

# PARTNER OVERVIEW

StoryRunners is a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ that produces Story Bibles for people that have little or no access to the Gospel. This is done by training national trainers who will evangelize and disciple others for Christ using the Bible stories they have learned.

A Story Bible is a chronological collection of Bible stories told person to person. Indigenous storytellers present the stories in the heart language and communication style of their own people. Only about 30 stories are required to begin evangelization and church planting. The stories selected cover all the major biblical literary genres and periods in history—they span the Old and New Testaments from Creation to the Church Age. About half of the stories teach the essentials of the Christian faith, while other stories address specific worldview issues that a people group may have. For example, people believing in many gods need to hear the story of Elijah's contest with the prophets of a false god to know the reality of one all-powerful God.

Billions of people either don't have a written translation of the Bible in their language or couldn't read it if they did. They can use their Story Bibles just like we use our written Bibles. They pray, worship, meditate, teach and make life decisions based on the scriptures. A Story Bible is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

Story Bibles dwell primarily in the hearts of people who internalize then retell the stories in a natural way to others. However, distribution of the stories can also occur in media projects.

## As a partner you can have your own project!

Each three year media project is designed to produce a rapid, indigenously led, and self-sustaining church planting movement. It provides:

- Story Bibles to 100 indigenous listening groups formed and taught by a team of Christian nationals. A listening group may start with single listener. If each group grows to 100 listeners, that's a potential listening audience of 10,000 people! These groups are trained by the team for evangelism, discipleship, leadership training, and rapid indigenous church planting. Each person in the listening group can hear, tell, and discuss the Bible stories with the people in their communities. As these stories will pass from person to person God will deeply impact and transform their communities.
- Opportunities for partners to send short-term mission teams, as security permits, to meet their team and perform compassion ministry (community health programs, humanitarian aid, vocational training, etc.) for listening groups and their communities.

**INVITE** your friends to join a free conference call hosted by StoryRunners. Funding is needed for 36 months at \$790 per month. For a small Bible study or fellowship group that's just 26 people each giving \$1 a day or 13 people each giving \$2 a day! Sponsor a three-year project and spark a church planting movement! Go to [www.storyrunners.com/conference.aspx](http://www.storyrunners.com/conference.aspx) today and set up your conference call.

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# PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

## *PREAMBLE*

A Story Bible is a chronological collection of Bible stories told person to person and dwells primarily in the hearts of people. However, media distribution of the stories can also occur. In this partnership we are seeking to glorify God through the media distribution of Story Bibles to people with little or no access to the Gospel (called an unreached people group or UPG) so that it results in a rapid, indigenously led and self sustaining church planting movement (CPM).

## *GOALS*

- Complete a 3 year media distribution of Story Bibles in an agreed upon UPG.
- Develop a written, long term CPM strategy.
- Start a CPM in the UPG.

## *RESPONSIBILITIES*

### STORYRUNNERS

- Select, train, and supervise a team of Christian nationals who, over three years, will:
- Distribute Story Bibles to 100 listening groups.
- Train each group to evangelize, disciple, and plant churches.
- Help Partner build a good relationship with the team, UPG, and other field ministries.
- Help Partner develop a written, long term CPM strategy.

### PARTNER

- Organize a prayer team.
- Appoint a Champion to publicize, educate, and organize support for this project.
- Financially support this project in the amount of \$790 per month for 36 months.
- Build a good relationship with the team, UPG, and other field ministries.
- When possible, send short term mission teams to meet their team and UPG and perform compassion ministry (community health programs, humanitarian aid, and vocational training, etc.) for the listening groups and their communities.
- Develop a written, long term CPM strategy.

