

# **SHORT-TERM MISSION**



**International Ministries  
American Baptist Churches, USA  
KING OF PRUSSIA, PA**

**Short-Term Volunteer  
Handbook of Policies and Practices**

## **Short-Term Volunteer Handbook of Policies and Practices of International Ministries**

**This handbook represents the current volunteer candidate process and personnel policies in effect for short-term volunteers serving through International Ministries.**

**Nothing in this handbook is intended to create a contract between International Ministries and the volunteer serving in global settings.**

**The information and practices set forth in the handbook are simply guidelines and International Ministries may deviate from them at any time, at its discretion.**

**International Ministries reserves the right to change the information in the handbook at any time without advance notice.**

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## **Welcome**

Greetings! Thank you for considering investment of your time and talents through mission service alongside American Baptist International Ministries. Short-term volunteers have been a vital part of International Ministries' global outreach for over 50 years. This mission movement seeks to share the love of Jesus Christ with every person on earth through holistic ministry that meets spiritual, physical, and emotional needs. This cannot be done without people like you supporting and enhancing the work of long-term servants and local believers around the world.

The *Short-Term Mission Handbook of Policies and Practices* is designed to introduce you to International Ministries, familiarize you with the volunteer candidate process, and provide general details on your service once accepted and placed within a given opportunity. This is a valuable resource whether you are considering volunteer service for the first time or have already taken this path before through International Ministries. Thanks again for considering how God is calling you personally to go, serve, and share the love of Jesus through word and deed.

Blessings,

Short-Term Mission Team  
International Ministries

## **Introduction to International Ministries**

We're glad you are considering being a part of the global mission work of International Ministries through volunteer missionary service. We are eager for you to get to know us, and we would like to be of service to you. Created by American Baptists, International Ministries (IM) is part of a worldwide mission movement. Our calling is to glorify God in all the earth by crossing cultural boundaries to make disciples of Jesus Christ. We fulfill this by working hand in hand with partner organizations, churches, and local believers around the world. God is doing new things in mission today, and we are excited to be a part of it. Come, glorify the Lord with us and let us exalt His name together!

### ***Who we are.***

International Ministries is a group of Jesus' followers. We bring joy to God's heart by crossing the boundaries between people groups, to help them meet Jesus and develop a transforming relationship with Him. We serve with sisters and brothers from over 170 partner organizations and churches, located in some 71 countries around the world.

### ***Variety is the spice... of mission!***

Jesus preached, but he also taught, healed, encouraged, confronted and even raised people from the dead! He touched the "untouchable" people of his time and place. As we follow Jesus' example, God's Spirit leads us into an amazing variety of ways to serve. We are pastors, evangelists, worship leaders and Bible teachers, of course. But we are also doctors and nurses, public health trainers, teachers, farmers, small business coaches, village development workers, conflict transformation trainers, and construction contractors. People serve with IM for anywhere from two weeks up to two years. In addition to those who "go," God leads many others to give, to pray and to inspire others to join in this mission movement.

### ***Eternal message in an ever-changing world***

God's Spirit urges us to find ever-new ways to share God's timeless love. Throughout our history, committed individuals and churches have continually stretched to respond to God's leading and adapt our ways of doing mission to new realities. We have learned to serve under the leadership of national churches, and to recognize our own homeland is itself a mission field. We are honored and humbled to be stewards of a great tradition, one that continues to grow today!

### ***God's call... to all!***

Jesus' command to share the Good News with people from every place and ethnic group is a mandate for all His followers. There are many ways to make a valuable contribution to Jesus' global mission including long term missionary service, being a prayer partner, being part of a Mission Partnership Team, and supporting the mission work financially. We are glad you are considering volunteer service through International Ministries. Thanks for your willingness to take part in this mission effort by being a short-term volunteer!

## Our Mission

The mission of International Ministries is to glorify God in all the earth by crossing cultural boundaries to make followers of Jesus Christ.

What International Ministries means by "making disciples" appears in the results that are sought, which are that people

**Come to Christ:** People enter into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ

**Grow in Christ:** Followers of Jesus mature in their faith and use their gifts for God's glory

**Change their world with Christ:** God uses mature believers to "turn the world upside down"- which is to say, "right side up!"

As we join other believers to participate in God's mission, the staff and board of International Ministries have identified seven key ministry focus areas:

### **Leading People to Faith and Starting New Churches**

*Jesus calls his followers to make disciples of everyone, everywhere. The basic call of International Ministries is to fulfill this call, helping people **come** to Christ, **grow** in Christ and **change** their world with Christ. We work alongside local church partners in dozens of countries to start new congregations and to preach the good news to those who have not heard about Jesus.*

### **Training Future Church Leaders**

*The global church is growing at a pace far faster than the rate of pastors being trained for ministry. Rural communities often worship with a trained pastor infrequently if at all. International Ministries is committed to helping to fill the gap by sending global servants to teach at seminaries and Bible schools worldwide. International Ministries also provides funding for church workers in some of the poorest countries to go abroad to study and prepare for ministry.*

### **Abolishing Human Trafficking**

*Today, millions of men, women and children are working long, hard hours against their wills. Human beings are considered "trafficked" when they are transported across country boundaries to work as domestic servants, in sweat shops and restaurants, or are forced to sell their bodies for sex. International Ministries sends global servants and global consultants to work with Christian partners around the world to help prevent human trafficking by working with those at risk and advocate and minister to those who have escaped.*

### **Promoting Health in the ~~in an~~ HIV/AIDS World**

*Each year, seven million children die from simple illnesses we take for granted, like diarrhea, because they cannot get basic medicine or healthcare. Even more children may be infected with HIV/AIDS or orphaned due to the loss of one or both parents from the disease. International Ministries sends global servants who are doctors and nurses, supports hospitals and clinics, and has mobilized thousands of volunteers and local people trained to be healthcare workers to those in need of help and healing.*

### **Creating Economic Opportunity and Building Futures**

*Poor people around the world work and want to work. But with billions of people living on less than two dollars a day, they need help to adequately meet their families' needs. We believe it is not enough solely to give people basic necessities like food and water. We partner with God in providing a future with hope. The future is one built with work skills and development resources that can grow and sustain families and communities.*

### **Opening the Mind, Empowering the Heart**

*Children who do not attend school and get a basic education often find themselves trapped in a cycle of poverty, disease, homelessness and even human slavery. Access to basic education can make a difference between life and death. International Ministries sends global servants, volunteers and financial resources for school tuition, books and supplies so that more children can break the cycle of ignorance and poverty.*

### **Seeking Peace and Offering Refuge**

*In times of regional strife and struggle, International Ministries is called upon by local Christian partners to send global servants trained in peace and conflict resolution. From India to the Middle East to S.E. Asia, IM global servants have trained warring leaders on how to come to peaceful settlement under difficult circumstances. International Ministries also works with people seeking refuge from violence or persecution in their home countries. IM global servants are working with U.S. churches to welcome tens of thousands of ethnic Burmese refugees fleeing decades of violence and repression to find new homes and churches in the U.S.*

As International Ministries responds to the leading of God's Spirit in mission, we are committed to:

- Pray;
- Follow God's Word;
- Share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and action;
- Treat others with respect, working and learning together as partners;
- Live out the life that Jesus modeled, who came as a servant;
- Dedicate ourselves to those the world tramples or ignores;
- Help churches become healthy and mature;
- Involve all American Baptists in service to all the world;
- Cooperate with other churches in God's mission;
- Follow the Spirit of God into new ways of working;
- Face honestly the dynamic tensions of life and mission;
- Care for people;
- Give our best to mission;
- Share the best of our Baptist heritage;
- Stay accountable to our churches.

Visit the website at [www.internationalministries.org](http://www.internationalministries.org) to learn more about how International Ministries engages in holistic mission around the world.



## History

International Ministries was incorporated in 1814 as the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society which remains its legal name today. This society was organized to respond to the desire of Christians in the United States to support the sharing of the gospel message with people around the world and is the oldest Baptist international mission sending organization in North America.

The formation of International Ministries began as Adoniram and Ann Judson as well as Luther Rice departed from the United States for India as Congregational missionaries. During the four months boat ride to India, the Judsons became convinced after much study and prayer, that believer's baptism was the New Testament mandate. They determined to be baptized by immersion when they arrived in India. In God's providence, Luther Rice came to the same conclusion separately from them as he was traveling in another boat.

Luther Rice returned to the United States where he facilitated an amicable separation with the Congregationalists. Baptists met for their first national meeting at Philadelphia in 1814. At this meeting Luther Rice was appointed by the Board as one of their missionaries with the duty of traveling among Baptists in America informing them of the work of missions and raising funds for international service and outreach. His work enabled the missionary service of the Judsons and others to continue.

The Judsons eventually settled in Burma and would overcome incredible hardship over the subsequent forty years of service as God worked through them to meet physical and spiritual need. Their legacy still lives on today in the lives of countless people in Southeast Asia as well as in International Ministries, which seeks to carry out this work to this very day.

Since 1907, International Ministries has been formally associated with American Baptist Churches, USA, an association of churches with about 1.5 million members in the United States and Puerto Rico. International Ministries partners with American Baptist churches in carrying out its mission of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

## **What is Short-Term Mission?**

Short-Term Mission is a program that seeks to mobilize American Baptists in mission by promoting volunteer and short-term mission opportunities for teams or individuals. Each year, this office works with hundreds of churches to enable individual volunteers and short-term mission team participants to personally experience and contribute to the global mission effort of American Baptists.

### **How do we serve individuals, the local church, and our partners around the world?**

- Place volunteer teams and individuals in over 30 countries
- Facilitate connections between volunteers, long-term global servants, our international partners
- Provide cross-cultural and short-term mission pre-trip orientations
- Offer inter-generational pre-planned mission trips
- Publish and promote global service opportunities
- Assist with logistics and health related and cultural information
- Provide access to resources on fundraising
- Coordinate emergency relief and development ministries
- Facilitate networking of Baptists engaged in volunteer/short-term missions

The staff of this office consists of:

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## The Involvement Process

Long before you reached this moment of decision, you began a process of mission service through interest, giving, praying, and involvement. Long after you leave your field of service, you will impact the process of others. The short-term mission experience is part of your Christian walk with a global community of kingdom citizens.

There are six basic steps in the process of serving as a volunteer on short-term missions.

1. Initial interest/Seeking information/Discernment
2. Approval and matching process by International Ministries
3. Orientation, ~~and~~ Preparation and Budget Planning
4. Arrival and Adjustment
5. Ministry of Service and Closure
6. Re-Entry, ~~and~~ Sharing and De-Briefing

International Ministries wants you to be effective in your personal walk and as a volunteer representative of International Ministries. Each of the stages above is addressed within this volunteer manual or in the accompanying cross-cultural training materials entitled "Cross Cultural Adjustment". By reading these sections and following general guidelines for living cross-culturally, you can begin preparing for a smooth transition into cross-cultural missionary service.

## Volunteer Missionary Service

What do you think of when you hear the word "missionary" or "global servant?" If you are like many, you might imagine a selfless and sacrificial person who is living in a remote village preaching and teaching. The global servant or missionary, we imagine, lacks food, clean water and adequate housing. They are suffering for Jesus, estranged from family, friends, and the modern life of comfort and convenience.

Would it surprise you that the word "missionary" or "global servant" never appears in the Bible? We often refer to the Apostle Paul as the first missionary, even though he never referred to himself as such. Our image of the missionary, and the name itself, comes from early European Christians who felt a call to share Christ with those in distant lands who had never heard of Jesus Christ. These preachers and teachers of the Gospel followed the model of the Apostle Paul in their contemporary context.

