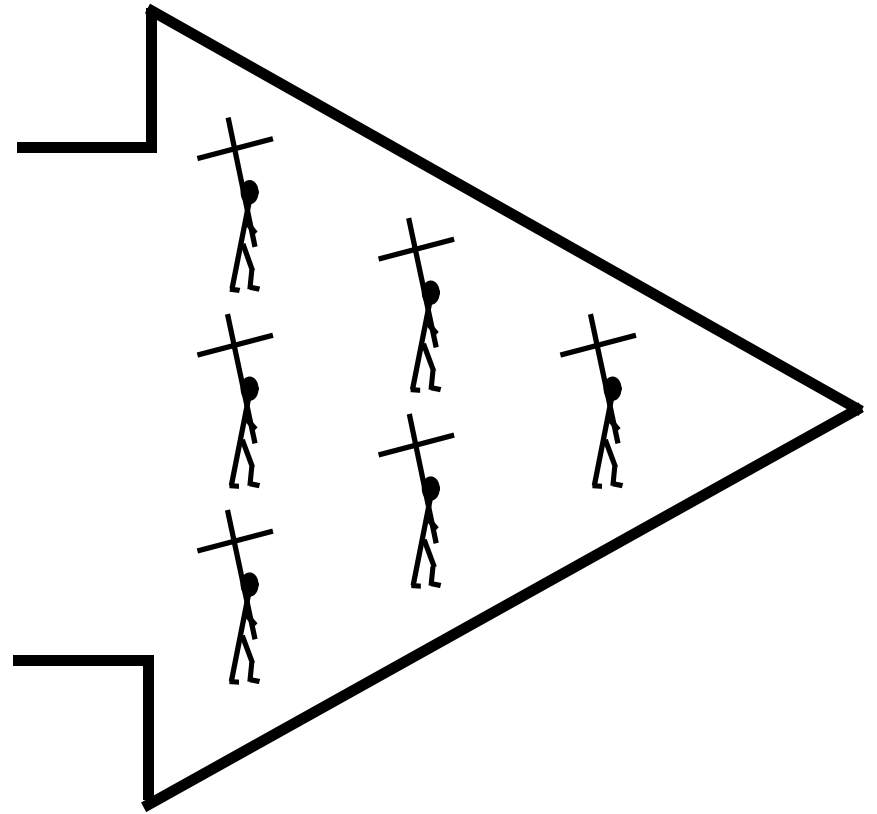


The Missionary Team



Extending God's Kingdom Together

A Practical Handbook

Edited by Ian E. Benson

This booklet is part 4 of the *Missionary Training Series*. To obtain the other parts, help and training in missionary work, contact:

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The Missionary Training Service focuses on training missionaries for the multiplication of churches among unreached peoples. It gives advice and help to missionary agencies, other training institutions and churches about organizing training programmes, and runs and distributes courses for missionary candidates. Ian Benson is coordinator of the MTS.

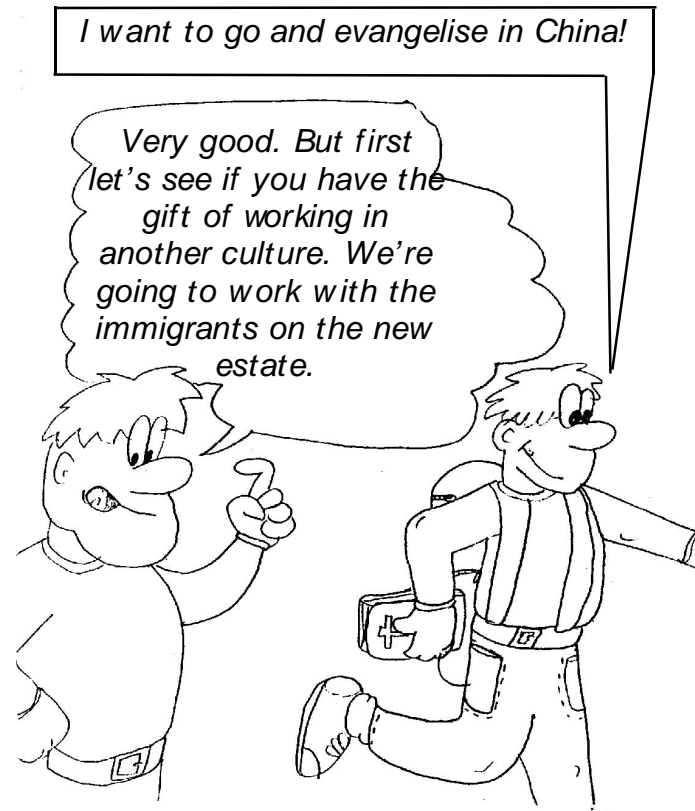
We value your comments and suggestions on this material.

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The Missionary Gift

The missionary gift is a special ability given by God to extend His Kingdom in other cultures. Essentially it means laying the foundation of new churches (1 Cor. 3:10). Before going abroad, it is good to test this gift and calling by helping to plant new churches nearby (if possible among people of another culture).



Churches then publicly recognize those who demonstrate this calling, commissioning them with the laying on of hands, and sending them

out (Acts 13:1-3). These churches support the missionaries with prayer and finance.

The words *missionary* and *apostle* both literally mean "a sent one". Apart from the original twelve apostles, the New Testament also calls Paul, Barnabas, and others "apostles" because God sent them to extend His Kingdom (Acts 14:4, 14; Rom. 16:7). Missionaries make extending God's Kingdom their priority; ahead of living in their own home, making money, and personal and family ambitions.

What is a Missionary Team?

A team is a group of people committed to a goal, and to work together to achieve it. Basically, a missionary team has the following components:

- Submission to God to be the people He wants, and to fulfill His will.
- At least two people (preferably at least six adults in restricted access countries).
- A united vision, goal, and commitment to the task of church planting.
- Complementary spiritual gifts — they need each other to do the work. Members of the team must learn how to relate well together.
- Organization, discipline and communication. Each team has its own preferred way of doing things. Each team member must understand this and be committed to it. There is usually a team leader to which other team members are accountable.

The team is like the scaffolding used to erect a building: new churches are the permanent fruit, whereas the team is mobile and only temporarily in any one location. However, the scaffolding itself needs to be correctly constructed with all the above items.

Advantages of Teams

- Missionaries are nearly always more effective working together. Members of a team have different gifts and complement each other's ministry. The Lord Jesus sent His disciples to preach two by two (Luke 10:1). Amassing "fire power" is helpful in difficult situations. Satan attacks missionaries who invade his territory: they need companions to pray, encourage and support one other.
- In fields where the team members have to take a secular job, having several on the team ensures that, between them all, they have sufficient time for evangelism.
- When some team members have to leave the field for any reason, others can continue.
- Teams provide an extended family for children and single missionaries. A caring attitude for all can be fostered.
- Teams cooperate to fulfil one aim, rather than several individuals all with different aims.

How Teams are Formed

A team may be formed in a combination of the following ways:

- A missionary agency introduces team members to others with a similar vision.
- A church or several churches pray for a particular people and form a team.
- A visionary team leader recruits a team.
- A large team splits into smaller teams.

The team leader needs much experience in the Lord's work, whereas some members can be apprentices. Some people without much experience accompanied the apostles, and learned as they worked under their supervision (Acts 10:23, 11:12; 13:1-5; 19:22; 20:4).

Churches and missionary agencies need much prayer for wisdom in evaluating missionary candidates - to ensure that they have (or

develop) the necessary characteristics and skills. For a list of characteristics and skills to be developed, see Activities 4 and 5 of *The Missionary Training Guide* * (Part 1 of this series).

It is beneficial for potential team members to visit the field for a short time before a decision is made whether to join the team permanently.

If possible, some team members should be recruited from a similar culture to the one to be evangelized: this could save many years' work in the initial evangelism stage. A similar social, educational and economic background to the people to be evangelized means that there is not such a gap to jump with the Gospel.

However, when members are from different cultures, each team member needs to be aware of all the different cultures: his or her own culture, the culture of other team members, as well as the culture of the target people. Different ways of thinking and working could cause friction.

The following issues must be considered together:

- Leadership style and decision making. Some prefer leaders who make decisions alone. Others prefer a democratic approach. How will the team arrive at decisions? How important is consensus? One person's directness can be seen by another as rudeness. Another's unwillingness to make decisions alone can be seen as weakness by other cultures.
- Male-female relations and the role of women. Men from cultures where women are seen as inferior may have difficulties working with women from cultures where women are seen as equal partners. Courtship and dating patterns should be discussed: they may be very different in different cultures.

* Obtainable from the MTS . See page 2 of this study for the address.

- Physical contact: between men and women, and between the same sex. This has different meanings in different cultures.
- The team language. Some team members may have difficulty expressing themselves in another language.
- Being "on time".
- Types of food for shared meals.
- The education of children.
- Privacy in use of time and housing.
- Styles of prayer, worship and evangelistic methods.
- How conflicts are resolved (see page 29 for more information on conflict resolution).

Team members must learn to communicate with each other and behave in ways that do not give offence. Remember that speaking the same language does not mean that you share the same ideas - or that the same meaning is attached to the same words. Ask other team members what they mean if there is any doubt. These issues should be reviewed periodically in team meetings.

Dying to oneself and learning to "speak the truth in love" in ways that are appropriate to members' various cultures, require much patience, meekness and tact if teams with members from more than one culture are to succeed. Focus on how others want to be treated rather on how we want to be treated. Be sensitive, especially, to those who form a minority on the team.

Part 5 of this series, *How to Make Disciples in Another Culture*, explains principles of adapting to another culture*.

Before recruiting a team, the leader should interview each candidate personally. The following are some of the areas to cover**:

* Obtainable from the Missionary Training Service. See page 2 of this study for the address of the MTS.

- Christian experience: their relationship with God and joy in Him - past and present, their family history and relationships, their past ministry.
- Character: their personality, temperament, strengths, weaknesses.
- Call: their call by God, to an area of the world, people group and the mission.
- Competence: their gifts and skills, preparation and training.
- Commitment: to their calling, the sending church, the team, the mission agency; the motivation to do things well for God's glory.
- Compatibility: in doctrine, organization, culture and goals. Flexibility in working with others, and willingness to serve in any capacity that might be required. Would the team help them to develop their gifts?
- Confirmation: from family, church, the mission agency, and friends. Do they have the respect of those who know them?
- Corporal health: their physical and mental readiness for other climates; any illnesses or hospitalization.

It is also important for a Christian counsellor to interview each potential team member - going over a personal history questionnaire covering such subjects as:

- family background and relationships in childhood and in the present
- relationships - with those of the same and opposite sex; loneliness or lack of close relationships
- sexual development; attitudes and experiences; any abuse; relationships with spouse and children;
- stress - internal through hurts, etc.; external - attitude to authority, orders, criticism, conflict and loss;

** Based on the Seven C's for the Seven Seas by Kelly O'Donnell, on page 186 of *Missionary Care*. See Useful Reading at end of this booklet.

- self-awareness - strengths, weaknesses, limitations;
- life traumas and reactions to them;
- driving force in life - for example: to achieve, to prove self-worth, to please others, or to earn acceptance;
- compulsive behaviour traits - eating, talking, masturbation, etc..

The purpose is to assess the degree of self-awareness the person has, and the degree of healing and/or resolution which has taken place. Some candidates may never have talked to anyone about these things before. The results should be kept absolutely confidential and any notes destroyed. Someone may need help in some areas before they could join the team, or it may be better if they served God in some other way. Some people may unconsciously view missionary work as a means of meeting their own psychological needs. Those who have been hurt need help. People who go to the field without healing in these areas can cause many problems. The Useful Reading section on page 76 contains some books and courses in this area. Churches and Christian counsellors can also give practical help.

