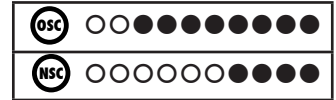




In the real world

Who? → When? ↓	Home Church	Missionary	Mission Agencies	External Partners
Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Disciple and mentor churchmembers in vision for missions ➤ Let being called be a natural thing ➤ Have a culture of confirming people in their gifts and ministry ➤ Give trust and varied opportunities for involvement in ministry to orientate ➤ Let agency have role in education program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ See confirmation of call by church as fundamental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ See endorsement of church and pastor as crucial ➤ Give input for programs in church ➤ Short term outreach as way to test calling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support in developing discipleship programs ➤ Support in providing tools and standards for testing of calling
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Be available as reference for candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Be open to take time to let others be convinced of call 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Get church involved in test of calling 	
Preparation				
On field				
(Crisis)				
Furlough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Involve missionaries in testing of calling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Be open to serve in testing of calling as expert 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Involve missionaries in testing of calling 	
Re-entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Involve missionaries in testing of calling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Be open to serve in testing of calling as expert 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Involve missionaries in testing of calling 	

Preparation Time



The facts

Our research attempted to determine the effectiveness of pre-field training for mission, especially its contribution to the retention of missionaries. Does pre-field training contribute significantly to the missionaries' ability to persevere and ultimately do well (survive and thrive) as the years go by? Obviously there are more detailed questions buried in this overall enquiry: we asked for the minimum requirement and agencies may regularly exceed this figure in the training undertaken. Also agencies are increasingly moving away from a one size fits all and a minimum requirement is therefore difficult for them to define.

Our results were frankly disappointing. As far as the OSC were concerned, explicit mission training seems to have a low status (see chapter 6 for a discussion on the general educational level of mission partners). Where it took place, it was often the wrong sort: too much emphasis on bible school education and not enough on focused mission training. Practical training was neglected. However, it was encouraging that the NSC were beginning to take the idea of internships or apprenticeships seriously.



The data

Q. No.	Factor	OSC		NSC	
		Health Indicator	✓	Health Indicator	✓
32	Bible school or seminary training	○○○○●●●●●●●●	✓	○○○○○○○●●●●●	✓
33	Formal academic missiological training	○○●●●●●●●●	✓	○○○○●●●●●●	✓

34	Practical pre-field missionary training	○○○●●●●●●●●		○○○●●●●●●●●	
35	Structured cross-cultural missionary internship or apprenticeship	●●●●●●●●●●		○○○○○○○○●●	✓
36	Mission agency's own orientation	○○●●●●●●●●		○○○○○○○●●●	



The key findings

- ✓ This group of questions asked the agencies for their minimal requirements of training prior to service with the agency. Their actual training standards may be much higher.
- ✓ The total duration of pre-field training time is highly correlated with total retention in OSC and NSC
- ✓ High retaining agencies expect three times more missiological training (Q33) than low retaining agencies.
- ✓ High retaining agencies (for total attrition) expect twice as much theological training (Q32) as low retaining agencies, although there is no correlation to preventable attrition (RRP).
- ✓ Missiological training (Q33) appears to be more beneficial than theological training as also shown in ReMAP.
- ✓ Practical missionary training (Q34) and cross-cultural internships (Q35) are still too rarely required for there to be statistical evidence of their effectiveness.



What it means

The first issue concerns how much time was actually spent in preparation. Our data indicates that for both NSC and OSC, most of the formal preparation time (pre-field training) is spent in a Bible school or college. However, if we consider *the right sort of preparation*, this is probably a mistake. Bible school training can be good, but the proportion of time allocated to it seems seriously skewed. I shall deal with the reasons for this below. A related question is whether the time allocated to training should vary according to the needs of the missionary in question. For example, we cannot expect someone preparing for a relatively short term assignment to pursue lengthy training. (I am not talking about short-termers) Here, I refer to the increasing number of 'career' missionaries who are being asked to fulfil a specific role, such as training, and then to hand over to

somebody else. Because preparation time is often limited, we have all the more reason to focus on the essentials. This is backed up quite clearly with the result that Formal Missiology [Q33 *Formal academic missiological training*] proved to be much more effective preparation (correlated with retention) than Bible school training.

The second factor in training concerns the issue of what sort of work the missionary will do. This depends on the educational background the missionary already has when he or she enters the mission agency. Take for example doctors or other 'professional' people. They may already have had many years of education and experience. They clearly need preparation for mission, but not as much and perhaps of a different sort than someone who is at the beginning of their 'career'. The latter may be involved in assignments such as getting to know people, evangelising, church planting and generally putting down roots. More people from the NSC than the OSC fit into this latter category, and this may explain why NSC are investing more in Bible school or seminary training. Conversely more missionaries from the OSC are involved in 'social work' and these would mostly be the 'professional' people mentioned above.

Trainers must therefore think long and hard about how they can offer *appropriate* training. They need to ask the teleological question – what is the goal, the purpose of it all; they need, in other words, to start at the end. Having determined what situation they expect the trainee to be part of, and to which he or she needs to contribute, what sort of preparation is necessary in order to ensure effectiveness? This sounds simple. But in practice the training programme far too often presumes a set menu that when consumed results in only "adequate preparation".

For example, 'knowing what the Bible teaches' – a sort of all purpose Biblical introduction – may not be as helpful as it sounds. We complain often enough that 'young people today do not know their Bibles'. A far more serious concern is that even when they do 'know their Bibles' (have some formal Biblical training), they may have no idea how it might be applied in a given mission situation. I remember going to a Bible study in Kathmandu and meeting some twenty five missionaries. I came away with the impression that, as far as they were concerned, the Bible had very little to say about the actual work they were doing..In the Educational section, academic training, especially at PhD level, proved to have a very strong correlation with retention – does this highlight the helpfulness of undertaking reflection on their praxis?

One important conclusion is that formal *mission* training is a good investment for future missionaries. I should like to add a second point. It seems likely (though this is an argument from silence as far as the data is concerned) that more attention should be given to the practical element within that training. In some ways both of these conclusions relate to the same problem. The training of people for Christian ministry in the West (but we

have exported the model to the South) has been standardised as a particular tradition of ministerial formation which goes right back to the Middle Ages. It includes Bible, theology, ethics, church history, religions, and then some 'practical' studies such as homiletics. Even missionary training colleges often find that they have inherited this sort of curriculum. Whether it is a suitable preparation for the leader of a church in the US or Western Europe could be debated. But it is certainly not an adequate training for someone about to embark on cross cultural mission. For example, where are the courses on leadership, world trends, the social sciences, communication theory, development studies, and globalisation?

Clearly the training of missionaries must be a) more mission focused b) more cross cultural and c) more practical in the sense that it involves some sort of effective experiential learning. We can look at each of these in turn.

'Mission focused' means that mission is not something we should blunder into without reflection. To an alarming degree, one still meets missionaries deeply involved in 'the work' who have hardly thought at all about what they are doing. To put it another way, in a long missionary experience, I constantly encountered fellow missionaries who wished that they had more training, understanding, with hindsight, that it would have helped them be more missiological in their work and ministry. Indeed in question 55 [Q55 *Missionaries are provided with opportunities for continuous training and development of gifts and skills*] where mission partners are offered opportunities for ongoing learning, we see a strong correlation with retention. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 26.

Cross cultural preparation is simply not an optional extra. Of course we know that the gospel has to be contextualised and that missionaries have to learn to live cross culturally, with the huge demands that this makes in terms of communication (language learning, cultural awareness) and personal identity (what can I give up and still be me?). But it is worse than that! The main problem that people encounter on the mission field is their colleagues. Working in cross cultural teams is, according to mission agencies, the number one contemporary challenge¹. This will become a more frequent experience as mission is increasingly globalised. Are we ready for that? Has our preparation time given us the necessary skills?

Finally, our training must include more experiential learning. The little learning circle, beloved of Liberation theologians, experience – reflection – action, has now become an important part of learning theory everywhere, and rightly so. Even missionaries in training must have some experience on which to reflect, a point well made in the accompanying case study from Dan Sheffield. The absence of 'structured cross-cultural missionary internship or apprenticeship' as part of the OSC training provi-

1 Research conducted by the Marketing Team at Redcliffe College, Gloucester, UK conducted by telephone interview with Personnel Managers in the UK during 2005

sion must be rectified. 'Practical pre-field missionary training' needs a much higher profile.



Adequate preparation

Dan Sheffield², The Free Methodist Church, Canada

For several years now, I have served in a leadership position with The Free Methodist Church in Canada, as Director of Global and Intercultural Ministries. We are seeking to lay a foundation for Canadian mission initiatives, including entering new fields and sending our own missionaries.

One of the first policy documents that we developed concerned Adequate Preparation of long-term, cross-cultural ministry personnel. We have articulated a policy that focuses on laying proper foundations with the few, rather than seeking to recruit and process the many. The lessons that I have acquired over the years, as indicated below, are central to our policy and practice.

When I started out as a young adult in the early 1980s to seriously consider cross-cultural ministry, naturally I wanted to make it happen expeditiously. Therefore, I did a one-year missionary internship with The Shantymen, a Canadian home mission agency, where I lived and worked on the west coast of Vancouver Island among fishermen and loggers. This experience created several impressions: everyday people are looking for meaning and answers in their lives, understanding your ministry context makes all the difference, and being adequately prepared is at least half the task.

Following this experience, I did a year or so of training in graphic design before offering myself to WEC. For some reason, they allowed a twenty-year-old into their six-month Candidate Orientation Course. At the time, most mission agencies might have expedited an unproven, uneducated, single young adult into a short-term assignment, but not into their career program.

But WEC took me where I was and worked with me. During the extended orientation course, WEC leaders covered such topics as spiritual warfare, cross-cultural communications, unreached peoples research, evangelism, and church-planting, but they also drew us into the ethos and functional

² Dan Sheffield is the Director of Global and Intercultural Ministries for The Free Methodist Church in Canada. From 1983 to 1990, Dan was a missionary with WEC International, involved in mission education and recruiting, as well as theological education in Egypt and South Africa. Then he served for three years as an associate pastor for evangelism and discipleship at a church in Canada. From 1994 to 1999, he and his family with Free Methodist World Missions (FMWM, USA) planted a multicultural urban congregation in South Africa. Dan served as International Urban Ministry Facilitator with FMWM since 2001 and as mission director for the FMC in Canada since 2003. Dan views developing competent cross-cultural workers as one of his most significant priorities.

structures of the organization in a communal environment. At the end of six months, I was a “WEC-er.”

Then the WEC director, Ken Getty, sat me down and said, “Dan, if you really want to be most useful in ministry, we think you should go to Bible college, before heading out overseas.”

So I went off to Winnipeg Bible College (now Providence College) to sit at the feet of mission professor, Jon Bonk, for two years. A foundation was laid in Bible study skills and knowledge, theology, ministry theory and practice, church history, cultural anthropology, and missiology. My cross-cultural ministry experiences were also foundational. I spent nine summers working in Christian camping as chore-boy, counselor and program director, church youth leader. I did a short-term assignment in Mexico with Operation Mobilization. I got married. My wife is a nurse, former Navigator associate worker, and also a graduate of the WEC candidate program. And then we left for Egypt with a two-year-old child.

What were some of WEC’s Good Practices?

1. They interacted with individuals and their call in a relational paradigm rather than an organizational one. You felt like you were part of a family and you were valued for your contribution.
2. They wanted evidence of spirituality and character through assessment in a communal environment.
3. Language, culture, and cross-cultural communication skills were taught and expected of competent missionaries.
4. They required sound biblical and theological skills.

After eight years with WEC, which involved experience in Egypt and South Africa, my wife’s health situation led us to resign from WEC. I took on a pastoral assignment back in Canada with The Free Methodist Church. At one point, we wondered if we were another statistic on the attrition list.

Then four years later (in 1994), a call came from the Free Methodist Mission, based in Indianapolis. We were invited to consider a church-planting/community development assignment in South Africa.

Our stepping out of active cross-cultural ministry had been due to my wife’s health and my need to have hands-on pastoral ministry experience. Now, my wife was capable of another overseas assignment and I had gained four years of pastoral experience. So, we responded positively. Besides the normal application and screening process, we were given four days of orientation and sent to South Africa.

Our retention (that of my wife and myself) in cross-cultural ministry until today (2005) has had little to do with Free Methodist Mission person-

nel procedures.³ It has had a lot to do with the adequate preparation we received through the WEC process. We knew the “why, what and how” regarding the mission task from the early foundations that we had received. We understood the significance of culture and language immersion, as well as the signs of, and the steps through, culture shock.⁴ I must admit that I learnt the way through “ministry shock” from the pastoral assignment.

What have we learned about Adequate Preparation and retention over the years?

Start with the person and craft a developmental process, rather than offer a standard one-size-fits-all process.

1. Spirituality and character need to be identified and affirmed by leaders in a local church context.
2. Hands-on ministry experience in one’s own cultural context is required.
3. Harmony with the church or mission’s ethos, value base, and operational approaches is required.
4. Biblical and theological foundations are required.
5. Social sciences and intercultural communications foundations are required.
6. Cross-cultural and intercultural experience of at least one year is required prior to making a long-term commitment.
7. Potential church planters require pastoral experience in their own cultural context first.

We are now seeking to develop these good practices regarding Adequate Preparation for our Canadian Free Methodist mission personnel. Instead of feeling inadequate to the task, our missionaries will develop competence in cross-cultural ministry skills, which I believe is a significant factor in missionary retention.

³ In the 1990s, the Free Methodist Mission had a 50% attrition rate.

⁴ Dan Sheffield and Joyce Bellous, 2003, “Learning to Be a Missionary: The Dreyfus Model of Skill Acquisition applied to the development of cross-cultural ministry practitioners,” WEA Resources: www.wearesources.org/publications.

Discussion questions:

1. What are some best practices for Adequate Preparation mentioned in this case study?
2. How does your organization currently prepare new missionaries? Are new missionaries being trained and prepared by those who have a personal awareness and understanding of the pressures and challenges of cross-cultural ministry? If not, what can be done to increase the awareness in trainers of the practical skills required for effective cross-cultural ministry?
3. Due to the changing nature of mission work in many places, how does your organization evaluate the overall preparation of new missionaries to ensure that the preparation is balanced and relevant for each field? Who does the evaluation, and how could the preparation process adapt to changing field needs?

*Preparing people appropriately*

Jonathan Ingleby,⁵ former Head of Mission—Redcliffe College, U.K.

This is a true story—the names have been changed.

When I first met Alan Chalmers he was a comparatively young man who had already been appointed as the ‘acting’ leader (he was soon to be given the permanent job) of a large mission group somewhere in South Asia. He was responsible for about 800 people, comprised of both nationals and missionaries and involved in a number of holistic ministries. It was a tough task. A once friendly local environment was becoming increasingly hostile. Civil war threatened. Government could not make up its mind whether it wanted the missionaries or not. People were being asked to leave unexpectedly and it was difficult to find replacements in good time. The team itself was very mixed; not just nationals and expatriates but mission partners from all over the world. As well as cultural differences, there were the usual theological disagreements and personality clashes. Meanwhile the mission needed to maintain the high standards it had always set.

⁵ Jonathan was Head of Mission Studies at Redcliffe College, Gloucester, UK for 15 years until his ‘retirement’ in Summer 2006. He continues to lecture on subjects in missiology and world Christianity to Postgraduate level and is an expert on the history of mission and missiology and in globalisation and postcolonialism.

Jonathan was brought up in Portugal by missionary parents. He worked for twenty years in India at Hebron, a school for missionary children, as teacher and then headmaster. Jonathan’s PhD is from the Open University and looked into the way that education was used as a missionary tool in India during the long nineteenth century (c. 1789-1914).

Alan shared with me some of his concerns. Not least of these were his doubts about whether he had the necessary skills to do the job he had been catapulted into. I tried to reassure him. He was clearly a born leader with a good understanding of the magnitude and complexity of the task ahead of him.

We spoke for a while about his preparation for the job. He admitted that, formally, he had none. He had attended a missionary training college for two years, and felt that the time there had been very worthwhile. One obvious gap, however, was that he had never had any training for the job he was actually doing. He had learnt a good deal of theology, been prepared for some of the inter cultural dimensions of his missionary life, thought about evangelism and church planting, and deepened his own spiritual life. He was grateful for all of these things. What had not happened was any sort of leadership training. Apart from what he had learnt by observation 'on the job' so far, he had never thought seriously about managing a team—leading, selecting, assessing, training, team building, resolving conflict and all the rest. He had never thought about the Biblical basis of leadership as such, about the ethical implications of leadership or about the particular demands of leading a cross cultural team. When I say he had never thought about it, I do not mean that Alan had no wisdom or insight on any of these subjects, but he had never been given the chance to reflect upon them in an ordered and systematic way and to draw upon the wider wisdom of others who had done so.

My story has a happy ending. Alan, by all accounts, rose to the challenge before him. He did this so well that it puts in doubt the whole moral of this story. Was it the case that he did not need training in leadership in the first place? Innate ability combined with life experience was enough. Perhaps, or perhaps he would have been an even better leader if he had the chance to study. Besides, we are not all like Alan. Some of us need all the help we can get if we are to make a half decent job of the leadership roles we find ourselves thrust into.



Preparation - gaining a commitment to the organisation as well as practical preparation

Alan Pain, Director of IMC, BMS International Mission Centre, UK

In August 1999, BMS World Mission, known at the time as, 'Baptist Missionary Society', completed its purchase of the former St Andrew's Hall in Selly Oak, Birmingham. BMS' intention was to refurbish the premises and to develop their own mission training centre, which they named, 'International Mission Centre' (IMC).

BMS had felt a growing need to take control of their mission training which had become increasingly fragmented with potential mission personnel training for short periods of time at a variety of locations. In addition to a lack of clarity regarding standards, there was little opportunity for selected candidates to 'bond' with BMS during their training. The original vision for IMC expressed the hope that it would provide, "appropriate, effective, adaptable training" for all those who were to serve overseas with BMS: long-term workers, 'Action Teams' (a well-established gap-year programme), other short-term teams and a growing number of solo volunteers. The word "flexibility" summed up what BMS leaders had in mind for the new venture in mission training.

Inevitably, the establishment of a new centre for mission training was not without its controversy but the prevailing view within BMS was that the existing situation for its own mission training could not be allowed to continue. There was a strong conviction that the availability of the St Andrews Hall premises offered a timely opportunity which was not to be missed.

Now fully refurbished, IMC can accommodate 65-70 people and seeks to be a high-quality residential centre which meets BMS' needs for mission training as well as for selection events and other committees. The size of the premises means that IMC also welcomes non-BMS groups, large and small. They come for their own mission training or to share in IMC courses, all of which helps to shape and to refresh its corporate culture.

At the beginning of 2006, the core business of IMC remains that of training those who are to serve in cross-cultural mission with BMS. For example:

- ✓ A one-year foundation course in mission studies for newly-accepted long-term workers. This includes two significant personal projects and a February placement which most people take overseas.
- ✓ A month's training in September as well as a selection weekend for our 'Action Teams', prior to six months overseas,
- ✓ Two weeks of de-brief and training in April for the Action Teams before an 8-week tour of British churches. There is also a couple of days final celebration in June and a re-union weekend just before Christmas.
- ✓ Three 'Volunteer Preparation Weeks' each year designed for the varied and highly-skilled people who offer BMS short-term service up to two years.
- ✓ Selection, training and de-brief/reflection weekends for our Summer Teams, Church Teams and Medical teams.
- ✓ A new BMS programme for 'mid-term volunteers' (2-4 years) is the latest challenge for which a three-month term is likely to become the normal period of training.

It's still too early to assess the long-term effectiveness of IMC for mission training but several aspects of its existence have been noted:

- ✓ IMC *is* BMS, and all sorts of people come to regard it as home. This makes a big difference to their commitment to BMS and has begun to influence some short-term workers back to longer-term service. Hopefully, in time, it will also increase the average length of service of 'long-term' ('career') mission personnel.
- ✓ IMC training is purpose-built for the needs of BMS. Its courses are prepared with the sole aim of providing effective preparation for those who are to serve with BMS. Other Senior Staff from the BMS international headquarters in Didcot, Oxfordshire, UK, make regular visits for teaching and consultation which has become an important addition to the year.
- ✓ With IMC in place we can be sure that all those serving overseas will have been trained in issues such as child protection, security and health. We can also tackle areas of particular interest to BMS.
- ✓ IMC training is evaluated regularly, and changes are made in the light of evaluation, without the restrictions of external accreditation or separate college authorities. The challenge of IMC is to reach the original vision, "... a centre of excellence for the formation of mission workers." That is part of the reason why we prefer to talk about 'Centre'/'Director'/'Mission Personnel' instead of using the academic language of 'College', 'Principal' and 'Student'.
- ✓ IMC tutors are colleagues of those in training, with a vested interest in their progress and their future. The relationships established at IMC can prove extremely useful in the early days of overseas service, especially when the going is tough for newly-arrived mission personnel.
- ✓ The training year provides a unique opportunity to develop relationships with BMS home staff, most of whom work at the headquarters in Didcot. It is very reassuring for them to make the move overseas knowing that they are by now far more than names to those who have administrative, financial and pastoral responsibility for them.
- ✓ By the time new mission workers move to their locations, they have already established strong relationships with their BMS Regional Secretary. This partnership of responsibility has already proved its worth and can be decisive for the longer-term survival of mission personnel, especially if the early months of service prove unexpectedly tough.

For example: In November 2002, a young American OM worker, Bonnie, was murdered in Sidon, Lebanon. The effect of her death was particularly traumatic for a small group of Christians working in Sidon. A young woman from BMS was part of this group. Becky (pseudonym) was in Sidon for language study prior to taking up

a teaching post in Beirut. She had been part of this group for just two months and had developed a close friendship with Bonnie. Very soon after Bonnie's death, Becky re-located to Beirut and, 19 months later, she came back to UK to be with her father who was terminally ill.

