



Future, Money, Children How They All Came Together

"We want our children to be Christians!" "We want our children to know and love our missionaries!" "We want our children to go with us on a mission trip!" "We want our children to hear and answer God's call on their lives!"

This is what we were hearing on our district, in part because we were the ones saying it! We want our children to grow up loving the Lord and serving Him, but we're honest enough to say we want them to "stay in the Church of the Nazarene as lifetime members." What's wrong with that? ("Nothing!")

After a year of fasting and praying, many of our council members determined that getting our kids onto a mission field was a crucial step for all of these dreams to come true. Yet so many young people can't afford to go on a mission trip. They don't have enough money themselves, and often their families aren't interested in sending them on a mission trip. Their churches struggle to pay their bills and salaries. What can we do? ("Something!")

Six years ago our district NMI council determined to set up a foundation. We named it the "Foundation for the Legacy to our Youth" and lovingly called it, "FLY." We are approaching the \$50,000 mark, and it has been completely funded by the grandmas, grandpas, moms, and dads of our district. Pledges are taken at the annual convention; and the payment rate is over 90 percent because people are serious about the cause.

But who gets the money and how do they qualify? ("An idea!")

We began to plan for a weekend camp once a year (Memorial Day weekend), where the children are invited to participate in mission immersion. We call it "Mission Boot Camp." Our first attempt was a success. There were over 50 kids who: courageously ate some "very strange food"; took very quick and cold showers; hiked long distances after dark; mixed cement as is done in Guatemala; made bricks like they do in Madagascar; listened to dozens of missions stories around the campfires; learned new mission songs; participated in a local mission project; and prayed for our Nazarene missionaries and their international friends.

The current plan is to "scope and sequence" the weekend, so that, after three years, the campers will be ready to scamper off to a foreign country with a Work & Witness team, largely subsidized by FLY. We've already sent seven kids on trips. Three of them felt a call to mission careers and two of them to full-time pastoral ministry. Only God lives in the future, but we're sending Him our willing children with our sacrificial money, and "He will...turn the hearts of the fathers to their children...to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17, NIV).

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