One such couple was Adoniram and Ann Judson of Massachusetts. Early in the nineteenth century, they heard and responded to God's call to share the Gospel of Christ in India, and later Burma. It was not an easy life and though they volunteered and responded to God's call to serve, they needed prayer and financial support from Christians in the United States and European countries.

In May 1814, representatives from 33 Baptist congregations met in Philadelphia to find a way to support the Judsons in their evangelistic efforts. From this meeting, they formed a national "mission" society. The Judsons, like other overseas evangelizing Christians, became the representatives of mission societies who prayed, raised support, and sent

servants of the Gospel to distant countries. These global servants, as agents of the missions, were called "missionaries." Many of these early missionaries were common folk with an uncommon vision to take the message of Christ around the world. They were often trades-people who entered service without the benefit of seminary training and cross-cultural skills. They gathered supplies, boarded ocean going vessels, and sailed the seas to settle in countries where people had unusual, to them, customs and culture.

A lot has happened since 1814. The distant village is now part of the global village. Air travel, the Internet, and other technology have brought the world closer.

The nature of mission and the role of the missionary have also changed. The Kingdom of God has grown. Christianity, the religion of one-third of the world's people, is primarily made up not of people from the United States and Europe, but the global south- Africa- Asia, and Latin America. While the focus of mission is still to share the Gospel of Christ, congregations around the globe now share the responsibility through partnership. The role of the Western missionary has changed from parent to partner, but the task of witnessing, planting churches, and ministering to human needs remains. The need is great for long-term servants who invest significant time to international missionary service. There is also a great need for short-term volunteers to support these long-term servants and the church around the globe.

## **Your Role as a Volunteer**

As a volunteer, your role is to support, encourage, and serve the ministry already in progress where you go. While you may expect to perform a single "task" on your mission, many variables often determine your role. You will actually serve in multiple roles.

Because of the different expectations of your work, you will need to be flexible, open, and adaptable- to be a short-term servant. This role will be particularly crucial in your relationship to both the local long-term global servants and to church leaders in your country of service.

How do short-term volunteers relate to long-term global servants, local church leaders, and pastors on the field? As a short-term volunteer, you are the guest of the local church body. As a guest, your hosts will treat you with much respect and care. At the same time, you feel a special call of God to help others with the skills you possess. A key word is "servant." Volunteer servants bring many talents and great energy to the international mission. You may see things that you do not understand and some with which you may not agree! It will help if you keep the following in mind before, during, and after your mission venture:

- You are on the mission field at the invitation of local leaders and therefore are a guest with a task to do
- You have responded to a specific assignment request, but you may be asked to do tasks outside of your expected assignment

- You are a representative of Christ, the Kingdom of God, International Ministries, and your local church. Your words and actions of love give witness beyond your own person to a collective community of Christians and the world at large.
- People will remember you long after you leave, for good or ill. Your good deeds, acts of kindness and servant spirit will bring many blessings to you and the community you serve long after you leave.

## Volunteer Qualities

Volunteers, like other world travelers, possess attitudes and qualities that allow them to adjust and adapt to new cultures. The qualities below serve as a gauge on your potential readiness for cross-cultural service.

Take this simple self-test to see which volunteer qualities you possess. Secondly, be sure to seek the affirmation of others in your calling as well as these specific qualities below. And then seek the affirmation of others.

**Please rate yourself from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). In which areas do you need to improve? Which qualities will be your greatest strengths?**

	Scale				
➡ Respect for others (treating others with equal regard)	1	2	3	4	5
➡ Openness and Flexibility (ability to adjust to new circumstances with grace)	1	2	3	4	5
➡ Responsible Optimism (positive honesty)	1	2	3	4	5
➡ Cooperative and Team Spirit	1	2	3	4	5
➡ Tolerating Ambiguity (patience in the unknown) Scale:	1	2	3	4	5
➡ Being Nonjudgmental (having a non-critical attitude)	1	2	3	4	5
➡ Developing Empathy (learning to see from the other person's perspective)	1	2	3	4	5
➡ Persistence and Perseverance	1	2	3	4	5
➡ Sharing His/Her Faith	1	2	3	4	5
➡ Relating to People as Opposed to Performing Tasks	1	2	3	4	5

**Greatest Strengths** \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas to Improve** \_\_\_\_\_

## The Screening and Selection Process

While God extends the call of mission to every Christian, cross-cultural mission requires people to invest time in proper preparation. This is more of a practical concern than a theological concern. Living in diverse climates, working with second, third, and even fourth languages, and adjusting to life in totally different cultures place unusual demands and stress on individuals and families. Serving in another country is not a test of one's high "Christian Call." However, it will test one's perseverance, commitment, and passion for missions. In other words, one is not a special person or "elite Christian" because he or she chooses to serve on a short-term basis in another culture. Yet, because you chose to serve in this way, your call and commitment will be tested and strengthened through a refining fire. This test comes by living among and working with people from a very different life experience than yours.

There are a number of qualities and characteristics that are the foundation to the success of cross-cultural service through International Ministries. They include:

Requirements for those seeking to serve as Short-Term Volunteers on extended time (30 days up to two years) through International Ministries include

- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Physically fit
- Emotional health and stability
- Strong Christian character
- A cooperative and flexible team spirit
- The ability to adjust to new situations
- Self-motivation
- Ability to accept and follow directions
- Patience
- Willingness to set aside personal expectations to fulfill needs expressed by long-term global servants and partners

## Check-List for Placement of Short-Term Volunteer

The following is the general process for selecting and placing volunteers.

1. Interest and information seeking
  - Contact the Short-Term Mission office of International Ministries for information
  - Complete an online Inquiry Application
  - Affirmation, counseling, and guidance from your pastor and network
2. Application and Screening Process
  - Complete and submit the Online Volunteer Application Form
  - Submit three reference reports from individuals that know you well. One should be from your pastor.
  - Submit a resume that shares your recent work history, if possible
  - Submit background check release
3. Assignment Process
  - Acceptance by International Ministries after review of application, references, background check
  - Acceptance by International Ministries global servant and/or partner organization
4. Complete Release Forms
  - Medical Release/Emergency Contact Form
  - Code of Conduct Form
5. Preparation for Short-Term Mission Service
  - Establish direct contact with long-term global servant
  - Receive information and links to language, cultural, health, ministry, fundraising, travel document, and other resources
  - Contact physician/travel clinic and get proper immunizations
  - Prepare for entrance into country: Valid passport (check country information for specific details), make travel plans, obtain visa
  - Provide a copy of travel itinerary to the Short-Term Mission Office
  - Select a prayer partner from your church
6. Departure for International Service
  - Register with US State Department
  - Prepare household for departure
  - Commissioning Service at church



## **Short-Term Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities**

Volunteers are an invaluable help to the ministry of International Ministries and God's work around the world. Volunteers are extended the right to be provided clear and appropriate assignments, the right to be treated fairly, the right to effective orientation, supervision and collaboration, respect, safe working conditions, and the right to recognition for service provided.

In return, the volunteers should be honest about goals, skills, limitations, and motivation for their service. He or she should seek to fulfill their commitment, cooperate with International Ministries' staff and with long-term global servants and in the host country, be flexible and open minded, ask for help when necessary, stay informed, and be a strong witness through word and deed, to the love and power of Jesus Christ.

## **Short-Term Volunteer Policies**

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

The short-term volunteer is accountable to whoever is deemed their supervisor in the host country. This will likely be the long-term global servant, but may also be a representative of a Baptist partner organization. He or she is also accountable to the Director of Short-Term Mission at International Ministries.

### **BACKGROUND CHECKS**

In order to reduce the risk to the many vulnerable groups that International Ministries serves, it is our policy to conduct a criminal conviction and sex offender background check prior for all adults as part of the approval for short-term missions.

The determination through the background check that the candidate has been convicted of crimes or has falsified conviction information on the application may result in rejection from consideration for short-term volunteer service. In making the determination of job-relatedness, consideration will be given to how recent the conviction occurred; the frequency and severity of the crimes; and the age of the individual at the time the crimes were committed.

Any information related to convictions is maintained in the strictest confidence. Only essential personnel involved in the assignment process will be informed on a need-to-know basis.

Background checks will be resubmitted every three years.

### **CHILDREN**

Children may accompany the parents to serve in a given country as long as appropriate permission from the host partner is provided and appropriate housing and schooling can be arranged. Medical and repatriation insurance does not cover children under the age of 9 years old. Short-Term Volunteers traveling with children younger than 9 years old must have proper insurance coverage.

Although International Ministries values each member of a missionary family the responsibility of the volunteer missionary's children falls primarily on the parents and extended family accompanying of the children.

### **COMMUNICATION**

The short-term volunteer should make every effort to communicate with the Short-Term Mission (STM) staff once a month, when on extended assignment. This will provide an opportunity to share about your experience and ask for help or advice on specific issues. It will also provide STM staff with an opportunity to provide support and encouragement as you engage in ministry.

The volunteer should plan to communicate with the STM office immediately after arriving in the host country and immediately before departing from the host country at the end of service.

It is highly recommended that the volunteer regularly communicate with family, prayer partner and sending church with updates via email or by creating a blog. This allows people to experience the mission work through reading the regular updates. If emails or a blog are generated, please copy STM staff so we may stay easily updated on the mission experience.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The volunteer represents International Ministries, American Baptist Churches, USA, and to a larger extent Christians in your community of service. In addition to appropriate dress and conduct, it is important to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest.

An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when a volunteer is in a position to influence a decision that could actually or potentially bring personal gain to the volunteer or a close relation or friend.

### **DRESS AND CONDUCT CODE**

Volunteers are expected to dress and act in a way that is culturally appropriate within their ministry setting. Please rely on the long-term global servant and the Short-Term Mission staff to guide you in making appropriate decisions.

Gambling, the use of profane or abusive language, alcohol abuse, or any illegal substances will not be tolerated at any time. The volunteer will be sent back at his/her own expense back to their originating city.

Romantic relationships are **strongly** discouraged. Serving on the mission field is a very emotional time, and your heart can become very vulnerable. We understand that being a single volunteer can be very lonely. There are advantages, though! For one, being single forces you to turn to God for intimacy and into a deeper relationship with Him. Please see "[Single & in Short-Term Mission?](#)" in the appendix for more information.

## **COVENANT**

We recognize that both the volunteer and the host or partner is human, with delightful human tendencies but also human shortcomings. There will be situations where, despite best preparations, the volunteer and the host are simply not compatible. The short-term mission assignment may need to be terminated sooner.

## **DEBRIEFING**

Upon your return from service as a volunteer, there will be an opportunity to debrief your experience with STM staff members either in person or by phone or by zoom video conferencing. Please be prepared to share your perspective of the experience, how you as well as the local church were impacted by your time, and what you might recommend to STM and to others considering service in this venue.

In addition, you will be mailed the following resources:

- Resources and devotionals related to readjustment and “reverse culture shock”, and spiritual renewal.
- Materials on making effective presentations and sharing your story with others

## **EVACUATION AND EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**

International Ministries accepts the obligation to ensure the safety of its short-term volunteers in times of political disturbances in any part of the world. By virtue of their calling, volunteers may find themselves in positions of risk.

Every volunteer must develop an evacuation plan in conjunction with the Short-Term Mission office and the in country host. The volunteer must educate oneself on the evacuation plan of the host long-term global servant.

The volunteer must provide the Short-Term Mission office an updated list of emergency contacts along with their contact information including home, office, cell phones, and email addresses, if available.

The International Ministries Executive Director, along with the crisis management team, will make a decision whether evacuation is necessary after gathering all the necessary information. If the volunteer does not evacuate despite a recommendation to do so, International Ministries assumes no responsibility for the volunteer's safety.

In the event of an emergency in which timely communication is difficult or impossible, the volunteer is expected to make the appropriate decision, in harmony with the recommendations of the host long-term global servant and the international partner.