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Partner

StoryRunners

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Date

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# COMPASSION MINISTRY

Compassion ministry incarnates Jesus Christ among people living anywhere, in any circumstance. It causes people to be more trusting and open. Incarnate ministry gives temporal blessings which can then provide openings for eternal blessings. This is especially true when storying strategies are intentionally wedded with compassion projects to provide natural opportunities to share Bible stories with listening groups. The following list includes just a few examples of such opportunities:

- Clean, accessible drinking water—It might seem incredible that so many grievous problems that have been evident for centuries could have a simple solution. But the solution is simple: it's water. One in five people in the developing world—1.1 billion people—struggle in abject poverty for want of this basic natural resource. Investing in water resources also provides a good economic return. Once people have clean, accessible drinking water, many good things like agricultural, business, hygiene, sanitation, economic, health, personal relationships will follow.
- Community health projects—Provide or participate in medical, vision, and dental clinics and seminars dealing with hygiene, sanitation, AIDS treatment and prevention, food preparation, and waste disposal.
- Wood efficient stoves—In many places, deforestation has contributed to a growing shortage of cooking fuel. Many times, the cooking devices used are very inefficient and consume lots of fuel. Teach how to build efficient wood burning stoves.
- Agriculture—Soil erosion removes valuable top soil needed to grow food and raise livestock. Seminars convey simple principles of soil conservation and crop and livestock production.
- Vocational training and micro lending—Economic opportunity can be nurtured through basic job skills and low interest business loans for as little as \$50 per loan. Repayments are used to fund other loans. Seminars convey simple Christian business principles to create effective business models that will supply local demands for products and services.

Compassion ministry provides opportunities for partners to send short-term mission teams, as security permits, to meet their team and build up the trust of their listening groups and communities.

# STORY BIBLE TEAMS

A Story Bible team is a church planting team staffed by two national believers. Team members are familiar with the language and customs where they minister. They are trained and supervised to produce, distribute, and use a Story Bible. A Story Bible is a recorded collection of key chronological Bible stories told person to person. It dwells primarily in the hearts of people who internalize then retell the stories in a natural way to others. However, distribution of the stories can also occur in media projects.

The training of a Story Bible Team occurs “just in time” in separate modules as needed. “Just in time” training allows several important things to happen:

1. Knowledge is given as field experience demands it.
2. Pastoral care can be given in a secure environment.
3. Prompt completion of time sensitive goals can be obtained.

The team is purposeful in their relationships because every relationship is a ministry opportunity. When the team meets with anyone, they seek to share their faith by telling Bible stories. They are also seeking to establish a listening audience for the Bible stories in each neighborhood, village, or town of the unreached people group.

A three year media project can produce a rapid, indigenously led, and self-sustaining church planting movement. It provides Story Bibles to 100 indigenous listening groups formed and taught by a team of Christian nationals. A listening group may start with single listener. If each group grows to 100 listeners, that's a potential listening audience of 10,000 people! These groups are trained by the team for evangelism, discipleship, leadership training, and rapid indigenous church planting. Each person in the listening group can hear, tell, and discuss the Bible stories with the people in their communities. As these stories will pass from person to person God will deeply impact and transform their communities.

The team will travel repeatedly throughout an area to follow up with each audience. Each audience will become a preaching and teaching point that uses Bible stories. The team will train and encourage listeners to learn and share the stories with others and then invite them to join their listening audience. The team trains the audiences for evangelism, discipleship, leadership training, and rapid indigenous church planting. Each audience will hear, learn, discuss, and retell the Bible stories to the people in their communities. They can easily reproduce these stories from person to person as they deeply impact and transform their communities.

Each audience will be a model that can reproduce into other groups. Before people have even professed faith in Christ, they are already observing how Christian leaders conduct themselves. This provides a base for explicit leadership instruction that will come after people have trusted Christ.

Story Bibles impart culturally relevant Bible stories that will be retold for generations, all the while serving as a benchmark to preserve story accuracy.

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# THE BIBLE AND ORALITY

There are thousands of languages without a written translation of the Bible. A completed translation in these languages either won't begin or be completed for many decades. There are few, if any, known churches or Christians in these unreached people groups. Many of these languages don't even have a written alphabet. When a written Bible translation does become available most of the people can't or won't read them because they are oral learners. The issue is much deeper than non-readers being unable or unwilling to read; they process information so differently. Oral learners are as intelligent as readers and generally have better memories because they don't rely on paper and pen to remember things. Self test your own level of orality:

Name the objects below:



Readers usually name them as a circle, square and triangle: all abstract conceptual ideas. Oral learners name these shapes by what they resemble: a plate, box or piece of pie. They are more comfortable with tangible ideas.

