

# PART C – BECOMING PART OF WO

This final section is designed for new applicants for field service and outlines the process of application, selection and preparation for joining WO, as well as principles for relating to sending churches.

In general, applicants should allow six to twelve months to complete the applications process.

WO's robust application process has been designed to give our field workers the best opportunity to thrive on the field as they work out God's calling for their lives.

## 15. JOINING WORLD OUTREACH INTERNATIONAL

### Introduction

WO provides pre-field support for various pathways into long-term and short-term missions service. We also welcome those who are already serving on the field. The process begins with an initial enquiry form via the World Outreach website ([www.world-outreach.com](http://www.world-outreach.com)). One of our team will then contact you to discuss with you how to move forward in your journey into missions and to verify whether WO is a good match for you. This will include guidance in how to prepare for long-term service and various types of short-term field experience, such as internships and other programs. The pathway adopted is flexible, depending on your experience, needs and other factors, and will be discussed with you. We are here to help you in the process.

### A. Application

When the formal application process has begun, you will receive all necessary documentation and forms from our very experienced Applications Team, who will walk with you throughout the applications process.

Basic qualifications sought in those desiring to serve with WO are:

- A personal experience of salvation through faith in Christ and a wholehearted dedication to his service;
- Christian character (Christlikeness);
- A definite call to Christian work;

- Appropriate qualifications and experience;<sup>109</sup>
- Humility and Christian love, celebrating the diversity within the Body of Christ and the cultures of the world;
- The ability to work in harmony with a team and to yield graciously to the judgement of others when necessary;
- Good physical and emotional wellbeing;
- Perseverance and patience;
- Agreement with WOI's doctrinal statement of faith, Code of Conduct, and Common Ground;
- A focus on unreached people groups;
- A willingness to raise a prayer and financial support network.<sup>110</sup>

## **B. Selection Processes and Acceptance for Service with World Outreach**

Applicants will be required to complete a full application screening process to verify that they are called by God and suitable for the mission field. WO will provide experienced people to assist the applicant through the process.

In addition, various supporting documents may be required, e.g. references, police clearance, medical examination, and psychometric testing, depending on the category of service. The endorsement of sending church leaders will also be sought.

In general, WO requires that people wishing to make a long-term commitment to a particular place make a field visit prior to final acceptance. Such a visit will assist in understanding the environment and defining their expected role in the intended place of service. If there is an existing team, this will also enable them to meet the team leader and missionaries in that location.

In general, the application includes a ministry plan identifying the applicant's vision, strategies and goals for their first term on the field. On request, WO will provide experienced people to assist you in developing your ministry plan.

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<sup>109</sup> Refer to Section 16: 'Standard Preparation Requirements for WOI Applicants'

<sup>110</sup> Everyone serving in WOI is expected to raise their own financial support

Once all the application forms have been completed, the documentation will be submitted to the Applications Committee for review, followed by a formal interview. A final decision will then be made by the Applications Committee.

## **C. Special Considerations**

### **1. Families**

Normally, the suitability of both husband and wife is considered before married couples are accepted for service with WO. Husband and wife are then equally linked to WO unless one partner is working or ministering in a different organisation.

WO bears in mind the needs of field workers' children in considering where the family will serve and the role they will fulfil. It is not considered wise to send teenage children into new cross-cultural situations and, therefore, will only be allowed after special consideration and exemption by WO leadership.

### **2. Probation Period**

All new long-term field workers will be put on a two-year probation. This is to allow both WO and the new field workers to confirm that they are mutually a good 'fit'.

## **D. WOI's position on child protection, divorce/remarriage and criminal convictions in regard to applicants**

WOI believes that all matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of Holy Scripture, which is our guide. The following is WOI's position on three sensitive issues that help determine whether a person is compatible for missionary service with WOI.

### **1. WOI position on child protection**

WOI takes a proactive stance toward the protection of children related to any WOI ministry; that is the children to whom we minister, and the children and families *with* whom we minister.

WOI takes its responsibility to protect and nurture children seriously, creating a safe and positive environment in which to grow. We believe it is never acceptable for any child to experience abuse of any kind. Protection of children is the responsibility of every adult within our organisation.

WOI's Child Safety Policies and Procedures are consistent with the Best Practice Standards adopted by the Child Safety & Protection Network.

WOI has a Zero Tolerance policy for any sexual abuse of a child, therefore:

- i. WOI will not knowingly allow any person to work within a WO ministry or accept into membership any applicant who has at any time during their adult life confessed to, been disciplined for or convicted, pled guilty or no contest to, or found civilly liable for child sexual abuse.
  
- ii. No one who confesses to or is proven to have sexually abused a child will be able to remain in or be returned to field service whether the offence was committed during his/her time in WOI or previous to that. Because of our desire to provide children with a safe environment, the high rate of recidivism of those who struggle with sexual abuse of children, and our corporate inability to provide a reasonable level of accountability and stability in life for those who struggle with this issue, WOI does not believe it appropriate to allow offenders to continue as part of the mission.

