**David Livingstone Institute of Medical Missions**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. What is a simple definition?

The simple definition is a trained and qualified medical evangelist using his medical skills to advance the Kingdom of God on earth both physically and spiritually.

1. What are the different types of medical missions?
	1. There are medical evangelists who live full-time on the field supported by churches. Their work will include such work as village medical assistant, hospital work, general provision of medical help, evangelism, teaching, preaching; even being a pastor in a mission church. Their efforts generally center in a church plant.
	2. There are also part-time medical evangelists. They traditionally work on single or multiple fields for periods from one month to 6 months. Their duties could be in support of a hospital or village evangelism, but always for the benefit of a local church effort. Many times in order to support themselves, they will work in their home nation for the time they are not on the field of service. Their spiritual duties will vary as will their medical work.
	3. There are also short-term medical evangelists who are part of a medical team in-country for 5 to 14 day missions practicing general medicine or, possibly even, surgical teams. The general medical efforts are in support of a missionary’s efforts to strengthen a church or start a church through medical evangelism. These efforts will reach several hundred people with each effort.
	4. The short-term surgical team is less evangelistic, but very impactful to develop and enhance the missionary’s presence and importance in the community.
	5. There are also medical evangelists that start medical compounds, clinics, or hospitals. Their efforts are in support of many mission works and missionaries with a consistent presence and heightened capability to provide medical care. These people can be short-term, part-time, or full-time. They can also do preaching, evangelism and teaching.
2. How does a medical evangelist differ from a traditional missionary?

The medical missionary can do all the work of a traditional missionary. His great advantage is his ability to impact greater numbers of people in shorter periods of time. By his medical efforts he will possibly increase his outreach by as much as 10 fold each year with high quality life touches. Medical missions is one of the few mission works which will allow staging from part-time to full-time and be completely affective on the field.

1. What are the degrees that a medical evangelist can pursue?

All traditional degrees of medicine are possible fits. Some medical degrees immediately pose more advantage for missions.

Because of the new care structure in the United States there is a new tier of medical training well suited to medical missions. We now have options such as a Nurse Practitioner and Physician’s Assistant. These medical degrees allow an individual to do several positive things.

1. What are the advantages of this new structure?
	1. They are geared to general medicine rather than specialties.
	2. They are generally less expensive to pursue.
	3. They require fewer years of preparation for use in general medicine.
	4. You may step into medicine gradually, sometimes paying as you go. Example: An individual may start with a simple degree such as an Associate’s Degree in Nursing. While working toward a bachelor’s degree the individual can work in a hospital developing experience and earning money to pay costs as they go. Once the individual has finished the BSN degree by distance learning or classroom options they may then pursue a Nurse Practitioner or Physician’s Assistant.
	5. You may use your degree more quickly, more thoroughly and be more immediately effective on the mission field.
2. What can I do medically with a Nurse Practitioner or a Physician’s Assistant?

These degrees allow a person to diagnose, prescribe treatment, and prescribe medicine. These mid-level providers give general medical care. In the United States they must work under a medical doctor’s supervision. This has proven to be a good relationship and profitable in continuing to provide quality health care in the United States. These two degrees can be very effective and cost efficient for the aspiring medical missionary.

1. What about becoming an MD?

The MD should be carefully and prayerfully considered by the aspiring medical evangelist because of its great respect and need around the world. This pathway however may be as limiting as it prestigious and versatile.

1. Are there other degrees that can be pursued?

The aspiring medical evangelist should also consider the medical treatment for teeth, eyes, and dispensing of medicine. These are also very crucial elements of good medical care through medical missions.

1. Why are there so few medical evangelists as opposed to traditional missionaries?
	1. The fields of medical service were very limited for many years by degrees requiring many years of training and high cost training. This is not always the case today.
	2. Churches and mission boards were not equipped to handle the high debt, fear of divided or added focus, and higher financial demand to equip a medical. This is changing as our structure of medical care providers become more mission field friendly.
2. How do I choose which type of medical evangelist to be?

