opportunity and responsibility to pass that on to others so that the universal Church becomes better at sending. As you begin to live out the first sixteen elements of being a great Sending Church, turn around and pass that on to other churches.

Upstream is here to help you Influence Other Churches. Here are a few ways:

- [Join the Upstream Membership](#) to gain access to our full library of articles & trainings for ele-



ment #17 on Influencing Other Churches. Resource include, but aren't limited to:

- “Regular prayer meetings in your city for missions leaders”
- “Practical ways to influence other churches”
- Our book, *Sending Church Applied* (Fall 2021), will take a deeper dive into how to Influence Other Churches.
- The [Advanced Cohort](#) will give extensive training and personalized coaching to help you Influence Other Church.