It is a requirement of anyone joining WOI to complete the Child Protection course and provide a Police Check from their home country or country of residence.

Refer to WOI *Child Safety Policy* for additional information.

## **2. WOI's position on divorce and remarriage<sup>111</sup>**

WOI recognises that the consequences of divorce and remarriage are very complex and can be painful for all involved. Therefore, any application by a divorced and/or remarried person for mission service will be sensitively approached with integrity and grace, whilst maintaining biblical standards.

Jesus made it clear that, in the beginning, God made Adam and Eve to be 'one flesh' in a lifelong union<sup>112</sup>. However, because of the hardness of people's hearts<sup>113</sup>, in certain instances, divorce is permitted on biblical grounds.<sup>114</sup> In these instances, the victim of the broken marriage vows is free to end the marriage, although this is never mandatory.

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<sup>111</sup> Some of the content in this sub-point is adapted from the *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage Policy* of the Australian Christian Churches, May 2017.

<sup>112</sup> Matthew 19:5-6

<sup>113</sup> Matthew 19:8

<sup>114</sup> Exodus 21:10-11; Deuteronomy 24:1-4; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16

There are two instances where divorce *may* be permitted on biblical grounds:

- i. Divorce on the grounds of sexual immorality. Jesus, in his answer to the Pharisees' question,<sup>115</sup> permitted divorce because of the 'sexual immorality' clause as found in Deuteronomy 24:1.
  
- ii. Divorce on the basis of abandonment. Divorce is permitted when a marriage partner, who is not a believer, abandons the marriage.<sup>116</sup>

In regard to the remarriage of divorced persons, all considerations must be examined in the light of the biblical teaching on what constitutes a biblical or unbiblical divorce. Where a divorce has occurred that falls within the biblical guidelines referred to above, the person who has not caused the divorce is free to remarry with a clear conscience before God<sup>117</sup>. However, we recognise that in many cases, both parties contribute in some way to the breakdown of a marriage, and the marriage in question may have taken place before a person became a believer. Therefore, the WOI leadership will sensitively assess the circumstances of the divorce on a case-by-case basis.

### **3. WOI's position on criminal convictions**

Some applicants for missions service may have a criminal record. WOI believes in God's grace and power to forgive, redeem and transform people.<sup>118</sup> While a criminal record is not necessarily an impediment to missionary service, some *serious crimes*<sup>119</sup> may have a bearing on one's application. The reason being that while sins against God's law are expunged, crimes against a country's laws carry consequences.

All new applicants are required to submit a Police Check from their home and/or residential country (where appropriate as determined by the Applications Committee) and *fully* disclose all criminal convictions and history on their application form. This will then be assessed by the Applications Committee on a case-by-case basis.

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<sup>115</sup> Matthew 5:32; 19:9

<sup>116</sup> 1 Corinthians 7:12-16

<sup>117</sup> Exodus 21:10-11, 1 Corinthians 7:15,16

<sup>118</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, note v. 11; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Timothy 1:15-16

<sup>119</sup> Such crimes include but are not limited to murder, rape, indecent assault, physical assault, grievous bodily harm, fraud, armed robbery, weapons-related crimes, hate crimes, terrorism, arson and/or kidnapping. Serious criminal activity is any offense that incurred serious punishment (e.g. a jail term).

## **16. STANDARD PREPARATION REQUIREMENTS FOR LONG-TERM CROSS-CULTURAL SERVICE**

### **Introduction:**

Adequate preparation is needed for missionary work. Certain training requirements are agreed to be essential. The 'call' does not constitute the capability for effective cross-cultural missionary service, so careful preparation is required for long term success. Life in a cross-cultural environment always exposes weaknesses and every effort must be made to anticipate and prepare for the struggles.

A person may be very experienced and qualified in ministry in their home country, but the speed at which a person becomes effective in their cross-cultural field is dependent on the amount of preparation and training that they receive. A missionary going to the field with no cross-cultural training will take seven years to reach the same effectiveness level that he/she was achieving in his/her home culture. Appropriate cross-cultural training has been shown to significantly reduce the time it takes to get to full effectiveness.

**The following is a list of the areas for preparation to serve on the field:**

### **A. Character**

References and evidence of sound character will be carefully considered.

### **B. Emotional / Mental Stability**

In general, a professional psychological assessment is undertaken. Where weaknesses are indicated, a suitable plan may be developed to address them (e.g. management courses, marriage enrichment, specific coaching).

### **C. Biblical Training**

All Mission Partners must have evidence of completing appropriate formal biblical studies / course(s) for the ministry to be undertaken. The suitability of course(s) undertaken will be assessed on a case by case basis.