How Teams Are Sent Out

Suggestions:

- Pray and fast to seek God's will for the work (Acts 13:1-4).
- One or two people could make a preliminary visit to the target people and do research.
- Build relationships with those already on the field or near it, through any mission agency involved, and also by telephone, letters, fax and e-mail (taking care of security - governments may monitor all types of communication). Write down any agreements that are made, so that plans can be reconfirmed by all involved.
- After a plan is drawn up, the leader, alone, or with some others, travels to the place and begins work. They try to find a "man of peace" - a key, long-term contact for the work.

- Other team members are recruited to make a full team as opportunities arise.
- Advisers are called in to help in different types of work and to help resolve problems. If possible, the team should build relationships and trust with these coaches before going to the field.

Agreement on the Team's Aim and Way of Working

The team needs to seek God together and agree on its vision and way of working. This agreement is sometimes called a "Memorandum of Understanding" (MOU). This document can be used for recruiting prospective team members.

The MOU could include:

- The aim. What is your specific target (people group, city, socio-economic segment, etc.)? Where no church is reaching the targeted population, the aim must be to establish a movement of indigenous self-multiplying churches. Normally this cannot be done in less than five to seven years. The team needs to maintain the focus on the group of people God has shown them (sadly some teams lose their focus and work on other things).

An example of a long-term aim: *Planting two self-multiplying house churches with at least seven adult members in each, among Tunisians in Kairouan, with their own national leaders before the end of the year 2010.*

You can pray for these aims and use them to measure your progress. Other parts of the agreement could cover:

- * Major goals with realistic dates for completion (defined further in "The Team's Action Plan" below).

- * Important principles of work: e.g. evangelistic emphasis and methods.
- * How will the team ensure that each member has sufficient time to evangelize and make disciples? Often other tasks take up time which should have been spent in evangelism.
- * Evangelical doctrinal basis. It is not usually necessary to go into any detail.
- * Ways that team members will obtain employment (if they are "tentmakers": i.e. bi-vocational).
- * Roles and responsibilities of the leader and members (see pages 15 and 18).
- * How decisions will be made: some teams make decisions by consensus; in others a leadership group or the team leader makes the final decision. Most teams meet together to plan work together at least monthly. Team members should be committed to abide by decisions that are made in the agreed fashion, even when they may not agree on all details.
At this stage decisions should affect only team activities and **not** define how future converts and churches will function.
- * Where does the authority lie in all decisions? To whom is the team accountable? What kind of coaching and help will the team receive from outside itself?
- * What will happen if there is a problem in the team that cannot be solved by the team itself? What outside input will there be? To whom is the team leader accountable? How often will he report?
- * Minimum time commitment to the work. The team as a whole must be totally dedicated to making disciples of the people (it should not withdraw until the new churches are multiplying). How can team members leave if they believe that they are not called to the work? Is there a probation period?
- * How, and how often, will progress of each team member be measured?

- * Lifestyle: e.g. standard of living, use of local dress, role of the sexes, times of prayer, fasting, etc..
- * Finances and support level. One or more of the following may be used:
 - sponsorship of each individual or family by churches and friends.
 - money from employment in the target country.
 - pooling all funds given to team members according to need.
 - sharing only when there are special needs.
(See page 47 for more details on finance).
- * Training requirements: what skills are members expected to have before joining the team? These may vary according to one's role on the team. Who is responsible for giving this training?
- * What provisions are there for emergencies, sickness and holidays? Who will look after sick team members?
- * Furlough procedures.
- * Role of husbands and wives. Roles of single men and women. Rearing and education of children. Baby sitting.
- * Pastoral care: how is this arranged? To whom will team members go if they have problems in their family? Who is responsible for pastoring men and women team members?
- * How the team will report to the churches and missionary agency? Who is responsible for keeping the work high on the agenda of the sending churches?
- * What level of language learning will be required? How will the team learn the language?
- * How will the team learn the local culture? Will the team members live with local people when they arrive in order to bond with them?
- * What will team life be like? Keeping team loyalty: refraining from gossip. Will the team meet for prayer, training or socializing? How often? Will there be differing roles for men and women? In what language will the team communicate?

- * Security in a restricted access country. Publicity guidelines.
- * Relationship with other agencies.
- * Relationship with churches in the target country.

All team members should pray about and decide these matters, together with the sending churches and missionary agency. All should sign the MOU without reservation. Some have found that having all the team sign the MOU together at one time creates a greater sense of unity. Keep rules that might **limit** activities to a minimum. As a general rule, freedom for the Holy Spirit to lead is inversely proportional to the number of man-made rules.

The Team's Action Plan

Based on your research, answer the following questions together with your team:

1. What progress has the Gospel already made among the people you aim to reach? Are other Christians evangelizing there? What is your relationship with them and any existing churches? Are there evangelistic radio broadcasts?
2. What specific barriers do you think need to be overcome?
3. What are the team members' strengths and weaknesses?
4. What are your initial plans for fulfilling the team's aim? — prayerfully set down specific steps. For example, your team's goal may be to establish a cluster of reproducing churches among your target people. Prayerfully, think what would be the goal that would have to be achieved immediately before the final aim of several reproducing churches. This would be either: one church which plants others, or a missionary team which plants several house churches at the same time. Complete this process until you arrive at your present situation. These goals make up your action plan. With prayer and faith, set realistic dates by which you plan to reach each goal.

Some of these goals might coincide with the Activities in the *Church Planting Guide* (contact the Missionary Training Service for this: see the address on page 2 of this study).

Break each goal down into objectives. Each objective should be specific, attainable, measurable, challenging and timed.

5. What other help is available to you to achieve your target (counsellors, books, training, etc.)?
6. How could the team members develop their strengths? What responsibilities will each one have in the work and in team life?
7. What is your team lacking to accomplish the task? What will you do until the Lord resolves this? Do not wait for perfection!

The Team Leader

The Team Leader co-ordinates the work, fulfilling the church planting vision, and caring for and strengthening the team at the same time. Following the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, the leader is the servant of all. Christian authority is dependent on the degree of one's service to others: the more one lovingly serves others, the more spiritual authority one has.

A good servant leader will:

personally

- live in constant communion with God, in thanksgiving, prayer and intercession, submitting to Him in all things.
- have a clear vision of what God will do in planting and multiplying new churches; continually seeking His guidance and confidently communicating vision and inspiration to help the team move forward; not allowing himself to be distracted from the goal.
- be reliable, consistent and honest.
- be transparent about his weaknesses - this shows his credibility.

- be accountable to others for his use of time, gifts, money, the work and for team members - giving reports to other leaders and the team itself regularly.
- keep himself and his family spiritually alert and fed.
- be a model in intercession, evangelism and discipling.
- have his own mentor/coach to guide and encourage him.

regarding the team's work:

- recruit and train team members to ensure that the team has the right blend of roles.
- lead team meetings for prayer, reports, planning and studies.
- build the feeling of common ownership of the objectives and work by involving others in their formulation: talk about "our team" not "my team".
- make decisions with the team: gathering the facts, consulting those involved. Afterwards, explain the decision to the team: what has been decided, when it will come into effect, where the changes will take place, how it will be implemented, who will be affected, and why the decision has been made.
- make workable plans with the team and with the leaders of the new churches for reaching the objectives.
- trust his team and the leaders of new churches, and delegate tasks and authority to them in order to see churches begin and multiply. When delegating, write out what is involved in the task, give training and support in challenging work, and evaluate the work together regularly.
- train team members and leaders of new churches. He trains assistant team leaders who will be able to lead new teams. He helps each team member grow in Christian maturity and discipline, prepare for the future, and improve skills and understanding by reading, taking courses, and discussion of issues.
- keep the team members and leaders of the new churches informed about the development of the work.
- enable the highest possible degree of cooperation and support from each team member.

regarding the team itself:

- love, care for, listen to and encourage team members and new church leaders, being their friend, showing how important their work is, giving them help quickly when they need it, showing respect, consideration and esteem - e.g. remembering birthdays, and reminding them that there is no condemnation in Christ - He forgives our failures.
- provide counselling for families and singles to help in their struggles.
- strengthen the unity and trust of the team, and also of the new churches. He does not break confidences or show favouritism.
- motivate the team members and the leaders of the new churches: by personal example, publicly recognizing the good they have done, giving them more responsibility, and thanking them.
- understand and resolve conflicts (see page 29).
- celebrate successes, recognising jobs well done.

regarding others:

- regularly report progress and problems to the missionary agency and sending church.
- cooperate with other missionary groups.

Good pioneer leaders should normally concentrate on pioneering. Once a work became established, the apostle Paul would leave another leader to build up the new churches and train leaders. He would begin again in another place.

Team Responsibilities

Talk over responsibilities regularly with the team: if possible, let their work fit their gifts and personality. One may have special faith and vision to lead the team; another, with evangelistic gifts will gain people's confidence more quickly. Someone with the gift of helping, perhaps as a businessperson (like Aquila and Priscilla), could provide employment for other team members. Others with the gift of mercy could help in times of persecution, illness or discouragement.

Areas of Team Responsibility:

Some members will concentrate more on some areas according to their gifts.

1. Prayer for:

- * the penetration of a hostile society.
- * people's salvation.
- * manifestations of God's power to confirm the Gospel, especially where there is no Bible or church.
- * the sick and discouraged.
- * the strengthening of new churches.
- * safety in travel
- * support
- * release from demonic oppression

This area also includes preparing others for spiritual warfare. Encourage members of the team and the new churches to pray for each other.

2. Evangelism and Disciple Making:

- * Relating the Good News clearly so that people understand in terms of their own language and culture.
- * Teaching new Christians to obey the Lord's commands and understand the faith.
- * Training new believers to evangelize and make disciples.

- * Helping those newly converted to discover and use their gifts and exercise a ministry (use methods they can imitate).

3. Cross-cultural Communication:

- * Developing methods of communicating God's Word so that the people understand it clearly and pass it on.
- * Helping the churches to develop methods which are easy for church members to imitate: in evangelism, worship services, training leaders etc.. Adapt the methods used in the New Testament rather than using those from your own culture.
- * Using the style of music from the local culture (do not translate songs and hymns from your own culture: help the new believers to compose their own hymns).

4. Pastoral Care and Training

- * Watching over the spiritual, mental, emotional and physical well-being and progress of each team member and the new churches. Pastoring team members, helping them to cultivate both the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and His fire to plant churches.
- * Training pastors and elders (if possible, through personal discipleship at a pastoral level, as Paul did with Timothy). A useful tool is the *Student Activity Guide* (an activity oriented curriculum available in several languages) *.
- * Watching and caring for the progress of the new church and helping the new leaders to pastor it. Teaching and apply God's Word to the new leaders so that they apply it immediately to their people.
- * Training new leaders to baptize, and lead the Lord's Supper.
- * Training new leaders to prepare and lead worship services.
- * Continuing to visit to train the leaders, after the team has gone to work in other places.

* Obtainable from the Missionary Training Service. See page 2 of this study for the address of the MTS.

5. Practical Service:

- * Making friends with people of the community and giving hospitality.
- * Meeting the converts' and co-workers' practical needs (e.g. looking after the children when missionary parents travel).
- * Maintaining regular communication with the home churches and missionary organization (to maintain prayer support).
 - Frequent prayer letters and news bulletins. Tape recordings, slide sets and videos also help people understand the work.
 - Arranging visits to the home country, when team members can talk about the work every few years.
- * Identifying and dealing with people's needs, and help the new churches minister to those who suffer. (However, do not begin programmes which the new churches will be unable to manage themselves, without outside help.)
- * Teaching the illiterate to read and helping them to teach others to read.
- * Reproducing whatever literature is necessary.
- * Teaching pastors and leaders to support themselves, if necessary.
- * Tentmaking work to support the team.
- * Mobilizing missionaries to support themselves. (Most unreached people live where only tentmaking missionaries may enter).

