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Introduction

It seems that you can never ask enough questions, read the right books or prepare yourself effectively for packing up and moving to another nation to serve the Lord. However, some information is better than none. The following "guidelines" have been prepared by past & present missionaries. We hope they will prove very helpful as you think and prepare ahead what the Lord is leading you to.

Exploratory Trip

World Outreach International (WOI) strongly advises that a 3 - 4 week exploratory trip be undertaken 6 - 12 months prior to moving long term to the "new" country.

This has proved to be invaluable in allowing missionaries to:

- become more familiar with the culture
- check out the cost of living
- get a sense of the conditions you will be going into, etc.

Meeting some of the missionaries already working in that area can also prove invaluable in answering some of the many questions that you will have as you prepare to move from your home country.

Sending Cell

WOI is recommending all new missionaries to adopt the sending cell support model in agreement with their home church leadership. [Read Doc ---"The Sending Cell – Practical Guidelines](#). If needed the nearest WOI Country Office / Director will be able to give further information regarding this.

Note: A sending team is a support group of volunteers focused on supporting one missionary family in the field (some or all of them might also be supporting them financially, but not necessarily). The sending cell meets once a month to discuss issues and make plans. The missionary does not "report" to the team - (they serve the missionary in a support role).

Here are the recommended offices of a sending team:

- Convener - the chairman.
- Prayer coordinator - makes sure people know what to pray for the missionaries, and that people don't forget to pray.
- Moral support – encourages others to write letters, send packages, phone the missionary etc.; perhaps visits other cell groups to raise interest. It's very encouraging to receive a parcel of "goodies" which aren't available on the field.
- Financial - has signing rights for check book, makes sure tax returns are sent in. etc. Could also be responsible for raising additional support.
- Logistics - all kinds of practical help, getting hold of home schooling books, etc.
- Re-entry - organise place to stay when they visit home, doctor/dentist/car fix appointments, etc.
- Communications - sends out newsletters, etc.

Breaking the News to Your Children

Small Children:

It is wise not to discuss your plans with your small children until you are sure of your acceptance by the Mission. Even when your acceptance is confirmed, many things need to fall into place before the final date of departure. This can seem a very long time in the life of a small child and very unsettling.

School Age:

It is important that your school-age children know they are part of your plans before it becomes general knowledge. Try to keep them in school as long as possible to avoid too much disruption of their routine.

Teenagers:

It is strongly recommended that teenagers are not uprooted into another culture. Most mission agencies will advocate waiting until they have finished school before you commence a cross-cultural career overseas.

But if you are planning on taking teenagers to another culture it is important to discuss with your WOI contact/ mentor the specific needs of teenagers in making a smooth transition and adapting to life in a new culture.

Passports and Visas

If you / your family members don't have a current passport you need to start this process as soon as possible.

Remember your children may be 3 or 4 years older before you return to your home country. Passports can be very costly to apply for once you are overseas.

Be aware that you may jeopardise your chances of receiving a long-term visa if you enter first on a tourist and then try to convert over.

Inquire at the nearest embassy/consulate to learn their visa requirements. If possible, get in touch with missionaries who are already there and ask their advice on this matter

Note: If husband and wife both plan to be active in ministry, inquire whether the wife needs a work permit also.

In areas that are closed to Christian activity, you will need some creativity in choosing the best type of visa. Other missionaries or Mission Agencies can help with advice on this. Talk with the WOI Regional Director, make it a matter of prayer and get as much advice as you can before proceeding. A wrong move here may jeopardise your ability to minister in that country.

Remember to check whether or not you will need visas for the different countries you may travel through on your way to your final destination.

Purchasing Your Tickets

With cheaper excursion fares it can be much cheaper to buy return tickets than one-way fares; however, most return tickets must be used within 3 -1 2 months. If you are staying longer than the excursion time limit, then you may need to let your 'return' ticket lapse. Check fares out and shop around for the best deals or options. Around-the-world tickets are also worth looking into too.

Accommodation

If you need to break your trip and need accommodation along the way ask your local WOI National Office Director or other missionaries to recommend places to stay that are reasonably priced. Christian guesthouses are often the best solution. Some airlines can offer very reasonable stopover packages.

Medical Considerations

Ask the Embassy / Consulate of your destination whether you need an official health card (for yellow fever etc) and certain immunisations or other health checks (such as chest x-rays). If possible see a specialist doctor in overseas inoculations rather than your own G.P.

Make sure you take your immunizations well in advance of your departure so that you are feeling your best when you travel. In case your immunisation shots cause side effects, e.g. fever, we advise you not to take them the same day as your children so you will be well enough to attend to them if they also are unwell.

Medication: if you are on any long-term medication check what is available on the field before you leave home. If not available or unsure take an ample amount with you. Medication sent by mail may not be cleared through customs.