A candidate without evidence of completing appropriate biblical studies/course may still be provisionally accepted if the agreed ministry plan includes a path towards obtaining qualifications suitable to their ministry.

#### **D. Ministry Training / Experience**

All applicants must have an appropriate level of ministry / practical expertise in preparation for their intended focus of service with WO.

#### **E. Cross-cultural Training**

Every effort must be made to get meaningful cross-cultural ministry experience prior to departure for the field either through migrant ministry in their home country or through mission trips.

In addition, training would include the mandatory attendance at the *Nations* course. All personnel are expected to be committed to ongoing study on the issues of cross-cultural communication as it is vital to successful cross-cultural mission work.

#### **F. Language Learning**

WO places the utmost importance on language learning, as proficiency in the language empowers the field worker to understand the culture of, and effectively minister to, a people group.

Long-term cross-cultural workers must be committed to dedicate significant time to language learning once on the field with a goal of reaching ministry-level fluency. In general, this requires full-time language learning for at least nine to twelve months or more, depending on various factors.

WO leadership will determine, after consultation with the field worker, what language training is required for their situation. It may be in a different location to their destination field. If feasible, and when considered an advantage, every effort must be made to begin formal language study prior to departure for the field.

Children of field workers are also encouraged to learn the language, as this will help them adapt quicker by giving them the ability to communicate and make themselves understood as well as enabling them to make friends.

## **G. Finance and Prayer Support**

WO does not pay salaries to missionaries. Field personnel are required to raise their personal and ministry costs. Ideally, their personal support should be fully raised before engaging in ministry with World Outreach.

The applicant will need to establish a budget that is appropriate to their situation in consultation with their designated field leader. This must include adequate medical insurance to cover medical emergencies for their whole family, except by mutual agreement with WO.

At the same time as raising financial support for the field, prayer support is also raised. This is an integral part of a missionary's life and is just as important as raising financial support.

## **H. Mission Contribution**

In general, WO field personnel are required to make a 10% mission contribution to World Outreach on all support and donations whether personal and/or for ministry.<sup>120</sup> This contributes toward the costs associated with missionary care and on-field support visits, field retreats, publicity and administration expenses, etc.

## **I. Contingency Plans**

Due to the security situation of many places in which WO personnel minister, WO has a contingency policy for responding to various situations.

It is important for personnel to consider and formulate a personal plan to respond to likely contingencies within this larger framework. These plans should be written in consultation with a field or ministry leader according to their review timetable or security context. Instructions on how to do this, along with templates, are available in the Operations Manual.

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<sup>120</sup> This excludes income received from interest and personal investments. This only applies to support and donations given by others toward the field worker's support and ministry costs.

Applicants should note that World Outreach has a policy of not paying ransoms, nor conducting interventions like rescues, legal representation and/or advocacy, which are primarily the responsibility of their passport-country embassy or High Commission.

The Application documents need to be read carefully as they cover some of the above and other matters in greater detail. It is important for applicants to fully understand how WO operates and what is required before joining.

## **17. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORLD OUTREACH AND 'SENDING' CHURCHES**

### **Introduction**

WO believes that a worker serving in a cross-cultural situation is an extension of the ministry of a 'sending' church. WO seeks to do all it can to encourage and affirm the relationship between the field worker and their 'home base'.

The partnership between field worker, WO and the 'sending' church has a vital and significant role to play in the release, facilitation, and ongoing support and success of the field worker.

### **A. Before Departure**

WO requires the input and endorsement from the leadership of the 'sending' church in the application and preparation process. WO relies on the leaders of the 'sending' church to give confirmation to the call and plans of the prospective missionary.

WO also believes it is the responsibility of the 'sending' church to publicly commission the field worker as they set out on their call. This public affirmation and endorsement before the 'sending' church congregation is a significant moment when the mission partner commits him/herself to the task and the home church affirms that it stands fully behind the plans and ministry of their worker.

### **B. Support**

WO encourages the 'sending' church to commit themselves to the financial support of their worker. This should include a contribution towards the establishment costs on the mission field and the raising of a consistent amount of financial support on a monthly basis. This enables the worker to plan his/her finances in an ordered fashion. Special offerings may also be contributed towards projects.

The 'sending' church is encouraged to pray consistently and continually for their worker. WO places a high priority on concerted prayer.

### **C. Ongoing contact**

WO encourages the 'sending' church to maintain personal contact and interest in their worker. This can be sustained by regular correspondence, gifts at birthday and Christmas time, and visits by leaders from the home church.

WO endeavours to maintain open communication with the 'sending' church in celebrating the success of our field workers, walking through challenges, praying and supporting our field workers.

### **D. Consultation**

Where applicable, the 'sending' church leadership will also be consulted for major ministry changes, member health issues or any issues arising which may require disciplinary action.