Job Descriptions:

The team leader helps each team member to write a description of their work:

- The type of work (ministry, responsibilities and tasks) - be specific.
- Its purpose (concrete goals).
- To whom he or she is responsible, and how often they will meet to give reports and make plans.
- Any people he or she will train and supervise.
- How much time he or she will dedicate per week (include prayer, time for language learning, evangelism, discipleship, being with the family, and rest).
- The measure of autonomy (what he or she can do without consulting the leader).
- How often they will review the work together.
- How mutual support and accountability among all team members will function.

Accountability

Being held accountable is a great help to most missionaries. Some have found it good to voluntarily give the team leader the authority to question, encourage and correct in the following areas* :

- relationship with God
- relationship with spouse and family
- relationship with others - nationals, team, opposite sex, need of forgiveness or to forgive, etc.
- personal character
- ministry - major area of work, concerns, etc.

Each week or fortnight the leader could meet with each member to review these areas. The leader should also encourage any team

* Adapted from a Frontiers team leader.

members to monitor his progress also, and be accountable to his own mentor regularly in these areas.

Some teams, especially those with new or young members, find it useful to have a written report form which the team member fills in each week (or each day at first). Information on this could include:

- Hours spent in prayer: _____
- Hours spent in Bible study: _____
- Hours spent in building relationships with or witnessing.
Significant events: _____

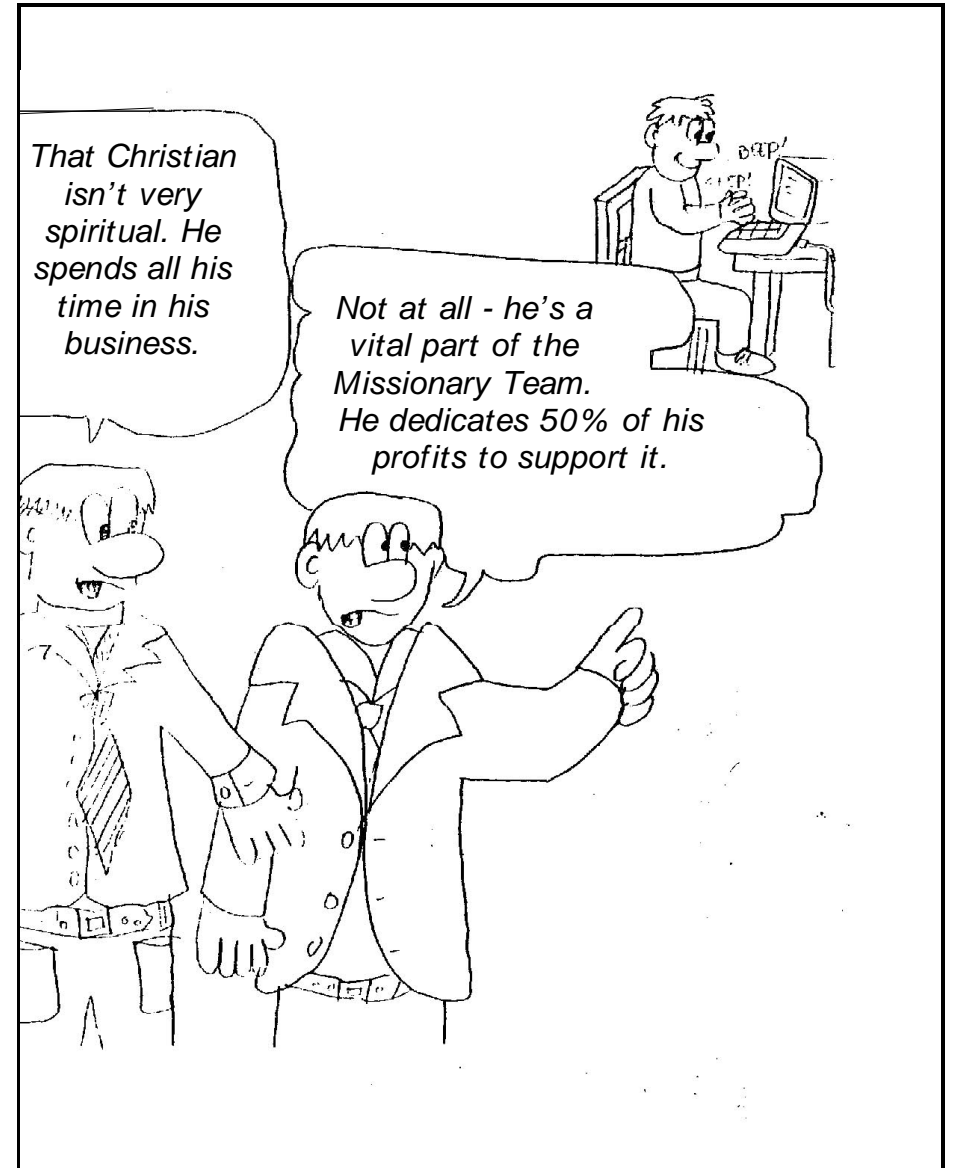
- Hours spent in language study. Language goals achieved: _____

- Main area of work at the moment: _____
- General contentment level (scale from 10 to 1, with 10 highest and 1 lowest): ____
- Emotional outlook (scale from 10 to 1) ____
- Spiritual life (scale from 10 to 1): ____
- Struggles: _____
- Prayer requests: _____
- Suggestions : _____

Tentmaking

Many teams will be tentmakers in order to enter and live in their target country.

Many of the first missionaries were tentmakers who worked in ordinary jobs as they raised up new churches. Often Christians with businesses or other jobs helped to support those who evangelized. In Acts 18:1-4 Priscilla and Aquila in Corinth had a tentmaking business. They gave lodging and employment to Paul when he was there.



Tentmaking usually supplements what the churches give. This allows the church to send more missionaries. Tentmaking also helps the team enter places which prohibit traditional missionaries.

The Moravian Church was one of the first evangelical churches to send many missionaries - about 200 years ago. Its vision was so great that although it gave sacrificially for missionary work, the offerings were not sufficient for the large number of missionaries. Many established businesses such as tile making factories, sewing workshops, and bakeries for their support. Christian businessmen formed part of the missionary team. Sometimes all team members worked in the business. In other cases only one or two team members managed the business full-time and supported the others.

Are there business or professional people in your church who are willing to dedicate their business and professions to missionary work?

Are they willing to go to the field with the missionary team?

Do they wish to establish businesses to employ or support other workers?

Write their names and areas of work: _____

Co-operate with other churches and mission agencies to form a team with businessmen.

For more information see Part 8 of the Missionary Training Series - *Tentmaking Missionaries* *.

* Obtainable from the Missionary Training Service. See page 2 of this study for the address of the MTS.

Building a Strong Team

A strong team requires commitment: both to the task God has given and also to the other team members. The following advice will help each team member to build a strong team:

1. Pray for each other, together and in private.
2. Agree on goals. Review these regularly together. These goals should be realistic, clear and measurable. Do not aim too high: this can cause frustration. Talk about the values you share.
3. Develop the skill of listening to others. Give them time and make them feel important.
 - * Try to understand what the other person is thinking.
 - * Acknowledge different personalities.
 - * Ask relevant questions.
 - * Clarify: "Let's see if I understand...".
 - * Confirm: "Here's what I hear you saying..."
 - * Elaborate: "Could you restate that another way?"
 - * Affirm: "I see what you mean".
4. Work hard to love your fellow team members, and understand and value their background, history, views and concerns. Foster strong friendships.
5. Recognize each others' responsibilities and gifts. Affirm each other's value and contribution by acknowledging and thanking one another for their efforts.
6. Maintain your own work with competence, integrity, and reliability.
7. Commit yourselves to submit to each other and to maintain good relationships with humility, trust and respect. Talk with each other when there are differences of opinion: foster openness and good communication. Take time to listen attentively and understand each other's opinion. Avoid gossip and criticism behind each other's backs. Learn to say, "I'm sorry, forgive me."

Modify your own goals for the benefit of the new churches. Try to develop the good qualities and ministries of other team members, instead of criticizing their weaknesses.

8. Identify yourselves socially with the target people. Take walks, eat and relax with them.
9. Make plans together and with the local church leaders for the future.
10. Seek restoration and reconciliation when there have been offences (sadly there will always be offences because we are not yet perfect). Work through problems quickly:

Cover over sins with love. (1 Peter 4:8) *"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."*

Seek forgiveness. (Matt 5:23,24) *"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift."*

Correct with humility. (Matt 18:15) *"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over."* (Gal. 6:1 says that those who are spiritual should gently restore those who are caught in a sin watching for themselves so that they are not also tempted.) Only involve other people if there is no resolution to the problem.

11. The leader should help the other members to reach their goals in planting churches. He should be concerned for the whole team, not just his own work.
12. Make sure that for every 40 hours spent in ministry giving out each week, each team member is able to refuel for about 10 hours: this can be anything that strengthens, relaxes, and

encourages, such as walking, reading for pleasure, praying or talking with friends, etc..

13. (If possible) Work together in church planting^{*} before going to the field - using the *Missionary Training Guide*^{*} and the *Church Planting Guide*^{*} .

14. Understand the normal stages of any team's life. This helps us prepare for different reactions of team members. Each time new members are added or leave the team, and when the team moves from one situation to another, the team may go through these stages again.

A. Beginning: organizing the team, becoming acquainted with each others' characteristics, and developing relationships.

B. Adjustment: struggling with differences and disagreements, and coming to harmony. Some members may drop out in this stage if there is not proper pastoral care. Other missions could help provide this care, especially in the important first two years of becoming adjusted to the new area and laying foundations. Try to meet the special needs of each team member at this time. Clarify aims and values. The team leader can help members to: overcome character problems - developing humility, use their gifts in harmony with others, adjust to working under authority, and accept different personalities.

C. Development: the team begins to work well together, committed to a common vision, goals and way of working. Members demonstrate a servant heart to each other. When-

* Obtainable from the Missionary Training Service. See page 2 of this study for the address of the MTS.

ever there are difficulties, the team must return to the task of developing servant hearts.

D. Success: members work in harmony with defined roles, and goals are reached.

E. Regrouping to tackle another task.

- 15.** Have regular retreats together (e.g. twice a year):
- * everyone can help plan these, including the children
 - * share growth in your lives and ministry experiences
 - * review the progress of the work.
 - * take turns sharing the devotionals, especially from Proverbs.
 - * have fun times: sports, meals and celebrations.
 - * if there have been difficulties, leaders can acknowledge how they have contributed to the struggles of others, and commit themselves to change. They do this before expecting others to admit that they need to change.
 - * go over ways of dealing with stress (see **How to Withstand Culture Shock** on page 40).
- 16.** Make time to integrate any new team members, helping them to understand the team's vision and goals, adapt to the culture and make friends, begin evangelism, and participate in team meetings.
- 17.** Beware of things that can destroy the team:
- * Allowing difficulties to obscure the original vision.
 - * Allowing minor disagreements to break the team apart. Do not cause other team members difficulties by judging them in these matters or being insensitive to their ideas (Rom. 14:13 - 15:7).
 - * Suppressing different gifts in team members: not allowing other team members to function in their strong areas can lead to dissatisfaction.
 - * Fear of the authorities and persecution.

- * Unwillingness to accept counsel from those with more experience.
- * Paying more attention to the team than to the people the team is meant to serve.

Resolve Conflicts

Paul and Barnabas had a conflict of opinion in Acts 15:36-41. All teams will experience conflict to some extent. Here are some guidelines in handling them (these guidelines apply equally to our relationships with converts and new disciples):

1. Anticipate problems. Keep in touch with everyone's opinions and feelings. Try to deal with issues before they become disruptive.
2. Acknowledge the problem: do not ignore it. Otherwise it could cause further difficulties. Clarifying an issue can be the means of building a relationship, even though it may focus on something negative for the moment. It might help to write the issue down.
3. Examine your heart to see if your bias is for or against the person. Do not cease to confront just because you like someone, or use confrontation as a means of punishing someone you dislike.
4. Make an appointment to discuss it when everyone involved can prayerfully concentrate.
5. Seek the Lord in prayer; then outline the problem clearly. Do not mix several subjects together.
6. Assess the sources of disagreement: inaccurate information, different methods, goals or principles. Try to find common ground from which to build a way forward. Have other previous problems contributed to bad feelings?
7. Do not attack people: concentrate on the problem. Avoid personal accusations. Affirm the other person and demonstrate a caring attitude.

