

# Sending Churches: The Pastoral Reference

**Q: When a church signs a pastoral reference form, what does that mean? And what is the church affirming about the candidate?**

A: Every potential candidate who comes to Pioneers has their pastor [or] overseer fill out a pastor's reference. In some cases it may not be a pastor who's filling it out, but someone who knows them best. There's a box that comes to the end that says, "approve and endorse," and they have to sign it and check that box. That is not an automatic ticket to get to the field; what [you're] really saying at that point is, "We affirm this particular person, their giftedness, how God has called them, and we're willing to walk through the process with them."

It doesn't mean that in five weeks they're going to get on a plane and they're going to go to their unreached people group and start sharing the gospel. That's usually a process, what used to be called deputation, a process of maybe a year and a half, two years.

At any point if the local church says, "You know, we're really not sure about some things and we want to raise these issues, we really want to clarify some things. We feel like maybe the candidate might need more training," [we listen]. They may become an appointee now with Pioneers, but [in] the process of getting there, the church really has significant opportunity to speak into that and to play a part in what God is doing and how people are being trained for that.