Becky had become an integral part of BMS, mainly through her year of training at IMC, and this made a huge difference to the way BMS was able to cooperate with her home church in caring for her through a very rough couple of years. IMC has been part of this support for Becky, and has been able to work with colleagues in other situations for the understanding and encouragement of former 'students' (we never use the word!)

Becky has now returned to work with BMS in South Central Asia where she has made an extremely positive start in a new country with a fresh challenge of language, culture and people.



The conclusion

The conclusions are not that surprising but they have strong practical implications. People who have been well prepared perform better and stay longer on the job. What is the best sort of preparation? Evidence suggests that we need more targeted missionary training, and that we have inherited forms of training which are not always helpful. We need more experiential learning included in our preparation programmes, at least as far as the OSC are concerned. NSC are experimenting with new forms of training including On-the-job type training but because these are not mandatory we were not able to assess them to a significant degree. Likewise the internship programme, whilst included, was largely unique to the USA and whilst helpful there could not be compared in other countries.



In the real world

Who? → When? ↓	Home Church	Missionary	Mission Agencies	External Partners
Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify and affirm the need for competence, character and spiritual skills ➤ Offer hands-on pastoral and ministry experience ➤ Biblical and theological foundation ➤ Culture and practice of coaching and mentoring 			
Recruitment			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Inform candidate about preparation requirements 	
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Form a Home Front Committee that supports broadly ➤ Support in practical preparation ➤ Develop relation with family that stays behind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Be willing to take time for the right preparation ➤ Work on a Home Front Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have a personal and relational approach ➤ Use programs that fit the individual ➤ Use tools to develop competence, character and spiritual skills ➤ Offer orientation to the mission agency ➤ Include missionary kids in preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop appropriate practical learning tools to be used ➤ Offer communal environment to prepare candidates ➤ Facilitate cross-cultural experiences ➤ Offer theological and missiological training ➤ Offer specific job training ➤ Develop tools for preparation of missionary kids
On field				
(Crisis)				
Furlough		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Involvement in preparing candidates 		
Re-entry		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Involvement in preparing candidates 		

Orientation and Continuous Training



The facts

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning— the first day. And God said, “Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water.” So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so.



The data

Q. No.	Factor	OSC		NSC	
		Health Indicator	✓	Health Indicator	✓
52	Effective on-field orientation is in place for new M's	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ● ●	✓	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ● ●	✓
53	Language learning arrangements are provided that enable new M's to learn the local language well	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ●	✓	○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ● ● ●	

54	Ongoing language and culture training are actively encouraged	○○○○○○○●●●	✓	○○○○○○●●●●	
55	M's are provided with opportunities for continuous training and development of gifts and skills	○○○○○○●●●●	✓	○○○○○○●●●●	✓
85	Pre-field orientation prepares M's for adjustment to cross-cultural life and ministry	○○○○○○○●●●		○○○○○○●●●●	



The key findings

- ✓ On-field orientation of new missionaries (Q52) was positively correlated with retention in OSC and NSC, yet the correlation was not as strong as expected (usually considered as extremely important).
- ✓ Initial language and cultural learning (Q53) was rated even higher than orientation (Q52) in OSC and clearly correlated with high retention (for preventative attrition RRP – yet not so much for total attrition, RRT).
- ✓ NSC agencies gave much lower rating to Initial language and cultural learning (Q53) than OSC, probably as many NSC agencies are working in near cultures where language learning is not so relevant.
- ✓ In NSC Initial language and cultural learning (Q53) is even negatively correlated with retention (it is assumed that NSC agencies working in near culture, where language learning is not so relevant, have higher retention rates than those working truly cross-culturally)
- ✓ In OSC, Ongoing language & cultural studies (Q54) received the highest rating in this block of questions and it was highly correlated with retention for preventable attrition in OSC.
- ✓ In NSC, Ongoing language & cultural studies (Q54) again was negatively correlated with retention (as many agencies are working in near cultures)
- ✓ Continuous training and development of new gifts and skills (Q55) received high rating and proved to be correlated with retention, especially in OSC, and particularly regarding preventable attrition RRP in OSC.



What it means

On-field Orientation is positively correlated with retention. However the correlation was not as strong as anticipated and the agency's pre-field orientation showed no correlation with retention. The overall aim is to prepare individuals to learn the local language (where necessary), survive culture shock and settle into the host country or culture to the point of being able to live and work effectively and without undue stress.

The method, timing and content of orientation will vary but what is generally true is that it is the mission agency that will carry it out. The case study by Rachel Murray (see the case study below - Collaborative orientation in New Zealand) gives an interesting example where a group of agencies carry out orientation together and this is a good use of resources and provides a depth and breadth to the issues covered. Orientation, however, should not be confused with mission or bible training which takes place at a college (see Chapter 10).

If we consider orientation in two distinct categories of pre-field and on-field, it is interesting to look at the ReMAP II results. Q85 [Q85 Pre-field orientation prepares Missionaries for adjustment to cross-cultural life and ministry] shows that whilst OSC and NSC executives both believe that they do pre-field orientation reasonably well (though with room for improvement) we did not find a correlation with retention. We must assume, therefore, that there is little difference in pre-field orientation between the high and low retaining agencies – the scores suggest that all agencies must do this reasonably – at least in the leader's opinion. It is an interesting result because I have often come across individuals for whom a major stumbling block has been poorly shaped expectation as a result of poor pre-field preparation and orientation. It seems a fairly common problem that people struggle on arrival because there is often such a vast difference between their expectations and reality. (We did not have this problem when we went to Nepal because we expected it to be horrendously difficult and it was, therefore, a delight to discover that it was only difficult!). Despite the lack of correlation, I would suggest that the scores indicate room for improvement so that people can be even better prepared. And maybe the leaders of the sending bases need to grasp the immensity of this issue.

In order to shape the expectations prior to departure, it should be mentioned that there is nothing more simple than a visit to the proposed field for a 'look – see' visit. Obviously cost is a huge factor here and many may not be able to afford the luxury of such a visit (especially for some NSC agencies). But if it is possible, it is highly valuable. When we were thinking of applying to go to Nepal, International Nepal Fellowship (INF) suggested such a visit as neither of us had been to Asia before. Finances dictated that only one of us would go but Rob was able to visit, do a

couple of weeks of work and get a really good feel not just for Nepal but also for INF. In our later planning for departure, it was so helpful to know where we would live for the first three months, who would meet us and some of the things about Nepal (e.g. Nepali pillows are like rock so take your own!). Friends of ours recently did a similar visit with their whole family to the Middle East and it was especially helpful for the children who were able to visit their future schools and begin to prepare and get excited rather than scared about the unknown. However, a short visit (at an unfavourable season) can also give false impressions as one's body does not have enough time to adjust to the climate, food, germs, host culture etc – and something unbearable can indeed become manageable on the long run.

Another helpful tool in pre-field orientation is to link up future mission partners with previous mission partners in the home country and current people on the field. These links provide a vital source of advice. If possible it is helpful to link up people with others in similar circumstances e.g. family to family, so that there is a common link. It is an encouragement then to know that others just like you have been able to cope and you can ask specific questions. Sometimes it is easier to ask, what you feel is a silly question, of someone in this link capacity rather than someone in the agency HR department. I remember wanting to ask about electricity and hot water availability but feeling silly. When I finally asked, it was great to know that there was electricity (most of the time) and hot water (as long as the sun shone!). It wasn't highlighted that in the winter, when you need a hot shower to warm up rather than a cold one to cope with hot monsoon, the sun was often hidden by cloud so that the solar panel didn't give you hot water! Perhaps the key to the link working is to be a little selective...! It is helpful to have a link with someone on the field because it automatically provides you with someone that you 'know' when you arrive. Before departure it is possible to contact them with questions such as availability of items and what you should pack to take. Certainly in Nepal availability changed on an almost monthly basis and things that we needed to take with us were available by the time we left. These links make important connections and can make the journey from home to field less bumpy.

Once an individual arrives on the field, it is usual for the agency to provide an intense period of orientation. The length of timing of this will vary widely, especially if it includes language training. It is important to note that OSC and NSC scored the same for on-field orientation and that it was correlated with retention for both also. However, despite this correlation the scores were not good, showing huge room for improvement. It is vital that mission partners get good orientation if they are to be effective in ministry and stay on the field. It is a disappointment that the scores are not higher for what, surely, is an obvious target for improving retention: preparing people for the task and location.

We should say a word about the type of issues that should be covered during pre-field and on-field orientation. Obviously this varies between agencies and there is no hard and fast rule (see the case study below from Torchbearers Mission Inc.). You need to put yourself back into the shoes of a new mission partner and think about what you would need to know. A good place to start would be to review and evaluate the current orientation with fairly new mission partners and ask them to point out what areas may be missing or are superfluous. The suggestions below are simply suggestions and are not an exhaustive list. Also it does not necessarily matter whether the orientation takes place pre-field or on-field, but what is important is that these issues are covered at some point:

Pre-field

- ✓ Language acquisition skills (preparing to learn another language)
- ✓ Cultural issues such as working in an international team, with national colleagues and national church (preparing for culture shock)
- ✓ Introduction to the agency
- ✓ Medical/health and stress issues for individuals and families, including issues such as singleness, marriage and education
- ✓ Visa application process, timescale etc.
- ✓ Items to take
- ✓ Support raising

On-field

- ✓ Language training
- ✓ Specific cultural practices and norms
- ✓ Local religious beliefs and practices
- ✓ In-Country agency matters
- ✓ Gospel contextualisation
- ✓ Developing personal faith and spirituality

Most of these issues should require no explanation. However, looking at The Data it is clear that language learning is not correlated with retention for NSC nor does it receive a high score, whilst the opposite is the case for OSC. It is widely assumed that the majority of mission partners from NSC are going to other cultures nearby where there may well be similarities of language and cultural practices e.g. an Indian mission partner serving elsewhere in India. They are going 'near' culture rather than a very different culture. In these situations it may well be unnecessary to provide language training. The factor of 'near culture' may enable good relationships to be formed regardless of language. On the other hand,

near culture is still different from the home culture and these differences need to be recognised, and these adjustments may come unexpectedly and even cause culture shock.

Mission partners from OSC are usually going cross-culturally where there is no similarity between language and cultural practice. It is here, then, that language learning arrangements are so vital. This is shown in the higher scores and positive correlation. There is still room for improvement in language and cultural training. It is important for people to identify their leaning style and learn language appropriately. A dyslexic person, for example, can still learn to speak another language but learning to read the script may prove difficult and unnecessary. I like to learn language through grammar, spelling and script and have a sentence perfect before I open my mouth. Rob on the other hand would rather attempt a conversation straight off, regardless of correct grammar or tense, and see where he gets! It is also important that language learning is not rushed. It is all too easy for a mission partner to begin their role immediately, pushing out language study, and then struggle to cope with language later. This was a major frustration for me, particularly as I worked in an English speaking environment and did not have as much chance to practice as others. Whilst people doing pure language learning for a long period (e.g. over 2 years for Arabic or Japanese) suffer frustrations of feeling child-like and useless (because they are not 'working'), these frustrations are short-lived and worth-while if the outcome is a good grounding and relative fluency in language which will enable the person to be more effective in ministry.

Looking back at the list of issues, it is hopefully obvious why orientation relating to cultural issues and religious beliefs and practices is important. A major cultural issue which needs discussion is not just learning about national culture (though that is vital) but also the trials of working in a team made up of different nationalities. There has been much written about this (e.g. *When Cultures Collide* by Richard D. Lewis) and its importance should not be underestimated (see Chapter 16). It is important; especially for Generation X and beyond, that an introduction to the agency occurs so that they can quickly feel a part of something (not apart!).

The other issue I want to highlight is that of stress issues for individuals, couples and families. It is important for people to look at themselves and be aware of their weaknesses. As written in Chapter 8 on Health and Psychological assessments; weaknesses often become magnified on the field when people are away from their usual support mechanisms. Thus, if a single person finds their singleness as an emotional, stressful issue they need to consider, before the issue is emphasised on the field, how they may deal with it and develop coping strategies. It is helpful for single individuals to understand the pressures on families and vice versa so that people can be a support to one another. It is also helpful for people to be encouraged to develop ways in which they can spiritually feed and care for themselves. In a different environment where church language

is unfamiliar and perhaps worship styles etc. are different in the national church, it is reasonable to assume that mission partners will struggle to feed themselves spiritually until they have been on the field sometime. Indeed mission partners often talk about their spiritual lives reaching a plateau (or even a valley) whilst on the field. Helping people to learn how to maintain their own spiritual life is a vital aspect of orientation and could include setting up mentoring or accountability structures.

It is also shown from The Data that where on-going language and cultural training is encouraged there is high correlation with retention in OSC. It is important that people have an opportunity to continue to develop language and cultural knowledge so that they can deepen the relationships within their ministry. This is not correlated for NSC, again probably because many are going 'near' culture and this may indicate the slightly lower score also. Some study undertaken by Andrea Thomas, Orientation Officer for International Nepal Fellowship, showed the value and benefit in giving opportunities for mission partners to continue their orientation. Apart from the obvious benefits of continuing to equip people for service, it also gives a sense of worth, value and therefore motivation. NSC did not find this area to be greatly linked with retention but this does not mean that they do not need to be improving in this area. Whilst the language element may be less important, there is still a need for ongoing cultural training, to help with motivation but also to highlight issues where practice may be similar but still different and therefore important to deal with to become more effective. Both OSC and NSC had a mediocre score for mission partners having opportunity for continuous training and development of gifts and skills and yet both were correlated with retention. So the need for continuous training and orientation is important (see Chapters 24 and 26 which cover Appraisal and Continuous Development).

Finally it is worth re-iterating that orientation is a very significant tool in the retention prevention kit. The data also shows that there is significant room for improvement and it is hoped that this chapter and case studies will provide a basis for revisiting your orientation programme and making some significant improvements. Not having a good orientation programme is like admitting that you are only willing to do half a job. As a fellow language student once said in our class 'Do I have to learn the future tense, can't I just stick with the present?!' Make sure that you look to the future and provide mission partners with all the orientation that they need.



Collaborative orientation in New Zealand

Rachel Murray¹, New Zealand

Orientation is a vital and important part of how mission candidates are prepared for cross-cultural service. How orientation is carried out, and what is included, will have implications on the initial settling down, the on-going learning, and the long term service of the individual and/or family.

Many agencies will use their own resources to prepare their mission personnel for service. They are large enough to do so, without the need to call on the assistance of others. However, in a country with a small population, or when there are several small agencies in one region, it would make more sense and it could be more fruitful to pool the resources to orientate new missionaries.

In New Zealand, four mission agencies have combined their time, talents and resources to offer orientation in the home country to prospective mission workers. The programme, known as 'Discovery', was developed in the late 1990s.

The earliest programme was based on the standard six-week Orientation programme originally run by Wycliffe. 'Discovery' was run as a two week residential programme, usually in a Christian camp environment. Although it was run by Wycliffe, other organisations began making use of the course. For example, SIM required their candidates to attend 'Discovery'. In time, SIM personnel became involved in running the programme alongside Wycliffe. Later, Interserve (NZ) and OMF (NZ) joined in.

Each agency now contributes key personnel to teaching the course, with each trainer adding value through their personal experience and expertise in various sections of orientation. Those attending 'Discovery' include mission candidates preparing to go shortly, those in application, and those still in very early stages of thinking about their call to mission service. The participants have a variety of ministry interests: with some going out to do church planting and evangelism, while others seek to work as tentmakers in their professions.

¹ Rachel Murray was the New Zealand coordinator for the ReMAP II project. She was formerly the short term mission coordinator for Interserve (NZ), an agency facilitating individuals into positions related to their professional skills for 1 to 12 months throughout Asia and the Middle East. In her role at Interserve (NZ), Rachel worked with enquirers regarding service with the agency. This included the orientation and preparation of short-termers, many of whom went on to be long term mission partners. Two of her Interserve colleagues were closely involved with the 'Discovery' orientation course. Rachel is currently the Executive Assistant at Carey Baptist College in Auckland, New Zealand. In her new role, she assists the Principal in leadership of a growing bible and theological college where people are trained for mission, ministry and the marketplace.

In the early years, a large component of the orientation course had been on language acquisition. In two weeks, the participants were required to grasp at least the basics of a language. Over the years, however, other factors were added to the course structure.

Today, the 'Discovery' programme comprises a three stranded approach: language, culture and missions, and personal growth. There are daily sessions covering these three areas, after a time of worship and biblical teaching.

1. Language

At first, the focus was on personal learning styles and linguistics. More recently, the focus has changed. Instead of mastering the basics of a language, the participants discover how to learn a language. This training allows for flexibility, personal style and a variety of language groups to which the new missionaries might be exposed.

2. Culture and missions

The focus is on working with international teams, national colleagues and the national church, contextualisation of the gospel, tentmaking, medical/health issues for individuals and families, and education.

3. Personal growth

This focuses on issues of faith and spirituality, spiritual warfare, marriage, family, singleness and personality types (including completing a personality test such as Myers Briggs).

Being a residential course, children are cared for during sessions by child care workers. This immediately sends the message that children are welcomed and valued. The residential nature of the course means that attendees get to know each other and they begin the process of learning what it might be like to be part of a close-knit team on the field.

In early 2005, 'Discovery' had to alter its structure to accommodate the changing nature of society in New Zealand. The two-week programme has become a one-week programme. Although this change required some consolidation of the sessions, the basic components remained. This shorter programme is better suited to the professionals who had to take annual leave from their work environment. Other reasons for the shorter course are: volunteer workers for the children's programme and catering have become scarce, and the overall costs for a residential course are prohibitive for some.

In 2006, it is likely that 'Discovery' will be altered again to become an intensive weekend course, in which the language and cultural components as above are the focus. This new course would include worship at a church of a different ethnic group on the Sunday morning.

Discussion questions:

1. Are there agencies or churches in your region or country that could work collaboratively with your organization to offer an orientation programme for new missionaries? What obstacles might have to be overcome for different agencies to organize a common orientation course?
2. What particular aspects of the two-week 'Discovery' course in New Zealand are most likely to contribute to missionary retention?
3. What would be an appropriate length of orientation course for your country and local culture? What are the disadvantages of a short orientation programme? What other topics could be included if an orientation course were more than two weeks?

*Orientation contributes to missionary retention*

Albert Seth Ocran², Torchbearers Mission Inc., Ghana

Torchbearers Mission Inc. is an indigenous inter-denominational missionary-sending organisation started in 1988 in Accra, Ghana. The vision of the six founding fathers was to raise committed Christians, train them and send them to unreached people groups. This vision was pushed along through regular prayer and fasting retreats held monthly. The Lord heard our prayers and began to lead us into mission trips to the Upper East Region of Ghana.

We recruited our first missionary, Pastor James Abedingo, at Bolga in 1990. He was taken through a six month orientation programme in Accra and placed on the field in the same year, specifically to work among his own people (the Kusasis) in his village, Apodabogo in the Bawku West District of the Upper East Region. The fact that Pastor James Abedingo has since been faithful to the call and has been on the field for the past 15 years shows how far God has helped Torchbearers from the beginning.

After Pastor James, other missionaries were recruited and they have also stayed at their stations. We have not lost any missionary from his station, so we can say we have a 100% missionary retention. Praise God! Our present missionary strength includes six couples (fulltime) plus one tent

² Albert Seth Ocran is the General Director of Torchbearers Mission Incorporated in Ghana. He has been serving in missions for the past 18 years. Prior to this, Albert was a Lecturer and Head of General Agriculture Department, College of Agriculture, Maiduguri, Nigeria. He studied missions at the WEC International headquarters in United Kingdom. Albert is a founding executive member of Torchbearers Mission, and he formulated its constitution, financial and other policies. In his present role as General Director, Albert supervises the missionaries and office staff, chairs and directs the executive committee, as well as well as conducting training and teaching of potential missionaries. Albert is also a founding executive member of the Ghana Evangelical Missions Association.

maker missionary couple in Ghana and a couple in Malawi. This excludes the five fulltime office staff, also considered as missionaries.

Factors that contribute to our Missionary Retention include:

1. Prayer

We have depended a lot on prayer because we believe in the strategy of Luke 10:2b – “Pray to the owner of the harvest that He will send out workers to gather in the harvest.” We pray to God to send labourers into the harvest field and He answers by sending some to us. We pray for the sustenance of the missionaries on the field.

2. Acceptance of missionaries

Each person that has been recruited as a missionary had been highly recommended as a faithful and committed Christian, with some experience and involvement in evangelism. We have a highly competent Board which interviews each applicant. When an applicant is found to lack some skills, a recommendation for further skills development is made to ensure that the person gains the requisite knowledge.

3. Orientation and training

All our new missionaries go through six months of orientation and training. They will either complete:

- six months of the Missionary Orientation Programme (MOP), or
- six months of the International School of Missions and Leadership Development (ISOMALD) where they learn several subjects within the six courses: Biblical Studies, Leadership and Management Studies, Missions Studies, Cross-Cultural Studies, Communication Studies and Ministry Skills.

Several experienced lecturers bring their knowledge and experience to bear on these new missionaries, thereby sharpening them for effective and lasting ministry on the field. During the training, the new missionaries also have field practicals to test their knowledge and see things practically.

One reason why our missionaries have stayed on the field is because the six months of orientation and training acts as an observation time both for the organisation as well as the missionaries. Any negative observations made by the organisation could lead to the potential missionary being asked to repeat the programme, or else they are prevented from being commissioned and sent to the field. This period of orientation and training has been our weeding stage, and we have had cases of potential candidates withdrawing voluntarily.