8. Try to see the other person's viewpoint. Restating their position in one's own words before replying can help.
9. Accept personal responsibility for one's own errors.
10. Ask a third person to be involved if necessary.
11. Look for a solution that both can accept and which will advance the Lord's work.
12. Promise to make the solution work.

The Missionary Family

1. Both husband and wife should feel called to this ministry. It is good for them to define together their roles and responsibilities on the field.

If a couple arrives on the field without children, both of them can probably dedicate themselves to language-learning and evangelism, but if they have children, the wife will be more busy at home (compare Titus 2:3-5).

The mother who stays at home may have more difficulties in adapting to the new culture; maybe she will not learn the language so quickly. However, children can open doors with the neighbours. Wives can observe and imitate the customs of local women and ask for their help. Many useful contacts can begin like this.

2. Maintain channels of communication

Talk with the whole family about the ministry, so that they understand and appreciate it. Before a journey, talk together about its purpose, and on returning, go over what happened.

3. Prepare the children for missionary life before they go to the field. Living in another culture will be a blessing to the children if you prepare them for the change.
 - * Help your children to value people of different cultures - by showing them pictures of people of different races; viewing films about them; having a world map in their room; hearing other types of music; helping them learn words in other languages; praying for people in other countries daily (you could use Jill Johnstone's book *You Can Change the World*); eating "foreign dishes"; buying articles from other countries and helping the children to think about who made them, what their lives are like, whether they know the Lord Jesus; having people from other countries to stay and have meals.
 - * Let the older children share in the decision to go to another country: help them learn about the country and its people, its history, geography and local customs. You can talk with the smaller children about these things when they go to bed.
 - * Let them know beforehand how they will live: the type of house, food, the shops and transport. Talking about the plans helps children to prepare for the change and feel more secure. Show them pictures. You might try the different foods together.
 - * Let the children share in the decisions about what things to take. Small children could take photographs of relatives and friends, and favourite toys.
 - * Help children maintain a daily routine wherever they live, through family devotions, hobbies and crafts.
4. Deal with conflicts immediately
 - * When there are conflicts between husband and wife, it is important that they express their feelings without attacking their partner. For example, a wife could say, "I'm upset that the dinner didn't work out as we'd planned", not, "Why did you arrive late again? You always make me so worried!"
 - * If feeling angry, pray about this to God before talking to your spouse.

- * Ask for forgiveness and reach a solution, in love.

5. Children's Education

Ask the Lord's guidance for the children's education. There are several options, with advantages and disadvantages in each case.

Factors to take into account:

- * The special needs of each child (e.g. learning disabilities)
- * A good curriculum
- * The value of a united policy between several missionaries or missionary agencies
- * Availability of the option
- * Time available
- * Interaction with local people
- * Learning the local language
- * Maintaining the home country's language
- * Preparation for the children's future education and careers
- * Standard of education
- * Continuity
- * Cost

Seek counsel from others, especially people who have successfully used methods that are different from the ones you currently prefer. Whatever system is chosen, parents must be united in their decision and commitment to make it work. Changing from one system to another can be expensive and cause tensions. Prepare the children for whichever alternative is chosen, explaining its benefits.

Some alternatives:

- * Enrolling the children in a local school.
- * Parents teaching children at home using special courses (to be successful, this usually must be the mother's top ministry responsibility. A specified study area with desks or table, regular class schedule and lesson plans are important.).
- * Employing a travelling teacher who can help in home education.

- * Working with other parents to form a school.
- * Leaving children behind in the home country with relatives or in a boarding school.
- * Sending children to schools run by missionaries on the field or another country.
- * Sending children to an international school.

6. Maintain good health^{*}. For a list of vaccinations and medicines see pages 36 and 37 of the *Missionary Training Guide* - (available from the Missionary Training Service - see page 2 of this booklet for the address).

Examples of good health practice:

- * Boil your drinking water.
- * Boil vegetables or wash them well with boiled water.
- * Wear shoes to avoid contracting hookworm and diseases through the feet.
- * Keep up to date with vaccinations.
- * Shield yourself from the sun.
- * Beware of bathing in fresh water: parasites can enter through the skin.
- * Be careful with insects and animals.

It is wise to take out insurance for major illnesses or accidents.

* For more information see the books recommended at the end of this study.

Links with the Sending Church

The missionary team is an extension of the wider body: the Church of God. It has to remain accountable. The team does not work alone: it keeps the churches and agency informed and receives, in turn, the benefit of prayer and financial support to carry out its task.

A group of people dedicated to promoting missionary work in the local church (called a "Missionary Action Group" or some other name) can help help the sending church to fulfil its missionary commitment. Sometimes several churches can form this group together. *The Effective Sending Church* (Part 7 of the Missionary Training Series) deals with this.* Help your church to organise such a group well before you leave for the field. Each member of the group could obtain a copy of *The Effective Sending Church*.

Alternatively, if your church does not organise a group, you could organise your own support team to back you up on the field. Prayerfully form a group of people to look after all the practical details of supporting you: packing up your belongings, prayer letters, power of attorney in case of emergencies, finances, preparation for coming home, etc.. Meet with them and build them up into a team. Educate them on the effectiveness of prayer and the importance of their work. You could ask for a limited commitment - for just one year - after which they may decide not to continue. This makes it easier for people to commit themselves. See *The Effective Sending Church** for more details of what such a team would do.

Sending regular reports, newsletters, personal letters, cassettes and photos all help the sending churches to remain informed and

* Obtainable from the Missionary Training Service. See page 2 of this study for the address of the MTS.

interested. Regularly thank those in the home church for their work in backing you up.

If possible, a church leader, as well as representatives of a missionary agency, should visit the team regularly.

Relationship with a Missionary Agency

Sending churches usually work together with missionary agencies to fulfil God's command to make disciples of all peoples.

A mission agency will help organize pastoral and practical support for the team. Some roles will hopefully include:

- Helping ensure financial support.
- Helping deliver mail and maintaining communications (in restricted areas).
- Encouraging prayer from the home churches.
- A plan for emergencies.
- Assistance with a plan for care and education of children.
- Telephone or e-mail contact for encouragement and feedback.
- Visits at least twice a year to encourage the team.

If possible, cooperating missionary agencies should have the following characteristics: they should:

- major on the ministry and geographical area in which you want to work. Examine their annual and five year plans.
- be of the same culture as the sending churches (a similar economic level, a similar style of organization, language, etc.) - to avoid communication problems.
- emphasize obedience to the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ above everything else (for example, not demanding more than biblical requirements for baptism, leading the Lord's Supper or becoming a pastor). Talk with veteran missionaries to see how they operate in practice - not just with the recruiters.

- have a statement of faith with which you agree.
- run a financial system with which you are comfortable - are funds pooled, for individuals, raised by the missionary. Ask for the most recent audited account.
- have a system of accountability and administration with which you are happy, e.g. appointment of leaders, furlough plans, how decisions are made - where you will work, children's education, care for missionaries on furlough or returning to the home country. Examine written policy documents carefully. Never assent to a policy you do not agree with, just for the sake of going to the field, and then fight it throughout your missionary career.
- be composed of people with whom you feel at one: talk to as many members as possible.
- the person who will oversee the work of the missionary team on the field should be in total agreement with the team's plans and vision.

See what others say about the mission. How do they treat their missionaries? Would you find it a privilege to work among its members? Ask some missionaries if they would join the same mission again if they were beginning today.

Be patient with the home sending base - even when they make mistakes. Show appreciation of their hard work on your behalf.

Team Meetings

Meeting together for prayer, planning and training is important to see God's Kingdom advance amongst the people. Prepare diligently to ensure meetings achieve results.

Suggestions for the meetings:

1. Prayer for guidance.
2. Inform of work done, review the vision and goals, and make further plans.
3. Talk and think through your experiences, and learn from each other.
4. Write down each team member's work (what they will do, when, where, and with whom).
5. Training for the task (when necessary).
6. Encourage and affirm each other in the task. For example, say how much you appreciate something that someone has done. Take care of relationships within the team.
7. Pray for each other and for the work.

Effective use of Time

The team leader helps team members to effectively plan their use of time. Church planting requires many hours of work.

- When making plans, give priority to what the Lord Jesus and His apostles commanded us to do.
- Make a timetable to ensure that responsibilities are fulfilled (Eph. 5:15-17).
- Keep a diary or journal to record what you do and important matters.

- Delegate pastoral and evangelistic responsibilities to the new leaders of the new churches.
- Spend some time with the family every day, and take a day off every week. Do not allow the family to feel that it has to compete with the ministry to have time together.
- Cooperate with team members so that each one maximizes his or her gifts.
- Ask neighbours and friends to help with children.
- Hire people to do routine jobs.
- Avoid disputes with unbelievers and others who may like arguing (Titus 3:9). Sometimes disagreements cannot be avoided, but only a limited time must be given for this. Keep on doing the positive things that you know God wants you to do. Don't think that you always have to prove yourself right.
- Keep checking how you distribute your time. Remove from your agenda those things that do not take you closer to the goals that God has given you. Avoid pastimes that do not build up or help to unite your family.
- Ask someone else to evaluate your use of time. No one can judge their own use of time properly.

Common pitfalls for missionaries

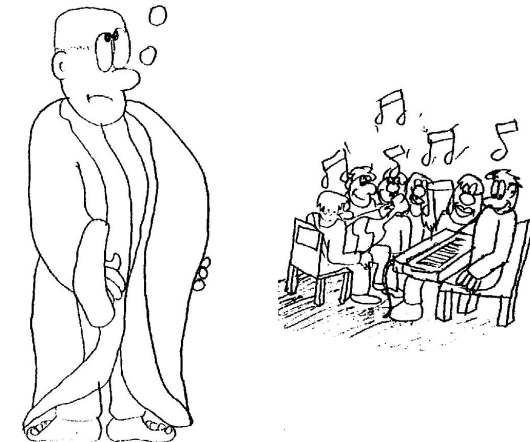
1. Not forming friendships with national people.

Team members may depend exclusively on other team members for friendship, because they are of the same background. In so doing they may form superficial relationships with those of the new country. To avoid this, team members could live apart from each other, preferably with local families, and build up friendships with local people.

2. Not adapting to local customs.

New missionary teams often make the mistake of starting church services using the customs of their own foreign culture.

I like having meetings with my foreign friends. But I don't think I'll try to win my family for Christ - they wouldn't feel at home here.



The team can have its own meetings to which local converts are not invited. However, when new believers meet, they should use their own language and customs. There should be more local people present than members of the team. The new church must feel it has its own identity within its own culture. Otherwise the new believers feel that they are joining a group of foreigners. If this happens, the group will become known as "foreign", and will not reproduce within its own culture. Also, when the team moves away the church collapses because it is dependent on the foreign team. Before public services begin, local people should be leading.

