

So you want to be a Missionary?

Getting There

by Julie Hughes 2013

Before I went to Thailand as a missionary I asked a former missionary,

“How do you get there?”

“You get on a plane.” She replied.

While this is certainly true, getting there is a lot more complicated than simply getting on a plane.

The following are 10 steps to “getting there.”

1. Commit your life to God. Total surrender to the “Call” is necessary and it is also helpful to remember different times in your journey where He has spoken to you about reaching the world with the Gospel message. For me, it was my conversion experience. I had a undeniably strong conviction that God was calling me to preach the message of Salvation to people in a country not my own. Write these events in a journal so you will always have them to remind you when you need them. Ask the Lord for confirmation. He delights to give us direction.
2. Tell your leaders. Your pastors in your home church need to know of your desire to serve the Lord. They are called by God to equip you to serve using your unique gifts. You can begin serving in your local church and you can learn how to share the gospel first with those of your own culture. I have always appreciated the years that we served in our home country. Those years taught me how to understand people and I gained experience that was very valuable to me later. Your home church will be very important for you later as you seek to go on the field. It will be your hope that they will be your sending church. Even though it is rare for one church to able to fully support their missionaries, it will be a great strength to you to have people whom you know are supporting and praying for you.
3. Do your homework. You can start now, learning about different needs, cultures, languages and can even go to a Bible or missions training school. You can even take classes online. It is of utmost importance to have a knowledge and understanding of God’s Word.
4. Pray. Cultivate your relationship with God. In the dark and lonely places, He will be your best friend.

You can also pray for the people groups and nations that you are interested in. There may be some specific areas you feel God is highlighting to you. Write them down and be faithful to pray. When we pray, we are sowing seeds that will later be a harvest for us.

5. Give. When Bill and I went to Bible School, we attended a church that had a tremendous missions program. They encouraged people to commit to “faith promise giving”. We would write down our intentions and we began praying for God to help us meet our commitments. Even when we were first starting out in our married life together, we determined to keep up our missions giving. God always supplied and we always had enough. Giving really helps us keep our priorities focused on the Kingdom of God. Jesus said it best, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

6. Go on a short trip. Churches, Bible schools and mission organizations host short term trips to locations all around the globe. This is a great opportunity to see first hand what God is doing and it also shows us if we are a good match for full time service. Some people enjoy taking short term trips, but very often a short term trip helps one push forward into a full time commitment. I remember our first tour to Asia. We went to Hong Kong, Thailand and Taiwan. It was on the way home from that trip that God spoke clearly to my heart that we were to return to Thailand. “These were my people.”

7. Practice evangelizing and discipleship. You must know how to lead people to Christ and disciple them. Even if you have a “tent-making” plan, your main goal will still be to “preach the gospel and tell them all that Jesus has commanded us to do.” When you lead someone to Christ and bring them through the basics, pray with them, help them be baptized etc... there is something grand that happens. It expands your heart. You love people more and you are more confident in sharing Christ with the next person. Look for people who are hungry for God and start praying for people, you will be amazed what God will do through you.

8. Find a missionary organization. Missionary organizations can help you with finding an appropriate opportunity, raising funds, training, newsletter production, and finances. I can not say enough about how important this has been for us. We could not be on the field and do what we do without this support.

9. Find a team to work with especially in the first years on the field. You will be learning the language and the culture for several years and it is very valuable to have a seasoned ministry to work with. We were so blessed to serve with an evangelist who was starting a new church. We came to love this missionary and his family just like our own family. I don't think we would have stayed on the field very long if it hadn't been for this team we served with for seven years. When we were ready to venture out into new territory, we were confident in the language and prepared through the experiences we had while in that church.

10. And last but not least, get on that plane. God will give you the grace to enter the mission field and will give you the grace to sustain you once you are there.

If we can be of encouragement to you along the way, we are very happy to do so.

For His Glory, till Jesus gets his full reward.

Julie Hughes
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