Malaria: some types of anti-malaria medication need to be taken in advance of you arriving in an infected area. Contact other missionaries who live in these areas to advise you of products they would recommend and what is available where you will be living. Sometimes these medicines cost less in other countries.

Extra Training and Skills needed

Your needs will differ according to where you are going and what you will be involved in.

In addition to the minimum training required in cross-cultural communication etc. various missionaries have recommended the following:

- Basic computer skills - the ability to send emails and produce financial records is becoming a necessity today.
- Mechanical skills - basic car repairs etc
- Photography course
- First Aid
- English teaching - formal or informal to be used to share the gospel & form relationships " Courses in Holistic Ministry - how to deal with social needs "
- Health and nutrition studies are a great advantage when ministering to women and children
- Training in deliverance, emotional healing and how to deal with demonic fetishes etc.
- Music training - basic guitar lessons are a big advantage

Leadership courses - take advantage of any that may be on offer during your preparation time

What to Take?

Discuss with your Field Leader what you will need to take from your home country and what is available for you in your country of service.

Some Suggestions:

Personal Items: photos of family, friends are very important to you in a new country

Music: take familiar, favourite music as often there is only music in a foreign language

Sermons: download sermons so that you can be spiritually built up in your own language

Toys: a few items that are special to your children are vital

Activities: needed for travelling and for the first few months while you are settling in and finding what you can buy in your area. TV and video are a great way to allow children to sit still and rest in the heat of the day in their new country

Family Games

Clothing - check out the climate and seasons etc. - also, what is acceptable and appropriate to wear as a Christian in that culture

Resident missionaries currently living in your prospective country are the best ones to recommend what you will need to take with you. Calculate if it is better to buy household furniture, appliances, children's toys, musical instruments, vehicles etc in your prospective host country or whether it is better to send by ship/air from your home country.

Note: If you choose to send household goods from home you will need to time your arrival as near as possible to the time your goods arrive. Often such goods can't be cleared unless you are there in person and have the appropriate visa for bringing such goods into a country. Ask resident missionaries the best way to clear your goods from customs etc.

Check out what voltage you will need for electrical appliances and what power points/adapters you will need. Many countries are different. Many countries have huge power surges. You may need to take a small transformer.

Include in your Budget – see Financial Budget Form

- Cost of relocating
- Be careful to separate personal from ministry budget. Personal budget includes such things as rent, food, utilities, schooling expenses for children (if applicable), language learning (and any other training courses that may be required), comprehensive insurance, holidays, furlough etc. The WO Field Leader or the missionary team leader for the area you intend going to, can help you
- Financial obligations in home country - if any, eg mortgage superannuation, etc

Make a Will

It's very important that before leaving your home country you have prepared and legally filed an up-to-date will. If you have children make sure your preferred guardians are identified (with their approval) in case something were to happen to both parents.

Power of Attorney: It is a good idea to empower someone you trust with property power of attorney to be able to deal with legal issues while you are away.

Children's Education

If you have children you will need to consider what method of education to use. If they are infants now think ahead to when they will be school age. You may have to put some plans into motion now.

Note: Consideration must be given to the fact that eventually your children may have to return to your home country for further education. With this in mind it is advisable to choose a method of education as near as possible to your/their home culture. More often than not children need to return for secondary school and/or university. If your child is nearing that age group, careful consideration must be given to whether the method of education you choose now will hinder her/him from being accepted into the school/universities in their home country in the future.

Types of schooling

International Schools

- Are they available where you are in your host country or nearby country?
- When does the school year start and finish (northern hemisphere schools usually begin in August or September)
- Are there boarding facilities
- Availability of Christian schools (boarding or day schools)
- Costs involved
- What curricula are used (American or British systems are very different)

Home School

There are many different varieties of home schooling to consider:

- What are your child's needs?
- Who will do the teaching/supervising? You may want to consider finding someone who would see this as their missionary call. Many missionaries have found this to be a big help and encouragement in their ministry. The children often prefer this too.

NB: If home schooling is new for your family it is advisable to begin at least six months before you leave so that you have adjusted to the new education system before facing the adjustments in your new country.

Some missionaries have commented that using distance learning or correspondence schooling (often available free for New Zealanders & Australians) helped in the transition of their move so the children were not too overwhelmed with culture shock.

However, most found the supervision of this and other methods of home schooling became too demanding on their time, especially when language learning. Also, some children need more motivation, social interaction and sports activities.

If you choose to use distance learning be sure to apply to the relevant school well in advance of your departure as in many cases the lessons need to be shipped, taking weeks or even months to arrive.

Another consideration is whether parcels need to be cleared from customs at a port near where you will be living. In some countries goods held at customs for even a few days can prove to be very costly to release.

Tips from recent missionaries

1. Be SURE of your Calling

Be sure of your calling and the timing of that calling and seek confirmation in various ways. The moment hard times come along your human resolve will be tested. Have a vision from God! Pray and ask the Lord's help for you to develop a short paragraph that sums up the vision He has for you.