4. Commissioning and sending

The public and open celebration associated with commissioning of the missionaries also encourages the missionaries in their going and staying in the field. Another factor that has encouraged our missionaries to continue to stay in the field is the fact that candidates are sent to the places where they believe they have been called by God to go.

5. Fellowship and brotherhood

During the orientation and training programme at the organisation's office, the students and candidates had fellowship with staff and members of the organisation. Some of them even stayed with members of the organisation. The fellowship brought about some bonding and knowledge of the people within the organisation as well as any rough edges in the potential missionary's life are being rounded off.

6. Spiritual maturity

Our missionaries have known the Lord for a considerable number of years, and so they have developed a regular and consistent devotional life. This enables them to effectively train and disciple leaders among the converts they make on the field.

7. Family life

Each missionary is taught and encouraged to have a good family life. Though most of our missionaries were recruited as singles, they were encouraged to marry. At present, all of them are married. The wives are also admitted as missionaries and they go through similar orientation and training. This makes the couple, especially the women (who may not be familiar with the organisation before marriage); understand what they are involved in, and what life on the mission field will be like.

Since our missionary couples are young, they also have young children (below 21 years) who are with them on the field. We have had a situation where one missionary couple have had to move from a village to a bigger town close by, in order to find a good education for their children. They still kept on ministering to the village and other villages from their new base.

From our experience, orientation and training plays an important part in the retention of missionaries in our ministry. If the right personnel are recruited, given adequate orientation and training, sent to places where they believe God has called them, and given adequate support and care, then attrition can be minimised and we shall have many workers staying on the field to fulfil the Great Commission.

Discussion questions:

1. At present, what orientation and training is provided by your organisation (agency or church) to your new missionaries?
2. What aspects of the orientation program could be improved? How would you do this?



In the real world

Who? → When? ↓	Home Church	Missionary	Mission Agencies	External Partners
Continuous				
Recruitment				
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support the idea of pre-field orientation ➤ Make pre-field orientation possible financially 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Take time to orientate at forehand ➤ Be honest about experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use pre-field orientation as way to test calling ➤ Be honest in picture shown ➤ Provide as much as possible practical information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Catalyze partnership in orientation ➤ Bring partners together
On field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pray for feeling at home on the field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Take time to orientate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Supply language training ➤ Introduce cultural practices and norms and local religious beliefs and practices ➤ Introduction to agency matters on the field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide tools for training ➤ Supply practical help to start living in a new context
(Crisis)				
Furlough				
Re-entry				

Spiritual Life



The facts

A healthy spiritual life is not surprisingly important to missionaries and mission organisations. Questions on spiritual life were rated highest of all groups of questions in both OSC and NSC and in OSC they show a clear correlation to retention. The testing of the maturity of a candidates spiritual life and the emphasis on the maintenance and growth of that spiritual life, are rated highly and correlate with retention. A culture of prayer throughout the mission agency (shown in regular prayer for the missionaries) is valued highly and in OSC is clearly correlated to retention. Prayer and the overall grouping of personal spirituality was given a high priority for almost all NSC agencies, so that there was little room for discrimination/difference between high and low retaining groups.



The data

Q. No.	Factor	OSC Health Indicator		NSC Health Indicator	
			✓		✓
25	Prayer support	○○○○●●●●●●	✓	○○○○●●●●●●	
46	Prayer	○○○○○○○○●●●	✓	○○○○○○○○●●	
47	Leaders example	○○○○○○○○○○●	✓	○○○○○○○○○○●●	✓
58	Spiritual warfare	○○○○○●●●●●●	✓	○○○○○○●●●●●	✓
74	Pers. spiritual life	○○○○○○○○●●●	✓	○○○○○○○○●●	
86	HO prays	○○○○○○○○○●●	✓	○○○○○○○○○○●	



The key findings

- ✓ Issues of Spiritual life received highest rating of all groups in OSC and NSC.
- ✓ In OSC they are highly correlated with retention. In NSC they received very high rating even in low retaining agencies so that no correlation was found.
- ✓ Culture of prayer throughout the agency (Q46) was rated very high and is highly correlated with retention in OSC – in NSC it received high rating by all agencies
- ✓ High emphasis on maintenance and growth of personal spiritual life of missionary (Q74) received very high rating and correlated with retention.
- ✓ Testing of Mature spiritual life of candidates (Q14) was rated very high and highly correlated with retention in OSC and NSC.
- ✓ Experience with spiritual warfare (Q58) had average rating and was moderately correlated with high retention
- ✓ People in host culture are becoming followers of Christ (Q67) was rated very high in NSC and correlated with high retention
- ✓ Home office staff prays for their missionaries (Q86) received very high ratings even in low retaining agencies (in OSC exceptionally high and correlated with retention).



What it means

Recognition

The fact that issues of spiritual life are rated highest of all should not surprise us. This reflects the importance Gods' Word gives to this topic and looking at the clear correlation to retention, it apparently shows its' worth in the practice of the life and ministry of missionaries. What can we think of? One clear example from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament:

Joshua: when Moses had gone to the Lord, Joshua was the one that had been called to take over the leadership of Israel. Right at the start the Lord speaks very directly to him. He confirms him in his new position and promises His support. Joshua's part in a blessed life and ministry is to meditate on Gods' law day and night and do strictly what is commanded in it (Joshua 1:8), then he will be successful.

In John 15 the Lord Jesus teaches His disciples that without Him; they can do nothing (John 15:5). To Him is given all authority and power and He will be with them always when they go out and fulfil the great com-

mandment (Matthew 28:19-20), but it is crucial that they are so close to Him just as the branch is to the vine. This means a close and obedient walk with the Lord, with His Word that purifies us and gives direction and with prayer as the means of our communication with Him to experience His presence and to move mountains in our ministry.

Knowing this, Daniel had a habit to pray three times a day with his face towards Jerusalem. In his busy life with his great responsibilities he took time to seek the face of the Lord and take courage in the tensions he had to deal with (Daniel 6:11). Also the church in Jerusalem (Acts 2:42) had a discipline to stay faithful in studying the Word, praying, celebrating the Lords' supper and being a community together. They needed this when persecution came (Acts 4-5).

Because of this Bill Hybels, pastor of the Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago (USA) wrote a book about prayer and called it "Too busy not to pray"¹. In having a kingdom ministry, one experiences a lot of stress and challenging situations and the continuous fellowship with the Lord is essential for ones rest inside and power to conquer Satan in the spiritual battle. In his book 'A Resilient Life' Gordon McDonald writes that he owed the people he served in his church 'a filled-up soul':

"Whether they encountered me in the pulpit or on the streets of our community during the week, they needed to know that if (perish the thought) there was only one human being in their world who had some experience in the presence of God, I would be that man."²

So besides the fact that they can not do without it themselves, workers in Gods' Kingdom also have the moral responsibility to live out themselves, what they teach others: they should be living examples of their own doctrine.

Issues to deal with

But is it that clear and easy in practice? Apparently not, when we look at the survey 'How spiritual are missionaries?' in 'Helping missionaries grow; readings in mental health and missions'³. Questions on; prayer and bible reading, what about God and suffering, mission relationships, theological fidelity, depression, holiness (including sexuality) and the charismatic experience lead Phil Parshall to give some serious reflections and recommendations:

1 Bill Hybels, *Too Busy Not to Pray*, (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1988).

2 Gordon MacDonald, *A Resilient Life: You Can Move Ahead No Matter What* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), p. 191.

3 Kelly S. O'Donnell and Michele Lewis O'Donnell, *Helping Missionaries Grow: Readings in Mental Health and Missions* (Pasadena, CA.: William Carey Library, 1988).

Are missionaries spiritual? The question should cause not a small amount of probing and introspection. Perhaps it is time to have field seminars on the subject. Often a close friend or colleague can be a catalyst between us and the Lord. Missionaries are sensing needs in their times of prayer and Bible study. Annual spiritual life retreats should be scheduled that are not encumbered with business agendas. Missions may want to consider the appointment of a field chaplain, whose only task is to minister to missionaries. Such a person could be shared among several smaller missions. Tension and depression continue to be major problems. Mission leaders should seek to alleviate continuous pressure points. Regular vacations and changes in routine are vital. This survey indicates intellectual stagnation on the part of many. Reading programs, team seminars, and furlough study should all be incorporated into the normal flow of missionary life as should the provision of relevant, accessible mission journals such as *Connections*⁴ and *Encounters*⁵ both aimed at practitioners of mission rather than closet academics. There are journals available in other languages – details of these can be found on the Worth Keeping website in Chapter 12. Busyness should never be allowed to become an excuse for the neglect of one's personal growth (p.81).

So busyness and the pressure of the ministry are a serious danger and threaten to weaken the strength of the missionary and his ministry. In 'Missionary Care', Kelly O'Donnell stresses even more forcefully the importance of a person's relationship to God. Taking the life of Abraham and Sarah he looks at five core issues for missionaries and concludes:

"The missionary's relationship with God is the pre-eminent issue. It is important to be aware of the numerous challenges of missionary life and to make sure that missionaries are supported as they face these. But ultimately, these are secondary issues, which must be understood in light of the missionary's need for obedience, perseverance, trust, perspective, and testing. This makes strengthening and encouraging a person's relationship with God the central component of any member care program."⁶

Now how do we do this? How can a missionary maintain his spiritual life so he will grow and be 'on mission with God' as Avery T. Willis, Jr. and Henry T. Blackaby put it in a challenging book on living 'God's purpose for His glory' (Life Way Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 2001)?

The key factor in this is discipline. A disciple needs discipline and since a missionary is basically a disciple, he too should have 'discipline'. Because of all the pressures he is under, maybe he needs this even more than a Christian that stays working in his own Jerusalem.

4 See www.worldevangelical.org/commissions/missions.htm for details.

5 See www.redcliffe.org/mission to access this free online journal.

6 O'Donnell and O'Donnell, *Helping Missionaries Grow: Readings in Mental Health and Missions*, p. 44.

This means making choices and living with priorities. Taking time with the Lord, studying His Word, praying for sanctification and the challenges of relating to the people around us, obeying His will etc., all these are crucial. Gordon MacDonald also pleads for this, as he shows his way to practice this daily:

“I try to rise early and seek God’s heart. And how is such time used? I worship and, occasionally, write prayers of praise and exaltation. I read (scripture and meditative literature). I pray. I give thanksgiving. I reflect on the events of the previous day and finally, I try to focus on what I think God is saying about the use of today’s hours and write down my intentions”⁷

An interesting thing in the quote of Phil Parshall (see above) is that he also points at the responsibility of mission leaders in this. It is one thing that the missionary himself is working on personal discipline, but what about the expectations of the mission agency. The agency can increase the pressure on the missionary by asking too much (PR work for the ministry during vacation etc.). It is encouraging to see that the agency sees the importance of praying for the missionary and this clearly has a correlation to retention, but the agency at the same time has a very important role in creating the environment and culture that helps the missionary to make his personal spiritual life top priority. Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses (Exodus.17:12) so he could pray, but they had also taken a stone, so he could sit. Praying only is not enough, facilitating the circumstance for a missionary to function well, is also basic. See chapter 19 *Work-Life Balance* for further details on this. What is needed is an integral approach, in which all partners are involved in the several stages of the sending process.

Mutual learning

- ✓ Is this a topic in which OSC can learn from NSC, considering the fact that even low retaining NSC agencies underline the importance of having and maintaining one’s spiritual life?
- ✓ What about the difference between Busters, Boomers, Gen X’ers and Gen Y’ers? The form may change, but the principles stay the same. We cannot do without a close walk with the Lord.
- ✓ Husbands - wives, parents – children can help and support each other through encouragement and giving each other the opportunities and time to spend time with the Master. Singles could look for ‘buddies’ or accountability partners. What can men learn from women and vice-versa in this?

⁷ Avery T. Willis & Henry T. Blackaby, *On Mission with God: Living God’s Purpose for His Glory* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), p. 191.



Development in the spiritual life of a single missionary

Rachel Murray⁸, New Zealand.

Just as we grow and develop in our physical lives, our Christian growth is important in expanding the understanding of our faith. We are exhorted to move from spiritual immaturity with the basic foundations in place to a more solid maturity and understanding (Hebrews 5:12-6:3) and without exception, we are all encouraged to grow. However for those in Christian leadership, this is a place of responsibility where expectations are often higher. Whatever the form of leadership, there is generally an accepted understanding that an individual must have, not only the appropriate skills for the role but that he/she is in a spiritual position to be able to model, guide, encourage and lead others to their own spiritual maturity.

By its nature, cross-cultural mission exists not only to spread the Good News of Christ through proclamation and demonstration, but also to encourage the spiritual growth and development of those who have heard and accepted Christ as their Saviour.

Missionaries are commissioned to do just these things in all corners of the earth, whether they are involved in aid work, pastoring a church, evangelism or education. However, if they themselves are not growing spiritually then an important factor and basis for their involvement in this work has been compromised.

Michelle⁹ lived in an Asian country for 17 years. Working with an international agency, she was involved in theological education of women; initially as a teacher and then in leadership of the college. She had a six-month home assignment every three years and a one-year home assignment after ten years on the field. She has since retired back to her birth country.

Working in a college environment that was 'faith-based' where people shared similar values, it would be easy to assume that maintaining one's spiritual life would be easy. But the wider Islamic context and culture, where Michelle was based, presented its own challenges. Never married, Michelle lived in a country that was patriarchal in nature and where marriage and family gave status and security. Politically there were periodic

⁸ Rachel Murray was the New Zealand coordinator for the ReMAP II project. She was formerly the short term mission coordinator for Interserve (NZ), an agency facilitating individuals into positions related to their professional skills for 1 to 12 months throughout Asia and the Middle East. In her role at Interserve (NZ), Rachel worked with enquirers regarding service with the agency. Rachel is currently the Executive Assistant at Carey Baptist College in Auckland, New Zealand. In her new role, she assists the Principal in leadership of a growing bible and theological college where people are trained for mission, ministry and the marketplace.

⁹ The missionary's name has been changed.

upheavals which created uncertainty and instability. Simply living where she did was not always straightforward.

Adjusting to these differences, coping with the difficulties and becoming accustomed to the diversity of the culture was challenging. Learning to be open and appreciative of alternative ways of 'doing', re-examining and expanding expectations and boundaries often without support structures -- all of these things meant that Michelle had to develop a stronger personal faith than she may have done in her birth country. Through a growing awareness of this new culture and its customs, which was far different from her own, Michelle learnt to appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of both cultures that were now part of her life, including which aspects did or did not approximate Christian standards. She had to think on what it truly meant to be more Christ-like and to live as Christ would in these situations.

Michelle attended church communities which communicated in the local language. This alone presented challenges until she was fluent enough in the vernacular. These congregations had been influenced by the churches that had founded them. Worship styles were therefore not totally unfamiliar from Michelle's church community in her birth country. But the combination of mixed cultural practices and formality was often stifling of her spiritual growth. Unfortunately, orientation sessions in her 'host' culture had no impact on how she could adjust to new practices of church and fellowship.

Retreats were organised on occasion by the local leadership of her agency. With little biblical input, Michelle felt these tended more towards 'time-out' than an opportunity to grow spiritually through solid teaching. Her own initiatives of personal retreats at local centres gave her more memorable opportunities for development. They could be timed and focused on her own needs and relationship with God -- a personalised occasion rather than a 'packaged' one that could not so easily provide for the individual.

Michelle's work brought her in contact with people, issues and the culture on a daily basis -- all of which challenged her to think about how she presented herself to others. She was after all in this country as a 'mission worker' and her actions would portray her beliefs and the God that she served. The challenges which faced her through interactions with others and the issues of daily life in that context became some of the most influential factors in her growth as a person. Therefore for Michelle, much of her growth came out of circumstances and pressures in her overseas context.

The unstable political situation of the country was ongoing and could create a sense of mistrust amongst even close friends. Michelle found herself a confidante on a number of occasions, due to the assumption

that foreigners understood and respected issues of confidentiality. Whilst difficult, Michelle came to see that such conversations with local people have helped her own spiritual growth. She had the opportunity to hear, think through and deal with issues that she may not have otherwise.

Over the years that Michelle was in Asia, retreats, spiritual direction and more eclectic practices became more common. While it was not unheard of to have 'days out' for prayer, they were not used widely enough. In the current age, Michelle now sees some benefit in retreats during home assignment or on the field, but she also notes two dangers; a) a 'one size fits all' mentality that can creep in, and b) an underlying assumption of missionaries having deep psychological issues due to their time of the field.

Michelle has not been under spiritual direction either on the field or now that she has retired from cross-cultural service. For her, having established personal spiritual practices prior to leaving for Asia helped her to continue what was best suited to her needs and to her relationship with God. This foundation meant she did not need to start something new in a context that already required a large amount of energy in adjustment and challenge in the initial years. A key feature for Michelle was her teapot... taking time to be with God in prayer, the reading of Scripture and reflection, for the duration of drinking three cups of tea: an established, proven practice that works for Michelle's personality and situation. In addition, pre-departure training at a Bible College for two years helped shape and develop Michelle's spiritual thinking, while reinforcing practices and beliefs prior to leaving for the field.

Relationships with others were vital to Michelle's spiritual life. Prayer partners were an important part of maintenance and growth for her. However, as is common in cross-cultural work, the transient nature of the mission community meant regular changes disrupted patterns and established practices. Friendships with national colleagues were founded on a shared faith, providing opportunities for prayer and discussion where all were learning. Michelle's role in the college where she worked included the mentoring of younger staff. Through sharing and encouraging others in their lives, Michelle found this a point of growth for herself.

In Michelle's situation, much of her spiritual growth was based on her own initiatives rather than through those of the agency she was with. She knew what would work best for in her relationship with God. Practices she had established prior to her departure to Asia formed the foundation for her growth while overseas. She was also open to allow the issues and situations of others to teach her and to therefore develop her own spiritual life. These elements saw her through 17 years of positive mission service and beyond.

Discussion questions

1. Michelle did not see spiritual development as different from our growth as whole people. Is this a fair comment? If so, how do we ensure that our 'spirituality' does not become a separate entity?
2. Whose responsibility is it to ensure that spiritual growth is taking place, either on the field or at 'home'? How can agencies best serve missionaries in their spiritual growth in their different contexts, with different personalities and family situations, according to their own needs and requirements? How do we avoid the 'one size fits all' approach?



In the real world

Who? → When? ↓	Home Church	Missionary	Mission Agencies	External Partners
Continuous	➤ Discipleship training at young age	➤ Commitment to discipleship	➤ Provide specifics on missions in discipleship training	➤ Support in developing discipleship training
Recruitment			➤ Testing of mature spiritual life	
Preparation				➤ Discipleship for missionaries as part of theological training
On field	➤ Pastoral support (visit, internet pastor) ➤ Intercession	➤ Discipline in work / (spiritual) life balance ➤ Communicating needs / answers to prayer	➤ Create right environment to make spiritual life top priority ➤ Home Office prays ➤ Personal mentor / coach	
(Crisis)	➤ Intercession ➤ Pastoral support			
Furlough	➤ Support in focus on spiritual refreshment	➤ Go on retreat	➤ Protect personal - "business" agenda	➤ Organise conferences for missionaries on furlough
Re-entry			➤ Internal debriefing	➤ External debriefing

Spiritual Life Spiritual Warfare



The facts

Spiritual Life generally may have received the highest rating of all the broad areas surveyed but the specific area of spiritual warfare received a significantly lower rating. High Retaining agencies rate the importance of how to deal with spiritual warfare higher than low retaining agencies in OSC and NSC alike. However the NSC gave a higher rating for spiritual warfare than OSC.



The data

Q. No.	Factor	OSC Health Indicator	✓	NSC Health Indicator	✓
58	M's know how to handle spiritual warfare	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	✓	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ●	✓



The key findings

- ✓ Missionaries know to handle spiritual warfare (Q58) was rated significantly lower than other questions of this block in NSC and OSC.
- ✓ Spiritually warfare (Q58) was moderately correlated with retention in NSC and OSC.



What it means

Recognition

Looking at the outcome of the survey it in one way is not surprising that NSC rate spiritual warfare higher than OSC: In recent decades evangelicals in OSC countries doubted the existence or at least day to day reality of Satan. After the Enlightenment you are not taken seriously when you believe in spiritual powers that have a personality and have one leader, Satan or as he was known 'the devil'. Therefore it is perhaps not surprising that this receives only a moderate rating. Perhaps this is an acknowledgement by mission leaders that their missionaries have too little experience in countering spiritual warfare and that they need to give them better preparation. . In NSC countries, the power of satanic forces is experienced daily in the whole area of daily life and Mission Agencies know they need to deal with that. Are OSC Mission Agencies infected by secularisation here? In Holland, someone made a comparison between several theological universities and he said that at one university (liberal) Satan walked in Dutch wooden shoes, so his presence was very clear. At another, he walked in fine Italian shoes, and at the third, he walked in socks. In the last case, he was there, but you could hardly hear him and the students seemed to forget about him. In the OSC he walks on socks, but it is dangerous when Christians forget about him. That forgetting about this biblical and practical truth has consequences that are shown in the reduced retention rate of agencies. Those that have a high retention rate see the importance of spiritual warfare, while low retaining agencies rate this topic lower.

What is surprising is that in both OSC and NSC spiritual warfare is rated lower than the other topics in ministry. Why is this? Looking at Ephesians 6 Paul focuses our attention on the spiritual reality we are part of, and how important it is to fight in a spiritual way. Perhaps the mission executives realise the significance of this topic but feel the lack of equipping and experience of their missionaries or the limits of their pragmatic dealing? It seems that not only OSC can learn from NSC, but that both can learn from Scripture. Would our total, global retention rate go up when we would more radically take spiritual warfare as our reality and integrate this in our policies and practices?