Any orders of the legally constituted government of the host country to depart must be obeyed.

In the event that volunteers or their family members are kidnapped, International Ministries will not accede to the demands of the kidnappers for ransom. However, International Ministries will actively and strenuously engage in negotiation through a third party to secure release.

## **FUNDRAISING**

Volunteers are responsible for raising the necessary support to pay for their travel, food, accommodations, and other incidentals while serving. Some ministry venues may provide free food and/or boarding, other venues cover all the volunteer's expenses with a small stipend, but the vast majority is unable to offer any financial assistance.

The level of fundraising required is very dependent on the location, context, and capabilities of the receiving partner. The STM team can work with you to develop a budget.

Due to IRS restrictions, International Ministries is not able to accept donations for a volunteer's fundraising support.

American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (dba International Ministries) is a designated 501(c)(3) institution by the US Internal Revenue Service. Gifts are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law. Our board approved policy is that all gifts designated for a specific project be applied to that project with up to ten percent included for project oversight, evaluation, and reporting. Occasionally we receive more contributions for a given project. When that happens these additional funds are used to meet a similar pressing need.

There are great resources available on how to develop a mission partnership and support network among your friends, church, and colleagues. Please see a list of recommended resources in appendix iii.

## **HEALTH RESPONSIBILITIES AND RISKS**

It is the responsibility of the volunteer to secure medical clearance from their physician prior to departure. The volunteer application asks whether you and your physician consider you physically, emotionally, and spiritually fit for international service. It is vitally important to confirm your fitness prior to departure as those without medical clearance from their physicians will not be appointed to serve.

Volunteer service may present health risks greater than those encountered in the United States or Puerto Rico. Access to effective medical care may be difficult. The volunteer assumes the responsibility to talk with his/her personal physician regarding the risks attendant upon traveling, living, and working in the ministry setting.

## **INSURANCE (MEDICAL)**

A volunteer must have valid medical insurance during their time of service. There are many insurance companies that provide medical insurance especially designed for volunteers serving on short-term assignments of a couple weeks to a couple years. Please contact International Ministries if you need assistance in locating insurance.

For medical care in most countries, be prepared by pay up front by credit card or cash even if you do have valid medical insurance. It is important to retain a receipt and ideally a written medical report so that it can be submitted for reimbursement to your insurance company.

## **INSURANCE (TRAVEL)**

International Ministries provides complimentary medical evacuation and repatriation of remains insurance to each and every registered volunteer. AIG Life Insurance Company of Wilmington, Delaware is the travel insurance company for International Ministries, under the policy A&H Ambassador. You **MUST** call A&H Ambassador for any emergencies prior to taking action such as making medical evacuation arrangements. AIG will not reimburse you for travel expenses, if proper protocol has not been followed and approved by AIG. They will make all the arrangements for you. To contact them during the emergency or for claims after your service, please call AIG at 713-260-5592 internationally or 1-877-244-6871 in the US or Canada. You may call AIG collect, if necessary. These important contact numbers are also found on your insurance card, provided to you by STM staff before you depart. Below is a summary of the benefits of this ~~travel~~ insurance

### **Emergency Evacuation**

AIG will pay for all covered emergency evacuation expenses up to \$100,000 if the insured person suffers an injury or emergency sickness while outside a 100-mile radius of their home. **The evacuation must be recommended by a physician and organized by AIG** in order to be covered. Evacuation will be to the nearest medical facility that can provide appropriate medical treatment

Following a covered medical evacuation, AIG may pay for reasonable expenses to transport one accompanying family members to the patient's location.

### **Medical Expenses**

If a person suffers injuries from an accident, the insurance will pay up to \$2500 per person for treatment of injuries within 90 days of the date of the accident. This benefit is payable for incurred charges up to 52 weeks from the date of the accident. This benefit does not cover sickness, only accidents, and should not take the place of an internationally valid medical insurance policy. Volunteers are highly encouraged to ensure they have proper medical coverage.

### **Accident Protection**

If injury to the insured person results in death, the insurance company will pay 100% of the principal sum, which would be \$25,000.00. If injury to the insured person results in dismemberment and/or paralysis, the person is entitled to a certain percentage of the principal sum depending on the injury. This accident protection is in effect while the volunteer is serving at his/her destination. In addition, one also has 24-Hour Accident Protection while traveling to and from the destination of service in a civilian or military plane. This protection also extends to when one is traveling in an automobile while wearing a seatbelt.

### **Repatriation of Mortal Remains**

If a person should suffer loss of life while serving as a volunteer outside a 100-mile radius of his/her home, AIG will pay for expenses to return the body home. AIG must make all the arrangements and authorize all expenses in advance. The limit for this policy is \$10,000.

## **LANGUAGE STUDY**

The volunteer should make every effort to begin studying the local language prior to departure and throughout the term of service. Attempting to speak the local language is universally appreciated and will enable you to build relationships easier and make your ministry that much more effective.

## **LIABILITY**

A short-term volunteer is not an employee of International Ministries and undertakes service at their own risk. Of course, International Ministries will undertake every effort to reduce risk whenever feasible. International Ministries is not liable for any event that should arise throughout the term of service.

The volunteer is liable for any expenses related to the service experience including, but not limited to early return expenses, uninsured medical expenses and emergency evacuation.

Prior to beginning their service, volunteers must sign a release prior to beginning their term of service absolving International Ministries of responsibility and liability of any risks the volunteer may knowingly or unknowingly be subjected to through the course of their duties.

## **PASSPORTS AND VISAS**

The volunteer is responsible for securing a passport, and if necessary, a visa to enter and live in their country of service. The Short-Term Mission office can assist in gathering the necessary documentation as well as provide advice on expediting services should time be an issue.

## **RECOGNITION**

There is truly no way to adequately reward the effort and sacrifice that volunteers undertake to serve others. The typical person in this position often gains sufficient reward through the strong relationships built over the course of their experience with the host global servant international partner and local Christians. However, there are a couple ways International Ministries seeks to recognize volunteers

- Special Events- When possible, we seek to provide venues to recognize and celebrate volunteers at World Mission Conferences and other gatherings throughout the year.
- Subscription to letters/updates from International Ministries in email or postal mail form.
- Networking- We are often contacted with requests for mission speakers and we can connect you with speaking opportunities as well as other volunteers from your area.

## **RECORD MANAGEMENT**

The Short-Term Mission office maintains files on each volunteer that serves through International Ministries. These records include dates of service, application materials, volunteer service description, evaluations, and correspondence. Volunteer records are confidential.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION**

International Ministries is committed to placing volunteer in settings that are free from sexual harassment and discrimination. Action, words, jokes based on any legally protected characteristic such as an individual's ethnicity, religion, or any other will not be tolerated. Please bring any incidents to the immediate attention of your supervisor in country and to the Director of Short-Term Mission.

## **STAYING SAFE AND HEALTHY ON THE FIELD**

Please see the full page list of suggestions in the appendix

### **Emergency Medical Plan**

Check with your hosts about their plan for responding to a medical emergency should the need arise (eg. the location of the closest medical facility, how long it takes to get there, and the best route).

### **Crisis Management**

There is a slight chance that you will face serious political turmoil or natural disaster. This HAS happened to volunteers and teams!

- Check with your hosts regarding the likelihood of political disturbance or natural disaster.
- Establish a contingency or evacuation plan with your host.
- Make sure you understand your host's guidelines ~~advice~~ about what to do should a crisis or natural disaster occur.
- Have a small amount of emergency funds tucked away to cover transportation costs should the need arise.

## **TAXES**

The Volunteer is responsible for filing any US federal, state, and local taxes and any returns required by the host government.

## **TERM OF SERVICE**

The term of service will be determined well prior to departure to the country of service. There is no typical term of service with the shortest terms being measured in weeks and the longer ones measured in years. The term may be modified if the volunteer, long-term global servant, host partner, and Director of Short-Term Mission are in agreement.

## **TERMINATION**

International Ministries has the right to discontinue the service of a volunteer at any time. Possible reasons for early termination could be related to conduct, interpersonal conflict, the changing nature of ministry needs in the location, and increasing security risk.

The volunteer also has the right to end their service at any time.

## **ORIENTATION**

The volunteer should first seek to become familiar with this manual to understand the process, policy, and procedures for pursuing short-term volunteer service through International Ministries. Then:

- Read, study, and reflect upon the accompanying materials entitled "Cross-Cultural Adjustment". This material will walk you through the seven stages of cross-cultural adjustment including a preparation checklist, provides an opportunity to write a culture profile, and shares recommendations of specific books for additional reading.
- Talk with STM staff to address any questions you might have about process, placement, and your service assignment.
- Dialogue with the receiving global servant or host partner, usually by email, to work out specific details and have any additional questions answered prior to your departure to the host country.

## **UPDATES**

Before you leave for international service, please add [volunteers@internationalministries.org](mailto:volunteers@internationalministries.org) to your newsletter list, or invite us to your blog or Facebook page. We want to be able to support you while you are serving!

## **VEHICLES**

International Ministries defers to the wisdom and recommendations of the host in regard to volunteers either driving or purchasing vehicles. That said, the volunteer is completely responsible for all actions and outcomes while driving or riding in vehicles. Volunteers must have the correct insurance for the country they are in, have a valid international license, and know and abide by the local driving laws and safety rules.

Final words...

Paul said it best in his letter to the Ephesians...

*<sup>20</sup>Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, <sup>21</sup>to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. Ephesians 3:20 - 21*

The Short-Term Mission Team is here for you. Please email or call with your questions, concerns, suggestions, and we'll do our best to help. If you would like cross cultural orientation/short term mission leader training, or the materials to lead the training yourself, give us a call. It is our desire for you to have the most meaningful experience possible, from preparation to long after you return.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Email: [volunteers@internationalministries.org](mailto:volunteers@internationalministries.org)

Phone: 1-610-768-2168

Address: International Ministries, STM, 1003 W., 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, King of Prussia, PA 19406

Web: [www.internationalministries.org](http://www.internationalministries.org)



# Global Service

**Volunteer Mission Training Manual**

**Board of International Ministries  
American Baptist Churches**

by  
J. Nathan Corbitt

with  
Bible Studies by Jeff Deiselberg

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# **Cross Cultural Adjustment**

Introduction

## *Seven Stages for Cross-Cultural Adjustment*

1. Building a Firm Foundation
2. Removing Prejudice
3. Interpreting Cultural Values
4. Developing a Third Culture: Sharing Through Communication
5. Growing Through Conflict
6. Exercising Safety
7. Stabilizing Your Living Abroad

## PART TWO

### CROSS CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

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#### Introduction

In the near future you will cross a geographic chasm with relative ease by boarding a mode of transportation that St. Paul would have marveled at. Yet, the cultural chasm you will face is the same as those faced by St. Paul. For since the beginning of time the basic problems of developing relationships, communicating and ministering across cultures have not changed. Paul did not have any training in his cross-cultural adventures, yet, he learned through trial and error the best ways to communicate in a world, though technologically different, that was filled full of cross-cultural chasms. While we read in the New Testament of Paul's adventures, and marvel at his abilities, there are many unnamed evangelists and ministers who did not do so well. Research in this century has shown that people who receive training and orientation to travel and ministry overseas adjust and work better than those who don't.

The following orientation material has been successfully used as a training program for career missionaries, cross-cultural students and business people. If you will read and apply this material, your overseas experience will be enjoyable and more fruitful.

This material uses the metaphor of the bridge as a way to illustrate your adjustment. Bridges are an important part of transportation. They help us get from one place to another over seemingly impassable chasms. There are seven basic stages for bridging the culture gap and adjusting to living in a new culture. You may wonder why we have not just included a list of do's and don'ts to help in your travels. You will learn these as you write your country profile which we suggest as part of the orientation process (See outline in Appendix B). These elements do help in your initial contact with people in your host country. However, if you can be aware of the deeper elements of culture and the process through which you will pass, you are better able to think through some very complicated issues of "Cross-Cultural Adjustment."