How to Withstand Culture Shock

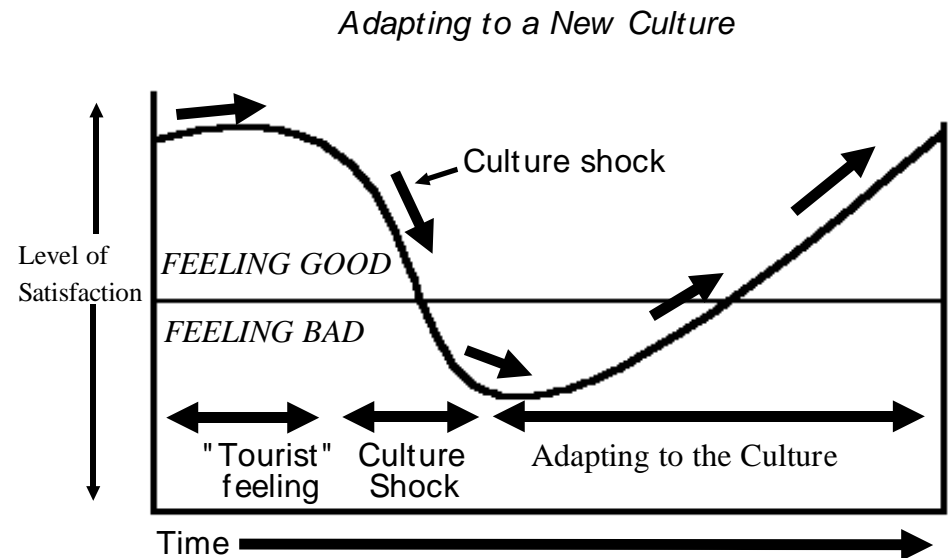
Many things can make us feel disoriented, especially during the first year or two: not being able to speak the language, not knowing how to behave in many circumstances, misunderstandings, not "belonging", and illnesses. This frustration, fear or anger is known as "culture shock" or "culture stress". Not everybody may feel it, but some do quite severely, and even consider abandoning the work. Adults and children can all feel culture shock. Our struggle is not against the culture, but against sin and the spiritual forces of darkness (Eph. 6:10.20). However, the devil may try to use cultural difficulties to dishearten us.

Symptoms of culture shock and stress can include:

- finding many things irritating or depressing
- feeling that the amount of work you have to do is mountainous
- thinking that colleagues are unusually unpleasant or unfair
- loss of interest and enthusiasm
- fatigue
- spending more time with other missionaries than with the people you are supposed to work with.

Many missionaries expect difficulties on entering a new culture. However, **returning to one's home culture after time abroad may also produce culture shock**. Missionaries themselves and their home culture may both have changed a great deal since they went abroad. Missionaries who expect everything to be the same as when they left may experience a disillusionment - a reverse culture shock; they have to adapt yet again to another culture.

The diagram below shows how missionaries may feel over a period of several months* .



* This graph is based *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* by Dr. Paul G. Hiebert, Baker, Grand Rapids, U.S.A. p. 65.

At first they enjoy the new culture (like a tourist would do). Then, when they realize that they have to live there permanently, coping with all the difficulties, they may begin to be disoriented and discontented. After a time, by God's grace, they adapt to the culture. But there will be days when they feel frustrated. This is normal.

Ways To Deal With Culture Shock

- 1. Recognize that you are going through culture shock.** Some people do not realize that this is what is happening. As a general rule, the longer one puts off "taking the plunge" into another culture, the harder it will be.
- 2. Dealing with other causes of stress.** Often stress caused by trying to function in a new culture and language, is worsened by other factors:
 - * traumatic events
 - * personal weaknesses - unresolved problems, unrealistic expectations
 - * difficult relationships with family, colleagues, and nationals
 - * work pressures
 - * differences of opinion with policies of your organization or team
 - * illnesses or fatigue
 - * loneliness, frustration or depression
 - * financial difficulties and lack of resources one is accustomed to
 - * shallow devotions
 - * lack of fruit in ministry
- 3. Find refuge in God in prayer,** confessing your fears to Him, and giving thanks to Him. We must know that we are completely accepted and forgiven in the Lord Jesus Christ, no longer under condemnation. We have no judge but God, and He has forgiven us. He loves us.

4. **Make friends with people of the new culture**, and talk about your difficulties with them. Become involved in their lives. Ask them to teach you about their culture. Understanding another culture helps us to appreciate it. Learn their language, gestures, facial expressions, rules of conduct and etiquette. This step is essential: it is the solution, not just a way of coping.
5. **Rest.** Sometimes we must draw apart from a situation as the Lord Jesus did (Mark 6:31). We need regular breaks. Holidays enable us to see things differently. Hobbies also help us to relax. Time and money spent on getting completely away from our usual surroundings, and in doing something really enjoyable is a far-sighted investment in the work. Proper rests scheduled each day, week and year mean that we are less stressed, and therefore more effective in our work. Find things that make you feel good about yourself - things that you can do well.
6. **Talk problems through** with family members, fellow missionaries or counsellors. It is comforting to know that one is not the only one to have such feelings. Show understanding and sympathy to others - especially if you do not experience many difficulties with the culture yourself - men, women and children all need support.
7. **Try to avoid doing too many things at the same time, that produce tension.** For example, if a couple is expecting a baby it would be wise to avoid moving to another area at exactly the same time.
8. **Forgive others** their failings; we also need to appropriate God's forgiveness through the Lord Jesus and not harbour feelings of guilt.
9. **Set realistic goals.** Some people try to do too much and then feel discouraged when they do not reach their goals. Be flexible and not too rigid in following plans. Accomplishing smaller goals can increase satisfaction.

- 10. Do not reject your own identity** as you adapt to a new culture. We cannot change the identity that God has given to us through our upbringing. We must learn to value and adjust to **both** cultures - the one that is ours by upbringing and the one we adopt. We learn to alter our way of doing things according to the different culture we find ourselves.
- 11. Carry each other's burdens.** (Gal.6:2). Self-centredness only makes troubles worse, but sharing with others lightens the load.
- 12. Laugh at your mistakes.**

Prayer and Spiritual Warfare

The god of this world blinds unbelievers so that they do not see God's truth (2 Cor.4:4). Our Lord Jesus fasted and prayed in the desert before commencing His ministry. On other occasions, He spent nights in prayer to receive guidance and power for His work.

We too must pray, and sometimes fast, for people to be set free. In prayer, we bind the "strong man" Satan (Mat. 12:29) in the almighty name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Praying for the people is as important as evangelizing, because we receive guidance and power for our work.

As the Lord Jesus extends His Kingdom through the missionary team, Satan will try to halt the advance of the Gospel by:

- Sowing doubts, fear and discouragement.
- Tempting us to sin.
- Provoking disagreements between team members and local believers.
- Raising up violent opposition and illness.
- Accidents.
- Etc.

Following the Lord's example in His desert fast:

- We submit to God and the continual guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- We put on the whole armour of God (Eph. 6:1-20).
- We recognize the source of our opposition. Pray to discern the spirits.
- We apply the Scriptures to every situation.
- We order the enemy to depart from us in the almighty name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- At all times, we praise and thank God, and seek His victory through prayer.

In a village in Niger, missionaries worked for 40 years but saw few conversions. Many people secretly wanted to become Christians but were afraid of the power of their traditional religion. Then the missionaries started to have special times of prayer that God would destroy the power of the local idol. One day there was a dispute which led to a fight between different sections of villagers. As a protest against unfair treatment, one section of villagers decided to abandon the local idol. Many people stopped fearing it. In the next few years, hundreds came to the Lord. God had heard the prayers and had destroyed the power of the "strong man" so that the captives could be set free in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ways to enrich prayer times

- Incorporate praise and worship. You might sing to a tape or chant the Psalms. In prayer meetings, the worship leader can lead out in prayer between every couple of songs, and encourage others to pray or participate in some other way.
- Repent. This is important for us personally and as a team. When one of you feels that God is convicting you of something, you could ask Him if it is something everyone could repent of. If it is, you could begin by confessing it yourself, and then asking if others feel the same. Do not force the issue if others are not sensitive to it.

You can also ask forgiveness for the sins of the people among whom you minister.

- Ask the Lord to send out labourers into His harvest (Mt. 9:37, 38; Lk. 10:1-3; Jn. 4:35).
- Use the Bible in prayer. For example, Colossians 1:9-14 could form the outline of prayer time.
- Claim your inheritance. Psalm 2:7,8. Boldness in prayer leads to boldness in evangelism. A missionary who has seen a great breakthrough in a Muslim area prays, "I'm willing to give whatever it takes."
- Have variety and different types of prayer (e.g. in pairs, walking around).

Suggestions when to pray

- Personally: every day
- At the beginning of each week (wait, think, plan)
- Team meetings
- Accountability partners (personal growth)
- Prayer retreats (e.g. 2 days a month)
- Before any event or outreach
- Prayer chains
- Days of prayer and fasting (e.g. once a week)
- Always (e.g. in traffic jams)

Help mobilise your church to support you in prayer (see section on Enlisting Prayer Partners and Financial Supporters on page 49).

Finances

General Points

- Pray that God will provide the finances to sustain our work. Each missionary will receive individual guidance from God about telling others about his or her needs, making requests for help.
- Many missionaries are supported by churches and friends. Missionaries also have the right to receive help from those who receive the Gospel. In 1 Cor. 9:14 Paul says, "In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the Gospel should receive their living from the Gospel." However, Paul himself did not always take advantage of this. He sometimes preferred to earn his own living to give an example of hard work to the new churches.
- All money belongs to the Lord. People give to God, not to us. God's people have the great privilege and duty to invest in the extension of the His Kingdom. Those who support financially will be concerned to pray more. The Lord said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Mt. 6:21).
- God blesses those who give to missionaries. Paul called the missionary offering raised by the Philippians "a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God." He continues, "And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:18-19).
- Sometimes, all the necessary money does not arrive from the churches. However, if God has sent you out, He has also promised to supply your needs. Pray and have faith in Him for your support. He can provide in many ways: sometimes there are business possibilities or unexpected gifts. Depending on a mission agency, church or certain individuals, instead of God, to supply one's needs, will lead to disappointment. God Himself is our provider and expects

us to look to Him. In His mercy He will not permit human sources to become our focus of attention.

- The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim.6:10). If money is not used wisely before God and man, it can ruin your ministry, family and your whole life. In 1 Tim.3:3, one requirement of leaders is that they should not be "a lover of money." In Acts 20:33 Paul could say, "I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing".
- As much as possible, do not borrow money or buy on credit. People may feel that the missionaries have come to take advantage of them. If you borrow, you cannot be sure that you will be able to repay the loan, and this may cause resentment against you. The Bible says "Let no debt remain outstanding" (Rom. 13:8).
- Lending can also cause difficulties. Often people cannot repay loans and this can cause bad feeling towards the person to whom they owe money. If someone in need asks for help, it may be better to give a gift. However, be careful of the dangers of gifts to the local people or church, as they could result in "conversions" out of love for money and dependence on the team.
- Money given for one purpose cannot be used for another. For example, if money is given for travel expenses but used for one's own clothing, the person who made the gift may not help again. Some missionaries have lost the Lord's anointing in this way.
- Keep careful accounts of receipts and expenditures. This avoids temptation and any suspicion of fraud.
- Personally acknowledge every gift.
- Inform your supporters how money is spent.
- Make arrangements for retirement, pensions, and an emergency fund.

The Biblical Basis of Raising Support

The Bible has many passages relevant to raising support. If God leads you to ask other Christians to stand with you in your missionary work, you must be convinced that it is God's will for you to be supported in this way. Some missionaries follow the policy of "Full information, no solicitation" - they inform of their needs and allow people to be led by God as to whether or not to give. Others solicit money, asking people directly. Others never mention money, except to God in prayer. You need to work out your own system before God. We list here a few Bible passages for your study:

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Exodus 25:1,2 | Luke 8:1-3 | 2 Corinthians 12:13 |
| Numbers 18:21-24 | Luke 10:4-8 | Galatians 6:6 |
| Deuteronomy 14:27 | Luke 11:5-13 | Philippians 4:14-19 |
| 1 Kings 17:1-16 | Romans 15:24 | 1 Timothy 5:17,18 |
| Nehemiah 2:1-8 | 1 Corinthians 9:7-14 | 3 John 5-8 |
| Malachi 3:8-10 | 2 Corinthians 8:12,13 | |
| Matthew 10:5-15 | 2 Corinthians 11:8,9 | |

Enlisting Prayer Partners and Giving Supporters

Your ministry will only be successful as the Lord answers prayer on your behalf: you need to develop a strong team of those who will pray fervently for you. Showing a high regard for prayer is honouring to God; it also builds up the spiritual lives of your supporters. You also need to build a team which will support you in giving. You need support in both prayer and money in order to fulfil your ministry, but prayer is the most important help.

