

BETTER Together

PREPARING PARTNERS,
STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

*Send Relief
missionary
Jason Tipton and
his wife, Mindy*

LEAD WOMEN ON MISSION:

Use with meeting plan on
pages 14-15 in Women on
Mission Leader (Fall 2022).

THIS MONTH, VISIT WMU.COM/BLOGS
for an update on the work and current
praises and prayer requests.

Denver, Colorado, is one of the largest and fastest-growing cities in the United States, boasting 300 days of sunshine, dry air, and a professional team for every sport. Outdoor enthusiasts can take advantage of hiking, hunting, camping, mountain climbing, snow skiing, and snowboarding. Each season in the Mile High City has its allure: fall with culinary festivals and aspen trees bursting with color; winter with snowy adventures; spring with comfortable temperatures and fewer tourists; and summer with parks, gardens, and bountiful fishing.

With all Colorado has to offer, Jason Tipton calls it a “beautiful, yet distracted city” and feels the challenge to place a compelling vision in front of people to follow Jesus.

SEND RELIEF MINISTRY

Nestled in one of the poorest areas of Denver is a Send Relief ministry center, where Jason serves as the ministry’s director. The start-up ministry center located in Denver’s urban core is one of 16 Send Relief ministry centers across the US and Puerto Rico. These compassion ministry centers are supported by the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering and the Cooperative Program. Compassion ministry opens the door to the gospel by first meeting physical needs and then sharing the hope found in the gospel.

SEND RELIEF: IMB AND NAMB IN PARTNERSHIP

AREAS OF FOCUS:

1. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES
2. CARING FOR REFUGEES
3. PROTECTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
4. FIGHTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING
5. RESPONDING TO CRISIS

Send Relief addresses widespread needs throughout the cities it serves, with each center adopting one of the five focal areas as its primary focus. The Denver ministry center emphasizes caring for refugees. With more than 100 international communities surrounding the city, strengthening refugee communities is a growing and vital interest.

Specific areas of ministry for the Denver center are food insecurity, projects that strengthen local schools,

resources for those in foster care, and job skills training for refugees. It orchestrates a collaborative effort from local churches and other nonprofit agencies to address these needs.

“I don’t believe in reinventing the wheel or starting something from scratch unless it is absolutely necessary,” Jason said. “If there is a need, however, to start something new, we will absolutely do that.”

NO PARTNERS, NO MINISTRY

The need for partners is crucial. Jason views partners as those who are being served and those who do the serving. Jason’s motto of “Better Together” demonstrates the relationship with his partners and his Send Relief ministry team.

Twice-weekly food distributions for refugee families require drivers and deliverers. Volunteers come from short-term missions teams, and local volunteers help fill the gap.

Jason’s son, Jonathan, is one of his best volunteers. Jonathan’s whatever-it-takes attitude gets the job done as he serves alongside his dad. As a 16-year-old missionary kid, Jonathan says it is sometimes hard. “You have to sacrifice a lot of time you could be giving to other things. And there are few who really understand what you are trying to do. But if you trust in God, you know that everything will be okay.”

In addition to his work with the Denver center, Jason also serves as a regional resource for all other ministry centers in the West and Midwest.

Jason’s wife, Mindy, has recently taken a position as a preschool director in the city. Much of her time is devoted to partnering with families to work with their children. She hopes her role will cross paths with her husband’s ministry, enabling them to work together through the organizations they serve.

Jason says Mindy’s calling to missions came long before his. “She had a bigger heart for mission service than I did when we met, and still does for that matter,” he said.

Mindy’s early years in Princeton, Kentucky, were greatly influenced by her participation in Girls in Action (GA) and Acteens. These groups helped teach her to know and follow Jesus, to love God’s Word, to pray for missionaries, and to share the gospel. She served as a summer GA camp counselor and then as a missionary in South Carolina for two summers.



Jason with Derick Sherfey (left), planter of The Oaks Church in Denver and coleader of the Denver Send Relief ministry center

FACTORS INFLUENCING MISSION SERVICE

Jason is a huge fan of short-term missions. His role in mission service was introduced through short-term mission trips. As a college student, he traveled to West Virginia to do light construction work with World Changers. By the time he left, he not only changed the lives of homeowners needing a new roof and a wheelchair ramp, but he also helped change the lives of those making a decision for Christ.