Before we move to these stages, it might be helpful to discuss an almost universal experience of people who travel to new places. It is called "Culture Shock." You will be excited as you plan and arrive in your host culture. You will enjoy the new sights, sounds and smells. Eventually, however, you will experience disorientation in the new culture. Things will not be the same and you will experience a cultural vertigo where you are lost in a cultural twilight zone. This feeling of culture shock may move to a stage of cultural fatigue where you will grow weary of trying to listen to a new language and experience conflict over your role and change your routines. The results are stressors to your emotional equilibrium. Some people experience rising emotional stress, frustration, even physical illness and depression. You are at the bottom of the cultural chasm.

There are four basic stages to this 'culture shock' phenomenon as you regain your equilibrium. One, there is a **tourist stage**--like a honeymoon--where everything is new and exciting. Short term mission trips seldom go beyond this stage. Two, if you stay

several months you may feel **disenchantment** with the culture and its people. Third, you will **resolve** this disenchantment by releasing the stress as you begin seeing humor in your situation. During this time, you may begin to “bond” with your new friends and feel more at home. Eventually, you **adjust** by adapting your lifestyle to that of your new home. (Heibert, 64-80)

Many people also experience “reverse culture shock” when they return to their home. People exhibit reverse culture shock by becoming overly critical of the United States upon their return. They complain about the waste, over emphasis on tasks and have a feeling that US Americans need to change their lifestyles! Just as the traveler adjusts and adapts to the foreign host culture, the returning traveler must readjust to the home scene, because it is not exactly the same as when they left. If we are aware and recognize our anxieties, learn to build trust and recognize our differences we will be better prepared to move through culture shock as we build bridges of relationships in new cultural settings.

## Seven Stages for Cross-Cultural Adjustment

**B**uild on a Firm Foundation  
**R**emove Prejudice  
**I**nterpret Cultural Values  
**D**evelop a Third Culture  
**G**row Through Conflict  
**E**xercise Safety  
**S**tabilize Your Living

*The Malagasy people have a proverb, "As the lip of the pot so is all humankind. The human bridge though Jesus Christ reconciles a broken world to God."*

### Building a Firm Foundation

At the very core of our ability to live and work with people of other cultures is a foundation of love. Jesus gave the New Testament commandment, "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and LOVE thy neighbor as thyself." You remember the story of the young religious leader who wanted to know exactly what that statement meant. Jesus then told a story about the "Good Samaritan." He told this story because a foundation of love, as you know, is more than words. We act out our love for God and our neighbor through kindness and service. However, the real problem with the religious leader was not loving God, but with defining his neighbor. Jesus wanted him to refine his "Neighbor Ethic."

As you travel to another country, refine your "neighbor ethic." An ethic is a principle on which we base our actions. It is our personal and spiritual value system. As a good neighbor you will have four essential qualities that form the center of your being. They are the gyroscope on which you base your every action. You **sojourn** as a pilgrim, **see** with the eyes of God, act out of **service** and go beyond your comfort zone in **sacrifice**.

### SOJOURNING

How do you pass through life? In Hebrews, Paul writes of the attitude of faith that believers should have of this world. He indicates that we are to be pilgrims on a journey. As such we pass through life, guiding, helping and being helped by other pilgrims of faith, leading others to an eternal home. In defining the picture of a pilgrim, we can often understand its meaning by visualizing the roles we are not to take. First, we are more than simple "visitors" who come only to give greetings, have a cup of tea, and leave. Second, we are more than "tourists", who "taste and see" exotic foods, people and places, collecting curios and taking pictures to take back to our home church, family and friends. Third, we are more than "transient workers" who are present to get a job done and then return to our real job. Nor are we settlers. Particularly, as volunteers, we must keep in mind that we are on the move for God and are not permitted the luxury of setting up our personal kingdom on earth.

As a sojourning pilgrim, you have a gift and a call from God to holistically serve pilgrims you meet on journeys you take everyday of your life whether on the streets of your hometown or the streets of a foreign town.

## **SEEING**

**Seeing** the needs of other spiritual sojourners requires a Godly vision. The vision of love requires you to see the “invisible” people on your journey--your neighbors. We are often tempted to ignore some people because they might challenge our comfort zone. Ralph Ellison, the author of Invisible Man wrote that in the United States the black man was invisible to the “people with sleeping eyes.” Certainly at home, like the religious leaders in the story of the good Samaritan, we may be tempted to look at those around us who are different and ignore their presence because of our spiritually sleeping eyes. If we are to have the eyes of Jesus, we must recognize the presence of others and look past roles and position. In the eyes of God we treat others with equal regard as fellow pilgrims. You may be tempted to ignore the person who comes into your comfort zone--the “ugly” people of the world-- the marginalized and poor people who are not attractive to you. When we ignore others we proclaim our own ignorance. Remember the words of Jesus, “In as much as you have done it to the least of these, you have done it unto me.” We are to see with the eyes of Jesus, with a Godly vision, the potential in every person.

## **SERVING**

As a **servant**, we find ourselves in a role uncommon to American society. The word “servant” has come to be associated with an ugly history of slavery and indentured servanthood. We believe, in principle, that all people are created equal and therefore feel that no one should serve another. Yet servanthood is an attitude more than a status.

The word ‘serve’ means to attend or to wait on. To be a servant is to respond to the immediate physical needs and eternal spiritual concerns of fellow sojourners. At times you will be the servant and at other times the one to be served. In some countries, you will be seen in the status of “wealthy American” and your attempts at servanthood will be misunderstood or refused. You may feel waited on like a king or queen and you must accept, with graciousness, the service of others. At other times you may feel the mistrust or hate of others because of what you have and where you are from. Yet, at all times, the servant is gracious, respectful and allows others their personal dignity as you seek to meet needs through the building of relationships.

We can also add another “S” to serving. It is **Sharing**. When we serve we share the gospel of Christ in word and deed. Some people do not feel comfortable in sharing their personal Christian testimony with others. Yet, Paul’s admonition to Timothy was to be ready with a response to those who asked what he believed.

Sharing your faith with others should be a natural extension of your conversation in your host country. Often unknown to us, the Holy Spirit prepares the hearts and ears of others who are seeking a relationship with God. Consider these guidelines as you prepare your verbal Christian witness.

- Your personal testimony is unique to your own experience.

- Before arriving on the field of service, spend time in prayer and reflection about your Christian experience.
- Write out your testimony, using simple language, telling of your personal experience with God through Jesus. Use scripture to emphasize your main points. Conclude with an open question by inviting a response from your listener. Remember to keep it simple and short.
- Practice sharing with a friend, your missions leader or pastor. Rewrite your testimony based upon their suggestions.
- While on your field of service many opportunities will present themselves formally and informally, publicly and person-to-person. Use your testimony as part of everyday conversation with your new friends. Share your experiences with the local missionary or pastor. They are interested in seeing others come to Christ and will want to follow-up on your encounters.

## **SACRIFICING**

As you seek to be a servant your ethic will be tested by **sacrifice**. Sacrifice is going one step beyond the comfort zone. You can be sure that kind words of intent will be tested at every turn. There are three things dear to most Americans. These are privacy, possessions and power. In your moments of sacrifice you may feel a lack of privacy, absence of your possessions and a lack of control in your daily living. Flexibility, patience and persistence will be demanded of you on a regular basis. As you develop your neighbor ethic build your foundation on solid ROCK.

- Refine your neighbor ethic. Take time to think and reflect on the reasons you are involved in service to others.
- Observe the difference but always see the person. Learn to look past the exterior of the person and see the potential of each person as a citizen in God's kingdom.
- Care to serve and share. Discipline yourself to act as a servant in all situations, sharing the message of Jesus in word and deed.
- Know and go beyond your comfort zone.

## **REMOVING PREJUDICE**

Jesus, on more than one occasion, accused religious leaders of having eyes but not being able to see. In a concrete proverb he was helping the religious leaders to open their religious vision to those outside their own world. Research has shown that religious people are the most prejudiced and the most tolerant of all people. This seeming paradox has to do with how people view their religious experience. Those Christians who view their religion as an end in itself tend to be more prejudiced, while those who view their religious experience as a means to an end are often tolerant, or less prejudiced.

You were born in a village. You called it a community, borough, block or town. In your village you learned rules of behavior for relating to the world around you. This is called your world-view. It is the eyes for looking at the world around you, sorting through the vast amounts of stimuli, and categorizing information to help you understand the world around you. The cultural codes of behavior in your village were right and good, to you. At the same time, however, most of us developed a view of the badlands, those people and places that were different than us. Our good view of ourselves "ethnocentrism" can become a barrier in our relationships with others. This national prejudice, "In America we do it this way and you should too," can become a barrier to ministry.

All people have prejudice. Prejudice or pre-judgment is the mental process we all go through in processing the vast amount of information that come to our senses every day. We categorize and index these external stimuli to provide us with safety and balance. We even develop stereotypes, some good and some bad, to give us equilibrium in a complex and often unpredictable world. These mental processes are natural and necessary for living. They help us to reduce uncertainty about life. However, when our indexes and categories become labels, and our resources of love are withheld, we begin to discriminate. We discriminate when we ignore the



presence of others, are indifferent to the needs we see, we choose the best for ourselves, and eliminate the presence of others.

As you enter your country of service you will participate in a new city called "Bordertown," where the beliefs, attitudes and cultural values of "your town" will be challenged, compared and negotiated. You will find that many have a prejudice against Americans, "You all are too rich and arrogant." You may have some of your own prejudices exposed, "The poor are ignorant and lazy." or "If you do things like we do in America this problem can be solved." Just as these generalizations are incorrect about all US Americans, you will want to avoid generalizations about your host culture.

Keep an open mind. As you interact with the people in your host culture you will create new categories for the rules of behavior. People who tend to see things in "black and white" (there are only good ways and bad ways to do things) will have difficulty in adjusting and feel considerable discomfort in their relationships. Realize that just as others must develop new ways of seeing Americans, you, too, must find new ways to see them. Withhold judgment. Being non-judgmental does not mean that we do not make judgments. It means that we gather information before making judgments. Seek clarification on behavior you do not understand. Consider the following rules for living without prejudice in your country of service by being more OPEN to other people and their cultures.

- Observe your rough edges and own your attitudes. As you enter the "border town" of your field of service be open to learn about your own ethnocentrism. Learn from the experience by admitting your inappropriate attitudes toward others and then change. Don't generalize.
- Pardon the Offense. On many occasions you may feel offended and give offense in work and action. Seek not to offend and not to be offended. Offense is a natural part of developing new relationships. We offend and are offended when expectations of behavior are broken. We expect someone to shake our hand and they don't so we become offended. We expect someone to offer us a seat, and they don't, so we become offended. Most offense is unintentional. We do not intend to offend others and they do not intend to offend us. But it happens. It happens usually because we incorrectly attribute our cultural understanding on their cultural behavior. For example, we may be used to saying what we think in a direct manner, whereas in another culture, this may be considered offensive because it is considered rude and arrogant. People of that culture may be indirect in their communication. If we can learn the meaning behind the behaviors and try to understand the other culture, we can minimize our offense. The sooner you learn what is offensive about your culture, the sooner you can minimize offense. By understanding what is expected in the host culture the least likely you are to be offended.
- Ensure your intent. Think before you speak by listening carefully. Choose and measure your words wisely when talking to others. Spend your influence by knowing when you have said enough.

- Negotiate meaning. Feel free to talk about life and issues but do so in dialogue. Avoid criticism, dogmatic pronouncements and argument. Take seriously, the concerns of your hosts. Don't trivialize their concerns.