Another example is found in the following objects. Which object doesn't belong?



An oral learner won't include the hammer as part of the grouping because he doesn't have a "tools" category in his thinking. Although a saw and hatchet will "work" the logs, a hammer won't. You should be catching on by now.

Let's try one more: Which object doesn't belong?



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That's right—the cup! An oral learner immediately realizes that the cup doesn't have anything to do with eating an orange. Even in cultures considered to have high levels of literacy, major population segments continue to operate in a predominantly oral framework. Oral learners use proverbs, parables, history, songs, genealogies, dance and other narrative forms to communicate their most important information. Oral learners do not look to the written word for learning, nor do they respond well to formal education. Instead, their life lessons are learned, and their worldviews are shaped by observation, participation and verbal communication of culturally relevant stories. Oral learners simply do not look to the written word for learning and they cannot be reached with the gospel using expository preaching, written or audible Scripture, and evangelistic tracts. Instead, their life lessons are learned-- and their worldviews shaped-- by observation, participation and verbal communication of culturally relevant stories.

## **What's in a worldview?**

Since oral learners generally don't possess a biblical worldview, a single presentation of the gospel will often be very unconvincing. However, chronological Bible stories, selected and told with respect for the worldview of the oral learner, greatly increases understanding. In essence, these Bible stories build bridges and overcome barriers to a biblical worldview. In time, the Holy Spirit will lead many oral learners to accept the more compelling stories of the Bible over the stories associated with their non-biblical worldview. Eventually, many oral learners accept the saving grace offered by Jesus Christ, the greatest storyteller of all. For many oral learners, the only Bible they will ever have and use effectively will be the one in their mind and heart. This will enable them to meditate on God's Word during personal time with Him, and even take part in devotionals, evangelism, church planting and leadership development. Stories stored in the heart can go where the written Bible can't go. They can cross borders, enter prisons and even homes staunchly resistant to the presence of the written Bible. They become the permanent possession of an oral learner, available for use at all times. Out of necessity, oral learners have much better memories than literates. They can't save their information on paper or computer hard drives. But they can retain, recall and repeat Bible stories with amazing skill. We call this internalization because the Word of God is in them. Some oral learners who hear these Bible stories will become followers of Jesus, and they will share their stories with others who will believe. This begins the multiplication process that will eventually result in a church planting movement.

The initial Bible stories that go into an Oral Bible are systematically selected, translated, and to the local people in their local language and natural storytelling style. The stories are checked for comprehension among the people, recorded and archived to produce an Oral Bible for that people group. As oral Bible stories begin to be retold through a people group, God's Word will exist in a form that can cross borders long closed to the gospel. When oral learners come to faith in Christ through an oral means they are much more likely to want to learn to read. Thus, the potential is there for accelerating written translations and literacy programs so they can finally read God's word in their local language.

## **What is the Biblical Basis for Using Stories?**

Most historians and theologians believe that long before Moses wrote down the first five books of the Bible, the stories were oral. From Creation to Moses, there were at least 2,500 years in which the people verbally passed along the Bible stories we now read in Genesis. Enoch received the spoken Word, and thereafter, walked with God until he was no more because God took him away to be with Him in heaven.

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When Abraham received the spoken Word, God credited him with righteousness. Likewise, when Isaac, Jacob and Joseph received the spoken Word by faith, God found them blameless. Even when Moses preserved the spoken Word in written form, he emphasized the value of hearing the stories of God: “These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:6, also chapters 31 and 32). Note how Jesus spoke to the crowds, “Jesus used stories when he spoke to the people. In fact, he did not tell them anything without using stories.” (Matthew 13:34 CEV). Jesus used stories because most of his audience was comprised of oral learners. Peter and John were probably oral learners: “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled (agrammatoi in Greek, meaning “illiterate” or “unschooled”) and ordinary men, they were astonished and took note that these men had been with Jesus.” (Acts 4:13). And so it was that “the word of God spread and the number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly.” (Acts 6:7). Church historians tell us that in the 40 years after Pentecost but before the New Testament was written, a church existed in almost every major city of the Roman Empire! It seems that we inadvertently depart from our spiritual roots when we stop telling Bible stories as a way to spread the gospel.