Important principles:

You need to develop a relationship with people. People support those they know, trust and care for.

The more personal communication is, the more effective: often the best is a one-on-one meeting.

People need to be inspired by what God can do through you - they pray for and give best to a vision, not just a need.

- 1. The backing of your home church is very important.** Have an interview with the minister to discuss their vision for missionary work. If you can help the church fulfil their vision, they will want to have a part in supporting you. What are their mission goals? How are they reaching out locally and globally? What are the obstacles to stimulating interest in the congregation? How do they develop their people? How do they identify and prepare candidates for missionary service? Suggest ways in which you can help meet their aims in missions education, training, etc.. Discuss your needs for prayer and finances, how to increase prayer support for your work, how to make a request for financial support, how to present your ministry to the church (different church meetings and groups), and ask for introductions to others in the church and other churches who could support the ministry.
- 2. Prayerfully determine how many people you wish to recruit as members of your prayer team.** A prayer team is a body of people who make a special commitment to support a missionary work in prayer. You need regular, fervent, sustained prayer. It is not necessary for the prayer team to meet together, but it is helpful if some of them are able to do that. Some missionaries have one hundred people who are committed to pray for them every day. J.O. Fraser, a missionary in China, formed many groups of ten people to pray before seeing great breakthroughs. If you believe that prayer is going to make a difference, seek many people for your prayer team. However, do not choose so many that it becomes difficult to relate to them as individuals. It may be best to begin with a number between 25 and 50. If your prayer team meet in groups, you may be able to deal with 100.
Numbers sought for your prayer team:
Praying daily: _____ Weekly: _____ Monthly: _____

3. **Write down your commitment to each member of your prayer team.** It could be to write to each one once a quarter or month, or to each prayer group once a month. Write down what you want from them: it could be to pray daily for your requests, or to meet weekly for prayer. You could write a one page description of what you expect from your special prayer team. This shows how seriously you take prayer and encourages your prayer team to make a strong commitment. It may be good to ask for just a commitment to pray for you for one year. After that, people could renew that commitment if they believe God would have them continue.
4. With your mission agency and missionary team, **work out a budget** including living expenses, housing, local transport, ministry expenses such as Bibles, literature, postage, language learning, flights, insurance, education of children, health care, pensions, fund for returning home and starting up there, emergency fund, etc.. Keep ministry and living expenses separate: this is important for tax purposes. Determine how much money you will need on average each month. Try to live nearly as possible at the same level of the people to whom you will be ministering.

Amount each month: _____

5. **Make a list of all people and churches who could possibly support you in prayer and giving.** Prayerfully write out names of:
 - * church contacts
 - * relatives
 - * friends
 - * neighbours
 - * school contacts
 - * work contacts
 - * contacts through shops and services such as banks, hairdressers, etc.

- * friends: review your Christmas list, address books, personal 'phone directory, etc.
 - * other missionaries and supporting staff
 - * friends from other missions
 - * club and civic societies.
 - * Christian businesses.
 - * trusts with which you can form some meaningful contact.
 - * etc..
- 6.** Order the names systematically. The easiest way is on a computer database. The next best is on a four by six inch card system. Include the following headings:
- * Name
 - * Address
 - * Form of salutation in letters (Dear ...)
 - * Telephone
 - * Fax
 - * E-mail
 - * Occupation
 - * Notes
 - * Church attended
 - * Whether at present a:
 - member of the prayer team
 - praying only occasionally
 - not supporting in prayer
 - pledged gift donor (e.g. monthly, weekly, or quarterly)
 - special gift donor (giving only for special requests)
 - non-donor
 - * Priority rating (whether you think they really will pray or give to support you)
 - high (they have a real interest in you)
 - medium (without much interest, but likely to support if asked)
 - low (people with whom you have had casual contact - they may help if asked - contact these after your high and medium priority people)

- * Prayer commitment given: _____
- * Giving potential - the amount you think they could give per month (think of their financial state: their home, type of car, lifestyle, type of job and salary, business, number of employees, etc.)
- * Amount promised: _____

7. If applicable, write down how much money you need to receive each month. Then go through all your cards, write down the amount of each Giving Potential, and how many people could give that amount (e.g. £20 per month - 10 people, £15 - 20 people, etc.). Work out how many people at each amount you need to cover your monthly support goal. For example, someone who needs to raise £1,000 per month could have the following Giving Schedule:

| <i>Giving Schedule</i> | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Giving Potential | No. of Givers Needed | Total |
| £100 | 2 | £200 |
| £50 | 4 | £200 |
| £20 | 10 | £200 |
| £15 | 16 | £240 |
| £10 | 16 | £160 |
| TOTAL | 48 PEOPLE | £1,000 |

Such a schedule helps you to see how many people you need to contribute. It also helps potential donors to aim higher.

8. Mail your prayer letter. Begin the letter with something that gains the reader's attention, bring them up to date with your life and ministry. Convey the burden the Lord has given you, some information on the missionary organization with which you will work, set out your need for prayer partners, and state your financial goals (monthly and starting up funds). The monthly prayer letter should be informational, not an appeal letter. Type neatly; do not crowd the page; add a few graphics; add a personal handwritten note; make sure you include your return address and

phone number, and also the mailing address of where financial support should be sent. Your mission agency could also provide you with a letter of introduction in which they spell out your mission and needs.

Keep a diary so that you have material on hand to use in your prayer letter. Vary your approach, style, content and format.

9. If applicable, **make appointments to meet potential supporters personally**. Pick out the highest priority contacts (who have a "high" priority rating). You cannot give equal time to all prospective supporters: you must concentrate on those who are most likely to help you most. A face to face meeting helps people see the burden God has given you and to catch the vision. Pray for each person regularly, and pray for each 'phone call. Practise what you are going to say. Telephone people whom you believe that the Lord has made most responsive first. This will give you more confidence. Assume they want to meet with you. It is important to present your vision and need personally. Say, "Is it better to meet this week or next?" rather than, "Would you like me to come round?". Practise what you are going to say before you call. Arrange to meet. It is better to meet somewhere private such as in the person's home. Church is too public and rushed.

What to say:

- * Say who you are
- * Make sure you are speaking to the right person
- * Engage in general conversation - family, church, etc. - something to break the ice.
- * State the reason for your call: e.g. "I've been asked to be part of a missionary team to I'd like to tell you about the work and how you might pray for us and help us".
- * Ask for the appointment: e.g. "It would be very good to see you. Would it be better this week or next week?"
- * Finalize details: e.g. "I'll look forward to seeing you this week on Friday, 18th June at your house about 7 o' clock in the evening.

Unless you see them personally, many people will not support you. For example, if someone says, "We are already supporting several missionaries, and cannot help any more", you could say, "I can understand that, but I really would like to spend a little time with you explaining the vision the Lord has given me." If someone says that they are busy at the moment, suggest a specific date in the future.

Do not ask for a pledge for prayer or donation on the 'phone. You will do that personally.

If the meeting is more than a week in advance, send a letter immediately, to remind them (handwritten if possible).

10. Preparing to visit a supporter. Prepare with much prayer. Dress neatly. Remember your goal: to help people to see whether the Lord would have them pray or give for your work. Review the information you have about the person: family, job, names of family, their "Giving Potential". Bring literature with you, including the prayer information sheet, and information on a project to support in case the person cannot become a pledged monthly giver. If you are new at this you might write out what you are going to say, and role play your visit several times before going.

Areas to cover:

A. After asking about your friend's family, job, church, etc., give them **AN UPDATE ON YOUR LIFE:**

- **How God has led you into mission work.** Be brief but give specific instances of His guidance.
- **The mission you will work with.** Show its importance. You could show a video, or show literature. If you use a brochure, hold it and guide your friend through it - if you hand it to him, you will lose his attention.

B. YOUR PERSONAL VISION: your specific work and reasons for its importance; your goals. Speak of real people who have benefited. Speak with conviction and enthusiasm.

C. PRAYER:

- 1) **Your need for prayer partners.** Explain what is required of prayer partners and your commitment to them in prayer and keeping them informed. You could share with them what you have written (see page 51, No. 3.).
- 2) **Your desire for the person to become a member of your prayer team.** Explain the different commitments, and ask how the person would like to pray for you (each day, each week, monthly, or as a member of a prayer group). Ask for a specific commitment to personal prayer or to a prayer group.
- 3) Invite your friend to your commissioning service.

D. GIVING:

- 1) **Your financial needs and plan to raise the money.** Mention your main budget items - not unnecessary details. Say, "The total need each month is £X". Ask if your friend has any questions and answer them before you ask for support.
- 2) **Your desire for the person to become a member of your financial support team.** Say that you are looking for people to pledge a certain amount each month - give a range - "For example £10, £15, £20 or £25". Ask your friend to support you - with such words as, "Would you like to support us at £15 a month". Ask specifically and clearly. If they agree, thank them and offer them the opportunity to make the first instalment immediately. Make arrangements for direct debit, covenanting, etc. Have all the forms to hand.

3) If your friend cannot help with a monthly pledge at the moment, you might ask for a special gift to cover a certain expense (such as moving overseas costs).

E. OTHER POTENTIAL SUPPORTERS. Say something like, "I wonder if you could help me in another way. In order to begin my work in ... as soon as possible, I need to see as many people as I can in the next few weeks. Do you have any friends in church or at work who would also share in our interest in world evangelization?"

F. CLOSING PRAYER: Ask if they have any prayer requests. If appropriate, pray with them.

11. **Keep records.** After the visit, record details about the person that may help later, including the type of prayer they have promised, amount of support and how often they will send this (for example, every month). Write the details on a card or a computer database. Have sections for those who will pray daily, weekly, monthly, members of prayer groups, pledged gift donors, special gift donors, and undecided. You can use this information to track how often your friends give their donations. Notice when people decrease or increase their support. Take immediate action by telephoning or writing to them accordingly to thank them or ask if they have some problem and need prayer.
12. **Within a day, if possible, write to thank your friend** for his or her commitment. Mention the type of prayer commitment or the amount of money promised. Keep the letter neat and short, and share some fruit from your ministry.
13. Take time to educate prayer partners in the importance and effectiveness of prayer, using such passages as Matthew 18:18,19; Colossians 4:2-4; James 5:16-18.
14. **Keep track of the prayer requests you make.** Pray for them yourself too, of course. Record answers to prayer, and inform

your prayer team to encourage them. Tell them about requests they prayed for, not just the ones with unusual results.

- 15. Write to people who live too far away to visit.** Cover the same things in your letter as you would in a personal conversation (see No. 10 above). Mention specific prayer requests. In the area of giving, do not ask for money to cover a "deficit" or for "general funds". Mention an identifiable object, and challenge people with a specific amount. Do not apologize for asking for prayer or money: we are helping them by asking them to participate in God's work.

Follow up the letter with a 'phone call. Make a system: write in your calendar when you plan to call. When calling, say who you are, and talk a little, and then ask if they received the letter. Be ready to repeat the contents over the phone in case they have not read it. Ask for a commitment to prayer or a specific amount of money per month.

- 16. Expand your network of possible partners.** You may need to contact more people than you know at present to pray for you and help you. Ways to gain new contacts include:

A. Ask your present prayer partners and donors to give you names of possible supporters - friends from church, work, Christian association, etc. - you could go over a church directory with them. After obtaining a list, go over this with your friend to mark those who are most likely to be able to help. Ask your friend to telephone them, and, if possible, visit them with you. If your friend cannot go with you, 'phone them yourself and arrange an appointment.

B. Arrange meetings in supporters' homes. After an introduction by your host, share something of our background, give your testimony, and then share your ministry, including, if possible a video or brief slide presentation. It is best not

ask for financial support during the meeting. It is for information and inspiration. During refreshments after your presentation, talk with each guest and arrange an appointment with those you think might make a commitment to pray for you or give for your work.