Issues to deal with

In dealing with this subject, it is fundamental that the right balance is found between the correct biblical and theological framework, and the daily practice on the field. A combination of both is required as Paul Hiebert articulates in the chapter on *Spiritual Warfare and Worldview*:

“Much literature on spiritual warfare has been written by missionaries who are forced to question their Western denial of the spirit realities of this world through encounters with witchcraft, spiritism, and demon possession, and who base their studies on experience and look for biblical texts to justify their views. These studies generally lack solid, comprehensive, theological reflection on the subject. A second viewpoint is set forth by biblical scholars who seek to formulate a theological framework for understanding spiritual warfare but who lack a deep understanding of the bewildering array of beliefs in spirit realities found in religions around the world. Consequently, it is hard to apply their findings in the specific contexts in which ministry occurs”¹.

This article wants to stress the importance of this subject and the need to develop our understanding of this in our personal life and ministry. Three points of knowledge are basic:

1. We have to know (of) the enemy

Paul in Ephesians 6:10-20 teaches what Daniel heard in Daniel 10:13, 20-21, we live in a spiritual reality. Lucifer, a prominent angel called to bear God’s light is, in his disobedience towards his Creator, trying to ruin God’s creation and the people that want to follow Him. In his ministry, Paul is aware of this fact (2 Corinthians 2:11). That is the reason why he looks at things from a spiritual perspective and responds appropriately in whatever he does in his ministry. In an article on Strategic Prayer, John D. Robb puts the strategy of our enemy in the following words that are applicable for New and Old Sending Countries:

“Both Satan and his powers are dedicated to destroying the human beings who are made in the image of God. Satan is the master deceiver, the author of idolatry, who seeks to dominate the world by undermining faith in God. Twisting values and promoting false ideologies. He infiltrates institutions, governments, communications media, educational systems and religious bodies, using them to seduce humankind over to the worship of money, fame, success, power, pleasure, science, art, politics and religious idols. Socio-spiritual forces of evil clench societies in a dark, destructive grip in two related ways. The first is by openly idolatrous and cultic covenants and the second through false patterns of thinking which blind people to the reality of God and the hope He brings”².

If this is right, all parts of integral or holistic mission need spiritual back up!

1 William David Taylor, *Global Missiology for the 21st Century: The Iguassu Dialogue, Globalisation of Mission Series*, (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2000), p. 163.

2 D. Winter Ralph and C. Hawthorne Steven, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement : A Reader*, 3rd/associate editors Darrell R. Dorr, D. Bruce Graham, Bruce A. Koch ed. (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1999), p. 146.

2. We have to know ourselves

In this spiritual battle there is only one way to survive: standing firm in the faith. 1 Peter 5:9, "...because you know that your brothers *throughout the world* are undergoing the same kind of sufferings", (emphasis mine). Dr. Neil T. Anderson in *Victory over Darkness*³ emphasizes knowing who you are in Christ as your strength: this requires daily discipline (1 Corinthians 10:12) and a close walk to the Lord.

3. We have to know our God

Jesus promised His church to be with them always, to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:20). To Him has been given all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). With His resources and promise, the Church is able to triumph, personally and in its ministry. In Ephesians 6:10-20 Paul writes about the importance of the spiritual armour, and note that there is only one offensive weapon: the Word of God (cf. Matthew 4, Jesus engaging in spiritual warfare) The interesting thing in this is that we are called not to fight Satan as our primary objective, but to live and work for God and when Satan comes on our way we deal with him. This however does not mean things will go our way all the time. In these days of the tension between the 'now' and 'not yet' the church must engage with suffering (see the examples of triumph and persecution in the book of Acts). Therefore, it is crucial that the saints persevere and are faithful to their Lord.

3 Neil T. Anderson, *Victory over the Darkness : With Study Guide* (London: Monarch, 2002).



Case study

author

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day. And God said, “Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water.” So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. God called the expanse “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day. And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day. And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.”

So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day. And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the

livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground— everything that has the breath of life in it— I give every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning— the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens— and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground—the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground— trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Asshur.



In the real world

Who? → When? ↓	Home Church	Missionary	Mission Agencies	External Partners
Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teach the reality of spiritual warfare to old and young ➤ Be obedient in following the Lord ➤ Be a bible based church, faithful to the Lord ➤ Be a praying church ➤ Teach and practice deliverance from evil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Be faithful and live sanctified ➤ Know how to handle spiritual warfare in personal life and ministry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Be a praying agency ➤ Have insight in the spiritual dynamics of the ministry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support ministry through education and training on how to handle spiritual warfare ➤ Offer opportunities for rest after warfare: retreats etc. ➤ Ministry of prayer for kingdom workers
Recruitment				
Preparation				
On field				
(Crisis)				
Furlough				
Re-entry				

Personal Care



The facts

Personal Care covers a wide range of factors that concern individuals being able to function well and do the ministry they are called to. This includes family issues, social and spiritual needs and health and safety considerations.

The area of personal care is very important with strong correlation with retention in both OSC and NSC. This correlation was across the majority of factors (9 of 14 in OSC and 10 in NSC) although there were interesting differences between OSC and NSC.



The data

Q. No.	Factor	OSC		NSC	
		Health Indicator	✓	Health Indicator	✓
42	There is a free flow of communication to and from the leadership	○○○○○○●●●●	✓	○○○○○○●●●●	
62	Opportunities are provided for a ministry/role for the spouse	○○○○○○●●●●	✓	○○○○○○●●●●	
63	M's have adequate administrative and practical support on the field	○○○○○○●●●●	✓	○○○○○○●●●●	✓

71	Missionary teams are effective in providing each other with mutual support	○○○○●●●●●●		○○○○○○●●●●	✓
72	Effective pastoral care exists at a field level (preventative and in crises)	○○●●●●●●●●		○○○○○○●●●●	✓
73	Interpersonal conflicts are resolved in a timely and appropriate manner	○○○●●●●●●●		○○○○●●●●●●	✓
74	Emphasis is placed on the maintenance and growth of personal spiritual life	○○○○○○○○●●●	✓	○○○○○○○○●●●	✓
75	There are satisfactory schooling opportunities for M's' children	○○○○○○○●●●●		○○○○●●●●●●	✓
76	Health care services for M's/missionary families are satisfactory	○○○○○○○○●●●		○○○○●●●●●●	✓
77	Time for an annual vacation or holiday is provided	○○○○○○○○○○●	✓	○○○○○○○○●●●	✓
78	Risk assessment and contingency planning is in place in all fields	○○○○○○○○●●●	✓	○○○○●●●●●●	✓
79	Home churches are encouraged to be involved in the life and ministry of their missionary	○○○○○○○○○○●	✓	○○○○○●●●●●	✓
87	Re-entry arrangements/ programs are provided for M's commencing home leave	○○○○○●●●●●	✓	○○○●●●●●●●	
88	Formal debriefing is undertaken during home leave	○○○○○○○○●●●	✓	○○○●●●●●●●	



The key findings

- ✓ The average over all issues on Personal care was highly correlated with retention in NSC and OSC.
- ✓ Effective teams (Q71), Pastoral care on field level (Q72) and interpersonal conflict resolution (Q73) were correlated with retention in NSC, but not so much in OSC (unexpected result). In OSC it was also rated significantly lower than in NSC (individualistic culture?).
- ✓ Time for annual vacation (Q77) was rated extremely high and correlated with high retention.
- ✓ Involvement of home church in life of missionary (Q79) was rated very high in OSC and correlated to retention (current missiological paradigm in OSC); it was rated significantly lower rating in NSC and there was only a mild correlation with retention (RRP) in NSC (logistic and financial limitations in NSC?).
- ✓ Risk assessment and contingency planning (Q78) was clearly correlated with retention, in NSC even more than in OSC.
- ✓ Access to Health care (Q76) was rated in OSC significantly higher than in NSC, yet in NSC we found a stronger correlation with retention.
- ✓ MK schooling opportunities (Q75) was rated higher in OSC and was correlated with retention (for preventative attrition RRP) in NSC but not in OSC (taken for granted in OSC?).
- ✓ Administrative and practical support (Q63) received very high rating in NSC and was moderately correlated with high retention in NSC and OSC.



What it means

The area of Personal Care brings together all the factors that were rated which are about the support and well being of the missionary, their spouse and family.

Some have said “they don’t make them like they used to” referring to the missionaries today who seem to require more looking after and are perceived as less resilient than previous generations. Whether this is true or not, needs to be the subject of a book itself: we do not have the space here to fully explore that. However it does seem, to many people in different fields, that ensuring peoples functional needs are met and that their relationships are healthy and supportive, allows them to function well as people. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs is a well tested and widely accepted explanation of this. Simply put he says:

Level 1: reduce current physical discomforts first: hunger, thirst, pain, air, warmth or shade, smells, balance, noise, light, and rest (sleep). When those are satisfied enough now...

Level 2: We try to fill our need to feel safe enough in the near future. Safety comes from trusting that our level-one needs and protection from local dangers will be reliably met in the coming days and weeks (our safety zone). In our society, that translates into believing that we'll have a dependable source of money to buy those securities. The safety zone is short for some people, longer for fear-based (wounded) others. Maslow suggested that when we feel comfortable and safe enough, we then try to fill...

Level 3: our need for companionship: our primitive need to feel accepted by, and part of, a group of other people. We need to feel we belong to (are accepted by) a family, tribe, group, or clan. The alternative is feeling we're alone in the world, which is not only lonely, but less safe.

Level 4: our need to be recognized as special and valuable by our group. We need to be more than just a featureless face in the crowd, we need to be known and appreciated.

The first four levels of Maslow's Hierarchy are not really about working: the fifth is often work or creativity related, but the hierarchy shows that you cannot function well at level 5 until the lower needs are met. The factors of Personal Care come into those lower levels but are foundation areas to enable you to do work or ministry well.

Level 5: the need to be self actualized. A key reason people still value Maslow's ideas is the universal longing to be fully ourselves. That implies we each have unique talents and abilities that we long to develop and use to benefit the world if all our other need-levels are filled well enough, often enough. Then we can become creative, energized, centred, focused, and productive and live "at our highest personal potential." (or in Christian terms, as whole as we can be this side of Christ's full recreation and renewal).¹

Maslow's theory is borne out here. Across the whole area of Personal Care all of the factors correlated with retention in OSC or NSC, and whilst some received a reasonable rating many factors did not and the overall rating of four and five for OSC and NSC respectively was one of the poorer areas examined. For OSC, re-entry (Q87 *Re-entry arrangements/ programs are provided for Missionaries commencing home leave*) and debriefing (Q88 *Formal debriefing is undertaken during home leave*) is

1 Adapted from Peter K. Gerlach, "Building on Dr. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs", (2005), <http://sfhelp.org/02/needlevels.htm>.

important for retention and an area in which further work is needed. This specific area is discussed in detail in Chapter 34.

OSC and NSC share strong correlations with retention in support structures (Q63 *Missionaries have adequate administrative and practical support on the field*), and spiritual life [Q74 *Emphasis is placed on the maintenance and growth of personal spiritual life*], holiday/vacation provision [Q77 *Time for an annual vacation or holiday is provided*], safety [Q78 *Risk assessment and contingency planning is in place in all fields*] and home church involvement [Q79 *Home churches are encouraged to be involved in the life and ministry of their missionary*].

As we discuss in detail in Chapter 19, the whole issue of work/life balance and the overall workload of missionaries is a big issue and so it is no surprise that practical and administrative support on the field should correlate strongly with retention. Also the fact that missionaries increasingly see themselves as specialists desiring to make best use of their skills and perhaps (although some might say this was always a problem) see administration as a distraction. However this issue did not receive a high rating in OSC or NSC and suggests that the home office (that responded in ReMAP II) feels frustrated or limited in their ability to provide as much support as they would like or perceive necessary. Time for an annual vacation received a very high rating and correlated with high retention. However, when seen in the light of the rating given to Question 61 [Q61 *Missionaries are generally not overloaded in the amount of work they do*] (discussed fully in Chapter 19) we should perhaps have asked the additional question “Do missionaries use all the holiday/vacation allowance provided?”

The ratings and correlation for Questions 71,72 and 73, [Q71 *Missionary teams are effective in providing each other with mutual support*], [Q72 *Effective pastoral care exists at a field level (preventative and in crises)*] and [Q73 *Interpersonal conflicts are resolved in a timely and appropriate manner*], were somewhat surprising and so are discussed in detail in the subsequent two chapters. Likewise [Q76 *Health care services for missionaries/missionary families are satisfactory*] was rated highly by OSC and yet correlated strongly with retention in NSC, although this may suggest that across the majority of OSC agencies there is an acceptable/workable level of health care access. This may have been developed in recent years with insurance companies in OSC requiring health care access or insurance cover for health care access or Medevac as a prerequisite for any insurance cover. With insurance provision being less widespread in NSC, any lack of local access to health care may result in return (and often permanent return) to the sending country, the only option. Effectively access to health care appears to be taken for granted in OSC where as it does not seem to be the norm in NSC and therefore, where it is present, it can make a significant difference to retention. Question 75 [Q75 *There are satisfactory schooling opportunities for missionaries'*

children] had a similar result and again appears to be an ‘expected norm’ in OSC agencies.



Caring for the missionary family

Márcia Tostes², Antioch Mission³, Brazil

Laurindo and his wife Andreia were sent to West Africa in 2001, with their two young girls (aged 3 years and 2 years). Two years later, around Christmas time, they were having a hard time with their oldest daughter Ada. They tried to explain that financial support from home had not been enough. For that reason, they could not afford any Christmas presents. Ada was very disappointed. Then she asked, “No Christmas presents? Not even from Aunt Antioquia?” Ada was actually referring to Antioch Mission’s special Christmas gift to each missionary child. She feels so closely related to her parents sending agency that she lovingly refers to our agency as a person!

Sadly, it has not always been like this at Antioch Mission. Some families had suffered the consequences of being pioneer missionaries in our early years, due to minimal resources and support.

Through the experience and knowledge received by connecting with member care groups, Antioch Mission has developed a “Caring for the Family” programme that includes:

1. Family Training – In our Mission Training Course⁴, we have a specific subject on missionary family. The subject covers issues such as Family life cycle⁵, Missionary life cycle⁶ and its implications; stress on the family as a whole; stress on the children; how to maintain the bond with family and church back in the sending country. When there are teenagers, we spend a special weekend with them to address issues such as loss and change, cultural adaptation, etc.
2. Suggestion for Choice of Education model – It is important for the family to understand the pros and cons of different models of education, so that they can make the best choices for their children. A

2 Márcia Tostes has been serving as a missionary with Antioch Mission for the last 20 years. She is currently the Director for Training and Pastoral Care. She, and her husband Silas, trained at All Nations Christian College in England, where she gained a vision for pastoral care. Since then, she has specialized in Family Therapy.

3 Antioch Mission is a Brazilian inter-denominational mission agency. It was founded in 1976.

4 The Mission Training Course is the Orientation course for new missionaries.

5 Family life cycle refers to the stages that a family goes through: a couple just married, a couple with young children, a couple with teenagers, a couple with children going to university, and so on.

6 Missionary life cycle refers to the stages that a missionary goes through over the years of missionary life: from training and selection, sending to the field, furlough, second term on field, furlough and so on.

missionary family needs to understand that these choices affect the future, so education planning should start from the early years. If wise choices are not made, families will return earlier.

3. **Family Brief and Debrief** – As the family prepares to leave for the mission field, all the family members are called for a family briefing. We include some exercises to help them prepare for the pain of leaving. For example, each person is asked to say what they would like to take to the field country. For young children who cannot write, they are asked to draw the object. We will then talk about the things they said. When something is not possible, questions are asked in a creative way about how they will cope with this and what alternatives there are. On one occasion, a child said that he would like to take the local church to the field. Talking this through, he decided that it would be impossible to take all the tiles, windows, benches and so on. Talking a little bit more, it became clear that what he was really going to miss were the worship services and songs in Portuguese. He then decided that if he took some CDs, and if the church could send him more CDs during the year, that would make things easier for him.
4. **Family Therapist** – It is important to have a trained therapist to listen to the whole family. This person will keep in contact with the candidates from the time of training until they reach the field. They communicate via e-mail or telephone calls.
5. **Family History** – During the Mission Training Course, all the candidates are invited to look through their family history, both the single and married people. Many come from broken families and issues need to be addressed. We also find out how marital relationships are getting on and how the children are coping with changes as the family prepares to embark on missionary work.
6. **Creativity** – When working in a poorer context of doing missions, one has to be very creative to offer care. Through creative care of missionary children, we hope to bring a sense of belonging to a large loving family within Antioch Mission.
 - At Christmas, Antioch Mission sends a special gift to each missionary child. Our partnership with churches and Christian organisations allows us to organize special fundraising events such as a bazaar to sell second-hand items during our annual mission conference. All the profits from the special events are used to buy gifts such as children's CDs and books for our missionary children around the world. The Christmas gifts convey a very important message to these children: they are important and someone cares for them.

- We have also developed a 'journal' for the children, which they receive once every three months. Every issue includes a picture of one of the missionary children, with information on where they live, what they like and so on. As third-culture kids, the missionary children relate better to people who have gone through similar experiences. When they receive the journal, they can read about other children in a similar situation as themselves.

We asked our missionaries that were sent to West Africa how they feel about the "Caring for the Family" programme. They said: "*The philosophy of Antioch Mission is about being a family, so we feel we have friends on the other side. Our children consider themselves as part of the mission. It is not just something that belongs to Mum and Dad. They have their little journal, their special Christmas gift, and so on. When they visit the mission headquarters they feel at home. They feel they are important, not for being missionary kids, but for being themselves.*"

Discussion questions:

1. What are some problems faced by missionary families on the field which could be prevented by better member care directed to the missionary family?
2. Does your organization have a member care programme for the missionary family? What areas are normally covered on this program? What other areas would you include in future?



Pastoral care to Costa Rican missionaries

Marcos Padgett⁷, Costa Rica

Note: The names used in this case study have been changed to protect the identity of individuals and the mission agencies involved.

In September 2005, Costa Rican pastor David Sánchez and his wife travelled to Central Asia to provide pastoral care to Costa Rican Missionaries. The following is a brief report of why they did it, how they did it, and what they did.

⁷ Marcos Padgett is a professor at Seminario ESEPA in San Jose Costa Rica, where he has served for 15 years. He is currently the director of the Cross-Cultural Ministries programme. Marcos was the ReMAP II country coordinator for Costa Rica.

Why did they visit missionaries on the field?

The mission movement from Latin America (which includes Costa Rica) is a relatively young force. The first missionaries sent from Costa Rica went out about 25 years ago. Many things were learnt by trial and error. Two key events had led one Costa Rican mission agency to begin a program in pastoral care.

The first event involved domestic violence and a missionary couple. When they returned from the field, the problem was not solved until they wife turned to a government agency, where she was able to receive counselling and protection for herself and the children. The director of the mission agency, Carlo Constanza, shared how frustrated he was to see that the church had not been able to solve this dilemma.

The second event involved a couple sent out from one of the mega churches. In time the family returned to Costa Rica due to health problems, but they found no support from their sending church because few members knew who they were.

The above mentioned events are the catalysts for a new pastoral care project that includes:

- ✓ preventive care (pre-field interviews and counselling),
- ✓ corrective care (a mission centre that will provide housing for missionaries on furlough with counselling and medical treatment as required),
- ✓ active care (pastoral visits on the field and follow-up) and
- ✓ re-entry care to help missionaries returning from the field with adjustment to their home culture.

This project is still in the fund raising stage. A proposal is being prepared to be presented to a foundation, and some individuals have donated funds. Some professionals are also giving medical care and counselling, either free or at a greatly reduced cost.

How did they go to the field?

David and his wife had left Costa Rica for the Central Asian country without the required visa. They had tried five times before their trip, but they were unable to obtain a visa. On the day of departure, David had almost given up hope but he persevered in faith. In answer to prayer, a fax arrived less than three hours before they left for the airport. The fax informed David that they had to go to the embassy in a neighbouring country to collect the visa.

The funds required for this pastoral visit was over US\$5,000. When one keeps in mind that a well-paid professional in Costa Rica only earns about US\$1,000 per month, we can understand why the cost of the trip was a

big obstacle. The total amount was eventually raised through the sacrificial giving from individuals, from churches who had missionaries on the field, and a Missions Coffee event. Tickets were sold, coffee was served and the project presented to the attendees: over \$800 was raised at the event.

What did they do on the field?

David and his wife held a three day seminar using *The Peacemaker* material by Ken Sande. Originally, this activity was planned for only the Costa Rican missionaries. However, due to the great need of other missionaries from Latin America, they were also invited and many attended the seminar. The missionaries met at a central location. The venue was a hotel run by a Christian, who allowed them the use of the facilities for free.

After the seminar, David and his wife visited in the homes of each Costa Rican missionary family and they spent three days with each family. They were not there to supervise or inspect the ministry of the missionary. Their purpose was to find out how the missionary was doing and to help deal with personal issues and problems. This trip has confirmed the urgent need for pastoral care on the field.

Recommendations from Pastor Sánchez and Carlo Constanza

1. Remember the purpose for pastoral care is to see how each missionary as a person is doing: a pastoral care trip is not to measure ministry results.
2. Be merciful and pastoral. A pastor cares for his sheep, even if he has to scold or correct.
3. Allot sufficient time for pastoral care.
4. Do not skimp on resources: invest what it takes to give good pastoral care.
5. The visitor needs to have the gifts of pastoring.
6. Make ministry and pastoral care to the missionary the priority: do not go as a tourist.
7. Have the necessary tools, or know where to find them, in order to minister effectively.
8. Prepare well before you go.
9. Get lots of prayer support and be ready to persevere through difficulties.
10. Take extra money. Be prepared to handle a delayed flight, an unexpected charge, or some other emergency.