Memorise this paragraph well. It will be useful when facing difficult times or when distractions come along (e.g. am I busy fulfilling God's vision for me). Hab 2:2. You may also use it when sharing with supporters.

2. Don't go to the mission field if.....

- You are not sure God has called you
- You are looking for something more exciting than what you are doing now
- You have marital problems, thinking God will heal your marriage because you are being obedient to Him. The opposite happens - hard times tend to magnify problems, not reduce them. The same goes for your relationship with your children. The positive side of this is that hard times will strengthen family ties. Sort out your problems before you go. It is not a good time to go on the field with children entering puberty or in their teenage years – use this time to prepare for when you can leave.

3. Don't sell your house

Unless you have to! Try and cover the mortgage and maintenance of the house from the rental return you will receive.

Many missionaries often regret selling their homes when financially it was not necessary to do so. Overseeing of property 'back home' can often willingly be taken on as 'ministry' by family, friends or a member of your sending cell.

4. Have solid prayer support/cover

- Good relationship with intercessors and sending church is important.
- New missionaries (as well as us old ones) need to understand the importance of staying in constant contact with supporters making them feel part of their ministry.

5. Local Church Experience

There is nothing like experience (including difficulties) in the local church life before going to the 'field.' Use your gifting in the local church and community (including cross-cultural work). WOI will be looking for such evidence in your application. It is very necessary to have a supportive sending church that you have been involved in for some time.

6. Protect personal devotion times

One's relationship with the Lord is more important than ministry/work - what we model in our lives is more important than what we say.

7. When things get tough

When things get stressful on the field, find out what the Lord is bringing to the surface for you to deal with.

8. Leaving issues

Saying goodbye takes time. Many people will want to visit you or have your visit them in your last 2 weeks. Try and plan ahead so that this is spaced out – begin early.

If you have children special consideration needs to be given to them to say goodbye properly to their friends. A special event for your children would be helpful. Children need to have closure on the relationships also.

Your final packing etc. will take longer than expected. Begin early so that you can enjoy the time with your family and friends in your last few days in the country.

9. Books and Internet Information

Read as many books as possible about preparing for the mission field Below is a list of highly recommended books. The internet has loads of information also Take time to study as much as possible about the country you are going to.

Recommended Reading List

Title	Author	ISBN	Publisher
Building Credible Multi Cultural Teams	Leanne Roembke		
Foreign to Familiar	Sarah A Lanier	ISBN 1-581580-022-3	2000
The Missionary Family	Betty Jo Kenney		William Carey Library, Pasadena
What Makes Aussie Kids Tick (Written to Australians for Australians but also very helpful for New Zealanders living overseas)	Jill & Roger Dyer		MK Merimma 1989
Re-Entry	Peter Jordan		YWAM Publishing, Seattle
Don't Go Overseas Until You've Read This Book	Neil Gallagher		Bethany Fellowship, Inc, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Where There Is No Doctor	David Werner	ISBN 0-333-51652-4	1993 Macmillan Education Ltd
Disabled Village Children	David Werner		
Malaria: a layman's guide	Martine Maurel	ISBN 1 86812 534 3	1994 Southern Book Publishers, SA
Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts	Gailyn Van Rheenen	ISBN 0-8010-9312-0	1991 Baker Book House Company
Hell's Best Kept Secret	Ray Comfort	ISBN 0-88368-206-0	1989 Whitaker House
Raising Resilient MK's	Joyce M Bowers		
Culture Missionary	Dr Jo Anne (Ader) Dennett		

Recommended Books on Islam

The Torn Veil	Gulshan Esther	ISBN 0 551 01153 X	1984 Marshall Pickering
The Unseen Face of Islam	Bill Musk	ISBN 1 85424 018 8	1997 Monarch Publications
Building Bridges	Fouad Elias Accad	ISBN 08910-97953	1997 NavPress
Reasoning From the Scriptures with Muslims	Ron Rhodes	ISBN 0-7369-1010-7	2002 Harvest House Publishers

Mosques and Miracles – Revealing Islam and God's Grace	Stuart Robinson		City Harvest Publication
As well as any books by Rick love, Gerhard Nehls and John Gilchrist			

Field work commences

1. When you arrive on field you may be working under the supervision of another World Outreach International Missionary – your Field Leader.

If this is the case:

Discuss with your Field Leader:

- The expectations for your first few weeks
- Clarify job descriptions for both husband and wife
- Needs of your family

2. You may be working in a new field of work. If this is the case contact your Field Leader and discuss your ministry plan for the first 6 months

3. Language Learning:

All new missionaries need to begin language learning as soon as possible. Being able to communicate to those around you builds respect, confidence and a sense of ownership.

If you have not attended a language course begin immediately with language learning.

4. Communication with supporters and friends:

Keep in regular communication with your sending church and supporters through newsletters. Once every 6-8 weeks is advisable.