If you are far from home, it is best to arrange the meeting for the beginning of your time in the area. Then you can follow up the contacts whilst you are there.

17. Cultivate your supporters. They are your friends. Develop a warm relationship with them, and show your love and concern for them and their families.

Ways of developing the relationship:

- * pray for your partners in an organized way - for example, pray for a certain number on your list each day. Ask them for prayer requests and ask them about answers.
 - keep copies of your correspondence with each supporter and file information on each one so that you can ask them how they are doing in different areas of their life
- * help and encourage them in spiritually - their understanding of the Lord and His Word and following Him each day
- * pay personal visits to key supporters
- * meet with several supporters in an area, with one acting as host
- * send personal handwritten letters, postcards, notes
- * send regular prayer letters (monthly if possible) - keep your ministry in your supporters' minds. These letters inform of specific prayer requests, and make people feel a part of your team. Be sure to include your own address and telephone number, the mailing address to which financial support should be sent. Write the letter as if to one of your friends - picturing him or her in your mind. Then edit it to make it suitable for general reading - you will find that there is little

to alter. Add personal handwritten notes to each person if possible.

- * send general newsletters to highlight developments in your work. Catch people's attention with headings. Talk about specific instances and people you have helped. Vary the design and format.
- * send family photographs and news
- * give occasional small presents to major supporters and children etc.
- * remember birthdays and illnesses
- * make 'phone calls
- * have a representative in each church
- * promptly answer every letter you receive
- * always send a note of thanks to people when they do something for you
- * help your supporters to be able to do things for you. See *The Effective Sending Church* - booklet 8 of this series for ways in which they can help.
- * Send cassettes or videos of the work and your family
- * always be vigilant for ways of strengthening the relationship between you and your supporters. Lack of care has meant that many missionaries have lost support. People do not want to support people who do not care for them.

18. Inform people again of your needs for prayer and support.

After a time, because of greater spiritual light in supporters' hearts, rise in income, or greater interest in the work, some people may want to increase their commitment. Some may become members of your prayer team, pledged monthly donors could increase their giving, some special donors could become monthly donors, or some non-donors could become either special or pledged monthly donors. Go through your list and visit or 'phone them to help them increase their commitment.

Practical matters

- See to dental, eye, and other health problems before leaving the home country.
- Investigate tax laws to make sure proper tax is paid - but try to avoid paying tax in two countries.
- Keep records of when important documents need renewing (visas, passports, etc.).
- Appoint someone to manage your property while you are abroad.
- Arrange for absentee ballots to vote in elections.
- Follow government regulations concerning births, marriages and deaths. Register them with the local authorities, and also with your own consulate or embassy. Children may automatically become citizens of the country they are born, and may not be allowed to leave to live in the parents' home country unless they pay a special tax. Sometimes difficulties may be avoided by returning to the home country for births. Investigate the legal situation in both countries a long time before children are born.

Maintaining Sexual Purity^{*}

About half of all missionaries are subject to very strong sexual temptations. Some fall into sin. Only by a miracle of God do many survive. Many think that it could never happen to them. However, when they are on their own where nobody knows them, lonely, and under long-term stress, Satan presses harder against them.

Falling into sin is usually an imperceptible slide, not a sudden fall. It may begin with looking at films with sexual scenes, looking at unseemly photographs in magazines for a few seconds - these things numb our minds to the dangers of sexual sin. Our society has lost its hatred of sexual sin: Christians also are influenced by this permissiveness. Our hearts are master deceivers (Jer. 17:9), and make us think that we are doing nothing wrong.

Beginning an illicit relationship is easier than one may think. One may be thrown together with someone of the opposite sex for legitimate reasons. Then one finds reasons to spend more time together in some mutual interest. In time one finds that some deep personal need is met by being together - whether that is spiritual nourishment through prayer, Bible study, counselling, or just companionship. The next stage is where two people begin to touch each other. This stirs up romantic and sexual feelings. Powerful emotions deceive and blind the conscience to what is going on. Finally actual fornication or adultery takes place.

* This section is adapted from "The Battle for Sexual Purity" a teaching video by Dr Ken Williams, Ph.D., produced by Wycliffe Bible Translators, Horsleys Green, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP14 3XL, United Kingdom.

Steps to Guard your Purity

- 1.** Recognize that you are vulnerable. "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall" (1 Co. 10:12). Never say, "That could never happen to me". It could happen to anyone.
- 2.** If you are married, keep cultivating your relationship with your spouse. Do not let the Lord's work divide you. If your affection and romance cool down, danger lurks. Build up your marriage with love. If your marriage is weak, Satan will try to bring in someone else.
- 3.** Personally, before God in prayer, make a conscious deliberate commitment to the Lord, "I commit myself to sexual purity". Renew this commitment regularly — even hourly under temptation. Submit to God and the devil will flee from you (James 4:7).
- 4.** Study, memorize, meditate on, and obey God's Word. This purifies our heart, and is a sure weapon against sin (Ps. 119:9,11).
- 5.** List all immoral practices in which you have been involved, including those things which may not be considered sin but which have influenced or influence your mind towards the flesh and not to God. This can include films, looking at magazines, looking longingly at people of the opposite sex, etc. Then make a conscious decision to put these things to death - stop doing them (Col. 3:5). You could burn the paper, praying that God will help you not repeat these immoral things. "Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature" (Ro. 13:14). This must be a lifelong, constant practice.
- 6.** Cleanse your mind - "... let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God" (2 Co. 7:1). We must make an effort to become more holy each day. Fill your mind with good and holy

thoughts, giving thanks to God through the Lord Jesus Christ at all times (Col. 3:17). "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

7. Develop an early warning system. When you sense that there may be temptation, at once cry out to God for help and take immediate avoidance action ("Flee youthful lusts..." 2 Tim. 2:22).
8. Avoid danger zones. Decide ahead of time how you will handle different situations. Try not to travel alone to other regions. Some missionaries try to share a room with someone of the same sex while travelling without their spouses. This can avoid temptation and also be security.
9. Make yourself accountable to someone of the same sex and openly and honestly share your life. Illicit attractions disintegrate when they are confessed - this discipline helps keep us vigilant. You could be mutually accountable. Ask hard questions of one another, and pray for one another.
10. Learn what forms of dress, smiling, sitting, looking and talking are sexually provocative in that culture. You must know what these cues are before you arrive, if possible - you may be enticing the opposite sex without being aware of it.

"...the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 Jn. 4:4). We can rejoice that God is greater than the evil one, and that He will protect us as we take these steps.

Guidelines for Emergencies*

Sadly, because we live in a fallen world and are engaged in spiritual battle, we must be prepared for emergencies.

List of Important Information

In emergencies, we often need access to documents. Make a written list of important documents held by all family members, with a note of where they are kept:

- passports - and their numbers and dates of issue
- visas
- bank account numbers
- credit cards - and numbers
- 'phone number for notifying credit card companies of their loss
- insurance policies - and their numbers
- car registration, serial and licence numbers
- National Insurance - and their numbers
- fingerprints, palm prints
- current photographs
- current prescriptions including glasses
- contents and location of your strong-box in the home country (see below)
- summary of assets and debts
- names, addresses, telephone numbers of business, personal, and emergency contacts

Make copies of this list. Keep one where you live, give a copy to a local mission administrator, and leave a copy with a trusted friend in the home country.

* This section is adapted from *Guidelines for Crisis and Contingency Management* by G. Stephen Goode, International Journal of Frontier Missions, Volume 12:4 Oct.-Dec. 1995.

Strong-Box for Documents

In a strong-box in the home country, store the following documents:

- original copies of current wills
- power of attorney documents
- birth, marriage and adoption certificates
- naturalization papers and dual citizenships
- deeds, mortgages, stocks/bonds (these can be left with the broker for quick or emergency access)
- insurance papers for life, car, house, medical, household contents
- current inventory of valuable possessions and their location
- medical and dental records
- school and university records

Take copies of the above with you. It is also good to leave copies with a trusted friend. Be careful to keep your will and inventory of possessions up to date, especially when marrying or having children.

Finances for Emergencies

In an emergency, we often need ready access to extra funds for travel, funerals, evacuations, etc.. The following measures should help:

- Appoint a current power of attorney to be able to transact business on behalf of each adult family member. Make several copies. You could make several originals too.
- Establish an emergency fund for travel and evacuation. A local person may need access to this fund with clear steps about how to use it.
- Establish credit that will be sufficient for emergencies. Keep a list of regular billing dates for all recurring expenses (for example, insurance, mortgage, and taxes).
- Establish a joint cheque account. Deposit cheques in a local bank account to draw out money - cheques lost in the mail cause many difficulties.
- Insure property and update policies periodically.

- Place cheque-books, bankbooks, some travellers' cheques and some cash in a safe and easily accessible place in case an overland journey is necessary.
- Learn the current laws regarding legal residence and place of domicile for tax purposes and ownership of property.
- Gather together all employment history for family members including resumes and letters of reference. Keep duplicates in the home country.

Prepare for Emergencies

- Missionary agencies and sending churches need to develop policies for dealing with emergencies (e.g. regarding the payment of a ransom), and establish a team to deal with them.
- Make a will for every family member. Include where you would like to be buried.
- Discuss with the family what should be done in the event of an emergency separation. Choose a contact place to meet in case you have to leave your house.
- Arrange who will be in charge if the leader is absent or jailed.
- If kidnapping is a possibility, decide what your steps would be.
- Make sure you are registered with the embassy of your country so that you can be contacted and evacuated if necessary.
- Make a checklist of items to bring in case of rapid evacuation.
- Know your way around the city. Try to remember different routes to and from different places.
- Plan escape routes from your home, city and country.
- Keep vehicles with tanks at least half full. Each house should also have a metal tank full of petrol kept in a cool place.
- Keep a first-aid kit, food and water in the vehicles. Keep a two week supply of food in the house, and at least one week's supply of water (change it every week if possible).

- Each house should have a contact person for passing on messages. Work out a communication network with other team members.
- Expatriates should carry passports at all times.

Dealing with Emergencies

- Death - Communicate with the family and close friends in the home country; check and comply with all legal requirements such as a death certificate, embalming requirements, funeral and burial procedures, or moving the body out of the country if that is the decision. Obtain price quotes from a funeral director. Insurance may cover some or all costs. If survivors are to return home, who should accompany them. Arrange memorial services on the field and in the home country. Arrange pastoral care long term for the families. Tickets purchased by credit card usually include a substantial insurance cover for death during travel.
- War and street fighting - stay at home if possible, in the basement if you have one. If not, select the safest place out of direct sight of all windows and doors, drawing the curtains to reduce the possibility of being hit by shattered glass. Keep a low profile and stay inside if possible. Open several windows on all floors to reduce the possibility of concussion breakage. Fill up all containers with water (water may be cut off). Advise all household members not to touch bullets and missiles etc. Do not tour the city or take photographs. Obey curfews. Pack one suitcase, have blankets for your family, and enough food and water should you have to be moved. If caught away from home, abandon your car - it would be a target for rioters.
- Evacuation - sometimes it may be necessary to leave the country. When word is given go to pre-arranged gathering points. Use your emergency fund to purchase travel tickets.
- Terrorism - in high risk areas, remain friendly with the local people, but be cautious about disclosing personal matters,

itinerary or programme. Leave all personal and business papers at the house or hotel. Watch to see if people are following or observing you. Report anything strange to the police or embassy. Check your vehicle for anything suspicious. Refuse unexpected packages. Keep a mental note of safe havens such as police stations, hotels and hospitals. Let someone know your travel plans - tell them if changes are made. If anyone starts shooting, drop to the floor and do not move until you are sure the danger has passed; if you must move, crawl on your stomach; do not pick up a weapon. Be unpredictable in your travel routes and times to confuse terrorists.