Discussion questions:

1. Could several churches or organizations in your country share resources and work in partnership to provide better pastoral care to the missionaries serving on the same field?
2. What are the advantages of a pastoral visit to missionaries on the field? How often should a pastoral visit be made? Who should make the visit? What could be done in preparation and during a pastoral visit? What follow up may be required after the pastoral visit?

*Personal care of our missionaries*

Antonia Leonora van der Meer⁸, Brazil

In Brazil, there is a growing understanding about the member care needs of our missionaries. More agencies and churches are seeking to care for and learning to listen to their missionaries. In spite of our limited resources, we are encouraged that Brazilian missionaries are receiving better personal care than they did ten years ago.

Having previously served as a missionary, I have considerable interest in the personal care of missionaries. I was a Brazilian missionary in Angola between 1984 and 1995, when that country was at war and under Marxism. Five other Brazilian missionaries were in Angola when I arrived. That number grew to around thirty about ten years later.

During that time, pastoral visits were something we rarely experienced. In 1991, the father of a missionary made a pastoral visit to us. Everyone looked forward to his visit, and a retreat for Brazilian missionaries was organized. The retreat was the very first time that Brazilian missionaries serving in Angola could share their fears, frustrations and questions in an atmosphere of trust and mutual encouragement.

Eventually, I returned to Brazil to serve at the Evangelical Missions Centre. I proposed that retreats should be organized for missionaries on furlough or after re-entry, in order to offer them restoration and renewal. A Brazilian pastor and a psychologist shared the same vision, and so in 1996, we began the retreats. Later, in 1999, the Brazilian Member Care

⁸ Antonia Leonora van der Meer served in Angola between 1984 and 1995, where she saw much suffering among local people and among missionaries. She has been serving at the Evangelical Missions Centre for 10 years. At present, she is Director of the Mission Training Program, and one of the leaders of the Brazilian Member Care Association. She has just completed her doctorate, and her Dissertation was on 'Understanding and Responding to the Needs of Brazilian Missionaries Serving in Contexts of Suffering'.

Association was founded to serve missionaries in several other additional ways.

Missionaries from a variety of agencies and denominations, with field experience on all continents have taken part in the Personal Care Retreats. Some of these missionaries were sent by leaders of agencies and churches who recognized the value of such retreats.

These are week-long retreats with a program that is built around the need to renew their personal walk with the Lord. Each retreat has a flexible and un-crowded agenda. It is a time to consider issues like: re-evaluating our calling; the pain of re-entry; physical and emotional care of missionary families; finding a rhythm of work and rest and the specific struggles of couples and of singles. It has been a healing experience for missionaries to be together, to be listened to by people who understand, to have a relaxed time together without high demands or expectations, to see how similar their experiences are, and to be free to weep.

Most missionaries leave a retreat feeling restored and renewed. Some open their hearts on the first opportunity, while others only on the last day. For those with more severe problems, we will ask them for permission to involve their agency or a professional to obtain further help.

We have also been able to organize some Personal Care Retreats in Angola and Mozambique, for Brazilian missionaries on the field.

Let me share a few lessons we have learnt from the retreats and our interaction with missionaries.

Special care for singles and families

Singles need special pastoral care. They need to know and understand the reality of life on the field, both the dangers and the challenges. They need help to integrate well in teams, where all can contribute and be respected as partners in ministry. Single missionaries often feel lonely, but they can learn to support each other.

Couples will also need pastoral care for their families, which are subject to high stress levels when living in a foreign country and culture. It could be helpful to organize special conferences for missionary couples or families, so that they can feel free to express their need for help.

Furlough and re-entry

During furlough, the time spent at home is not easy for many missionaries. They do not expect to have problems in adapting back home, but many will discover how foreign and insecure they feel, and how little people at home understand their struggles.

Missionaries generally arrive home feeling very tired from their work on the field. They expect to rest and to be renewed, but not all churches understand these expectations: some churches will cut their support, while some will organize a packed agenda. These churches do not realise how important it is to continue supporting their missionaries, and to offer time for rest and relaxation.

Other churches and agencies, however, receive their missionaries well. They provide care for their needs and give special attention to their children. Many missionaries need help in their process of reintegration. Churches can give practical help (such as with shopping and banking) to make the reverse culture shock less painful.

Missionaries may also arrive home with many pains to deal with. They will seek opportunities to speak to their local church and its leadership (but of course not on the day of their arrival!). The leaders of their sending church and agency should be ready to offer pastoral care. They need to listen to the missionaries, to find out individual struggles and pains, and to determine what kind of help should be given

Life on the mission field

While our missionaries are on the field, it is necessary to offer pastoral care, so that they may overcome any difficulties that arise. Ninety percent of the Brazilian missionaries feel assured of receiving regular prayer support. It is also important for each missionary to receive pastoral visits and this is becoming a more common practice lately.

Discussion questions:

1. In what ways does your organization respond to the need for spiritual renewal and rest of your missionaries:
 - a. at home during furloughs and after re-entry?
 - b. while they are serving on the mission field?
2. Would it be possible for different missionary-sending agencies in your country to work in partnership to improve pastoral care services to missionaries? If yes, what could be done to provide better personal care to your country's missionaries serving on the same field?



In the real world

Who? → When? ↓	Home Church	Missionary	Mission Agencies	External Partners
Continuous				
Recruitment				
Preparation			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pay attention to the whole family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Therapist service for family ➤ Facilitate partnership in sharing knowledge and resources
On field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Financial and material support ➤ Mental support ➤ Pastoral support, regular communication or visits ➤ Prayer support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Take care of work / life balance ➤ Be open about needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Policy of not overloading missionaries 	
(Crisis)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide debriefing opportunities
Furlough				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Counselling and medical treatment in mission centre ➤ Provide debriefing opportunities ➤ Organize retreats
Re-entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support practically and pastorally 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide debriefing opportunities

Personal Care Team Building and Functioning



The facts

As we said in Chapter 14, the team is the operating norm for much of the missions' world and yet here we find that the effectiveness and reality of those teams is questionable. OSC demonstrate individualism and less regard for mutual support and conflict resolution than NSC and it is not strongly linked to retention whereas in NSC it is linked much more strongly. Overall the results do show that OSC and NSC wrestle with the same issues and see the same struggles and weaknesses on team building and functioning.



The data

Q. No.	Factor	OSC Health Indicator	✓	NSC Health Indicator	✓
42	There is a free flow of communication to and from the leadership	○○○○○○●●●●	✓	○○○○○○●●●●	
57	M's are given room to shape and develop their own ministry	○○○○○○○○●●	✓	○○○○○○○○●●	✓
63	M's have adequate administrative and practical support on the field	○○○○○○●●●●	✓	○○○○○○●●●●	✓

71	Missionary teams are effective in providing each other with mutual support	○○○○●●●●●●●●	○○○○○○●●●●●●	✓
73	Interpersonal conflicts are resolved in a timely and appropriate manner	○○○●●●●●●●●●	○○○○●●●●●●●●	✓



The key findings

- ✓ The rating of Effective missionary teams (Q71) gave a weak correlation with retention in OSC and a stronger one in NSC (community oriented society).
- ✓ In NSC rating of interpersonal conflict resolution (Q73) was correlated with retention.
- ✓ Missionaries given room to shape their ministry (Q57) received very high rating and correlated with high retention.
- ✓ Missionaries given administrative and practical support on the field (Q63) received very high rating in NSC correlated with high retention in OSC and NSC.



What it means

“A team is a small number of people with complementary skills, who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and an approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable”

Katzenbach et al (1992)

A team is characterised as a relatively small number of people (3-12) which share:

- ✓ A common goal
- ✓ The rewards and responsibilities
- ✓ Goal of team takes precedence
- ✓ Needs of team take precedence

The goal of the team taking precedence is vital and yet missionaries are often the worst material for traditional team formation. They are often responding to an individualised call and have the examples to follow, of

pioneer (often solo) missionaries. To allow the needs of team take precedence we need to teach on sacrifice and provoke people during training to see how they will react and make them realise that their own preferences will often be challenged and thwarted if those of the team are fulfilled.

Within the area of team building we see different emphases in OSC and NSC. Both demonstrated a correlation with retention on the ability for missionaries to shape their own ministries [Q42 *There is a free flow of communication to and from the leadership*] and this received a good rating in OSC and NSC. Likewise administrative and practical support on the field [Q63 *Missionaries have adequate administrative and practical support on the field*] correlated with retention and received almost as high a rating.

Where we see differences was on communication with leadership [Q42 *There is a free flow of communication to and from the leadership*] where it correlated with retention in OSC but not NSC. Both gave a fairly good rating for this and perhaps in the highly relational communities of NSC communication happens across most agencies and therefore would explain why we saw no significant difference between high and low retaining agencies.

Another area where the relational culture may help to explain some results is with Questions 71 [Q71 *Missionary teams are effective in providing each other with mutual support*] and 73 [Q73 *Interpersonal conflicts are resolved in a timely and appropriate manner*]. Neither of these correlated with retention in OSC and this may be due to the highly individualistic nature of those societies. People in OSC are often fiercely independent and reticent to rely on others and this would certainly begin to explain the significantly lower rating this received in OSC compared to NSC. This result does however, appear to be contradictory to the research on generational issues which suggests that the boomer generation (born between 1946 and 1965) was very team orientated, demanding that they be allowed to function in teams settings. However the same research also suggests that the same generational cohort are also highly outcome focused and perhaps this, particularly when combined with the strong protestant work-ethic, overrides the priority of team functioning in the search for high performance and satisfaction of personal goals aspirations and self-worth. Certainly one question we did not ask was the average age of mission partners in each of the agencies surveyed and this would be a helpful area to explore in further research to make more sense of these findings.

In NSC the relational values often dictate that a prerequisite to being able to work and function with someone to achieve something is the establishment of a meaningful personal relationship. In Asia I learnt the importance of drinking tea with the government officials I worked with. Spending time asking about their family and feelings was vitally important

but strange to a Westerner used to a work environment where such discussions were seen, at best as luxuries for when time was plentiful, or at worst, distractions from the work in hand. Likewise the fact that any conflict must be resolved as a matter of priority – to the degree that resolution supersedes the importance of the task is a reality in NSC, although there was recognition that doing this was difficult with a rating of 4 in NSC and an even lower 3 in OSC.

One issue that often seems misunderstood is the difference between a group and a team. If a collection of people have little in common other than their geographic location (something that often occurs in mission where there are diverse individual ministries happening in one place) those people are more of a group than a team. A team needs to have some commonality, some shared focus to glue them together. In its absence, it is usually better to recognise that you have a group and not place expectations of team behaviour upon them.

When you are forming a team there are several factors to consider:

- ✓ How long can you give to team building?
- ✓ How committed are the members to becoming teams?
- ✓ How many members are there?
- ✓ Are they all in same place?
- ✓ How much history does the group already have?
- ✓ Is that history positive or negative?
- ✓ How strong and credible is the leader?

You can use different team formation tools:

- ✓ Myers Briggs (MBTI)
- ✓ DiSC
- ✓ Belbin
- ✓ Strength Finders

One model for formation is Bruce Tuckman's 1965 Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing team-development model. This useful model has been tested around the world for team formation and development. It outlines the normal process through which a group of people goes when you place them together and require them to develop a team (usually to achieve a task).

Forming - Stage 1

High dependence on leader for guidance and direction. Little agreement on team aims other than received from leader. Individual roles and responsibilities are unclear. Leader must be prepared to answer lots of

questions about the team's purpose, objectives and external relationships. Processes are often ignored. Members test tolerance of system and leader. Leader directs (similar to Situational Leadership® 'Telling' mode).

Storming - Stage 2

Decisions don't come easily within group. Team members vie for position as they attempt to establish themselves in relation to other team members and the leader, who might receive challenges from team members. Clarity of purpose increases but plenty of uncertainties persist. Cliques and factions form and there may be power struggles. The team needs to be focused on its goals to avoid becoming distracted by relationships and emotional issues. Compromises may be required to enable progress. Leader coaches (similar to Situational Leadership® 'Selling' mode).

Norming - Stage 3

Agreement and consensus is largely formed among team, who respond well to facilitation by leader. Roles and responsibilities are clear and accepted. Big decisions are made by group agreement. Smaller decisions may be delegated to individuals or small teams within group. Commitment and unity is strong. The team may engage in fun and social activities. The team discusses and develops its processes and working style. There is general respect for the leader and some of the leadership is more shared by the team. Leader facilitates and enables (similar to the Situational Leadership® 'Participating' mode).

Performing - Stage 4

The team is more strategically aware; the team knows clearly why it is doing what it is doing. The team has a shared vision and is able to stand on its own feet with no interference or participation from the leader. There is a focus on over-achieving goals, and the team makes the most of the decisions against the criteria agreed with the leader. The team has a high degree of autonomy. Disagreements occur but now they are resolved within the team positively and necessary changes to processes and structure are made by the team. The team is able to work towards achieving the goal, and also to attend to relationship, style and process issues along the way. Team members look after each other. The team requires delegated tasks and projects from the leader. The team does not need to be instructed or assisted. Team members might ask for assistance from the leader with personal and interpersonal development. Leader delegates and oversees (similar to the Situational Leadership® 'Delegating' mode).

Adjourning - Stage 5

Bruce Tuckman refined his theory around 1975 and added a fifth stage to the Forming Storming Norming Performing model - he called it Adjourning, which is also referred to as Deforming and Mourning. Adjourning is arguably more of an adjunct to the original four stage model rather than a separate next stage - it views the group from a perspective beyond the purpose of the first four stages. The Adjourning phase is certainly very relevant to the people in the group and their well-being, but not to the main task of managing and developing a team, which is clearly central to the original four stages.

Tuckman's fifth stage, Adjourning, is the break-up of the group, hopefully when the **task is completed** successfully, its **purpose fulfilled**; everyone can move on to new things, feeling good about what's been achieved. From an organizational perspective, recognition of and sensitivity to people's vulnerabilities in Tuckman's fifth stage is helpful, particularly if members of the group have been closely bonded and feel a sense of insecurity or threat from this change. Feelings of insecurity would be natural for people who prefer constancy and routine.



Forging a team to paint a vision

Paul Rhoads¹ and Steve Hoke², Church Resource Ministries, USA

Church Resource Ministries (CRM), a North America-based agency focused on leader development in 22 countries. Since the early 1990s, CRM had been concerned about taking better care of staff around the world. In 1999, Paul Rhoads our Vice President for teams, who had skills in forming teams and experience in counselling and staff care, was asked to form a Staff Care Team³.

Rather than starting by listing needs or scheduling trips to staff "hot spots," we began by meeting together for three days every quarter, in order to get to know one another, grow into an organic team, and listen to God. We committed to forging a closely knit team of like-minded people who together could create a vision for where the organization should be and how to get there. In the context of learning each others giftings and

¹ Paul Rhoads, currently Executive Vice President of Church Resource Ministries (CRM), served as the founding director of the Staff Development and Care Team, and now directs CRM's ministry teams around the world.

² Steve Hoke is Vice President of People Development, focusing on staff training and spiritual direction.

³ Refer to our case study "Shaping a Staff Development and Care Team" in chapter 24 on Staff Development.

passions, we discussed and analysed the needs of our teams and individuals and possible solutions.

We began by spending time together in out-of-the-office settings to build relationships and teamwork before we even approached the issue of what we would DO. By spending sufficient time together, having fun, building memories, ministering side-by-side, sharing our passions, spending time in prayer, waiting on God, thinking and talking together over a range of staff care issues, we built deep spiritual linkages and unity: we began to love and trust each other. Out of the transparency emerged trust, and out of trust we began to explore issues such as accountability, care, and support systems.

Only after a year of prayer and consultation were we able to craft the following purpose statement: *We are called to resource team leaders in creating and nurturing grace-filled, safe communities for holistic staff development and care, as well as assisting staff in the areas of spiritual formation, ongoing development, and personal care as needed*

Coming to clarity on our shared vision allowed us, now as a cohesive team, to consider other care models. We started with Kelly O'Donnell's article on "Doing Member Care Well" in which he suggested a way to structure the variety of missionary care (EMQ, 2001, vol.37, pp. 212-222). Toward the end of the first year, we began designing a structure to meet the particular strengths and needs of our organization. Our structure emerged from the functions we had identified, and it morphed frequently as we learned by doing.

We would nurture both individual and family spiritual formation, encourage ministry development as well as provide personal and family life-cycle care. Our goal was simply to obtain healthy leaders and effective ministry. Central in our model was helping each staff member form four support systems or teams of people recruited personally to sustain them over the long-haul (see Figure 1: CRM's Staff Development & Care Ministry Model).

1. First, an **intercession team** of 25 or more was critical to their initial support raising and long-term cross-cultural ministry.
2. Second, the **financial support team** was readily understood for their sustaining role.
3. Third, a small group of **close personal friends** was identified for regular communication and nurture.
4. Finally, a **cluster of mentors** they could access from a distance, both inside and outside of the organization, was identified to help them in areas of spiritual formation, ministry skills, and personal development. Although we

did share the depiction of the model with existing staff, we found it was most helpful for our own planning and ministry.

What did CRM learn about team formation and expansion?

We learned that BEING team must precede DOING care ministry. Team must precede Task. Form must precede Function. Having a team of called and gifted staff to analyse, pray, and respond to staff needs is critical. Even a small team (we started with six) can do a great deal of transformative, proactive and reactive member care. Inclusion of new team members must be very intentional and gradual, but should not be resisted once the initial team gets “formed.” We wonder how we did without such a team for the first 19 years of the organization’s life!

At CRM, we want to be attentive to approaches and trends that are on the horizon that will impact individual staff member’s health and the wider network. Forming a Staff Development and Care team allowed us to build on strengths, and include the giftings of others as needed. It was easier to respond and incorporate fresh ideas as a team, than it had been for one person to constantly sift and respond to ideas and trends in care and training. Gifted teams are better suited to “morph” into responsive shapes than individuals already overwhelmed with responsibility.

Discussion questions:

1. Does your organization form teams for specific ministries? If yes, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of existing teams.
2. How are team members usually recruited? How could recruitment be improved if you became more intentional about inviting key people to become a part of the specific team you are forming?
3. What are the important things to keep in mind when recruiting and forming a staff development and member care team?
4. Why should BEING team precede DOING ministry? What activities can strengthen the relationships within your teams?



Third dimension teams

Steve Richardson⁴, *Pioneers, USA*

The Dixons are veterans of 35 years of ministry to a large unreached people group in Southeast Asia. They testify to the benefit of missionary teams on their field.

Prior to the mid-1980s, they had witnessed dozens of well-intentioned missionaries who came, stayed for a short time, and then returned to their homeland. Then, beginning in about 1985, a different pattern emerged. Young people continued to arrive, but most of them stayed. In fact, whereas the Dixons had laboured virtually alone among this people group for almost two decades, today there are approximately 80 international workers from different agencies who have joined in the harvest.

What had changed? One common distinguishing factor was that new arrivals after 1985 were persons affiliated with organisations that prioritised, or were seriously endeavouring to develop, a *team* approach to ministry. The organisations nurtured a strong sense of community among their personnel on the field.

Research on missionary attrition has shown that “a low sense of organisational connectedness” is an important factor contributing to the early departure of missionaries. If we lose our workers due to inadequate relational ties, perhaps we can keep our workers if we excel in team building.

Defining the objective: what is a missionary team?

When members of the mission community speak of “team,” they normally refer to one of three different concepts of teamwork. For the sake of clarity, we may call these First Dimension, Second Dimension, and Third Dimension teams.

First Dimension Teams are groups of people who identify with one another on the basis of shared ministry calling and/or geographic and organisational affinity. Such “teams” consist of missionaries who happen to be with the same agency, or who work in the same area. They will normally share the same overarching goal.

An “Iron Man” sports event would be analogous to this kind of team. Team mates compete together in the same race, but with little interaction. Strategic cross-pollination of ideas, experience, and resources is limited. Members tend to be individually task-focused, decisions and leadership

⁴ Steve Richardson serves as the president of Pioneers-USA. He lives with his wife, Arlene, and four children in Orlando, Florida. The Richardsons led church-planting teams in Southeast Asia for more than 10 years. The element of team, and specifically third-dimension teams, significantly impacted their work among unreached peoples.

selection occurs democratically, and elected leaders may wield authority somewhat hierarchically. The system tends to be policy-oriented, as there is little opportunity or desire for communication. In this model, it is important that members have been equipped for survival and effective ministry *before* they get to the field.

Second Dimension Teams add a common ministry strategy to the mix. Members are interdependently task-focused as they work out priorities together. Decision making tends to be more consensus-based. People are forced to grapple more with each others' personalities and gifting, and working in concert takes on added significance. Musicians in an orchestra illustrate this kind of teamwork. While Second Dimension Teams reflect a deeper level of interaction and mutual commitment, they are still largely dependent on outside life-support systems for their member development and nurture needs.

Third Dimension Teams introduce a deeper interactive commitment among the members of the team—a desire for ongoing mutual development and encouragement. Such teams are interdependently task *and* member focused. Jesus exhibited this kind of love and concern for the members of his team. He ministered to the multitudes, but never lost sight of the twelve. He was interested in developing them as people, while training and equipping them to do the work of the ministry. These teams will eventually develop their own integrated and holistic life-support system, whereby they detect and meet their own needs: be they spiritual, practical, or strategic.

Third Dimension Teams behave more like a basketball team. Players rarely know what will happen next, but are able to fashion an appropriate response to any situation. Persons from varying backgrounds and representing various levels of preparation can be incorporated more readily.

If we define “team” in this way, then ReMAP II findings suggest our retention statistics will steadily improve.

Generational observations

Developing Third Dimension missionary teams is important for us, especially as we consider the kind of people who now make up the “harvest force.” Youth of today have been described as the ‘with’ generation. We have found that the “third dimension” concept of team is powerfully appealing to them.