### **Interpreting Cultural Values**

In the previous stage we said that you grew up in a village and developed a world view. This way of seeing the world, organizing your life and relating to others is your culture. It is a mental map of reality that becomes your "culture bubble." Culture, how people see the world, organize themselves and go about living is universal to all groups of people. However, all cultures are not the same. In this section we will look at how cultures differ and how it may affect your living and ministry as a short-term volunteer.

Many people believe that if they can just say the right words and do the right actions they will adjust. These are the easiest part of adapting to a different culture. Imagine trying to move about a new city with a map of your hometown. Ridiculous, isn't it? Underneath the surface of the Place and Face of culture are values of Pace, Space and a value Base that determine these behaviors. Because culture is dynamic, and not static, we can only describe its character in general terms. When all of the variables are placed together there are quantum possibilities for complex actions. There are wide variances in how one person may reflect a culture. A failure to understand this variance is actually the way stereotypes develop.

### **PLACE**

All culture derives from a **PLACE**. This is the actual geographical environment of a people's origin. The place of culture has predetermined many cultural differences. One wears different clothes in warmer climates than cold ones. Transportation is different in the Amazon than in Saudi Arabia. Your lifestyle will change because of a different climate, geography and ecosystem. You will have to acclimate to different weather, diet, altitude and other environmental conditions which create real physical stress. This place of your new home will have a definite FACE which will force upon you the need for further adjustment.

### **FACE**

The **FACE** of culture is those things we experience with our basic senses. In the tourist stage of adjustment you will be excited at new sounds, smells and sights. You will enjoy a new diet, unless of course your stomach doesn't react well to the spicy food of some cultures. You will hear many different ways of speaking. Even in England (and many other places) where we hold a common language of English, our meanings are not the same. The first time you ask to put your bags in the trunk of the car, you may get a funny look, because it is referred to as a "boot"--something you wear on your foot. Again, you will have to adjust and adapt to these different sense experiences, and you will do this with relative ease because we can identify these differences. The place and face of culture is the tip of the cultural iceberg. As you descend beneath the face of place, you may begin to become uncomfortable.

### **PACE**

The **PACE** of culture has to do with how people move about life--their concepts about time and special rituals that hold meaning of their world view. Let's look at a few that cause problems for adjustment.

### **Time**

US American culture is very time oriented. We value time as a commodity and organize it in a linear fashion with a look toward the future. We segment time into definable qualities of seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years, centuries and millennia. Now while many other cultures may use this dichotomized system, they will not value or see time in the same way. Your host culture, especially if they are a country in the southern hemisphere, may not be concerned about time in the same way. In Indonesia it is called "Jam Karat" or rubber time. People may have the time for person oriented activities (tasks are not that important in comparison), live in the present without too much concern for the future, and do many things at one time. This may have an immediate effect in your first worship experience.

If you are use to a tightly organized worship service--all the activities arranged and timed within an hour--you may become frustrated when the worship of your new host church is more loosely organized and takes several hours to complete. During the service you may notice that there are many things going on at one time, such as people moving about, discussions here and there, and relative unconcern for this behavior. There is a structure, contrary to what you may feel, it is just different than the one you are used to.

### **Activity**

A related issue is a difference in concepts about activity orientation. Many U. S. Americans are "Doers." Doing is very important and we enjoy completing a task. You may be very concerned with completing your project, and completing it on time. Some cultures, however, are concerned with "BEING" where personal relationships are highly valued. For these cultures your task is valued but your "being together" is more important.

The greatest frustration for many US Americans living in overseas countries is the slow pace at which things get done. Just like you would place a car in neutral and idle at a stop light, try to place your "doing clock" in idle and enjoy being with others. Many sojourners actually begin to enjoy this change of PACE but become uncomfortable with a change of SPACE.

### **SPACE**

The **SPACE** of culture is the concepts about our use of space in relation to others. Two are worth your awareness as you travel to your new place, appropriate distance and touch.

#### **Distance and Touch**

Most U. S. Americans keep a personal distance of about 18" when they stand to talk with another person and they are relatively low touch. We may slap each other on the back and hug occasionally, but we don't feel comfortable when we never have to touch or we touch too much. In many cultures, kissing, hugging, even

holding hands is a sign of friendship, yet you know, that in many Asian cultures, there is very little touch and personal space is much greater. You will be able to adapt and adjust when you experience the feel of touch deprivation in some cultures or space invasion in another. Your best response is to try and mirror (not mock) both the pace you observe in the cultural context or space. This also means that you must avoid treating others as you like to be treated (slapping on the back, touching the head, shaking hands with bone-crushing grips and pumping) and treat others as they seem to be treating themselves in cultural encounters.

### **Control**

Another issue is that of control. Who controls the environment? Scientific cultures like the U. S. have a strong belief that we can control nature. We are "Can-Do" people and develop all kinds of technology to control our environment. Some other cultures, however, believe that we are controlled by our environment. The term "Fatalism" is often used in this context. We can understand how people without scientific technology may be at the mercy of environmental circumstances. Yet, think of the recent catastrophes in Kobe, Japan and California. What does the Bible teach about this subject?

### **BASE**

Beneath these aspects of culture--at the very core--is a center of culture I call **BASE**. The base of culture are the unseen values that form a foundation for beliefs, attitudes and behaviors, they have a profound impact on how you will view your new culture. In describing these elements of culture we can see best through a comparison of how many US Americans may contrast with other cultures.

### **Individualism**

U. S. Americans value individualism whereas many other cultures around the world value collectivism (a term which implies the importance of group orientation). As an individualist culture we like words like pioneer, rugged individualism and teach our children to be independent. We are also competitive. Yet many of the world's cultures in Asia and Africa, particularly, value a cooperative spirit and see independence less important than interdependence. In collectivist cultures the extended family is important and there are many social and family ties important to doing business and ministry. Imagine the frustration you might feel if when you ask a person to follow Christ they would have to discuss it with their family first.

## Gender Roles

Another difference that can create conflict for U. S. Americans is gender role definition. In the U. S. many people believe that men and women should be able to do the same things as part of equal rights. Yet, in many countries of Asia, African and Latin America, there is a strong cultural expectation that men and women are different in the roles they perform. While there may be an allowance for visitors, for example a U. S. American woman to be an administrator, to work outside the home, it might be difficult for both men and women to accept a change.

## Power

Some cultures are hierarchical and maintain a distance of power between those of higher status and those of lower status. In the United States we have a great deal of freedom to criticize leaders, including our president. Yet, in other countries this would not only be considered rude, but could lead to discipline. We may consider this a freedom of speech issue, while others may consider this a matter of respect. It may affect your ministry because you may be treated with a great deal of respect, and at the same time, there may be no verbal or visible disagreement with you, even though there is no agreement.

As you enter your field of service, learn to be AWARE.

- Assess your own culture. The more you know about your own culture the better you will be able to compare, contrast and evaluate the differences you experience.
- Work to clarify your own values. You may begin to question your own cultural values in the light of your experience. They will be refined under trial by cultural fire. Accept this as a challenge to understand how your culture has in many ways influenced you faith. In the Bible studies below, Jeff Dieselberg has tried to address some of these issues.
- Affirm the value of “Other” cultural maps. To some U. S. Americans the word “diversity” has taken on a negative connotation. However, not only is diversity the spice of life, but it is diversity that allows us to survive in a complex and sometimes chaotic world. Value and learn from the differences of others.
- Recognize the difference between culture and person. Recognize that while we have generalized ideas about cultural differences, there is a great deal of variance in how each person exhibits traits of the culture. Always see the person first, and then their culture second, as a way to understand your interaction.
- Evaluate and adjust to the differences. As you evaluate behavior, beliefs, attitudes and cultural values in light of knowledge, biblical values, and Christian community, learn to adjust to those which are not contrary to biblical teaching. For a short time, you may have to tolerate what you do not understand.

## Developing a Third Culture: **Sharing Through Communication**

Establishing relationships and working with people who are different can be an enjoyable part of your volunteer experience. In this section we want to look at some basic principles of communication and some adjustments you will need to make in the process.

The word “communication comes from the Latin word “communicare” which means “to have in common. *The more we have in common with other people the easier it is to communicate.* Imagine how much easier it is to talk with a close friend as compared to a complete stranger. When talking to a friend you both have developed a third culture unique to your relationship; both of you are different yet you share many things in common. The opposite of this principle is also true. *The more we are unlike, the more difficult it is to communicate.* Learning to communicate with others requires communication energy--emotional and physical energy to speak, listen and understand. One student who visited a South American country and tried to exercise her infant Spanish often complained of “language tiredness.” She became fatigued at slowing her English so that she could be understood, listening intently to Spanish and trying to read the different non-verbal behavior of her new friend. There is also a responsibility in communication. We are responsible for our words, statements and promises. For the Christian, this is an ethical burden.

There are four basic principles you can consider as you enter your new home and begin to communicate in work and witness. These are Talk, Time, Togetherness and Touch.

### **TALK**

**Talk** is the most immediate skill needed in communicating. By referring to talk I mean the process of both speaking and listening. Both are important skills in the process of sending information to another person, receiving their feedback and creating dialogue between both of you. Let’s look briefly at how you should speak and then discuss the concept of listening.

Chances are, as a volunteer, you will not be fluent in the language of your field of service. Even if you have had some language training, your level of competency will be very low compared to the quick fluency of your new friends. In some cases you will have to use an interpreter.

- Learn the basic greetings and use them at every opportunity. People will appreciate the fact that you have learned a few words in their language.
- When using English speak slowly and distinctly. Do not speak loudly.
- Use simple English words that do not have several meanings. Use simple sentences. This is especially true if you are to speak to a congregation or give instructions. You would not for instance, when delivering a sermon, introduce the topic by, “On this glorious Lord’s day we want to contemplate an exposition of the apostle’s gospel to Corinth.” Remember the KISS principle. “Keep It Simple Stupid.” Your goal is to be understood.

- When speaking through an interpreter, use short sentences and stop between sentences allowing the interpreter time to translate your words into another language. Also, avoid American idioms which will be difficult to translate into another language.
- Avoid any criticism of your host country, its people or its government and leaders. In the U. S. we often take our freedom of speech to mean the opportunity to criticize and debate political issues. This may not be the case in another country. Always season your words with the salt of wisdom. Enjoy talking about the weather, sports, family (where appropriate), work and above all Christ.
- Conversely, avoid bragging about your country, your work and your possessions. Spend more time asking questions and learning about your host country.
- As difficult as things may be for you, do not complain.
- Finally, LISTEN more than you speak.

You may say more with your silence than your speech. You may have heard the expression "If you've got it flaunt it." While talk is important in every country, it is valued in some more than others. A proverb from China says, "A fragrant flower does not have to announce its existence." Listening, especially if you do not speak the local language, is something you will be doing a lot of in the new country. Listening is more than hearing--the physical process--it is understanding the meaning of others communication to you. Listening is not a passive process but an active one. It means attending to what the other person is saying with all your attention.

Listening also means NOT SPEAKING. You may feel uncomfortable at first, especially if you are an extrovert, but the patience and discipline of not speaking and listening for verbal and non-verbal meaning will aid in your eventual comfort. Most U. S. Americans listen only with their ears. Try to listen with you eyes, to hear how people act, move and relate. Listen with your other senses as well.

### **TIME**

As important as TALK is the concept of **TIME**. As we have already discussed cultural concepts of time vary from culture to culture. In this meaning of TIME it is the amount of time it takes to develop new relationships. As a US citizen, you are accustomed to efficiency, fast-food restaurants and quick service. On your field of service try to relax and enjoy the presence of other people. Take and make the time to develop relationships. Taking the time to learn and minister requires **TOGETHERNESS**.