Start with the first things first. Decide to be a servant medical evangelist. When you are committed to use your medical training and skills for God’s absolute glory in telling people about Christ and strengthening the church then God will show you a pathway to service

1. What is the American model of medicine and is it effective on the foreign field?

The American medical model is a training process that prepares for work in American hospital that are heavily geared to diagnostic machinery, extreme specialization, highly specific building needs, and processes and procedures legally spawned rather than medically spawned. The American-medical model has proven to be successful on the mission field. This model has proven to require long training periods, very expensive training, and longer periods of internship.

1. What type of things should I expect in a non-American model environment?

Needs over-ride purity of medical action. It is often necessary to conduct surgery, medical care, or procedures in less than specifically desired buildings which medical purist would approve. Sometime improvisation becomes the best rule of medicine. Medical tools are not available for diagnosis so the medical evangelist must be more willing to trust judgment and knowledge. It may require a more humble approach of seeking wisdom of other medical providers apart from the costly machines. It may require medicine choices that are unconventional but well accepted.

The problem with being a medical evangelist is the following:

1. The length of time in preparing for field.
	1. How can you prevent the extension of time from sapping the zeal?

There is no set way to do this. If you isolate yourself with non-medical missionary peers keeping the zeal will be greatly challenging. If you do not attend church very regularly, keeping the zeal will be greatly challenging. If you do not, participate in evangelism efforts regularly, both domestic and foreign, keeping the zeal will be greatly challenging. If you do not associate with other missionaries, keeping the zeal will be greatly challenging. If you do not set spiritual goals for your education and training process, keeping the zeal will be greatly challenging. If you allow your prayer life and Bible study devotion to lag, keeping the zeal will be greatly challenged. If you do not establish contact with people and organizations for accountability, keeping the zeal will be difficult.

* 1. How can you prevent the extension of time from hindering raising support?

You must raise support in phases. Do what you can with each phase of your training. When under heavy stress of education or time demand, do clerical work such as organizing contact information, procuring contact information, or plan an approach method. When education and time will allow begin to develop contacts that will speak to potential supporters in your behalf or even support you. When education and time will allow do short mileage presentations in potential supporting churches or individuals. Develop longer range trips as your time allows. Start an email list and produce a chronicle of you education efforts to become a medical evangelist exposing all those training and study hours and hours spent in pursuit of your spiritual goals. Take your education efforts and use them as a testimony to encourage people to support you. Use direct mail, email, facebook, linked-in, blogs, instagram, twitter or any other way of getting your message out. Solicit family members, friends, or colleagues to help you get your message out. Also, keep your education goals so as to foster opportunity to raise funds.

* 1. How can you prevent the extension of time from causing increased debt?

Establish education achievement which will allow you to pay debt as you go.

* 1. How can you prevent the extension of time from becoming too long?

The effort for education is a never ending process for a true medical evangelist. The beginning steps of training must be thought through so a time plan can be established with the understanding that there will always be periods of dormancy or limited engagement due to education and training. With medical missions your mind set must demonstrate fluidity, flexibility, and hunger for the next step. Ebb and flow is the key to a good medical evangelist.

1. The education difficulty level.
	1. How can you prepare for the education demand?

First, this question demands age breakdown. If you are in the 8th or below you must start immediately to determine to master all your education. You must begin to plan-out your 9th through 12th grade years. In order to get to the next level of educational accomplishment you must prepare yourself for college demand as early as possible. You must be able to keep a 4.0 average while in high school and college.

YOUR EDUCATION MUST BE BOLSTERED BY YOUR SPIRITUAL INTENSITY TO DEVELOP YOUR HEART FOR SOULS. Develop with your parents and spiritual leaders a manner of life in which all will see your purpose as a youthful medical evangelist. Set a course with help from your mentors which will allow you to properly access the appropriate training in college. Go to the college you wish to attend; tell them your spiritual and medical goals; and ask them to advise you as to your education and training.

