

## Just for Thought

At Westwood, our small groups (ABS & Home Groups) are the launching platform for *serving in the church* and *living on mission*. That is true because we have a gathering place for *connecting with God*, which is our worship service, and our gathering place for *growing with believers* is obviously our small groups.

Therefore, let's consider how to use our small group to get involved in missions together. Some churches do all their mission trips through small groups. Some of our groups already do missions together. Doing so, helps us all test the water with a group we feel safe with. It takes some of the aloneness and risk out of getting involved in missions.

***What can your group do together?***

## Life Challenges

1. Apply for your passport this week. It's a way of telling God, "When You call, I'll be ready." Visit [travel.state.gov/passport](http://travel.state.gov/passport).
2. Commit now to attend Westwood's One Mission Celebration, Feb. 17-21. Home Groups will be paired with ABS Classes for Friday/Sunday events. Mark your calendar for the following events:

Wed., Feb. 17, 6:30pm	OMC Kick-off Celebration Service
Fri., Feb. 19, TBA	Small Group Home Meeting with Missionary
Sat., Feb. 20, 10-2	Olympics, Lunch & International Desserts
Sun., Feb. 21, am	OMC Worship and Missionaries in ABS

## Homework

1. Do some research on your country and pray for God to reach them.
2. Visit some web sites for info: [ewestwood.org/missions](http://ewestwood.org/missions), [going.imb.org](http://going.imb.org), [GoE3.net](http://GoE3.net), [DoulosPartners.org](http://DoulosPartners.org), [NAMB.net](http://NAMB.net), [adventures.org](http://adventures.org), [samaritanspurse.org](http://samaritanspurse.org), [joshuaproject.net](http://joshuaproject.net), [theseedcompany.org](http://theseedcompany.org)

**Answers** - Blanks from "Truths to Remember":

1. lost
2. ownership
3. HOW
4. obedience
5. freshness
6. home

\***10/40 Window** refers to regions of the eastern hemisphere located between 10 and 40 degrees north of the equator that have the least access to the Christian message and Christian resources on the planet.



# One Mission: Go

December 20

[ewestwood.org/groups](http://ewestwood.org/groups)

## Starting Point

The first week we focused on **praying**. Last week we focused on **giving**. This week we will focus on **going**. Really, when the word *go* is used in the Great Commission, it is more accurately translated "as you go." Since we recently finished the Going Public with Your Faith study that equipped us to be a witness in our own backyard (Jerusalem), this lesson will focus more on the "Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" kind of going--beyond Shelby County.

Finding excuses not to go seems to come easily to most believers. No doubt the Evil One wants to keep us from leading others to Christ and to have experiences that allow us to see our God in a new and bigger way!

Beginning Questions:

1. What are the reasons (or excuses) that people might give for not getting involved in mission work in Birmingham, Baltimore or Bangladesh?
2. Which of these reasons are faith challenges, that is, obstacles that might be solved with God's intervention?

## Scripture

John 20:21

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

2 Tim. 2:3-4

Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer.

See also Romans 10:13-15, 2 Peter 3:9, Rev. 5:9-10

## Focus

One great step toward maturity in our relationship with Christ comes when we come to the realization that life isn't all about us. Rather than believing God is just waiting around to help us out, mature believers come to realize that we're here to serve, not to be served. Nowhere is that more evident than in our attitude toward missions. The Scripture from 2 Timothy refers to us as soldiers, but many of us live life as if we're passengers on a cruise ship!

In the Great Commission, Jesus tells us to "go and make disciples of *all nations*." The Greek word *ethnos* is translated nations, but more accurately refers to people groups rather than political boundaries. The Southern Baptist International Mission Board has identified over 11,000 people groups making up a world population of 6.6 billion people. 1.6 billion of those people are among 5,800 people groups where there is no active church planting taking place. These are referred to as Last Frontier groups, mostly in the 10/40 Window.\* Our church has adopted the Cotabomba people group of Peru.

The 10/40 Window may seem far off, but there are many other "Go" opportunities that are more easily reached. Westwood has numbers of individuals who have followed God's leading in various ways--helping with food and clothing ministries and the Christmas Gift Shop of the Shelby Baptist Association, feeding the homeless in Birmingham, ministering to those in prison, witnessing and serving at the free health clinic, working with Kid's First, sponsoring local church plants as well as those in New Hampshire, Georgia, and Louisiana; ministering to orphans in Russia and Africa, medical missions, and evangelism and church planting in Brazil, Cuba, Peru and Ecuador. We are a church already going, so all you have to do is hop in and join.

Lack of finances is sometimes given as a reason for not participating in missions. Westwood has made a commitment to help people find a way to do what God has called them to do. We can't remember anyone ever saying, "God called me to go, but He didn't provide a way." Some support is provided through the church, but often comes through those in our small groups who help send us. Trust God to provide where He calls you to go. He is faithful.

Have you found your place in missions? Our growth strategy includes four environments—Connect with God, Grow with Believers, Serve in the Church and Live on Mission. For our relationship with Christ to be complete, all of these components should be in place. In February, our One Mission Celebration will help you discover not only what God is doing down the street and across the globe, but how you can get involved to make a difference to a lost world. May we join Isaiah in saying "Here am I. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8)

## Truths to Remember

1. There really is a \_\_\_\_\_ world around us—people who are without Christ and destined for hell.
2. God gives all believers responsibility for a lost world, not just church staff and missionaries. We must take \_\_\_\_\_ for our part of the mission.
3. God's word tells us TO go, WHERE to go, and \_\_\_\_\_ to go. (See today's three Scripture references.)
4. God doesn't need our competence, He asks for our \_\_\_\_\_. He equips us for the mission He calls us to do.
5. Being a part of bringing salvation to others provides a \_\_\_\_\_ and vitality to our own relationship with Christ.
6. The light that shines farthest shines the brightest at \_\_\_\_\_.

## Questions for Discussion

1. How do you think going on a short-term mission trip would affect your praying and giving to missions?
2. If God called you to participate in a short-term mission trip, could you accept funding from your family, friends or your small group? Why or why not?
3. It would seem that our North American prosperity would result in making us more likely to participate in missions. Are there some ways it would make us less likely to be involved in going?
4. What responsibility do we have for lost people in the 10/40 window?
5. Can a person be a mature Christ-follower and never seek to lead others to a relationship with Christ?
6. If we consider ourselves too busy to even think about missions, how can we carve out some margin in our lives to **go**?