The trip changed Jason's life too. While in West Virginia, he met students from Union University and decided to transfer from Mississippi State University to complete his accounting degree at Union, something he felt God was calling him to do. He "left all to follow Jesus," beginning the fulfillment of Mark 10 in his life.

Another short-term mission trip to Spain and northern Africa altered the way Jason viewed the world and the mission of God. "There were so many experiences that laid a deeper foundation for mission service: gospel conversations, divine appointments, meeting brothers and sisters in Christ from a different culture, being exposed to doing the long work of gospel ministry in a different culture, spiritual warfare, lack of a gospel witness, and exposure to IMB missionaries." All of these experiences helped shape his calling to mission service.

Jason reflects upon the people and church programs God used to open his eyes and heart to mission service. Even as a child, Scripture was alive to him. He liked to pretend he was the pastor. He tried to guess what the pastor would say next.

Jason's parents, grandmother, Sunday School teachers, and student pastors were instrumental in shaping his spiritual development. While at Union University, he met Charles Fowler, who is now president of Carson-Newman University, who encouraged him to stay faithful to God's preferred future for his life when he yearned to return to Mississippi. Jason now sees Charles as his "father in the faith."

After graduating, Jason accepted a bivocational role as a student pastor at Union and an associate pastor in West Tennessee. He loved seeing students use the evangelistic tools he taught them. He also loved seeing the local church become mobilized to share the gospel.

EMBRACING WEAKNESS TO LOVE STRONGER

Jason began to sense a fresh stirring from the Lord while in his postgraduate position. An issue of unbelief was festering in his life, which needed to be acknowledged and repented of. Jason confessed he was trying to view himself through a lens of earning his way into the presence of God and gaining favor through works. He found himself in a place of extreme spiritual exhaustion, struggling to pray.

In partnership with the Denver Send Relief ministry center, a group from Colorado Christian University completed a painting project at Place Bridge Academy, a refugee magnet school in Denver.



“Any time that I’ve struggled to love myself, it is always rooted in a wrong view of God . . . and that I wasn’t letting Him be ‘Abba Father,’” he said. He confronted the truth that “being a son of God comes from a deep well of God’s grace, not at all by our performance.”

God led Jason through a season to embrace weakness, which Jason believes was used to drive within him a deeper dependence on God. His fear of inadequacy finally melted after reading John 15:4–5, which says, “Remain in me . . . apart from me you can do nothing.” John 21:1, where Jesus revealed Himself again in the midst of the disciples’ inability to catch fish, also spoke to Jason.

GOOD POSTURE

Jason dedicated his life to full-time mission service. He and Mindy were prepared to serve overseas, but that’s not where God was calling them. Through a not-so-chance meeting, the Tiptons ended up in Denver.

Jason believes his calling and that of the ministry center is tied to Isaiah 58, which mandates a biblical responsibility to the underprivileged. People and relationships are the overriding themes of Jason’s life and his work at the ministry center. “We place a high value on relationships and do ministry from a posture of relationship and hospitality/service,” he said.

Zach can attest to that. One morning, Zach and his friend stood across the street, watching the ministry teams load food into cars for delivery to refugee families. “We want some food too,” they yelled. Jason walked over to them and attempted to engage in conversation. Zach’s friend was resistant, so Jason turned to Zach and asked, “What’s your story?” Zach answered, “I don’t know what to tell you except that I feel lost.” Ironically, Zach was wearing a T-shirt sporting the quote “Not all who wander are lost.”

Jason knew Zach was destined to be saved that day, but Zach didn’t. By the end of the day, Zach pleaded for forgiveness and cried out for help. Jason showed Zach how to have a new life in Christ. Zach told Jason, “I’m not lost anymore.”

BE ON MISSION: PRAY AND SERVE

Full-time vocational missions work is not for everybody, but Jason says God calls everyone to have a lifelong mission with Him.

He asked for prayer for the following:

- For the Tipton family, especially for the next three years before Jonathan goes to college
- For sustaining grace to lead and to pace themselves for ministry over the long haul
- Short-term teams and long-term partners
- For the gospel to be advanced among those being served

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KAREN ALLEN lives in Birmingham, Alabama, and often participates in short-term international mission trips. Read about some of those trips on her website, ewerblessed.com, and sign up for her blog.