### **TOGETHERNESS**

Most US citizens enjoy privacy more than people in most other cultures. You will find that in many cultures being together in the same space is an enjoyable activity. Consider these suggestions:

- Enjoy mealtimes with your new friends. This is a perfect TIME to TALK
- Participate in worship, work and play whenever the opportunities present themselves. You may be tempted to be a spectator but try to participate in an appropriate manner.

- Try to BE in the new culture more than you DO. Your presence and being will be valued as much as the task you came to do.

## **TOUCH**

**TOUCH** or connectedness is an important part of your mission. We connect with others when we develop empathy, understanding and show respect. As we discussed above, all cultures value physical touch in different ways.

- Back-slapping, touching heads, heavy handshakes and hugging may not be appropriate. At the same time, all cultures have ways of connecting with others. Merely being together creates a connectedness.
- Empathy is different than sympathy. Sympathy is an emotional response, it is related to pity in that we may have feelings of “being sorry” for what we see in other people and countries. Empathy, conversely, is the ability to listen from the other person’s point of view.
- Respecting others and treating them with equal regard is another important element in connecting.

If you have spent time, developed dialogue, been together and connected, you will gain **TRUST**. Trust is a bi-product of a good relationship. Trust is the reliability of your words and actions. It is an essential ingredient in ministering in your field of service. Without trust, however, your honest intentions are misunderstood and conflict may follow.

## **Growing Through Conflict**

Conflict is universal and inevitable. Conflict is found in every culture and can be over personal differences as well as cultural differences. As a volunteer, you will experience conflict over how things are done (behaviors), what people believe (religious beliefs and cultural values) and the roles you will assume in the new culture. You will even experience conflict within yourself as you work through life’s issues.

While some people believe that ignorance is bliss, understanding signs of conflict can bring us to reconciliation before anger becomes a dividing force in our relationships. Earlier we said that you need time, talk, togetherness and touch to build relationships. The opposite are signs of conflict in relationships—silence, busyness, distance and force. Most of us only know that conflict is present when we see acts of violence or hear strong words of argument. As you develop your non-verbal skills and begin to “read” your contexts of life you can begin to become a “Peacemaker.”

## **SILENCE**

**Silence** has many meanings in different cultures. Silence, as a first sign of conflict, however, is the absence of talk. When people stop talking, where conversation was present, there is a possibility for conflict. Reading this can be difficult in other cultures. US Americans tend to enjoy filling all empty time with talk. We value the “gift of gab.” Some Asian cultures, conversely, value silence. There is a Japanese concept called “Ishen Denshin” which means that friends do not have to speak in order to be understood. This cultural misunderstanding of silence can itself bring about conflict. As a volunteer, however, when people stop talking to each other in dialogue, you may



feel discomfort and the first sign of conflict. When you experience silence you should ask yourself if this is a culturally appropriate response or a sign of conflict.

### **BUSYNESS**

The second sign of conflict is **busyness**. In the US context we tend to become very busy as a way to avoid talking to one with whom we disagree. I know a particular wife who begins cleaning whenever there is a conflict in the house. It is her way of dealing with a conflict at hand. She even uses this as time to think through the issue. The cultural concept of task orientation can bring about conflict in the cross-cultural setting as you relate with people who would appreciate your spending time in talk. This coping device, however, should caution you to stop and evaluate your social interaction before your conflict reaches the point of distance.

### **DISTANCE**

If conflict is not resolved, it becomes visible through **distance**. By distance, I mean the absence of connectedness. You may have noticed how negotiating parties in a conflict may withdraw from the negotiating table. People withdraw from work in protest. In some cultures, it is important to save face and to avoid bringing the shame of error on the community. This is an indirect way of voicing disagreement. As a volunteer, if you are involved in conflict without resolution, you have the option--even luxury--to leave. Yet the conflict may remain on the field. Occasionally, conflict reaches a boiling point and we see fists fly and words hurled in unrepentant anger of **force**--touch in reverse.

Understanding the signs of conflict does not answer the ultimate question. What causes conflict? James is explicit in his analysis of the causes for conflict, "What causes conflicts and fights among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it...When you ask, you do not receive because you ask with the wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures." (James 4: 1-6 NIV) In this passage we find the attitude that we are to have in dealing with others. We are to exhibit, at all times, grace, humility, and submission. We are also to control our tongue. Our motives and intentions need to be pure. Despite your best intentions, you may find yourself in conflict and will seek resolution and reconciliation.

### **AVOID CONFLICT**

Many US Americans are competitive and enjoy winning. Winning implies that someone loses. During your visit seek:

- cooperation above competition
- submission more than striving
- dialogue instead of argument
- reconciliation not retaliation
- interdependence not independence
- consoling and not complaining
- grace before grumbling

In seeking reconciliation, you should work for a win-win solution by exercising your TALK of communication.

- Track your dialogue. In other words control you actions, mind you language and measure your words.
- Assess your time. If you find yourself more concerned with your task than the people you are with, try to relax and enjoy the moment.
- Live for community. Always seek the best interest of the community. For individualists this means forgoing one's own interests for the benefits of the group.
- Keep connected. When conflict erupts and schisms result take the initiative to reconnect. Reconnecting through reconciliation is not done the same way in all cultures. In some cultures, indirectness is appropriate. Other cultures use go-betweens to negotiate and provide a ritual for reconciliation. If you are involved in giving offense (even unintentionally) seek the counsel of the local missionary or church pastor, immediately.

### **Exercising Safety**

Safety and survival are basic needs of all people. Fear and the avoidance of uncertainty in new situations can present real and present dangers. Volunteers need Common Sense, Survival Skills and Support Networks in order to feel and be SAFE.

Many people feel the emotion of fear in new places. Fear is an emotional response that alerts us when we are in potential danger. Yet, not all fears are founded. We all have a need to avoid uncertainty by predicting the outcomes or consequences of actions. Many people have a fear of strangers and strange places because we learned at an early age that their behavior was unpredictable or dangerous. Yet, statistics show that most violence is not committed by the stranger from without but the familiar person within the home or neighborhood. The more we know about the people and circumstances of our field of service the better we are able to reduce our fear and uncertainty.

At the outset of your journey to a new place you should trust your host. They will give good advice. They live productive and safe lives.

### **Common Sense**

We learn to have **common sense**--the ability to understand the consequences of our actions--in our own culture. This common sense, however, may not be the same in all places. What may be common sense in one culture may not transfer to another culture. Common sense tells a farmer that he doesn't milk a cow from behind because he understands the "kicking" and swishing tail consequences of his actions. Common sense tells a city woman that she doesn't walk about with her pocket book dangling open at her side because she has learned the consequences of this action. Both of these people have reduced the uncertainty for tragedy and feel relatively safe in their environment. They use common sense as they survive in their environment.

### **Survival Skills**

People also learn basic **survival skills** for their environment. Many U. S. citizens cannot survive without a stove, refrigerator and a supermarket and might not survive without a fast-food restaurant. While this is a humorous thought, consider the panic people have during an ice storm when the electricity fails. I once knew a volunteer who was so concerned for her survival in an African country that she packed an entire suitcase full of peanut butter. Conversely, consider the difficulty a farmer's wife from a remote South American village might have when transplanted to New York City. The comforting thought is that we humans are adaptable and can adjust to new environments by learning survival skills. These skills help us to gather food and find shelter on a daily basis. Cooperation is an important element for survival. In new places support systems help us to survive. Your hosts will provide a basic support system. If you need something, ask! If you are unsure how something works, ask!

### **Support Systems**

Because we cannot survive alone, we develop **support networks** of people who help us learn to live in new places. As you travel to your field of service you will look for friends and family to support your efforts through prayer and encouragement at home. Once on your field of service you will seek the guidance and come to depend upon support networks of people to help you adjust, survive and feel **SAFE**. Your hosts will be your best support. Learn to trust them.

- Seek safe people. There are safe people in all cultures. Generally, these are those entrusted with leadership by local people--preachers, teachers, doctors, police, mothers and fathers. Your host will be a safe person to ask advice about being safe. While you will want to use discretion, it will be appropriate to make a mental note of the safe people in the new culture. Common sense tells us, conversely, that there are unsafe people. You have heard of the expression "wolves in sheep's clothing." Appearances can be deceiving, especially in a new environment when you are learning so many new things. Seek the advice of your host about unsafe people. The greatest potential for danger will come from the city environment and not the rural context. In the rural village, generally, there is a high degree of familiarity between people. However, in the urban center this is not the case.

*As a word to the wise newcomer:*

1. Avoid stopping to talk with people who try to get your attention on a busy street. This is a common ploy to distract the "tourist." You may not think you look like a tourist, but your non-verbal behavior will give this away.
  2. If you feel threatened or fearful look for a policeman or enter a safe place such as a hotel or store and speak with the proprietor.
- Acquire safe ways. Just as common sense grows from one's environment and culture, so do safe ways. Two important areas for the traveler are health and legal issues. Experience has well documented the trouble visitors can enter by poor health practices and disregard for local laws and legal processes. The following lists of hints or rules can prepare you for safe ways.

## Health

My children jokingly complain that when any group of missionaries get together the subject always turns to diarrhea. While this may sound odd, it is not uncommon for travelers to have stomach disorders and minor infections. It is also not uncommon for people who do not take adequate precautions to contract more serious diseases. Dr. Van Williams of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention suggests four lines of defense for people living in developing countries. In your process with IM you will be instructed to go to a travel clinic or your own physician to get the required immunizations.

- 1. Know your own health.** Make sure your medical insurance is current for international travel. Carry extra or duplicate health items which you require, such as prescription glasses. If you must carry large amounts of medicine, make sure you have a doctor's letter. Laws against drugs are very strict in other countries. Finally, make sure you wear a medical identification bracelet if you have allergic reaction to medicines should you be in an accident.
- 2. Get your immunizations.** Check with your doctor to see which shots are required and which are recommended. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. You may be asked to submit a certificate or results of an AIDS test when you enter a country.
- 3. Common sense health rules.** In many countries the water is not safe to drink. Tourists often forget that ice is made of water and that salad vegetables are grown in night soil (human waste) and washed in local water. Generally, drink bottled water or boiled water. Hot drinks are fine if cooked to a boil. Eat only cooked food. Avoid milk and egg products. Take time for rest and exercise. Avoid extremes of heat and cold. If you go out in the sun in countries near the equator, make sure to wear a hat and appropriate clothing. Before taking long walks or swims, check with the local missionary.
- 4. Take active medication.** Carry and apply sunscreen (30 or better). Hydrocortisone cream or solarcaine can be used for sunburn. Wear ventilated clothing in hot areas. Carry a fungicide for athlete's foot and jock itch. If you suffer from motion sickness consider Dramamine or other medication your doctor recommends. Carry Kaopectate or Pepto-Bismol for upset stomach and diarrhea. Use mosquito nets for prevention of Malaria, but especially check with your doctor for preventive medication usually taken six weeks prior-during and six weeks after your trip.

## Laws and legal issues

In 1994 U. S. Americans watched a young teenager arrested, jailed and caned in Singapore for what many considered an adolescent misdemeanor. Yet, this incident serves as an example of the different attitude toward crime and punishment in countries outside the United States.