## **What is an Oral Bible?**

When we consider all these facts regarding orality, it makes sense to begin to spread the gospel to these people now by word of mouth in the same way in which the early church was so successful. However, we face an obstacle the early church didn't have. Unlike the early church, very few Christians, if any, speak the languages that are without written Scripture. Bypassing written Scripture translations to begin dissemination of oral Bible stories in those languages will require Oral Bibles for each language. These Oral Bibles will be created by the systematic oral translation and audio recording of carefully selected chronological Bible stories as told by indigenous storytellers from each language group. These storytellers will simply retell in their local language the Bible stories they have been taught. The Oral Bible will serve as a benchmark for preserving the accuracy of the stories until a written translation is completed. Be sure to read the companion article titled, “The Bible and Literacy.” Until then, the Oral Bible will be the primary tool used to train other Bible storytellers.

The introductory story set is comprised of three parts, each containing a series of stories:

- The Old Testament—including creation, the nature of God, His love for human beings, the need for reconciliation with God, and how He deals with His people in preparing the way for the coming Savior.
- The Gospels—including the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and main events from His life and teachings.
- Acts—with insights from the Epistles, including examples of people coming to saving faith in Jesus Christ, the growth of the church, and the promise of Christ's return.

National church planting teams will be trained and supported in crafting and using an Oral Bible for planting churches. The Oral Bible will have an initial set of about 50 stories with an evangelistic theme. More stories will be added later that teach discipleship and leadership as a way of equipping and training pastors and leaders to plant churches. People will internalize the stories by listening to Bible storyteller and/or their own Oral Bible. They will be taught to use pre and post story discovery questions to focus on the biblical principles to be learned from the story.

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Most Oral Bibles will have some of the same general stories. However, each Oral Bible will have special Bible stories to customize the set to the particular worldview of a people group. That way, each story set will guarantee maximum understanding by breaking barriers and building bridges to a biblical worldview. It's important not only to tell the Bible stories correctly but also to tell the stories that best speak to the hearts of people in a given culture. For example, if a culture has a weak understanding of sexual sin, special attention is needed to craft story sets that highlight that issue. In that circumstance, it may be very helpful to include the story of David, Bathsheba and Nathan the prophet. Of course, that story can also be used to teach many other biblical principles such as repentance and that sin has consequences.

The following sample set of Bible stories will be included in most Oral Bibles:

- Satan's Rebellion
- Creation
- First Sin and the Judgment
- Noah and the Flood
- Promise to Abraham
- Tests of Abraham
- Passover
- Ten Commandments
- Promise to David
- Elijah and the Prophets of Baal
- The Promise of Jesus
- The Birth of Jesus
- Early Life of Jesus
- Jesus Heals the Sick
- Jesus Calms the Storm
- Jesus Has Power Over the Demons
- Jesus Raises the Dead
- Lazarus and the Rich Man
- The Passion of Christ
- Resurrection Appearances of Jesus
- Pentecost
- The Ethiopian Eunuch
- Saul's Conversion
- Paul in Prison and in Thessalonica
- The Second Coming of Jesus

# THE BIBLE AND LITERACY

StoryRunners is working to make the Gospel accessible to those who have no access to the Scripture. We treasure written Scripture and view it alone as the authority for Christian faith and practice. We seek to lead people to embrace that same high view of the Bible, which is the basis for Oral Bibles. It is our hope and expectation that those won to Christ through Oral Bibles will take interest in the source of the stories, want to hear more of them, and that at least some of them will want to acquire literacy so that they can read them for themselves. We view this as a very positive thing and will be supportive of their desire for literacy and vernacular Scriptures.