Today's missionary recruits want community. We find that people wanting to serve the Lord today are not only asking “what” and “where” but “with whom?” One woman recently mentioned that she would be taking an English teaching job in Bali. “Oh, we have a team there. Would you like

to be part of a team?" I said. "Why, yes!" I could sense excitement in her voice. "How do I join?" Three weeks later she joined the team.

In North America virtually every young person I speak with about serving in missions wants to participate in a dynamic team. Surveys here show that a "sense of belonging" is more important to most people than a particular job or location.

Today's missionary recruits need community. Workers often come with emotional "baggage." What do we do with people who have had the necessary theological training and obviously have much to contribute, but carry with them emotional scars and response patterns that will take years to correct? In our experience Third Dimension Teams are a significant part of the answer.

On the long-term church-planting team in which my wife and I served, some members had come with a great deal of personal baggage including past involvement in drugs and gangs, some had been suicidal, some had been abused as children. By God's grace and the enabling of His Holy Spirit these young people overcoming these (not to mention visa pressures, tent-making pressures, cultural and political hurdles) and this team of approximately 35 young adults continues to be a dynamic spiritual force among a major unreached people group.

Today's missionary recruits are experts at detecting genuine community (as they define it). One successful and highly respected missionary couple shared with me the trauma of their rejection by an agency some years ago, and their subsequent acceptance into a Third Dimension Team with another agency. "We felt rejected by one, and embraced by the other," they recalled. Sometimes the potential recruit may not even be able to articulate what attracts them to one group, or repels them from another. This sense of teamwork, a genuine caring, a deep valuing of each individual, is often at the heart of it. Today's agencies must grapple seriously with the concept of community among their members, both at home and abroad.

Organisational and operational implications

So how have we set about building Third Dimension Teams?

First, *teams are best built within a team-centric organisational culture.* The most effective way to restructure and re-orient is for the whole organisation to begin thinking "team." Leaders, administrators, recruiters, and workers in the field must consciously integrate principles of biblical teamwork into their work.

In our experience the concept of teams needs to be written into the mission statement or core values of the agency if you are serious about developing teams. First Dimension structures tend to resist Third Dimension

elements much like a body rejects incompatible transplanted organs. This does not mean that there is no need for strong leadership in a team-based organisation. On the contrary, strong and capable leadership in teams and team-oriented organisations is critical. However, the manner in which these leaders are chosen, conduct themselves, and wield their authority, is different.

Secondly, we had to *begin viewing the team as a primary locus of personnel development*, including member care. For too long we have thought of care as coming primarily from the outside, from “home.” Who is primarily responsible for recruiting new personnel in your agency? For determining ministry qualifications? For mentoring missionaries and developing them with appropriate accountability over time? For crisis management? The team should play an important role in these activities, in concert with other back-up systems in the organisational structure.

Thirdly, *responsibility and authority had to be divested to teams, within the context of an inter-dependent network*. Teams must be “liberated” if they are to be truly effective. A new team had to be given the freedom to try, and to possibly fail, in order to ultimately succeed. Decentralisation of responsibility and authority is critical in a team-oriented structure. Who allocates personnel? Who fashions the ministry strategy? Who determines ministry roles and establishes financial guidelines? The first steps of empowering teams in this direction may be traumatic. Mistakes will be made by inexperienced personnel, but in time they will rise to the responsibility, and feel a greatly increased sense of ownership and belonging.

Fourthly, *leadership development, at both the team and regional levels, needed to be the primary concern of an agency’s upper level management*. In any structure where responsibility and authority are decentralised, we find it is critical that leaders be mentored and equipped for the task. In a conventional structure, only a few leaders need be trained. In a team-oriented structure, many local leaders must be trained for the task. Everything depends upon the skill with which these leaders are able to facilitate the needs and ministries of the teams. While this may seem like an overwhelming task initially, tremendous energy and initiative will be unleashed in the process. In time, the organisation will have no shortage of trained, capable leaders available to assume positions of broader responsibility.

Conclusion

Over a 10-year period, the church-planting team launched in Southeast Asia in 1985 multiplied into 10 new teams in the surrounding area. Today, there are 100 long-term missionaries committed to this region. The attrition rate has been relatively low, despite the fact that visas are not readily available. The application of a *Third Dimension Teams* approach has been a major contributing factor.

Discussion questions:

1. Does your organisation encourage missionary teams?
2. Do your missionaries belong to a “Third Dimension” style team? If not, what could you do to develop better teamwork on the field?



In the real world

Who? → When? ↓	Home Church	Missionary	Mission Agencies	External Partners
Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Culture of teamwork ➤ Teaching about team-approach 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Culture of teamwork 	
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Check history of teamwork 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Who is needed for what team? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assessment of personality and team roll
Preparation			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Preformed teams move to the field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide team training and team building ➤ Teaching about team dynamics
On field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Emphasize being a team with the missionary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Seek team members ➤ Create environment of encouragement and accountability 		
(Crisis)				
Furlough			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Debriefing on team functioning 	
Re-entry				

**Personal Care
Conflict and Teams**



The facts

Teams are the operating reality for much of the mission work today and offer an energy, flexibility and skill set that is hard to equal with lone pioneers. However it also offers huge challenges. The same diversity that can spark ideas and compliment skills can also give rise to tensions and conflict. Across OSC and NSC alike, agencies are struggling to operate effectively in these team contexts.



The data

Q. No.	Factor	OSC		NSC	
		Health Indicator	✓	Health Indicator	✓
44	M's are included in major decisions related to the field	○○○○○○○●●●●		○○○○○○○●●●●	
48	Most leaders identify problems early and take appropriate action	○○○○●●●●●●●●	✓	○○○○○●●●●●●●	✓
51	There are documented and adequate procedures for handling complaints from M's	○○○○○●●●●●●●	✓	○○○○○●●●●●●●	✓

71	Missionary teams are effective in providing each other with mutual support	○○○○●●●●●●		○○○○○○●●●●	✓
73	Interpersonal conflicts are resolved in a timely and appropriate manner	○○○●●●●●●●		○○○○●●●●●●	✓



The key findings

- ✓ Rating of interpersonal conflict resolution (Q73) correlated with high retention (for total attrition) in NSC but not in OSC. Due to their relational society?
- ✓ Procedure to handle complaints (Q51) is highly correlated with retention in OSC and NSC.
- ✓ Leaders identify problems and take appropriate action (Q48) is clearly correlated with retention in OSC and NSC.
- ✓ Missionaries are included in major decisions on the field (Q44) was negatively correlated with retention in NSC.



What it means

Despite more recent occasional dissenting voices, the majority of the missions' world is now operating on the basis of teams and believes that to be a healthy progression from the older model of lone pioneers. Of course some missions from their earliest days have had teams¹; however, in recent years those teams have become less homogenous and more multicultural. Mixtures of people from different cultures, geographies and languages and this makes for one of the most challenging situations in contemporary mission, but also one of the most exciting, that is brimming with potential.

It is challenging because most people struggle with difference and feel more at home, more relaxed with homogeneity – when they are with their own people, speaking their own language, eating their own food. Just look at how “normal” balanced people become nationalistic and patriotic in the extreme, when they reach the mission field. We naturally retreat in to what we know and are familiar with. Cultural difference is not the only cause of conflict in teams. Many homogenous teams struggle with

¹ Apostle Paul and his team, The Serampore Trio, Cambridge Seven and Ecuadorian 5, would be some examples.

conflict (perhaps your home church would be an example?) but when conflict arises in a multicultural team it may be interpreted in cultural terms or caused by that cultural difference. An example was where a mission was opening a mission school to try to help mission partners stay longer in that location by providing consistent quality education locally. After the in-depth discussions about the big issues: what curriculum to follow, what ages to teach; someone raised a “minor” closing point about what the uniform would be. The room erupted. What one person thought was a minor issue: the school uniform, became a major issue. – Why? Well German parents found a uniform completely unacceptable due to its association with Hitler Youth and Nazism. This was truly a cultural issue. These cultural differences are an unchangeable reality but you can help to minimise their impact by providing good preparation which helps people understand cultural difference but it should also include development of self-awareness. If you are aware of how your own culture can irritate people from different cultures you can be more considered in your own behaviour. My own training had taught me to be aware that Dutch and German colleagues generally spoke with a directness that bordered on offensive for an Englishman! However, it took my German language partner’s directness to explain how much I frustrated him by “speaking through flowers” with him and not saying what I really meant. My tact was interpreted as a lack of honesty, his honesty as harsh rudeness! Knowing your own preferences and others does not always mean you can avoid the tensions but with increased understanding you often bring increased grace.

Resolving interpersonal conflicts [Q73 *Interpersonal conflicts are resolved in a timely and appropriate manner*], whatever their cause, received relatively low rating in OSC (4) and NSC (5) and proved to be more important for retention in NSC, perhaps due to the more relational nature of many NSC societies. Do OSC cultures have very high (unrealistic) expectations or do they detach work issues from personal relationships more than NSC do? Anyway, there is certainly room and need for further improvement.

As well as causing conflict, teams can constructively support each other [Q71 *Missionary teams are effective in providing each other with mutual support*]. NSC countries reflected a stronger retention correlation and a much higher rating than OSC. Again perhaps the relational aspect of NSC culture shows here with family-structured missions. (This could also reflect the relative youth of the agencies in NSC. Historically OSC agencies used family structures to shape their organisations, only losing this relatively recently as size and age increased.)

Organisations handling complaints appropriately [Q51 *There are documented and adequate procedures for handling complaints from missionaries*] and leaders tackling problems proactively [Q48 *Most leaders identify problems early and take appropriate action*] correlate strongly with reten-

tion across NSC and OSC alike but received only poor ratings. These are areas we need to work on urgently.

However, we should be clear that we are not advocating that the aim should be the absence of conflict. Conflict is healthy and helpful in creating new ideas, challenging established norms and fostering a deeper and truer understanding of each other (compare Acts 15:36-41). Lencioni is his excellent book “The Five Dysfunctions of a Team”² says “... teams that trust one another are not afraid to engage in passionate dialogue around issues and decisions that are key to the organization’s success. They do not hesitate to disagree with, challenge, and question one another, all in the spirit of finding the best answers, discovering the truth, and making great decisions.”



Serving two masters

Dr. Thomas Oduro³, Ghana

Note: Agency names and the names of people in this case study have been changed to protect the true identity of organisations and individuals involved.

In some countries, the process of missionary sending and receiving can be rather complex. At times, a small Christian organisation or young church on the field may make a request for a missionary to come and assist its fledgling ministry. The organisation or church will approach a missionary sending agency to send someone. Due to the limited immigration quotas for residential permits which are issued to foreign workers, that sending agency could in turn depend on other agencies to obtain the necessary immigration papers. When the missionary eventually arrives on the field, the person may find that he is obligated to serve two or more organisations. Such a situation can result in considerable conflict between the different parties, as we shall see from the case study below.

Apollo Resource Centre (ARC), a faith based organisation, felt the need for a missionary to help it fulfil its mission. However, because the Centre was not socially influential, it could not secure a residential permit for the prospective missionary. Leaders of ARC nonetheless applied for a missionary from Kingdom Association (KA), a sending agency.

² Lencioni, P. (2002) *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team : A Leadership Fable*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass

³ Dr Thomas A. Oduro is the Principal and a Lecturer at Good News Theological College and Seminary, Accra, Ghana. As head of the Seminary since 1994, Dr Oduro has applied for missionaries from many mission agencies. (The Seminary is interdenominational so it is open to many mission agencies). He ensures that they are integrated into the Ghanaian community, guiding them in cultural studies and practices. Prior to being appointed Principal, Dr Oduro worked with other missionaries. Over the years, he has met with heads of mission agencies, often having conversations about their concerns and observations.

The sending agency KA agreed to send a missionary provided that ARC could secure a residential permit for the missionary. Leaders of ARC, consequently, contacted Peter Educational Institute (PEI) to facilitate the securing of an immigrant quota (“work permit”) for the missionary. Leaders of the two institutions agreed to share the ministry of the missionary, an agreement that was perceived as good by KA and the prospective missionary.

As a result, Rev. John Davies from Nicaragua was sent to Niambonia to serve the two institutions. He arrived on the field with his wife. On arrival, Rev. Davies was made to understand that his priority was to ARC, the poor institution that initially made the request. ARC asked Rev. Davies to do a field survey to determine the need for teaching those who are in Christian ministry but without any formal education. He was also asked to draw up a curriculum and be a trainer of those who would train the untrained ministers. Peter Educational Institute, the institution that secured the immigrant quota, asked Rev. Davies to teach at their school, which is an established educational institution with a curriculum, teaching timetable, etc.

After one year, both institutions began complaining to each other about Rev. Davies because his commitment fell short of the expectation in each institution. When asked by leaders of the two institutions, he told them on separate occasions that: “When I am not here, then I am there.” The leaders hardly believed what the missionary told them. They did not know how to make Rev. Davies more serious in his commitment. Neither did they send any complaint to the sending agency. They simply decided to advise and tolerate him.

Meanwhile, the negative attitude of the leaders of the two institutions toward the missionary soured their relationship. Rev. Davies felt disappointed but he did not know how to heal the relationship. The unhealthy relationship dragged on till someone hinted to the leaders of ARC that Rev. John Davies and his wife had formed Grace for Needy Children Foundation (GNCF), a Non-Governmental Organisation. A website of the GNCF confirmed this allegation.

The Apollo Resource Centre asked the KA to withdraw or replace Rev. Davies for breach of trust. KA did not respond to the request to withdraw Rev. Davies, so ARC decided to sever its working relationship with Rev. Davies. The authorities of Peter Educational Institute, on hearing the dismissal of Rev. Davies, quickly changed their attitude towards him. They wrote to the KA to express their willingness to work with him.

Leaders of ARC perceived the attitude of PEI as a betrayal and a taking of an advantage of a volatile situation. Rev. Davies, on the other hand, became bitter against the leaders of ARC because he felt that his missionary career had been tainted and was in jeopardy. He blamed ARC leaders for

failing to approach him and ask him about the website, etc. before writing to the sending agency. ARC leaders, nevertheless, saw Rev and Mrs. Davies as missionaries who came to Niambonia with a hidden agenda, that of enriching themselves.

Meanwhile KA, the missionary sending agency, kept a tight lip and observed the impasse.

Discussion questions:

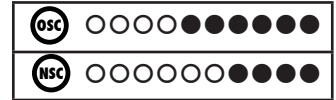
1. Each organisation had different expectations of this missionary. What could the missionary sending organisation have done to minimise conflict and misunderstanding on the field?
2. What are some other types of conflicts that missionaries from your organisation have faced on the field? What can your organisation do to help each missionary better manage such conflicts?
3. How could your organisation train your mission workers to develop culturally appropriate conflict resolution skills?



In the real world

Who? → When? ↓	Home Church	Missionary	Mission Agencies	External Partners
Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have clear teaching on how to handle conflicts 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have clear procedures to deal with conflict ➤ Deal with problems early and take appropriate action 	
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Check track record of candidate 			
Preparation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Understanding own strengths and weaknesses 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide training in conflict resolution
On field		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Be willing to deal with conflict constructively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Be open for external help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Offer mediation services
(Crisis)				
Furlough				
Re-entry				

Member Care



The facts

ReMAP II has proved the significance of member care, personal support and organisational development for missionary longevity. It has shown that Preventative Member Care (MC) as well as reactive crisis intervention are important. We see that OSC and NSC agencies have greatly improved the quality of their MC in the past 10 years. In particular the NSC mission force has tremendously grown in organisational structure and effectiveness and her attrition rates have seen a huge drop. High performance OSC agencies have retained their excellent retention rates over the past 20 years, offsetting the modern trend to shorter assignments and higher attrition rates. Likewise the high retaining NSC agencies have exceeded their earlier excellent performance too.



The data

Q. No.	Factor	OSC		NSC	
		Health Indicator	✓	Health Indicator	✓
37	Estimate the % of total time spent in pastoral care of M's ¹	○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ●	✓
38	Estimate the % of budget/total finances spent on pastoral care.	○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ●	✓
39	How much of these resources are preventative member care ²	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ● ●		○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	

1 (include both home and field workers).

2 Prevention, personal development, support, etc. (versus responsive, crisis resolution).

72	Effective pastoral care exists at a field level (preventative and in crises)	○○●●●●●●●●	○○○○○●●●●●	✓
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The key findings

- ✓ There is a clear correlation between time (Q37) and finances for member care (Q38) with high retention in NSC.
- ✓ OSC invest only half of the amount of finances and staff time into member care as NSC (Q37 & 38).
- ✓ The amount of preventative member care (16 – 33 %) (Q39) is too low compared to curative crisis intervention (84 – 67%).
- ✓ There is a correlation between fraction of preventative member care (Q39) and high retention in NSC.
- ✓ We need to distinguish between amount of member care and its quality.
- ✓ Effective member care on field level (Q72) is moderately correlated with high retention (total attrition).



What it means

What makes missionaries strong, healthy and flexible to stay fresh and grow in their personality, spiritually vibrant and resilient to overcome crises and challenges? It is usually believed that Member Care has a major bearing on missionary health and longevity, but only ReMAP I and ReMAP II have provided us with the empirical evidence. When we talk about Member Care (MC), we have a full range of services in mind: pastoral care, personal encouragement, team building, spiritual refreshment, professional counselling in critical incidents etc.

Kelly O'Donnell¹ has illustrated this with a Roman Fountain that has several levels of water basins and the water running from one level to the next. 1. In the centre (and at the top level) there is the Master Care: the Lord himself taking care of his children. 2. Self-Care as Apostle Paul expressed it: "Take care of yourself and the flock" (1 Timothy 4:16). Each missionary is responsible for his/her own lifestyle and spiritual health. 3. Mutual Care, one person taking care of his/her colleague (John 13:14+34; Romans 15:5; Galatians 6:2; 1 Peter 4:10). This includes the care of expatriates and Nationals. 4. Sender Care provided by sending churches

¹ Kelly O'Donnell, "Going Global: A Member Care Model for Best Practice," in: Kelly O'Donnell, ed., *Doing Member Care well*, (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2002), pp. 13-22.

and mission organisations. 5. Specialist Care like Medical Pastoral, Training, Family Care, Counselling, Financial Professionals. And finally 6. Network Care which describes the cooperation of Care Centres: Connecting, Consulting, Catalysing.

The ReMAP I study showed (fig. 1) that mission agencies with little investment in MC suffer a very high attrition proving the significance of MC and the attrition rate comes down with increasing care for their missionaries. Thus, MC really pays out. Yet there are also indications that agencies with a very intensive personal care may have an increased return rate. Can there be a too much of MC when something good can possibly weaken the missionaries' resilience, foster a self-centredness and feeling of entitlement?

Member Care in OSC and NSC

To answer this question MC was studied in more detail in ReMAP II. It was found that OSC agencies invest 7 % of their total staff time (in the home office and on the field) in MC, that is to say one in 12 missionaries are serving their colleagues full time (or a correspond serving part time). NSC-agencies dedicate the double amount of staff time to MC (14.4 %), or one in seven NSC missionaries are caring for his/her colleagues. This confirms the earlier findings of ReMAP I, and recognises the relational structure of societies in the majority world.

ReMAP II also showed that agencies allocate 4.3 % in OSC and 9.8 % in NSC, of their total budget to MC. This percentage is somewhat lower than the percentage of their total staff time, as the budget normally includes project costs etc. besides personnel costs – and possibly not all salaries are included in this sum due to many mission partners raising their own support.

The majority of the MC resources are dedicated to curative crisis intervention (69 % in OSC and 79 in NSC), whereas only 20% in NSC and 33% in OSC are allocated to prevention, i.e. strengthening of the missionary's personality and spiritual life. This fact indicates that MC is still considered primarily a reactive emergency service for wounded missionaries and prevention remains underdeveloped.

NSC-agencies with high retention assign twice as much of their finances to MC than low retaining agencies and also double in Preventative MC (23 % vs. 11 %) so that they invest four times more finances to prevention² than low retaining agencies. This huge difference indicates the vast gulf in their ethos and practices.

² 8.7 % x 0.23 = 2.3 % vs. 4.3 % * 0.11 = 0.5 %

Member Care and missionary retention

The central concept of the ReMAP II study is “retention”: that is how many missionaries out of 100 are still in service at the end of a year. Ideally this is 100 % but in practice this is somewhat lower. Figure 2 gives the retention rate of OSC-agencies when varying amounts of member care are provided³. The results prove that agencies with little MC lose almost twice as many workers for potentially preventable reasons than those with a reasonable level of MC (3 % vs. 1.6%).

A difference of 1.4 % per year appears small, but there is much more at stake. Missionary retention is merely an indicator. It is like the tip of an iceberg with the majority of the effect hidden under the waterline. There are many more workers ineffective; worn down by the continued stress of cross-cultural mission – yet who do not have the courage to return home. Missionary retention, on the other hand, reflects the missionaries’ sense of vibrant spirituality, inner peace, personal fulfilment, job satisfaction and spiritual fruitfulness. It draws our attention to specific issues like continuous personal growth, team building, effective leadership and organisational development.

Too much Member Care ?

Can there be a “too much” MC provision? Can something good turn into something negative? Could it develop into a “cushioning” effect that erodes missionaries’ resilience and personal growth? Indeed, there is anecdotal evidence that often the attrition rate rises after a field visit of a professional counsellor. Indeed, we need to acknowledge that some missionaries are assigned to the wrong task; others may lack the required gifting, skills, training or experience. These missionaries need to be reassigned; false placements be corrected, wounded missionaries need restoration or be brought home safely and with dignity. Yet visiting counsellors can also jump to hasty conclusions without consideration of all the options of personal growth, inner healing or reassignment within the country of service – and I praise God for the growing number of Member Care Centres for Missionaries in various countries⁴ which avoid the need to return to the sending country and endure the reverse culture shock and stress that it can sometimes involve. Western agencies have a tendency to send home missionaries as soon as problems occur. By this practice they deprive local believers of witnessing and experiencing effective conflict resolution and restoration.