1. If arrested for any reason in other countries one is usually considered guilty until proven innocent
2. The U. S. State Department will not bail you out.
3. If held, there is a long wait for trial, in prison.
4. Do not bribe
5. Don't drive! If in an accident you can be held in the country until trial. Rent a car and driver, or take public transportation, if recommended by your local missionary.
6. Learn basic phrases in the local language for a crisis, like "HELP" or "thief." But don't forget to know the signs for No Entry and Prohibited.
7. Do not take pictures of government or military buildings, areas or personnel (including bridges and airports). Your camera and film/memory card may be confiscated.
8. Register with the U. S. Embassy.
9. Find Safe Places. Some places are safer than others. These safe places however, depend upon the context. Even the U. S. Embassy, which is the safest place of all for U. S. citizens abroad, can be unsafe in time of crisis. (Remember the U. S. Embassy crisis in Iran during the Jimmy Carter Presidency.) The lessons your parents gave you about safe places carry over to other cultures. You will want to avoid: 1) dark and unguarded areas in the city or urban areas 2) public places where there are no people 3) public places with angry crowds. You may want to add to this list. At the same time, record in your journal the physical location, address and phone number of the following places.

The police station  
 A hospital  
 The US Embassy  
 The residences of missionaries and church leaders  
 The residence of your host  
 Churches, schools and hospital (at safe times)

10. Explore All Options. When you first enter your country of service you will experience some jet-lag and disorientation. When you are tired it is difficult to be alert and to think of matters of safety. This is one reason that you can rely on your host to help you. As quickly as possible you should become aware of your environment and the many options and resources for feeling safe and surviving. In your journal or culture summary, you may wish to prepare lists of resources for food, transportation and lodging prior to entry.

When talking about safety and survival some people become more fearful and anxious. Someone has called fear, **F**alse **E**xpectations **A**ppearing **R**eal. Your volunteer experience will be well planned and supervised. The Board of International Ministries and the local overseas mission will not invite you to an area that is considered unsafe.

They will also take precautions to help orient you and keep you safe. On a rare occasion, however, a crisis may occur. If you find yourself in a crisis situation consider the following, recommended by Dr. Stan Slade, Global Consultant with IM.

1. Crisis can happen
2. IM does not send volunteers without a support system or safe environment.
3. The IM organization stands with you.
4. Rely on local wisdom and experience.
5. Locate the US Embassy.
6. ASK! if something goes wrong.
7. There is usually a crisis contingency plan on the field.
8. Remember to pray through your entire mission experience.
9. NO RANSOM is paid.
10. You must sign a waiver of liability before you leave the United States.

### **Stabilizing Your Living Abroad**

If you have ever moved to a new city, transferred jobs or traveled overseas you are familiar with the term "Culture Shock." Culture shock is the emotional reaction we feel when things don't fit into the ways things we expect them to. These different ways of doing things create 'stressors' in our lives. A cultural stressor can be anything from hearing a language we do not understand, feeling uncomfortable when we reach to shake a hand and our host bows to adjusting to different kinds of foods. Cultural stressors create tension and lead to feelings of emotional unsettling. Some travelers even experience stomach disorders and want to withdraw. These feelings are natural.

There are three basic coping strategies people use to adjust to a new culture. These are the rigid "I-will-not-change" person, the "go-native" person, and the "adjuster." Some sojourners to other countries become rigid and demand that others conform to their usual way of doing things. Other sojourners try to 'go native' and accept everything they see about the new culture. The results can be catastrophic when a rigid person snaps under the pressure of change or humorous and equally harmful when one tries to do everything like the local people. When you enter your culture of destination, you enter as an alien, a foreigner and a guest. You will need a quality called *emotional resilience*. That is the ability to maintain BALANCE in your living and ministry on a daily basis. You will want to find a balance between what is important to your well-being and the needs of the people whom you serve. A number of successful career missionaries identified the following qualities as important to maintaining balance in their cross-cultural living and ministry.

### **PURPOSE**

A **sense of purpose** or call to ministry is the foundation for your volunteering in the first place. Yet, you may not be surprised to know that people misunderstand and misuse their call to serve. As a volunteer your call is to serve. God may have spoken very clearly about your ministry, and we praise him for that, but God's call is always affirmed by others to whom He speaks. A rigid person may say "God told me to do this and only this," and a 'go-native' person may say, "It doesn't make any difference what is done."

As a balanced volunteer you will seek to define your call in cooperation and partnership with those whom you serve so that your gifts and talents may be fruitful.

### **LEARNING ATTITUDE**

In order to hear the collective voice of God, you will want a balanced **learning attitude**. You neither have all the answers, nor do your hosts. You have been asked to help and to work through the problem need together as co-workers. You will see, hear and experience many things that may not make sense to you. As a learner you will want to suspend your judgment, listen, learn and wait for the teachable moment to ask questions (which sometimes are heard as statements) and offer advice. If the rigid person is the "fire" of arrogance and the go-native person is the "wind" of indecision, the balanced sojourner is "productive earth" to stimulate growth in you and others.

### **GENUINE CARE**

As you learn and experience ministry in the host culture, you may witness poverty, injustice and unrighteousness. Your **genuine care for others** will become evident not from what you say but from what you do. The rigid person can become self-righteous and ethnocentric by offering stark criticisms and pontifical pronouncements. The go-native person may make promises that can never be kept, offering words without intent to fulfill. Sometimes sympathy (an emotional response to need) is a response. While you will not be able to solve problems you should be able to listen. Through your listening and experience you will develop empathy and through empathy you can talk together. Honesty is also a valued quality. You want to help others work through their problems but remain faithful to truth. Naive optimism of the go-native and direct criticism of the rigid person can and do lead to mistrust and suspension.

### **MATURE FLEXIBILITY**

Genuine care of others demands **mature flexibility** in your daily living and ministry. When we see lifestyles that may be far below our standards we sometimes respond by complete self-sacrifice. But imagine a person who gives away all of their clothes and must then walk about naked. Or imagine the person so wanting to help they tried never to sleep in order to accomplish all they could in a month. That's what some go-native people do. Rigid people, on the other hand, refuse to give up their personal needs for others. They demand special food, accommodations and ministry tools and refuse to function without them. They try to take a "Little America" abroad. Mature flexibility means that you make life and ministry decisions that are necessary for your own balance and that of your host.

## **PATIENT HUMILITY**

This balance is reached with **patient humility**. The rigid person is alike a door ram. They demand, cajole and push their way to get their needs made. The go-native person, however, is often a door mat. They give in to everything and then find that they are drained of energy and health. The balanced person is a "door-post." They have personal autonomy, knowing their beliefs, values, needs and concerns and are able to adjust for the common good. Being able to adjust out of humility requires **sensitivity**. This sensitivity means being aware of your own needs and the needs of others. It is a delicate balance in speech and action. The word sensitivity comes from the word sense. Many travelers become more aware, through their five senses, than ever in their life time. So how does one practically maintain balance of living and ministry in another culture? The following principles of BALANCE will provide a core for your travels.

- Be aware of your own boundary and life needs. You need food, rest and exercise to stay healthy.
- Assess your stress on a daily basis. If you feel overly tired, anxious, or your emotions get away from you realize you are under stress. Take time to collect yourself. Spend time socializing and enjoy your sense of humor.
- Learn to say "NO" politely. It is OK to say 'NO' but how you say it will be very important. Be polite.
- Adapt to your environment. You will need to adjust to a different time zone, food, language, sleeping accommodations, worship styles and communication patterns. Being aware of this adjustment is a first step in adapting. Find your breaking point and bend where necessary.
- Negotiate your concerns. Your hosts are interested in your welfare, however, as a guest you will also need to give.
- Create a "friendly" space. Be approachable.
- Enlarge your world as you try new foods, visit new places and meet new people.



## **Single & in Short-Term Mission? Then this article is for you!** **by Becky Young**

"For your Maker is your husband - the Lord Almighty is his name - the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, he is called the God of all the earth."

OK. We're young. We're single. We have needs. But be realistic:

- We are short-term.
- We don't want any entanglements that will cause regrets
- We are representatives of our mission, our church and friends, of Christ.

But we also have needs.

- So what are legitimate ways to fulfill our needs without getting into any sticky situations?
- Live with or spend time with a family.
- Pour your affections on children.
- Build friendships with people of the same sex.
- Enjoy the natural interaction the culture allows you. But understand what it means. (e.g. girls holding hands or guys walking arm in arm are culturally acceptable PLATONIC expressions of friendship in many cultures.)

There ARE advantages to singleness.

Being single gives you freedom . . .

- In your schedule.
- In your travel plans.
- For time with people.
- For fulfilling your responsibilities.
- Being single forces you to turn to God for intimacy.
- Being single helps you relate to single students.

READ I Corinthians 7:7-9,17-35 and Psalm 86:11

There ARE difficulties with singleness.

As single adults, we all face difficulties. They are unavoidable. So it's helpful to adjust our expectations. Here are some things you can anticipate as a single adult living and working cross-culturally:

Being single, you will:

- Experience loneliness (don't forget that married people get lonely, too!).
- Lack physical contact (though there are culturally appropriate ways of touching in every culture).
- Feel like no one understands your two worlds - home in country of origin and home in the country you work in.
- Feel like you are always giving and reaching out to others.
- Want someone to meet your needs.
- Stick out in the culture you're going to. People may constantly ask you about marriage or try to set you up. Mothers or friends may see you as a good "catch" for their children or someone they know.

- Be a target for some national who sees you as a ticket to your homeland.
- Be aware of your limitations.
- You don't know the local rules for dating (e.g. "dating" may mean that you are having sex).
- Your limited knowledge of the language may cause confusion (e.g. you may agree to marry someone without realizing it!).
- You don't know what it's like to grow up in their culture. You may assume that they know things or hold similar beliefs when they really don't.
- You and your teammates may be the most mature Christians around or at least that you interact with regularly. There will be the temptation to lower your standards and decide it's okay for you to date a younger Christian because they are the best thing around. You may have friends who are also expatriates. Spend time with them. It's a good reality check.
- You are responsible for how your actions affect your student group. If you are seen as potential dating material, it will cause tension in the group. If you want to date someone, think about how this will affect your team, your students, etc.
- Remember that even though you may be more similar to a teammate than to the nationals, you are still different. And you haven't had a chance to observe them in your home culture or theirs.

Some final suggestions.

- Exercise regularly.
- Pour out that built up love and affection on children, the elderly or students (in appropriate ways).
- Be open and honest with your teammates. Hold each other accountable. When one of you is spending too much time with someone of the opposite sex, ask about it: "What are your intentions?" "How do you feel?" "How do you think the other person interprets your actions and time together?"
- Expect to be attracted to people.
- Realize that your conversation topics, what you read, what you watch and the music you listen to will all affect your frame of mind.
- Trust God. He's called you. He will give you everything you need to be like Jesus wherever you are. Do you really trust God to provide for you, even in your need for intimacy and affection? Are you serious enough about what you're doing to forego casual dating?

Adapted from an article by Becky Young, LINK staff in Russia, in the [InterVarsity LINK](#) Handbook, 1999.

## Health, Safety, and Security Overseas...

Congratulations on your upcoming mission experience! While you are out of the USA or Puerto Rico, there are some basic things you should know to stay healthy and safe. Remembering these basics can keep you out of the hospital, make you less vulnerable, and ensure that your experience is one to remember...in a positive light!

The information below consists of excerpts from the "Going with God" toolkit. We highly recommend you utilize this resource as you prepare for this mission experience. If you are interested in receiving orientation, please email [volunteers@internationalministries.org](mailto:volunteers@internationalministries.org) or call 1-610-768-2168

### What to Expect While You are There

1. Get information from your hosts on what the conditions will be in the host country:
  - housing
  - food (be willing to try new things, always be gracious)
  - transportation
2. Be aware of health and hygiene issues. A good source of information can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx>. Select your host country and read about the latest health alerts and how to stay healthy in the country. If you know someone who has travel experience, ask them to share suggestions for staying healthy. Common sense suggestions in many countries include:
  - drink only boiled, bottled, or treated water, and drink lots of it
  - avoid ice unless you're sure it's safe
  - brush your teeth with safe water
  - eat food that is thoroughly cooked and hot
  - avoid fresh salads, fruit or raw vegetables (unless you peel them)
  - avoid street vendor food unless you can get the food that has just come off the fire
  - wash your hands every time you get a chance (a squeeze bottle of hand disinfectant works great)
  - wear insect repellent that contains no more than 35% DEET
  - wear sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher)
  - know your own limits and don't exceed them
3. Know common safety measures when traveling in unfamiliar places. The basics...
  - Always go with a buddy. Stay in well lit areas.
  - Always let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return. Take the address of your host or hotel with you, written in the local language.
  - Stay alert but not paranoid. Don't make yourself a target. Do look confident.
  - Stay with the crowds and the traffic when appropriate. (No protests and demonstrations, please)
  - Don't leave your bags unattended.
  - Carry only small amounts of cash and carry your "secret stash" somewhere else on your body
  - Keep a hand on your bag; carry your wallet in a front pocket.