For a church body or a church planting movement to have long-term theological and biblical strength, it will need at least a few of its members to acquire additional training that enables them to serve the theological needs of the larger group. However, even in the United States, we do not seek to prepare everyone in ministerial training for that role. Only a few, by virtue of calling, gifts, and opportunity, are likely ever to exegete Greek and Hebrew texts skillfully and become technical scholars.

Minority languages and oral cultures pose a special challenge to learning Greek and Hebrew. For example, in Togo, seminary students receive instruction in French, which is the third language for many students. So they study Greek and Hebrew, their fourth and fifth languages, via their third language. They take Greek and Hebrew simultaneously, which makes matters even worse! Additionally, conventional ways of teaching biblical languages depends on a high level of conceptual ability. A "participle" or "ablative" or a "hiphil" has never walked the earth, been held in one's hand, or been seen with the human eye. Many of the conditions requisite for successful instruction in Greek and Hebrew do not exist in the places where we work.

**However, we are not surrendering to illiteracy!** We are simply using Oral Bibles in order to meet oral learners where they are initially. We are not giving up on the prospect that they might learn to enjoy reading and studying a printed text of Scripture. We hope to "hook" them via Oral Bibles. Our hope is that an encounter with Christ through oral proclamation of Scripture will stimulate a hunger for learning, literacy, and formal education. In the history of education in the United States, the desire to be able to read the Bible stimulated the provision of schools.

Indeed, it is our hope that every people group will one day have a written translation of the whole Bible in their mother tongue. That's why we encourage partners to consider sponsorship of a written Bible translation and literacy project. One of the quickest ways for that to happen is to partner with a Story Bible project. Many times Story Bible teams have the skill sets needed to help begin a written translation. We will introduce these workers to Bible translation ministries to help accelerate a written translation. The production of Story Bibles for an unreached people group helps move them one step closer to a written translation of the Bible and literacy.

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# MINISTRY SUMMARY

StoryRunners was born out of a growing awareness that most of the remaining unreached people groups are made up of oral preference learners. For them to understand the message, it must be presented in a way that addresses their culture and learning style. During the 1990s, three multi-agency consultations on orality and the Bible were held at various locations around the world. In discussion with those mission leaders who were also on this path of discovery (and even leading us down the path) we felt the need to more regularly gather to network on issues such as Bible storying, as well as related oral and audiovisual expressions, in order to take the gospel to unreached people groups. Our first annual consultation was held in December, 2001. This network later joined forces with a permanent task force that was formed at the 2004 forum of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization to address various aspects of making disciples of oral learners. It has come to be known as the International Orality Network.

In a parallel development, Table 71, a regular gathering of mission-agency leaders that arose from the Billy Graham Amsterdam 2000 Conference on World Evangelism, adopted a cooperative strategy centered on orality and Bible storying. An intersection of these different streams has resulted in OneStory, a partnership managed by the five largest organizations involved in the least-reached people groups and Bibleless language groups of the world. Each organization brings a unique set of strengths to a partnership ventured around Bible storying. The StoryRunners team provides the core operational function for OneStory.

Table 71 later initiated Finishing the Task. It is a movement which exists to connect local churches to all of the unengaged, unreached people groups of the world, developing indigenously lead church planting movements resulting in the evangelization and discipleship of the peoples. StoryRunners also provides the infrastructure and field training for the Finishing the Task initiative.

In a similar fashion, StoryRunners provides the logistical support of Finishing The Task, including the development and technical support of websites, developing the communications strategy, mobilizing churches, etc. We serve as “first responders” to all church contacts from the websites, conferences, and our own sponsored FTT Briefings for donors and pastors.

## *CORE VALUES*

### **ALL PEOPLES**

A core value that pervades all other values is that of reaching all peoples. This means that the proclamation of God’s Word will not be limited by the size of a people group, the level of literacy, the geographic or sociopolitical context, or any other parameter. StoryRunners values every unreached people group and dreams to see them reached.

