

## Are you ready for overseas missionary service?

The mission field is a difficult place even for those who are prepared for ministry. One must be very healthy mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically, and even then the stresses and strains of life overseas are demanding. It is not the place for someone to go that wants to get his or her life in order. Only those with strong qualifications and the highest potential for missionary service are able to move forward.

Let me give you some of the things that we look for in an applicant. Please understand that this is a general list that we give to everyone and some of these things may not be concerns for you personally. Use this list as a self-evaluation and honestly examine each area that may apply to you. It would be wise to seek the counsel of those closest to you and ask four simple questions and then look at the list of qualifications:

- ✚ "Am I ready today for an overseas mission assignment for two or three years?"
- ✚ "Do I demonstrate evidence of a call to international missions?"
- ✚ "Am I prepared for the eventual feelings of loneliness and isolation?"
- ✚ "What do I need to do to prepare myself for the mission field?"

Job choices these days are maybe somewhat limited. Only those with strong qualifications and the highest potential for missionary service are able to move forward. To simply "survive" on the mission field is not enough; we desire to see you "thrive". God desires for you to prepare for service and the people that you minister to overseas desire the best preparation that you can do, not to mention "the pursuit of holiness". How does one know if their full application has potential for IMB service?

### Here is a look at some stronger qualifications:

1. A clear salvation and baptism testimony; a vibrant, mature and growing spiritual life, able to feed your spirit on your own; perhaps worship where there may be no church.
2. A solid history of church membership and leadership through your local SBC church and/or campus ministry.
3. A stable employment or educational history over the past several years.
4. A clear expression of a calling to international cross-cultural missions.
5. Some cross-cultural missions experience overseas and/or regular working with the international community here in the States.
6. A good and stable emotional, psychological and medical history.
7. A proven ability to effectively communicate and teach your Christian beliefs.
8. A proven ability to effectively share your faith and the plan of salvation with lost people; exercising your evangelistic skills; formal evangelism training like EE, CWT or FAITH is helpful.
9. A lifestyle history that exhibits moral purity; and good relational/social health; with strong and supportive references.

10. Transferable skills that can be utilized in one of our strategic assignments; attempting to impact strategic areas of lostness.
11. A "whatever it takes" attitude to reach the lost of the world for Christ; flexibility in your ministry and expectations of life in another culture.
12. A cooperative, humble and teachable spirit; ability to be a learner.

## Here is a good scenario in which to place yourself to see if you are ready for the task of international missions:

You are assigned to a city of 250,000 people and the only Christian/Missionary there. The closest English-speaking believer other than your teammate or your spouse is five hours away. Your job is to engage strangers and make the first converts in a language that you have never spoken before your arrival in that country. You must disciple them in hopes of forming a new church. You would teach them the basics of the Bible, the Christian faith, the doctrine of the church and worship within the cultural context of that people group that has been a totally unreached people group.

Does this challenge reflect the gifts, talents and passion in your heart? What have you done to prepare yourself?

While not all missionaries have such a demanding and isolated task, many missionaries are in situations just like this and often in environments that are not friendly towards missionaries and Christians. We want to encourage those that feel called to international missions to explore the possibilities and seek the affirmations. If God is calling, the next step is to prepare as much as possible for cross-cultural international missions.

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