

Go Now Missions: Same mission in different locations

June 3, 2020

Go Now Missions has adapted its approach to college student missions to keep its students safe as they share the gospel this summer.

Since its inception in 1946, Texas Baptists have sent more than 9,000 students throughout the state, the United States and the world to share the love of Jesus Christ through short-term missions.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the travel advisories and restrictions that followed, Go Now leadership reorganized the summer 2020 missions to provide students with safe opportunities to be on mission.

Brenda Sanders, Go Now Missions consultant, explained the mission-sending program has begun using the hashtag [#missionnotcanceledgonow](#) to remind students a Christian's mission to share the gospel is never canceled.

Go Now launches Mission Lab

Instead, many of the students' original trips were modified to limit travel. Students who were supposed to go on international trips were given the option to serve in different capacities, such as in their hometowns or somewhere else in Texas.

Mission Lab has been developed by Go Now to send out "home missionaries," or students who will serve wherever they spend summer break. They will serve in their local community and engage in training, cohort activities and accountability with Go Now. Sixteen students will

serve through Mission Lab, which begins with a kickoff in Dallas that students can choose to attend virtually or in-person June 17-20.

With Mission Lab, student missionaries will be responsible for finding the best ways to serve in their communities. They will explore the needs, available ministries and people groups and commit to serve alongside one or more local ministries. They will spend 10 to 40 hours a week engaged in mission activities and may also join with their local Go Now cohort to serve on weekends as a group.

A Sam Houston State University student who originally planned to serve in Central Asia will serve through Mission Lab in Huntsville.

“The Lord has prepared my heart for a people group and not a place, and I am living in a city where the people are alive and well and ready to hear the gospel. I knew around 40 Central Asians were in town, and I knew serving them was the ministry that the Lord had for me,” he said.

“It’s so cool to see how the Lord has prepared me to serve this summer with them, especially in the relationships that have already been formed. Mission Lab will be another resource to help me be accountable and to think about living missionally. It helps people think about how serving in missions is also local, not just global.”

Creative approaches to ministry

In addition to Mission Lab, Go Now will also send 106 student missionaries to serve in the United States, with most serving in Texas. They will serve as summer missionaries for six weeks or Impact missionaries for one-to-two weeks. These missionaries will have a training on June 5-7 before they prepare to go where they have been called to serve.

Several of the student missionaries have found creative ideas for ministry. A student at the University of Texas at Tyler originally planned to serve with college students in Canada, but her plans changed following the spread of the pandemic. Feeling called to work with college ministry, she decided to serve as a virtual intern for a collegiate ministry in New York, as well as serve on a one-week team with collegiate ministry in San Antonio.



"The Lord grew me and showed me that the location does not matter, but once you are with the Lord then you become a missionary wherever you are," she said. "The Lord showed me Acts 16, where Paul wanted to go to Asia but the Lord directs him to Macedonia instead, and good things come from that. That passage encouraged me and showed me that the Lord knows what he is doing. It's not about me and it's not about the location, it's about the Lord's glory."

A virtual Go Now Commissioning Service is scheduled June 7. Sanders said she is excited to see college students be on mission and share the gospel in the midst all they have faced in the last two months. Though they may not go to their originally planned locations, the students still will make an impact in the community where they are serving and learn how to live a life of missions.

"As Go Now Missionaries, these students will have community, training, motivation and service," Sanders said. "By the end of the summer, they will learn the rhythms of a missional life that will enable them to serve the Lord faithfully not only this summer but for the rest of their lives."