### **GOD’S WORD IN THE MOTHER TONGUE**

Proclaiming God’s Word to every unreached people group is at the core of StoryRunners. Making Scripture available in the heart languages of unreached people groups facilitates the development of viable, sustainable, reproducing and indigenously led churches. We desire for the gospel message found in God’s Word to flow freely at the heart level of every individual, with everyone having the opportunity to receive it, understand it, respond to it and reproduce it within their own culture. While providing oral translations of scripture, it’s also important to note that we work tenaciously in partnership with Bible translators to

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protect the integrity of scripture at every stage of each project. We value the finished and recorded stories as important foundation blocks to providing additional scripture resources within each people group.

### **HEART LEARNING STYLE**

StoryRunners honors the communication style, learning preference and oral traditions of each distinct people group. With thousands of languages yet unwritten, learning how these cultures have retained and passed along their culture, language, history, music, poetry and values for thousands of years is critical. These “heart issues” are always packaged in a heart learning style (usually oral and highly cultural). God’s Word is full of stories that reveal to us His character, His plan of redemption, and His loving relationship with man. The Bible preserves these stories in a written record, but many of them were originally communicated orally, as was the primary means of communicating them over the millennia. A first generation of mother-tongue storytellers telling a carefully crafted, carefully selected set of Bible stories, and then equipping others to tell them, accurately provides for effective, deeply understood evangelism resulting in spiritual movements.

### **PARTNERSHIP**

A priority and focus of StoryRunners is to be a catalyst in developing global and local partnerships in order to maximize the lasting fruitfulness of all our partnerships. An effective cross-cultural partnership model will bear witness of God’s grace to the world and bring glory to God. We are committed to partnering with local churches and to encouraging and facilitating their success in being on mission with God and working together to fulfill the Great Commission. We also believe in close partnership with national teams, national churches or local agencies for building sustainable models. Sometimes, the most fruitful model is a partnership with humanitarian groups to develop a more holistic ministry impact.

### **NATIONAL STORYING MOVEMENTS**

StoryRunners envisions effective communication of God’s Word, resulting in evangelism and discipleship spreading broadly through every people group and deeply influencing lives. The result of this movement is the planting and growing of healthy house churches that respond to the unique, God-given culture of each people group while staying firmly grounded in God’s Word. Church planting becomes a spiritual movement as members of each local church plant new churches within their own people group and beyond. As God’s Word flows freely, we believe changed lives will result and God’s stories will multiply into other nearby people groups, resulting in a local storying movement.

### **NEGLECTED SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY**

One of the values of StoryRunners is that God’s Word should flow freely into all segments of a people group. We are committed to intentionality in this area of need by focusing special efforts on women (especially in Muslim, Hindu and other cultures where the gospel might not flow freely between men and women). We are also developing special strategies for children, Deaf communities, families affected by AIDS/HIV, and other groups that have often been inadvertently overlooked by normal mission strategies.

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# GETTING STARTED

Imagine your church has begun a three year journey with StoryRunners, a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ. You will take the Gospel to people that little or no access to the Gospel called an unreached people group or UPG. During this journey you will gain the knowledge and personal relationships needed to lead an effective long term ministry. By God's grace it will result in a rapid, indigenously led, and self-sustaining church planting movement through evangelism, church planting, discipleship, and leadership training. Story Bibles will be used in the context of compassion ministries involving health, education, and business. During the journey you will learn to mobilize the resources needed to get the job done.

## **Initial action points for getting started:**

- I. A printed, personalized announcement by the Senior Pastor attached to the Partnership Agreement. The announcement should be given wide distribution online, church bulletin, and classes.
- II. Selection of a church member to serve as the Champion who will administer the project.
  - A. Promote the need for a Champion and supporting team through church announcements from the pulpit, online, church bulletin, and classes. Invite people to attend the vision casting and informational meeting where details will be shared. If helpful, an online informational video clip from StoryRunners can be made available for viewing at this meeting. Ideally, the Champion will lead the meeting.
  - B. At the meeting give an overview of the project and describe the roles of the Champion and supporting teams:
    1. Prayer
    2. Research and mapping
    3. Short term mission
    4. Special projects
    5. Communication
    6. Fund raising
    7. Any other needs that may arise

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