Member Care at the expense of organisational structure

The ReMAP II data shows that mission agencies with very intensive MC programs gave a significantly lower rating in organisational issues like:

³ Considering potentially preventable reasons for attrition only.

⁴ A comprehensive list is given in Kelly O’Donnell, ed., *Doing Member Care well*, (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2002), pp. 529-550.

Mission statement, Clear goals, missionaries' pre-field training, especially in Missiology, Effective orientation of new missionaries in the place of service, language study, supervision, effective administrative support, sustained and adequate financial support and maintenance of spiritual life. Apparently those agencies have put a strong emphasis on their member care program at the neglect of other organisational issues. Yet a good MC program will not keep missionaries in service if it is not supplemented by careful candidate selection, good pre-field training and effective leadership. Therefore it is believed that it is not the MC in itself that initiates the increased attrition rate but the neglect of organisational issues. In addition it might be speculated that fragile candidates might choose those agencies with an extensive MC program and their recruitment office may let some of those persons slip through trusting on their MC program – something which appears a false hope. In addition we need to consider that ReMAP II merely monitored the quantity and not the quality of the MC program.

Preventative Member Care

The effect of MC was further explored by analysing the subgroup of OSC agencies with MC Time 5-10% (the amount that showed the maximum retention rate) and examining just the preventative MC – that is strengthening of the missionaries' personality and spiritual life (in contrast to reactive crisis response and restoration of wounded missionaries). RRP shows an inverted u-type curve that falls towards both ends (fig. 3). Agencies that invest in preventative MC or in reactive crisis intervention to the neglect of the other, experience a reduced retention rate. Apparently both types of ministries are needed: preventative MC (i.e. personal growth, spiritual life, healthy relationships, team building etc.) as well as effective help in crises and the restoration of wounded workers. Fig. 3 also shows that the optimum appears to be around 25% for preventative MC (when considering total attrition).

However, when we consider Preventable Attrition only (RRP, fig. 4), we find a u-type with its maximum higher, at 40 % preventative MC. Apparently preventable attrition is reduced particularly by preventative MC.

Apparently potentially preventable as well as unpreventable attrition are both affected by preventative MC. At first the latter seems irrational as "unpreventable attrition" sounds as though it cannot be affected - however we need to keep in mind that it was defined in ReMAP II as retirement, death in service, illness, loss of visa, completion of contract, end of project, appointment into leadership position in the mission etc.. And these factors are not all unchangeable per se but may be affected by preventative MC: when a missionary stays physically, emotionally and spiritually healthy, his/her immune system will also be strengthened, he/she is making wise decisions, and there will be a caring ministry team as well as

a stimulating environment in which the whole person can grow. It builds a hardy personality, and when the project is completed or one assignment comes to its end (unpreventable attrition) the missionary might be open for a new task and challenges. He/she may even continue with ministry after reaching the retirement age.

For NSC agencies we find a similar result⁵ and Fig. 5 gives the curve for total attrition of the years 2001/02⁶. As indicated before, NSC agencies have their optimum at 10-20 % of total staff time invested in MC. The analysis for preventative MC (fig. 6) again shows an inverted u-curve with a maximum at 25 % preventative MC. When considering preventable attrition only (fig 7), the optimum is found at roughly equal proportions of prevention and restoration.

A comparison of the with ReMAP I, however, shows that the attrition rate in OSC and NSC is now significantly lower than 10 years ago. This happened against the global trend to shorter assignments and indeed a new generation of missionaries is now in service with different needs and gifting. The last 10 years have also see a tremendous amount of organisational development of many mission agencies, especially in NSC⁷, and particularly regarding the quantity and quality of MC. In addition, an international network of MC specialists has developed, so that a huge wealth of MC resources are available today, including online-resources (e.g. www.membercare.org, www.missionarycare.org, www.missionarycare.com) as well as a global network of MC facilities.

MC helps missionaries to grow spiritually, expand their resilience and durability, maintain their physical and emotional health, build effective ministry teams, encourage and care for each other, communicate effectively, develop a consultative leadership style and develop flexibility to adjust to ever changing needs and challenges.

This general trend is reflected in the agencies' organisational culture as shown in ReMAP II. Leaders of NSC agencies with high involvement in MC (> 20 % Time in MC) have given a much higher rating of almost all organisational parameters (fig. 8). In particularly they gave 15 – 30 % higher rating of the issues: Missionary teams provide mutual support; Effective pastoral care on the field level; Resolution of interpersonal conflicts; Sustained and adequate financial support; Annual vacation; Contingency plans; Adequate medical care and MK-schooling options. Leaders of OSC agencies with high MC gave increased rating in: Supervision on the field; Handling complaints from missionaries; language and cultural studies; Sustained and adequate financial support; Maintenance of missionaries'

⁵ Yet with lower magnitude as RRT and RRP are generally higher than in OSC so that effects become smaller. In addition, the recent trend towards organisational development in NSC and general reduction in attrition are partially levelled in the long-term analysis covering 20 years.

⁶ Covering only the time span 2001/02.

⁷ Detlef Bloecher, "ReMAP II affirms the Maturation of the Younger Mission Movement of the South," *Connections* (Oct 2003), p. 48-53.



spiritual life; Involvement of home church in the missionary's life and ministry – and it is believed that all these factors help to reduce the early return of missionaries.

Excellent personal care has great significance in our rapidly changing modern world. Many ministry locations are today shaken by natural disasters, ethnic conflicts, violence, corruption, social injustice and extreme poverty which put missionaries under constant stress. MC is not an option but an obligation. It is an integrated way of caring for our missionaries that infuses all principles and practices – not an additional component in our agency besides strategic planning, administration and PR. It is a comprehensive way of thinking and caring. Missionaries are our most precious resources. They are the human vessels through which God's grace and love, righteousness and truth is revealed in our needy world. They are set to be examples for new believers to follow (2 Thess 3:9).

It is the leader's responsibility to care for them so that they stay healthy and robust. They help them to recover after defeats, comfort in crises and assist through changes. Home office, team and field leaders have a shepherding function on those entrusted to their care, and the standard is the example of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 21:16; Acts 20:26). This fundamental understanding is expressed by the Apostle Peter:

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers, not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 1 Peter 5:2-3

Yet we do not consider the reduction of missionary attrition as an end in itself and to increase missionary retention at all costs. Missionaries can also stay for too long and then hinder the maturing of the National church and the development of local leadership.

But hard places will only be reached by the Gospel through dedicated, experienced long-term missionaries that have carefully learnt the language adjusted well to their culture, living a simple lifestyle in trusted relationships, supported by a caring community and an organisational structure with lean management and effective leadership. This brings home the two biblical issues shepherding and good stewardship.



Church-based missionary care groups

Bibien Limlingan⁸, Philippine Missions Association⁹, Philippines

When the Philippines began sending missionaries many years ago, member care was hardly practiced. Churches would send out their missionaries and then forget about them once they reached the mission field. Missionaries would become disappointed because they received no letters, no visits, and no care from their sending church.

Some of our early missionaries are now mission executives. From the lessons they learned through their past heart-aches, they are now investing in member care. Today, member care has become “an intentional practice”¹⁰ in most agencies and has found its way into the core values of quite a number. The Philippine MCare¹¹ Network envisions that “Filipino cross-cultural missionaries are well cared for holistically.”¹²

In general, we find three types of member care:

1. Field-based member care (missionaries care for other missionaries on the field);
2. Sending-based member care (the mission organizations provide care); and
3. Church-based member care (this is a new but growing practice).

The profile below is an extra-ordinary example of church-based missionary care. Tanauan Bible Church (in Batangas, Philippines) has sent out and cared for five missionary families and two single missionaries for about ten years. All their missionaries continue to serve on the mission field up to the present. This church provides holistic and balanced member care. Unlike most other churches that have sent missionaries, TBC is already investing monthly on their missionaries’ pension plans, health plans and retirement plans.

⁸ Bibien Limlingan currently serves as the Research Officer of the Philippine Missions Association. Bibien has a Masters degree in Theology from Asian Theological Seminary. She has just recently finished putting together an extensive study on all the people groups in the Philippines. She is married to Pastor Jong Limlingan and they have three daughters.

⁹ Philippine Missions Association is a 23 year-old organisation that serves as the missions commission of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches..

¹⁰ Dr. Kelly O'Donnell in his article “*Some Historical Perspective on Member and Humanitarian Aid.*”

¹¹ MCare is short for Member Care.

¹² Philippine MCare Network’s vision statement.



Church-based missionary care groups at Tanauan Bible Church

Ana M. Gamez

When Tanauan Bible Church (TBC) started to send missionaries in 1995, we had limited knowledge about how we were supposed to take care of our missionaries from their deputation, time spent on the mission field, time on furlough, home assignment, study leave, and when they finish their term. We only knew that we should pray for them and send our financial support based on our capability, and let our partner (the sending and receiving mission agency) take care of them.

As the years passed by, and as our church engaged in sending more missionaries, we realized that it was not enough to only pray for our missionaries and send our financial support. We realized that we should also provide the emotional, moral and practical support that they need. This may include providing food, clothing, housing, travelling needs, children's educational needs, health insurance, encouragement, visitation of families who are left behind and so forth.

We were then faced with the question: "If these are the missionaries' needs that we should provide as a sending church, is our Filipino church capable of responding to their needs? Do we have enough resources in our local church?" As a local church, we have been sending missionaries for more than ten years now. We can say that by God's grace and through a joint effort of the whole church, in partnership with the sending and receiving mission agency, we can meet those needs. We must educate our church and let them know how they can participate in fulfilling the Great Commission. If we do this I believe that we have enough resources within our church.

Let me share how we have been providing care for our Missionaries at TBC. We humbly admit that we are not experts in this area. We are still learning and doing our best to provide optimum support and care for our missionaries. It is TBC's prayer that our church-based Mcare Group will be a blessing to many churches in Asia and the world.

TBC has several Missionary Care Groups. Each Missionary Care Group (MCG) is composed of people who have committed to support, care for and minister to the missionary while he/she is on his/her deputation, in the mission field, on furlough, home assignment or study leave. On behalf of the missionary, they challenge and mobilize others to actively take part in the fulfilment of the Great Commission. They are also considered as advocates of the missionary.

The concept of the Missionary Care Group originally came from Rev. Rey Corpuz, a former National Director of Philippine Missions Association (PMA). He came to visit our church sometime in May 1998, and he shared the concept and importance of having a church-based missionary care system. The church understood its importance and in June 1998, we formed Spain MCG, Mindanao MCG, Vietnam MCG, and Japan MCG.

Let me explain our process for selecting suitable people for each MCG.

For those missionaries who were already on the mission field, the Missions and Evangelism Committee enlisted the people who already have a close relationship with the missionaries. We talked to the people, explained their responsibilities, and asked them for their commitment to be part of an MCG.

For those missionaries who are in their preparation or deputation stage, we require them to follow these steps:

1. Each missionary under probation will submit a list of individuals – a minimum of six and a maximum of 12 who will serve as his/her prayer coordinator(s), spiritual, financial, communications, logistics & family matters coordinator/s. The availability, commitment, giftings and skills of each individual should be carefully considered in this process and they should have a genuine interest to look after the welfare of the missionaries (Phil. 2:20) and have the passion to take part in fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).
2. The Missions Board shall interview the individuals selected by the missionary, to explain their would-be responsibilities, and to confirm their commitment to be a part of the MCG.
3. After the interview, the missionary will meet with the members of the MCG. They will choose a leader from among themselves who will be in charge of the group. This person will facilitate the monthly meeting once the missionary has been sent to the mission field.
4. The MCG should, in coordination with the overall church missions' coordinator, decide when to meet once a month for prayer and updates. An emergency meeting is called whenever necessary. As long as a missionary is in the church, he/she is in charge of communicating with the MCG Monthly meeting, so that he/she can strengthen his/her relationship with the members of the MCG, and get to know each of them in a deeper way.
5. Members of the MCG are also commissioned during the commissioning service of the missionary.

Note: When some MCG members failed to fulfil their responsibilities, we talked to them and inquired the status of their commitment. For those members who could not continue to be a part of MCG, we looked and

prayed for other church members with a genuine interest to look after the welfare of our missionaries.

Each MCG comprises several key people with specific roles and responsibilities.

- ✓ The Prayer Coordinator(s) makes sure that the missionary is being prayed for. This person is responsible for gathering prayer requests and updates from the missionary regarding his/her host country (possibly through emails). He/she will mobilize others to pray for the missionary, the adopted people group and the host country.
- ✓ The Communications Coordinator(s) will send emails/letters to the missionary regularly; share updates, issues, current events, as well as news from Christian circles of the country/place where he/she has come from. This person sends greetings or cards during special occasions (such as birthdays, anniversary, Christmas, etc). He/she reproduces and distributes newsletters and updates from the missionary. The communication coordinator has a crucial role in the MCG.
- ✓ The Spiritual Coordinator(s) serves as a Barnabas who will remind and encourage the missionary about his/her growth spiritually, especially during the time on the field. They will provide materials and other resources to ensure spiritual feeding of the missionary. This role includes thinking of creative ways to minister to the missionary (e.g. sending sermon cassette tapes, poems, inspirational thoughts, etc).
- ✓ The Logistics Coordinator(s) assists the missionary during his/her pre-field preparation, while on the field and on home assignment or furlough. This includes following up on the missionary's schedules and appointments for church visitations; securing and sending materials needed by the missionary on the field as requested (e.g. books, tracts, Bible, etc.); pick up and send off of the missionary at the airport; and assisting in finding a place for missionary to live during his/her furlough and home assignment. For example, when our missionaries in Vietnam finished their term, the Vietnam MCG looked for their housing when they came back home, and prepared everything that they needed.
- ✓ The Financial Coordinator(s) facilitates easy and practical ways of sending the missionary support in coordination with the partner sending mission agency. They remind churches/individual supporters of their commitment. They may call, visit or even write to them on behalf of the missionary. They serve as a lookout for potential partners and supporters. One of our best examples here is the Finance Coordinator for our Mindanao MCG. She challenged her friends to support our missionary couple in Mindanao for 5 years.

- ✓ The Family Matters Coordinator(s) (FMC) assists the immediate family of the missionary in matters relating to their personal and family concerns. They take care of issues and challenges faced by the family members left behind by the missionaries. This is usually discussed by the whole MCG. If the group cannot handle the issues, they will consult the Missions Committee to take the necessary action. All matters related to the missionary's family are communicated to the missionary for prayer and information. The church pastor is also informed.

Because of the important roles and responsibilities of our MCG coordinators, they are also commissioned during the commissioning of the missionaries.

Let me now share the implications of having church-based MCG:

1. The needs of the missionary (spiritual, physical, emotional, psychological, practical and moral support) will be taken care of in partnership with the sending and receiving mission agency.
2. A specific group of people from the sending church is responsible for looking after the welfare and needs of each missionary.
3. Through their participation in an MCG, our church members are given opportunities to actively take part in fulfilling the Great Commission. Not all of us can go, but all of us can be a part of the Lord's work in mission through prayer, spiritual, emotional, moral and practical support.
4. As a church, we have been able to recruit new missionaries and empower others to go to the Unreached People Groups. Based on our experience, two of our missionary couples, now serving in Central Asia, were former members of the Mindanao MCG and Vietnam MCG.

In conclusion, the local church, in partnership with the sending and receiving mission agency, should together provide mutual care for the missionary from the time of recruitment up to his/her retirement, so that missionary attrition will be minimized.

Discussion questions:

1. How does your church presently provide Member Care to your missionaries? What aspects of Member Care are covered?
2. Could church-based Missionary Care Groups be formed in your local church? If yes, what would be some key roles and responsibilities of such groups?



From statutory welfare measures to member care

John Amalraj,¹³ Interserve (India), India

In the early 1990s, India Missions Association¹⁴ (IMA) leaders conducted an initial survey among its member mission agencies. They discovered that most agencies in India did not have any system to care for their missionaries. Many mission agencies were being started without the necessary support structures to provide care to missionaries who were being actively recruited.

New missionaries enthusiastically left their jobs, their extended families and local culture to live thousands of kilometres away. They endured learning a new language, living in a new culture, and struggled to communicate the good news to the people around them. These young missionaries did not realize the sacrifices they were making. Often times, the missionaries went without their basic physical, emotional and financial needs being met. Over the years, these young men and women got married and raised children, and their needs kept growing.

Meanwhile, their mission agency leadership, overwhelmed by the enormous challenges on the field and pre-occupied with achieving ministry goals, never realized that a storm was brewing. As more of the missionaries' needs were not being met, there developed a growing discontent among the missionaries. However, the missionaries rarely shared their troubles with their agency leadership, nor did they openly complain to anyone else. For the majority of missionaries, it was difficult to talk about their personal needs. This was because their church leaders and mission leadership assumed that missionaries had willingly sacrificed all their needs and that all of them were happy serving the Lord. The missionaries were often treated as spiritual heroes. Few leaders realized that in some fields, the missionaries were no longer enthusiastic. Feeling frustrated, the missionaries had already left the field mentally, even though they remained physically on the field.

¹³ John Amalraj was trained as a lawyer. He worked for some years as a lawyer, exports company manager and personnel manager at a group of companies in Chennai. During that time, he was a volunteer in India Missions Association (IMA) and helped to set up management standards for IMA members. In 1993, he joined IMA as the Office & Projects Manager in Chennai. Later, John pioneered the office for IMA in New Delhi in 1998, and promoted IMA in North & North East India. After four years of ministry in Delhi, John and his wife pioneered the IMA Centre in Hyderabad. Over the years, John has served in training leaders through Advanced Mission Leadership Training, coordinating IMA National Conferences, and leading many think-tank meetings. Amalraj now serves as the Executive Secretary /CEO of Interserve India and continues to be actively involved in several IMA networks.

¹⁴ India Missions Association is the national federation of missionary sending agencies and churches in India and have 208 members – website <www.imaindia.org>

In 1992, IMA published a book on “Management of Indian Missions” which discussed several management issues on finance, law, organization and personnel.¹⁵ This book advocated a system for a salary structure that included provision for various allowances to meet the basic needs of each missionary and his family. The book also gave suggestions for mission agencies to adopt some social security measures which were mandatory by the government.

One of IMA’s leaders, K. Rajendran, prepared a critique of twenty five years of Indian Missions as part of his doctoral thesis. He documented in detail the various stresses faced by missions and individual missionaries and the urgent need for better care¹⁶. This 1998 publication became the cornerstone in creating awareness about member care among Indian mission leaders.

Also in 1998, India Missions Association organized a national conference¹⁷ for mission leaders of all its members in Nagpur. During this conference, the issue of ‘Missionary Welfare’ was openly discussed for the first time. Suggestions on how to understand the needs of the missionary and respond to them were discussed. In the following year, during the national IMA conference, the main theme was member care for missionaries. Several seminars were organized for mission leaders to discuss issues on pastoral care and counselling, managing family in mission life, health care for missionaries and people formation¹⁸.

After these two major conferences in 1998 and 1999, the mission scene in India witnessed a change toward the understanding of missionary needs. Missionary welfare was no longer regarded as an unspiritual term. Many missions intentionally introduced both statutory and voluntary welfare schemes for their missionaries. Mission leaders corporately evolved various welfare programs that included statutory provisions like provident fund, gratuity, life insurance, medical expense reimbursements, and special financial help for the family of missionaries who die while in service, retirement benefits such as pension fund, post retirement home, etc.

Some evidence of the change was seen when mission agencies began advertising the missionary needs in their newsletters, for example the need to mobilize funds for missionary children’s’ education, Christmas gifts, continuing education scholarships etc. Missionary Upholders Trust (MUT), a member mission agency of IMA, started the vision of regular mission support for cross-cultural missionaries sent from North India, by

15 Ebe Sunderaraj and team, *Management of Indian Missions*, IMA, Chennai, 1992.

16 K. Rajendran, “Which Way Forward Indian Missions?” *SAIACS*, Bangalore, 1998, pp 97-121.

17 The annual IMA National Conference facilitates the executives and leaders of the missionary organisations and churches in India to come together under one roof. The objective is to impart a national vision, information, corporate thinking, skills, ethos and synergy to missions and leadership. This event is the platform to raise and discuss national missiological issues and help in formulating a national outlook, strategy and set national goals.

18 People formation describes the emphasis on life long learning. .

raising their support primarily from their own family members and friends. MUT also took the lead in evolving various corporate schemes for missions at large.

In early 2000, India Missions Association encouraged an existing network that had previously focused on welfare to take on a more holistic approach, and this network became known as the 'Member Care network'¹⁹.

In 2002, a national consultation on Member care was organized. Regional consultations were also organized for mission leaders to create awareness about the best practices in member care. Several articles in the quarterly publication of India Missions Association highlighted the need for member care. Special one-day seminars for CEOs were organized, and these enabled them to talk about their own personal needs. Training programs on developing inter-personal skills and family life seminars were facilitated around the country for the benefit of the missionaries belonging to the mission agencies of India Missions Association. In 2005, IMA hosted the first gathering of missionary children from different mission agencies.

After five years of efforts to encourage better member care, Indian mission leaders will now go beyond just providing financial benefits. They now provide more personal care in terms of counselling, family seminars, training missionaries in inter-personal skills. Better member care has required the equipping of second-line leaders in various skills to meet the needs of the missionaries they supervise.

Today, mission leaders are beginning to corporately address these issues in their own context. Grace Counselling, another member mission agency of IMA, provides training in counselling skills for mission leaders at various levels. Sharpening Your Interpersonal Skills (SYIS) seminars are being held in different parts of the country, through the coordination of IMA in partnership with several mission agencies.