### Emergency Medical Plan

Check with your hosts about their plan for responding to a medical emergency should the need arise (eg. the location of the closest medical facility, how long it takes to get there, and the best route). In the event that you need medical treatment, a member of the host team should accompany you to the hospital and be your advocate.

### Crisis Management Notes

There is a slight chance that your team will be in a country facing serious political turmoil or natural disaster.

1. Check with your hosts regarding the likelihood of political disturbance or natural disaster.
2. Establish a contingency or evacuation plan with your host.
3. Make sure you understand your host's advice about what to do should a crisis or natural disaster occur.
4. The team leader should have a small amount of emergency funds tucked away to cover transportation costs should the need arise.

NOTE: In the very unlikely event that a hostage situation should occur, International Ministries will make every effort to negotiate release. However, like other mission agencies, International Ministries has made it a policy not to pay ransom.

## Short Term Volunteer Recommended Reading

**When Helping Hurts...How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor, or Yourself \*\*\***

By [Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert](#)

When Helping Hurts is a paradigm-forming contemporary classic on the subject of poverty alleviation and ministry to those in need. Emphasizing the poverty of both heart and society, this book exposes the need that every person has and how it can be filled. The reader is brought to understand that poverty is much more than simply a lack of financial or material resources and that it takes much more than donations and handouts to solve the problem of poverty. Also available are When Helping Hurts, a Small Group Study and Helping without Hurting for Short Term Mission Teams

**Serving with Eyes Wide Open: Doing Short-Term Missions with Cultural Intelligence**

by [David A. Livermore](#) Baker Books 2006

More than one million people participate in short-term mission projects outside of North America every year--and millions more are involved in domestic cross-cultural missions right here at home. This is encouraging news. But the work is not done. There are weaknesses in our approach and practice. And these volunteers need resources to help them prepare for effective cross-cultural engagement. Serving with Eyes Wide Open helps Christians understand the changing face of Christianity and how that affects short-term missions. In three parts, author David A. Livermore will take a broad look at what the twenty-first-century church is doing on the mission field, the assumptions people make about Christianity, and what it takes to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts. Perfect for all who engage in short-term mission trips--either at home or abroad--Serving with Eyes Wide Open will equip readers to serve more sensitively.

**Maximum Impact Short-Term Mission: The God-Commanded, Repetitive Deployment of Swift, Temporary, Non-Professional Missionaries**

[Roger Peterson](#) , [Gordon Aeschliman](#) , [R. Wayne Sneed](#) STEM Press 2003

288-page exhaustive perfect-bound paperback featuring the 9-cell planning matrix "MISTM-Grid", non-negotiable process trilogy (pre-field, on-field, post-field), non-negotiable participant trilogy (senders, goers, receivers), ground-breaking, solid STM theology (OT & NT), historical overview of STM using more than 40 case studies of actual churches, agencies, and schools that send STMs, and excellent tables and illustrations to capture summarized snapshots of the critical pieces of Christian short-term missions.

**Mack & Leeann's Guide to Short-Term Missions (Paperback)**

by [J. Mack Stiles](#) , [Leeann Stiles](#) InterVarsity Press (August 2000)

Today the world is as close as an airplane flight. Thousands take advantage of this, going for short visits to other countries to be more involved in God's worldwide mission. How can we prepare for such a trip? What are the hazards to avoid and opportunities to take advantage of? Here is field-tested advice no one should go without. Mack and Leeann Stiles are veteran leaders of a dozen two-month mission trips all over the globe. Their practical advice, hard-won lessons and hilarious stories will help us know what to expect as we get ready to see God in action in new ways.

**The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone  
(Christian Doctrine in Global Perspective)**

[Samuel Escobar](#) InterVarsity Press 2003

Christian mission is no longer a matter of missionaries from the West going to the rest of the world. Rather, the growth of Christianity in Latin America, Africa and parts of Asia is eclipsing that of the Western church. In the third millennium of the Christian era, Christian mission is truly global, with missionaries from all places going to all peoples. Veteran missiologist Samuel Escobar presents this introduction to Christian mission today. He explores the new realities of our globalized world and assesses the context of a changing mission field that is simultaneously secular and syncretistic. He also sets forth a thoroughly biblical theology of missions, considering how God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are at work around the world, with implications for how Christians are to go about the task of global mission.

**Send Me: Your Journey to the Nations**

Steve Hoke and Bill Taylor. World Evangelical Fellowship Mission s Committee 1999

Send Me! is a preparatory global mission workbook designed for two kinds of people: those who have a deep desire in their hearts to serve God cross-culturally and those who want to help them. It has been designed to help you work through the process of charting a course from where you are to where God would have you be.

It describes the path to cross-cultural service in 10 steps, with each step presenting a basic explanation of the importance of that phase of the process. Good resource on preparing to serve cross culturally more oriented to the individual rather than to the team dynamic.

## **Short-Term Missions: From Mission Tourists to Global Citizens**

[Tim Dearborn](#) InterVarsity Press; Workbook edition 2003

Going on a short-term missions trip can be a life- and faith-transforming experience. It can enrich the way you view the world. It will cause you to rely on God more fully. It is an opportunity to develop deep relationships with your team and the people you serve. A short-term missions experience can also involve weeks of physical and spiritual distress. An unprepared team can wreak havoc on each other and the people they intend to serve. To get the most out of such a mission trip, you need to go prepared. Whether you are going on your own or with a team, the keys to preparation are here in Tim Dearborn's workbook. It includes

- Concise summary of cross cultural principles
- Help in facing spiritual warfare
- Tips on avoiding a tourist mentality
- Spiritual preparation through individual or group Bible study
- 8-week course for teams to do together

You'll get a biblical perspective on the world, gain cross cultural understanding and even prepare for reentry when you return. If you are planning to go on a short-term mission trip, don't leave home without working through this book!

## **Foreign to Familiar: A Guide to Understanding Hot - And Cold - Climate Cultures**

[Sarah A. Lanier](#) McDougal Publishing Company

Author Sarah Lanier explains how cultures around the world can fit into two basic categories and how these categories differ. Whether you are a cross-cultural worker or simply live in a cross-cultural neighborhood, you'll find this book to be a valuable resource for understanding and relating to others from a different "climate".

Read about relationship versus task orientation, direct versus indirect communication, individualism versus group identity, inclusion versus privacy, different concepts of time and planning  
This book is also available in Spanish.

## **Re-Entry: Making the Transition from Missions to Life at Home (Paperback)**

by [Peter Jordan](#) YWAM Publishing (December 1992)

Essential teaching for every short- and long-term outreach participant & every church and mission agency that sends them. Peter Jordan's vital, insightful teaching on the challenges and opportunities that await returning missionaries makes this essential reading for everyone involved in missions. A missions "must-read"!

*"Having counseled with hundreds of returning missionaries, Peter & Donna know from experience the re-entry challenges and opportunities that await missionaries worldwide. They have much to say on this vital subject of re-entry... and the authority to say it."*- Loren Cunningham, Founder and President, Youth With a Mission

## **Getting Sent: A Relational Approach to Support Raising (Paperback)**

by [Pete Sommer](#) InterVarsity Press

Most of us would rather have a root canal than ask for money. Raising support is one of the most difficult challenges facing Christians in ministry. Fears of rejection, concerns about biblical validity, feelings of not being deserving, anxiety about limited resources can all block us from obtaining the means to fulfill our calling. This book both affirms that God uses the Christian community to send us into ministry and demystifies the process. This down-to-earth handbook offers a clear, biblical perspective gives step-by-step instructions on how to assemble the tools unique to each person's support-raising task.

## **Bless God and Take Courage: The Judson History And Legacy**

[Rosalie Hall Hunt](#) Judson Press 2005

Adventure, love, war, passion, tragedy, and triumph—this was life for America's first missionaries. Rosalie Hall Hunt has provided a well-researched, thorough, and scholarly account of Adoniram, of the three women—Ann, Sarah, and Emily—who served as his partners in life and mission, of the Judson descendants, and of the lasting impact of the Judson ministry. An engaging and in-depth tale of the people whose vocation led to the birth of American missions, Bless God and Take Courage documents the life and legacy of the Judson's with never-before-published discoveries and details, including: Newly unearthed correspondence between Adoniram and his third wife, Emily, events from the first trip to Burma, more details on Adoniram's imprisonment at Let Ma Yoon, the aftermaths of the Judsons' deaths, the continuing impact of the Judson ministry among modern-day Burmese Christians

## **Stepping Out: A Guide To Short-Term Missions.**

Tim Gibson et. al. Seattle: YWAM Publishing, 1992.

A guide, a resource book, a discussion starter - this book is all three and more. By focusing on the reasons, tactics for getting others involved in support, preparation, and the realities of short-term missions trip, the contributors give freely from the wealth of their experiences. Whether you are undecided, have already made a commitment to go, are in the field already or have completed the trip and are wondering what's next, Stepping Out covers much ground in a succinct and easily readable format. Also included, and placed strategically throughout the book, are Checkpoints, which are provided to help evaluate and quantify your position on certain issues, thus fine tuning your interaction with your chosen mission field.

### **The Next Christendom**

Philip Jenkins- Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002

From Amazon: Philip Jenkins' *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* is the first book to take the full measure of the changing face of the Christian faith. Jenkins asserts that by the year 2050 only one Christian in five will be a non-Latino white person and that the center of gravity of the Christian world will have shifted firmly to the Southern hemisphere. Within a few decades Kinshasa, Buenos Aires, Addis Ababa, and Manila will replace Rome, Athens, Paris, London, and New York as the focal points of the Church. Moreover, Jenkins shows that the churches that have grown most rapidly in the global south are far more traditional, morally conservative, evangelical, and apocalyptic than their northern counterparts.

### **Operation World**

Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mmadryk, <http://www.operationworld.org/resources/index.html>

You can play a vital role in proclaiming the Good News by praying daily for the world. With Operation World as your guide, you can pray intelligently for any country in the world. You will learn vital information about each country that will help you pray specifically for its needs. Operation World is the most widely used reference book for missions in the world. It has been used by missionaries and missions executives for years. Features include: - up-to-date statistics on the Eastern Bloc countries - prayer calendar enabling you to pray for the entire world in one year - detailed maps and graphs -- Operation World is your personal guide to praying for the world.

### **Discovering Missions**

Charles R. Gailey and Howard Culbertson Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2007

From Amazon: *Discovering Missions* is a foundational textbook that examines the importance of missionary work overseas as well as within one's community. With perception and relevancy, it supplies understanding and awareness for important terms and practices related to mission work and strengthen one's calling to serve others and teach them about Christ. Objectives, sidebars, key-word lists, and discussion questions are included in each chapter to enrich the reader's study and comprehension.

*Discovering Missions* offers capable, qualified teaching on the study of missions and is a valuable tool for seminaries and universities as well as pastors and laypeople seeking to increase their comprehension of missiology and its impact on the Church and the world today.

**\*\*\*We STRONGLY recommend that you read this book!**