* 1. What if you wasted your education time as a teen?

There is only one answer. You must fill in the gaping holes in your education. The sooner you do this the better. It is never too late to begin remedial efforts. Be wise, but you must make up lost ground in education. Attempt to streamline this effort by taking only necessary remedial work. Reading is very essential. Many people who read rapidly and well can advance themselves with minimal classroom effort. Go to the college and ask for a survey of the entrance exam for your field. Do not over extend your educational goal. It would be better to start at the lower step and move upward than tackle an impossible educational goal and fail.

* 1. What levels of education should I pursue in order to be a medical evangelist?

This depends on your overall plan for medical missions. If your goal is to be an MD, Dentist, optometrist, or pharmacist then you must plan on very difficult programs of education because of the American medical model.

* 1. What if I am not a book student, but I learn well when in service?

Start at the lowest medical position and move upwards increasing your ability for higher demand learning programs.

* 1. Is there more areas of service than being an MD?

Yes. Begin to search out other options.

* 1. What can I do to be a dentist, optometrist, or pharmacist?

Use all the information above, but gear the answers to those medical professions.

1. The extra cost for education.
	1. What are steps to avoiding heavy education costs?

Choose a medical professional level which is immediately lower in cost, but will allow you to always be upward mobile.

* 1. What are the alternative ways to pay for your education?

There are programs in the military requiring years of service. There are state offered scholarships for work in remote areas or under-staffed areas of the United States. Sometimes it is possible to apply to foundations for help because of your willingness to help the needy.

1. The lack of mission boards for medical missions.
	1. Is there any board that would be open to medical evangelists?

That question must be answered by each board.

* 1. How can I be used on the mission field to reach the lost?

You will draw crowds for the gospel, increase the missionaries standing in the community, and reach people to which normally the traditional missionary would not have access.

* 1. What do mission boards offer as an advantage to a medical evangelist?

Contact boards individually for that answer.

* 1. Should I consider living on the field continually?

That is always a possibility and should be prayerfully considered. However it is not necessary. You could travel with short-term teams and be effective for many traditional missionaries world-wide. Also, you would be a blessing to your church because full-time support is not required.

* 1. If I do not live on the field continually is there a mission organization that I should approach?

Your church would be your best advantage. Also, check with other part-time medical evangelists.

* 1. What if I am not a preacher?

You do not have to be. Your job is to create an atmosphere of love and compassion to draw people to the preaching.

* 1. What if I am a woman and single?

The medical evangelist is your greatest ministry for the mission field. Your connection to women on the field and their children would be a God-send. However, you are not limited to women and children. As you work you can give a clear verbal message of hope in Christ.

* 1. Should I work with a missionary rather than being independent?

Seek out a traditional missionary, but you are not limited by this.

1. The difficulty to be certified in a foreign nation.
	1. How do I become certified to practice medicine in a foreign country?

Submit your credentials to the countries authorities. It is good to know and organization already prepared to help you in the country. Prior mission trips will help.

* 1. What would be the cost for being certified to work in a foreign country?

Varies by country.

* 1. Can I seek the certification on several fields and travel from location to location?

Yes.

* 1. How do I get medicines and equipment?

There are many sources around the world that will help you. Part of your efforts before finishing your education would be to search out such support groups.

1. The resistance of churches to “non-church planting” missionary.
	1. Are churches going to support me, if I am not a “church planter”?

Gradually, this is changing in our strong Bible-believing ministries. Do not let this stop you!!!

* 1. How do I present myself to a church for support as a medical missionary?

Tell them exactly why you have trained, what you will do on the field, and what your effort will do for a traditional missionary.

* 1. How do I raise support, if I am not with a traditional mission board?

Your church can help you decide this. Do not let this stop you!!!