Looking back at the last fifteen years of mission history in India, we should laud the efforts of India Missions Association to create awareness and evolve policies to care for missionaries. Such awareness about member care has made a significant impact on the Indian mission scene. In the past, mission leaders were not willing to discuss issues related to missionary welfare. But now, we have an environment where all issues related to member care are being addressed on corporate level. Better member care has transformed many Indian mission agencies and reduced attrition rates on the field

¹⁹ India Missions Association has about ten networks that address the various challenges of Indian Missions. The IMA Member Care Network led by Pramila Rajendran has been active in the last five years to create awareness and help missions to formulate policies to care for missionaries.

Discussion questions:

1. Discuss the good practices for member care in India. Which of these practices would you encourage in your own organization?
2. How could the national missions movement in your country help to create better awareness about member care for missionaries and their families?

*OMF's medical advisory service—a model for medical member care*

Dr Stroma Beattie²⁰, OMF International, Singapore

OMF International, formerly the China Inland Mission, has been sending missionaries to East Asian countries for 140 years. From the early days, the need for medical care of its workers became apparent. Medically trained missionaries found that their skills were needed to care for colleagues. Today, OMF International has approximately 1,000 adults and 600+ children, representing around 30 different nationalities, being sent from 18 sending bases, both Asian and non-Asian, with members working mainly in East Asia though some are in non-Asian contexts.

To provide medical member care to this large group, OMF International has developed a Medical Advisory Service, which provides medical advice and preventative health care to its members, their families and its leaders. This service aims to enable our workers to serve as effectively as possible and to prevent premature attrition. It seeks to provide clear medical communication between doctors, leaders and members in the various countries in order to facilitate appropriate medical care that is relevant to the specific needs of our workers.

This Medical Advisory Service is coordinated by the International Medical Adviser (IMA), a full-time missionary doctor based at the agency's headquarters in Singapore as part of the personnel department. The doctor is professionally registered with the Singapore Medical Council and runs a clinic enabling the doctor to provide medical services to mission personnel, to prescribe medicines and to refer patients. At the same time, the IMA works for OMF's International Director for Personnel and is involved in policy setting, candidate selection and response to emerging diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Avian influenza ('bird flu').

²⁰ Stroma Beattie is a doctor with post-graduate qualifications in family and travel medicine. After a further year in psychiatry, she moved to South Korea with her husband in 1991 as OMF missionaries. Full-time language study was followed by medical and missions work. She moved to Singapore in 1998 to become OMF's International Medical Adviser.

The IMA leads a team of home side and field side doctors to provide medical care to the missionaries and their families whilst at the same time giving advice and guidance to the mission's leadership in major matters such as ongoing fitness for service or re-designation. The current structure involves 26 home-side doctors and 14 field-side doctors (some of the latter positions are vacant), and the team is augmented with the help of psychologists, member care consultants, counsellors and nurses.

The Home-side (sending country) Medical Advisers tend to be volunteers, busy doctors who give some of their time as part of their Christian service to assess potential new workers, organise pre-field medicals, and assist returnees or home assignees with health related issues. The Field-side (receiving country) Medical Advisers are missionaries, serving on the field, either performing their medical advisory role as part of their wider work or as their full-time ministry. On a day-to-day basis, they provide advice and assistance to colleagues in their place of service. All workers have full routine medical examinations at least every two years, following which a report (vetted by patient and doctor) is given to the mission leadership, at times giving specific advice regarding medical needs, work patterns or lifestyle issues.

Decisions regarding the medical assessment of an individual involve a team-based process. All missionary candidates undergo a formal medical examination and psychological assessment prior to acceptance as a new worker and field deployment. The International Medical Adviser receives the reports from the Home-side Medical Advisers, and then obtains any further detailed input from Field-side Medical Advisers when more is required. For example, a new worker with a chronic medical condition might feel called to a remote rural area but the management of the condition could mean that placement in a more urban setting with better medical resources is wiser.

Such team-based decision-making would, it is hoped, lead to better medical management of a medical condition, longer field service and more effective ministry, thereby resulting in better stewardship of the person's gifts and calling. Is it wise to place a new worker dependent on a specific medicine in an area where there is no reliable supply? Should someone with a history of a chronic depressive illness be designated to a situation where the pressures of ministry might cause the condition to worsen and for suicide risk to increase? When is it possible to predict such things and when is it too difficult to do so?

Philosophically, our mission agency is committed to contextualisation. This means that members use local services where possible. However, especially in the early stages of inculturation, the assistance of a Field Medical Adviser (who speaks the local language, understands the local medical system and has lived in the country for some time) can greatly help a new worker negotiate ill-health in a foreign land. At times, as part

of the medical member care system, field nurses have also been appointed who help accompany new workers to local clinics, hospitals or provide assistance when babies are born far from the natural support network of grandparents, family and friends.

Some people have asked whether this Medical Advisory Service is too luxurious a service. Are we wrapping missionaries in cotton wool? Over-protecting them? Are we so concerned about physical or psychological risks that we fail to obey God's call? Does the medical member care hinder workers from stepping out in faith, regardless of the dangers and costs?

However, others will offer an alternative view, that of stewardship. Yes, we need to take risks to engage in the task of effective evangelism and outreach. We need to respond in bold obedience, but we should also be wise in our use of resources. Called, committed people are our best resource, but often there are rather few of them. We need to take good care of them. It is hoped that in some small way, this internal preventative health care and medical advisory service enables workers to serve the Lord as effectively as possible and for as long as possible in the country to which He has called them.

Discussion questions:

1. What are the advantages of having an internal medical advisory service?
2. If your agency is not as large as OMF and cannot justify such a significant investment in medical support services, could you achieve similar benefits through partnership with other agencies?
3. How is medical member care presently provided for your missionaries? In what ways can the medical care of your missionaries be improved?



Promoting member care education in Malaysia

Philip Chang²¹, Malaysia

In recent years, member care education in Malaysia has contributed significantly to a steady growth both in numbers and percentages of single men and married couples with families going from Malaysia into long-term

²¹ Philip Chang holds a senior management position in the marketplace in the financial services sector. He has over 23 years of cross-cultural experience, having studied and worked in both Europe and Asia. Philip is the Chairman of Interserve Malaysia, a member of the Missions Commission of National Evangelical Christian Fellowship in Malaysia, a member of the Asia Member Care Taskforce and the Missions Commission of WEA. He served as national coordinator for Malaysia in the ReMAP II project.

mission. Some initiatives, such as dissemination of information linked with member care consultations to create awareness amongst agencies and churches, seemed to have produced positive results.

Background

In a survey conducted in March 2003 among a number of major mission agencies in Malaysia, the simple average percentage of single missionary women engaged in long term missionary service was found to be substantial at 47.6%, whereas single missionary men was only 2.5%, and married couples 49.9%²². These statistics for missionary sending from Malaysia were not surprising at all. It was well-known that many single men and married couples have previously been discouraged from responding to the call to long term missions due to a variety of member care issues, such as family commitments, children's education, and financial reasons.

In a recent survey in September 2005 among the same agencies, the aggregate numbers have increased and the average percentages for single women, single men and married couples were 37.7%, 8.6% and 53.7% respectively. Clearly, there has been a marked increase in the number and percentages of single men and married couples in just two and a half years, which many would view as a positive trend.

The change in mission demographics for Malaysia has been attributed to the concerted efforts of mission agencies in encouraging awareness of member care amongst churches. This has also led to improvements in member care practices by churches and among mission agencies themselves. As a result, missionary workers, particularly single men and married couples, will find it easier to go out and also stay longer in the field.

How member care education has been promoted

The promotion of member care education amongst local churches became more significant from the late 1990s. Several mission agencies and key missionary-sending churches took the initiative to get together and collaborated with the Missions Commission of the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) in Malaysia to organise member care consultations. It was hoped that these consultations would serve as a catalyst to promote and improve member care practices amongst sending agencies and churches.

Initially, the concept of 'member care' was seen by many as being synonymous with 'pastoral care', whereas in reality it is but one component of member care. Over recent years however, more and more senders have become better informed. As a result of better awareness about mem-

²² "Single Missionary Women and their Unique Challenges" – a report by Lim Siew Foong, NECF Research Department, 7 June 2004.

ber care, mission executives have noticed that churches have become increasingly supportive in terms of general care and finances for their missionaries. WC Cheong, National Director of OM affirms, "There's a general feeling that member care awareness has increased."

Sarah Yap, chairperson of Wycliffe Malaysia, one of those involved in the member care consultations early on, observes, "Member care education has certainly grown, and this is an on-going process that different churches are going through. The emphasis among churches has also somewhat changed. Their involvement now is not just sending people and money, but also being involved in the missionaries' ministry, praying for them and supporting them. Churches are being encouraged to be active partners in missions in the role as 'senders', and not just playing a truncated or passive role."

Promoting MK care

One significant and positive outcome of member care consultations has been a growing awareness of the educational needs of missionary kids or MKs. More MK education options, such as home schooling programmes and MK boarding schools, are now available and being made known, compared to five or ten years ago.

Dorai Manikam, Missions Director of Full Gospel Assembly, notes the importance of MK education and in particular, home schooling, "Home schooling has been a great component which makes families more mobile. This in fact has a mobilising effect. And when we send out a family we have to look into how the family is supported as a whole, not just the adults."

Literature and information on MK care and education are also now more easily available through mission agencies and executives, sometimes through e-mail circulation of member care news forums. Mission agencies like Interserve Malaysia, for example, make it a point to include articles on MKs in their regular news publications to educate its readers. OMF has also published several books for both MKs as well as their parents to read to prepare them for transitions.

Sending churches have become more understanding of the need to support MKs and provide for their educational needs. This has also helped many married couples with children to raise adequate financial support to enter the field and stay on longer.

Next steps in member care

The recruitment of single men and married couples with children has definitely increased, due to the various initiatives and the sending agen-

cies' ongoing effort to provide and improved member care services. Nevertheless, much more can be done.

Several missionaries, when interviewed by Lim Siew Foong, Executive Secretary (Research) of NECF in 2003, have suggested that local sending churches should do more. She notes: "Missionaries would like to see the development of 'member care' as one of the church ministries. Churches can collaborate on community projects such as a community housing project for retirees and missionary retreat centres, etc. They should also seriously consider medical plans and housing loans as part of the retirement plan. Besides raising prayer and financial support, churches are encouraged to fully stand behind the missionaries for the sake of their psychological and emotional wellbeing. For those missionaries who are returning home, the necessity of pastoral support cannot be overlooked. In addition, a church pastor should encourage members to get in touch with the lives of the missionaries, e.g. visiting or writing to them. By doing so, a pastor will be contributing to the moral support of the missionary." This will also have the added benefit of increasing the vision of the visitors and the sending church generally.

By sharing about these suggestions and its research findings to the Malaysian churches at large, the NECF itself is also playing an important part in the process of disseminating member care education and indirectly helping to mobilise more churches and Christians into missions.

Discussion questions:

1. Is member care well understood among the local churches or mission agencies in your country? How is member care awareness being promoted in your country, home church or mission agency?
2. What areas of member care are widely practiced? What areas have been neglected and require more attention?
3. Would a collaborative effort of mission sending agencies and local churches in your country be helpful in promoting holistic member care of missionaries?



In the real world

Who? → When? ↓	Home Church	Missionary	Mission Agencies	External Partners
Continuous			➤ Seek partnership with home church	➤ Promote membercare education
Recruitment				
Preparation	➤ Start missionary care groups	➤ Name members for care group ➤ Learn to be open and accountable		➤ Provide training tools on membercare
On field	➤ Provide spiritual, physical, emotional, psychological, practical and moral support ➤ Take care of family that stays behind	➤ Be as open as possible to inform about needs in life / work	➤ Facilitate communication	➤ Provide medical support
(Crisis)			➤ Manage crisis	➤ Be available for debriefing
Furlough		➤ Unload positive and negative experiences	➤ Provide debriefing	➤ Be available for debriefing
Re-entry	➤ Practical and pastoral welcome		➤ Provide debriefing	➤ Be available for debriefing

Organisational Values



The facts

Organisational values are, if you like, what gives the agency its character and shapes the way it operates. Twenty one specific ratings contribute to reasonable overall ratings of five and six for OSC and NSC respectively. Seventeen of those for OSC and fifteen for NSC showed a high correlation with retention. This is not really surprising as people bond with an agency over the issues covered here. The organisational values are what missionaries identify with and what shapes the nature of the relationship between the organisation and the missionary and therefore strongly dictates the strength of that relationship.



The data

Q. No.	Factor	OSC		NSC	
		Health Indicator	✓	Health Indicator	✓
40	Vision and purpose are shared and understood throughout the agency	○○○○○○○●●●●	✓	○○○○○○○●●●●	✓
41	Plans and job descriptions are communicated clearly to the missionary	○○○○○○●●●●●	✓	○○○○○○●●●●●	✓
42	There is a free flow of communication to and from the leadership	○○○○○○●●●●●	✓	○○○○○○●●●●●	

43	There is effective communication between sending base and field	○○○○●●●●●●	✓	○○○○○○○○●●	✓
44	M's are included in major decisions related to the field	○○○○○○○○●●		○○○○○○○○●●	
45	Policies are well documented and understood	○○○○○●●●●●	✓	○○○○○○○○●●	✓
46	A culture of prayer is actively promoted within the agency	○○○○○○○○○●	✓	○○○○○○○○○●	
47	Most leaders are a good example of the agency's beliefs and values	○○○○●●●●●●	✓	○○○○○○●●●●	✓
48	Most leaders identify problems early and take appropriate action	○○○○●●●●●●	✓	○○○○○●●●●●	✓
49	Good on-field supervision is provided (quantity and quality)	○○○○●●●●●●	✓	○○●●●●●●●●	✓
50	Leaders conduct an annual performance/ ministry review with each missionary	○○○○○●●●●●	✓	○○○○○●●●●●	✓
51	There are documented and adequate procedures for handling complaints from M's	○○○○○●●●●●	✓	○○○○○●●●●●	✓
54	Ongoing language and culture training are actively encouraged	○○○○○○○○●●	✓	○○○○○○○○●●	
56	M's are assigned roles according to their gifting and experience	○○○○○○●●●●		○○○○○○●●●●	✓
60	M's are committed and loyal to the agency	○○○○○○●●●●		○○○○○○○○○●	✓
61	M's are generally not overloaded in the amount of work they do	○●●●●●●●●●	✓	○○○○●●●●●●	✓

62	Opportunities are provided for a ministry/role for the spouse	○○○○○○○○●●●	✓	○○○○○○●●●●	
64	M's regularly evaluate and seek to improve the agency's ministry	○○●●●●●●●●	✓	○○○○●●●●●●	
71	Missionary teams are effective in providing each other with mutual support	○○○○●●●●●●		○○○○○○●●●●	✓
78	Risk assessment and contingency planning is in place in all fields	○○○○○○○○●●●	✓	○○○○●●●●●●	✓
80	M's usually receive sustained financial support that is adequate for their needs	○○○○○○○○●●●	✓	○○○○●●●●●●	✓



The key findings

- ✓ The average rating of organisation values is highly correlated with retention in OSC and NSC
- ✓ Leaders solve problems (Q48) was rated very high in NSC and clearly correlated with retention
- ✓ Documentation of policies (Q45) correlated with retention in OSC and NSC
- ✓ Vision & purpose (Q40) and clear plans & job description (Q41), good on-field supervision (Q49), good leadership (Q47-48) are clearly correlated with retention in OSC and NSC, likewise in OSC: Free flow of communication with leadership (Q42), inclusion of missionaries in decisions (Q43)
- ✓ A clear procedure for handling complaints (Q51) is highly correlated with retention in OSC and NSC
- ✓ Opportunities for service of spouse (Q62) was rated very high in OSC and was correlated to high retention.
- ✓ Assignment to gifting (Q56)
- ✓ Risk assessment and contingency planning (Q78) was correlated with retention in NSC and OSC
- ✓ Missionaries are committed and loyal to agency (Q60) received very high rating and was correlated with high retention.



What it means

There are many areas of an agencies function (and therefore questions in ReMAP II) that contribute to their organisational values, however what is very clear is that collectively they have a very significant influence on retention. Organisational values are often the defining factor in whether an organisation thrives or flounders, whether its staff are growing and productive or constrained and just surviving. You can group the questions asked in to several areas each of which has a significant impact on organisational values: Clear Boundaries, Good communication, Effective leadership and Valuing of people.

Clear boundaries

Questions 40, 41 [Q41 *Plans and job descriptions are communicated clearly to the missionary*], 45 [Q45 *Policies are well documented and understood*] and 51 [Q51 *There are documented and adequate procedures for handling complaints from missionaries*] cover the area of setting out boundaries and all are highly correlated with missionary retention. Boundaries are essential in an organisation to give people freedom to operate. Does that sound contradictory? Let me explain. To make best use of the people in a hierarchical organisation, functions and tasks should be delegated as far down the organisation as it is possible to go, and still get the job done satisfactorily. So everyone needs to understand clearly what they are allowed to do, what their manager is allowed to do and what their subordinate is allowed to do. This way they know what freedom they have to act without reference to their manager, as well as what they are expected to delegate and what they must undertake themselves. In Asia I found this to be vitally important for to do the job of someone else lower than you in the hierarchy was to deny their ability and reduce their dignity. To do something that was your managers job was not viewed as helpful or taking the initiative as I have sometimes found in the West, but challenged their authority and status.

In an environment of team working and *flat* structures, some people make the mistake of thinking that boundaries have less importance. If anything they are more important than in a hierarchical structure. In a team people usually operate with more freedom and autonomy than in a hierarchical structure. People change roles depending on the work in hand. To give people true autonomy you have to give them boundaries so that they know very clearly that within an area they may act, think and innovate freely. They need to know that to cross outside an area they need to involve others who have freedom to operate in a wider area. If you do not have clear boundaries, most people spend their time inhibited because they worry if they are acting within their role and doing what they should be doing. So a clear vision and purpose, questions 40 [Q40 *Vision and*

purpose are shared and understood throughout the agency], helps people to know what the priorities of the organisation are and can align their own work to supporting the meeting of those aims and purpose. On this function, agency leaders gave a rating of just under 8 out of 10 in NSC and OSC, indicating that they feel that the vision and purpose is shared and understood. Boundaries and therefore as I have explained above, freedom, is given with clear job descriptions and plans. They allow people to see the way in which they are to meet the aims and purpose of the organisation. Having clear job descriptions correlated very highly with retention and scored 7 out of 10, a good score but given its importance, one that we should aim to improve upon.

What we are trying to explore here is *Where am I going, how do I get there, and what behaviour is acceptable in my effort to get there*. The where am I going is the vision and purpose, the how do I get there are the plans and job descriptions, and the policies of the organisation set out what behaviour is acceptable to achieve the vision and purpose. An example would be that in Nepal we needed to import items, particularly medical equipment that was not available in country. This meant getting expensive items through customs. There were two approaches to doing this. The quick way was to pay a fee to the customs officials who would ensure that your items were processed immediately; they went to the top of the pile. If you did not pay the fee you could wait weeks or even months. We needed the equipment to meet the aims of the organisation (running medical camps amongst the country's poorest people) but the organisations policy was not to pay these *fees* as they were viewed as bribes. Policies are important for they reinforce the common behaviour required in an organisation. In NSC the rating of Question 45 received was 7 out of 10 where as in OSC this received just 5. There may be things that the OSC can learn from NSC about this function or it may be that there are much higher expectations of what constitutes a clear policy in OSC agencies? Here we need to talk, explore and learn.

Good communication

Questions 42-44 cover the area of communication. Communication is of course a function in its own right but the prioritising of communication is making a statement of value, it is saying *we consciously communicate and put energy and effort into making communication happen*. It is a myth that communication just happens! As you increase the number of people in an organisation beyond one, so you exponentially increase the obstacles to communicating and we need to be both conscious and proactive in our communicating. We need to create systems for communicating and create space in which to communicate. If we choose to do this amongst busy ministry schedules we will do it because we have made it an organisational value which both affects all aspects of the or-

organisation and the lives of the leaders. For more discussion on this area see chapter 21.

Effective leadership

Making leadership effective is a key organisational value. In fact it takes a lot of investment, effort and downright perseverance because as other ratings show, the workload in our organisation is very high and creating and maintaining effective leadership takes time. It requires us to limit the volume of work we do to give us time to mentor, develop and raise leaders. It requires tough decisions if we are to lead well rather than just provide leadership that allows us to scrape through and survive. The bible says *Without vision, the people perish (Proverbs 29:18 KJV)*: Leaders provide vision and set the agenda and the quality of that leadership determines more than anything else whether the organisation is a growing, thriving one, or whether it is a regressing, dying one. If we are to have organisations that function well and have healthy people, we need to ensure that effective leadership is an organisation value. Across the four questions on leadership, questions 47-50, we see a high correlation with retention and in the OSC a worryingly poor rating of just 4 out of 10. The NSC are only slightly better at 5 out of 10. These ratings are discussed in detail in chapters 22 and 23.

Valuing of people

We often say *People are our most valuable resource*, but in mission this really is true: we have very few other resources. Business organisations often have large development budgets, significant building infrastructures and the latest IT equipment. Missions do not. Often we have very little material resource and have to stretch things out. What we do have are people who are called and very committed to the ministry or work and we need to be making the most of this. A question I often ask mission boards is *What structure do you have?* In OSC many mission organisation used to function as large, extended families, even to the extent that there were often parental figures at the head of the organisation. In recent times many, with the increased size and complexity, have dropped this structure and gone for more of a business structure. This is a concern for a number of reasons:

- ✓ The average business is responsible for the wellbeing of their staff for just 8 hours per day, in mission it is a 24 hour responsibility
- ✓ In business, the relationship between the individual is based at its root, on a financial contract – they pay a competitive rate to get a good level of service and loyalty from the individual. In mission people often bring their own funding and it is a basic allowance rather than a competitive rate.