- Hostage taking - You alone must decide whether to resist capture or surrender - the odds may be overwhelming. If you decide to surrender, let the terrorist know you will cooperate. Regain your composure as soon as possible. Maintain your dignity and humanity. Once settled, do not be afraid to ask for anything you need or want. Develop and maintain a regular daily programme, including prayer, Bible reading, exercises, reading, writing, games or even daydreaming. Show the captors you are human by showing photos of family and talking about them. In rescue attempts, be calm; do not attempt to stand up and run.

Visiting the home country

- Decide how long you will be on the field before visiting the home country. It may be between two and six years. Usually the first term will not be less than three years, in order to learn the language and begin fruitful work.
- Keep in touch with home while away. Family and friends can send news items, magazines, sports news, etc..
- Make arrangements for the continuation of the work while you are away.
- Plan many months ahead for the home assignment. Decide the length, allowing time for:
 - * a good rest (ideally no work for several weeks on arrival, to readjust, holidays in the middle, and several weeks at the end to pack, say farewells, and prepare for departure),
 - * spiritual renewal
 - * time with someone you respect, and/or someone from the sending church or missionary society you work with, to give advice about any problems experienced on the field.
 - * visiting families: parents have paid a high price having their children overseas. They must not be allowed to feel that speaking engagements come before their needs.
 - * speaking at churches.
 - * thorough medical, dental and optical examinations.
- Obtain clearance for leaving the country some time before you need to travel. Residents cannot always simply leave the country as tourists can.
- Make sure there is suitable accommodation for you in the home country. Local churches may deal with this.
- If you have any problems, such as bad health, make sure your family, church and missionary agency are aware of these so that they can prepare properly.
- Plan and arrange meetings. If possible, ask someone good at organization who can help arrange these.

- Begin to prepare messages, slides, recordings of worship songs and Bible readings, etc., several months before going home. You could take a national costume, or other artefacts to show what life is like. Several short presentations can be prepared for different speaking situations. These can be combined when necessary:
 - * Special biblical messages that God has laid on your heart.
 - * How you went about language learning
 - * The culture of the country or its historical background
 - * The religious beliefs of the people
 - * Individual believers
 - * How new churches were formed

Hudson Taylor, missionary to China in the 19th century wrote: "In all your intercourse with friends of the mission, seek to deepen their realization of the value of Christ, and our union with Him. Should you succeed in interesting them in ... the mission, your efforts may end there: but if you minister blessing to their souls, they will better enter into Christ's commands and purposes... and will more likely become helpers in prayer... After all, what we want is not money but power."

- Prepare for readjustment to the home country. This can be like culture shock: one may feel disoriented. One may not expect this, having lived in the home country for many years. However, the culture, values and relationships will have changed since departure. The same advice given on page 40 for dealing with culture shock applies here too. Also it is good for someone to help one adjust: telling one about the latest changes in the country and the church; someone with whom one can share one's feelings and problems, and pray together.

- Children may experience greater changes than adults on leaving and returning and returning to the home country. To prepare them:
 - * Explain what things will be different
 - * Go over family photo albums so that they recognize relatives
 - * Take children's toys or other treasures that will help children to feel at home in the new country. The more continuity there is the better.
 - * Help each child make a photo album of their time away to show to friends at home.
 - * Have a "home country night" sometimes in which you try to eat food like that served in the home country, and look at pictures.
 - * Let children adapt to their new home at their own pace. Help them to talk about what they feel.
 - * Teenage children will want to blend in with young people of their own age. Be sensitive to them and ready to talk.
- Once in the home country, after meetings to inform of your work, it is good to write a 'thank-you' note to the person who arranged each meeting.
- At the end of the furlough, a public service to recommission missionaries gives a renewed sense of support. It also reminds the church to continue to prayer and support.

Moving On

If God calls you to return to your home country, you should prepare for this, just as you did when going abroad. However, never make a hasty decision to leave your field of service, especially in a crisis. Much prayer and discussion is needed for such decisions. The following are useful steps of preparation for homecoming:

1. Recognize and come to terms with the reasons you have for leaving the field whether these are because you have finished your work, because of difficulties, or any problem. Thank God that everything works for good for those that love Him (Ro. 8:28).

If you believe you have let God or others down, seek and receive God's and others' forgiveness. It is important to return home with a clean heart before God, and a clean slate.

2. Entrust the work's continuation to God (Acts 20:32). As it is the Lord who moves us on, through whatever circumstances, we can safely commit the future of His work to Him. Intercede for the Lord's guidance and help.
3. Make arrangements for the continuation of the work. In Ephesus and all the churches he founded, Paul had appointed elders to oversee the church. He instructed them how to conduct the work.
4. Reflect and learn from your experiences. You may find it useful to prayerfully read Philippians 4:8-9, and then write down your answers to the following questions:
 - * What things have you come to appreciate about the country where you have worked? Which ones would you consider taking home? Why?
 - * What are your concerns and expectations about returning home?
 - * How have you grown and changed while ministering abroad? (Go over your diary or journal.) How has your appearance and changed? How have your attitudes and circumstances changed in spiritual, family, political, emotional, financial and other areas? Think how people at home might react to these changes and prepare yourself prayerfully for this.
 - * Do you feel in touch with and close to the people back home? Why? Why not?
 - * What major changes have occurred in your family (e.g. births, marriages and deaths) and country (e.g. elections, disasters) while you have been away? How will they affect your return?
 - * What aspects of your family life do you expect to be the same?
 - * What are your plans? What job situation awaits you?
 - * How do you think your time away will contribute to your new role?

- * What things do you need to do before leaving?
- * What help do you need in preparing to return home?

It is very useful to go over your answers to these questions with the team leader.

Going over a simplified list with your children will also help them to make a transition to life in the home country.

5. After a time of painful crisis, avoid making decisions of a permanent nature, until your emotions have healed.
6. Prepare for homecoming. You will have grown accustomed to a new way of life. Changing to a different one may cause stress. The following factors could influence the degree of stress you undergo:
 - * The length of time away.
 - * The degree of identification with the local people.
 - * The degree of differences between the home culture and local culture
 - * How fulfilled you feel in your time away.
 - * How you will feel to be separated from your area of work.
 - * Your physical condition.
 - * Changes in yourself while away.
 - * How you are preparing for homecoming.
 - * How long you expect to stay in the home country.
 - * The purpose of your return.
 - * Previous experiences of going home.
 - * The extent to which you have kept abreast of events at home.
 - * The strength of support you receive from your family church and friends.
7. Try to make sure you are fit and well before meeting friends - both spiritually and physically.
8. Take gifts home for your family, friends and pastors. A quantity of small typical gifts is useful in many circumstances.

9. Sadly, more missionaries crash when they come home than when they are on the field. It is essential to maintain your spiritual edge through prayer, Bible reading and obedience to the Lord.
10. Meet with your pastor as soon as possible to report back. Be accountable to him and, after a suitable vacation time, seek to help in the Lord's work where He has now led you.
11. Meet regularly with someone sympathetic to missionary work to report on your progress in adapting to the home country. Being accountable to someone else in our readjustment is very helpful.
12. Gather your supporters, thank them and report on your work. Seek other opportunities to share your experiences to encourage support for the work.
13. Be an effective supporter of mission work, informing others, praying, giving and recruiting others. *The Effective Sending Church**, booklet 7 in this series has further information on this ministry.
14. Beware of becoming critical of the home church and the home country. Just as you had to learn another culture abroad, you must learn the home culture again.
15. Be prepared for a mixed reception in your home church. Some churches may make you a hero; others may not pay you the attention you expect. Your identity is in Christ, not in what people think of you. Therefore do not become puffed up if people praise you, or despondent if they ignore you. Forgive those who could have negative reactions to your work. Look for new opportunities to serve others, in whatever capacity that may be: do not seek special recognition.

* Obtainable from the Missionary Training Service. For the address see page 2.

16. Review your answers to No. 4 above about six months after arrival to check how you are doing.

Useful Reading and Resources

Essential Biblical Reading

- Matthew 10:1-42
- Luke 10:1-20.
- Acts, especially chapters 10, 13, 14, 16-20.

General Missionary Work

- *Tuning God's New Instruments: A Handbook for Missions from the Two-Thirds World*, by Denis Lane, World Evangelical Fellowship and Overseas Missionary Fellowship, 141, Middle Road, #05-05, GSM Building, Singapore 0718, Republic of Singapore
- *Manual for Today's Missionary: From Recruitment to Retirement*, by Marjorie A. Collins, William Carey Library, PO Box 40129, Pasadena, CA 91114, USA, 1986

Developing the Missionary Team

- *October 1995 issue of the International Journal of Frontier Missions* on Member Care, and books recommended in the article "Written Resources for Member Care" by Kelly O'Donnell and Gerald Reddix.
- *Honourably Wounded (Overcoming Missionary Stress)*, by Marjory Foyle, Evangelical Missions Information Service, PO Box 794, Wheaton, IL 60189, USA. 1987.
- *Learning to Love People You Don't Like*, by Floyd McClung, Kingsway publications, Eastbourne, United Kingdom, 1987.
- *Making a Team Work*, by Steve Chalke with Penny Relph, Kingsway Publications Ltd., Lottbridge Drove, Eastbourne, E. Sussex BN21 3YJ, England, 1995.

- *Missionary Care: Counting the Cost for World Evangelisation*, edited by Kelly O'Donnell, William Carey Library, PO Box 40129, Pasadena, CA 91114, USA, 1992. See especially Part Three on Team Development.
- *Naturally Gifted*, by Gordon and Rosemary Jones, Scripture Union, 130 City Road, London EC1V 2NJ, United Kingdom, 1991.
- *Peacemaking: A Study Guide. Resolving differences, restoring, and building harmony in relationships*, by Rick Love, Frontiers, 325 N. Stapley Drive, Mesa, AZ 85203, USA, 2nd Edition 1995.
- *Peacing Together: from Conflict to Reconciliation*, by David Cormack, MARC Europe, 1989.
- *Relationships: Overcoming friction in Christian Service*, by Trus Wierda, WEC Publications, Bulstrode, Oxford Road, Gerrards Cross, Bucks, SL9 8SZ, United Kingdom, 1989
- *Team Spirit: People Working with People*, by David Cormack, MARC Europe, 1987.
- *Teamwork*, by Gordon and Rosemary Jones, Scripture Union, 130 City Road, London EC1V 2NJ, United Kingdom, 1995.

Healing for Emotional Hurts

- *Ripped Down the Middle*, a video from 2100 Productions (InterVarsity/UCCF) - biblical advice and practical steps for those from difficult family backgrounds.
- *Inside Out* by Larry Crabb, Navpress, Colorado Springs, CO, USA, 1991. Dealing with feelings of personal inadequacy and broken relationships.
- *Love is a Choice: Recovering from CoDependent Relationships*, Minirth-Meier Clinic Series. (CoDependency is a relationship in which someone fulfils his or her own emotional needs by helping someone else.) A proven ten-step programme for recovery.

- *Healing for Damaged Emotions* by David Seamonds, Victor Books.

Returning to the Home Country

- *Re-Entry: Making the Transition from Missions to Life at Home*, by Peter Jordan, YWAM Publishing, P.O. Box 55787, Seattle, WA 98155, USA, 1992.

Health

- *Healthy beyond Heathrow*, by Ted Lankester.
- *Survival of the Fittest*, by Christine Sine, MARC, USA.
- *Where there is no Doctor*, by David Werner, Herperian Foundation, Palo Alto, CA, USA. 1977 & Revision.

Support Raising

- *Friend Raising: Building a Missionary Support Team that Lasts*, by Betty Barnett, YWAM Publishing, Seattle, Washington 98155, USA, 1991
- *People Raising: A Practical Guide to Raising Support*, by William P. Dillon, Moody Press, Chicago, USA, 1993

The Missionary Team is a helpful summary of key principles needed for effective team life - from recruitment to reentry. I am grateful to the Missionary Training Service for this distillation of sound advice and core concepts from many different sources. Well done!

Dr Kelly O'Donnell, Psychologist, Member Care Associates, YWAM

The Missionary Training Series

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