

Preparing to Go

1. Short-term teams

Short-term teams have a valuable place to play in promotion of missions. By going folk catch a heart for a nation and get vision for returning there. However we must remember the reality that going on such teams changes the team members more than the nation they went to.

While we want all to consider going on a short term team, some form of selection process must be in place as certain individuals may not be appropriate for a team placement.

Preparation for these teams will not be as thorough as for those going overseas for longer terms but will still involve:

- Orientation days – maybe two or three sessions. Coordination of the training each year for those going on teams – which will probably mainly be in the summer, will be an obvious use of resources. More careful preparation will be required for those going into culturally sensitive areas.
- Debrief – more likely to be team specific and would happen around a month after return.
- Subsequent follow-up should raise the question of “what next?” to stir folk to consider longer term activity overseas.

See Mission Teams Checklist (www.saltlight.org/resources > conferences > CFP07)

2. Training & Equipping for Longer term service

Preparing to go involves three elements – practical, financial, spiritual

- From the work of others and our own missionaries' experience, we need to identify what preparation needs to be in place before someone moves overseas.
- Other churches as well as mission organisations have produced good resources. We do not need to reinvent the wheel, but we will want to present the majority of such training and equipping ourselves in order to maintain the relational dynamic with those 'going'.
- Training & preparation will need to cover issues such as: Dealing with the baggage; Sense of isolation, powerlessness to help; Shortage of news of various sorts.

Supporting there

Support is provided through different channels, the apostolic, personal pastoral, friends, a specific church base and a wider UK support base. With the support goes accountability – of the worker to those in the UK and of the supporters to the worker.

Support to those in the field needs to deal with the three elements – **practical, financial, spiritual**.

Finances

- Financial support needs releasing. Guidelines and support are available for this.
- Financial support from the church budget would be allocated according to principles set out in missions policy

Regular communication is a key part of support.

- As a church we provide regular communication through dispatch of newsheets and CDs of sermons.
- Communication is a two way process. We would expect to receive regular (monthly or bi-monthly) news/prayer updates. Those overseas would also be encouraged to communicate by e-mail, sending brief, frequent e-mails wherever possible rather than lengthy occasional ones.
- Those receiving financial support from the church would be expected to give a yearly report on their work and finances to the church leadership

Visits

Visiting those in the field has been a haphazard affair up to now – there is a need for coordination of visits: apostolic, pastoral, church friends.

A timetable of pastoral visits is drawn up and agreed yearly by the church leaders of who goes where, when.

These steps should help to eliminate:

- Sense of isolation, powerlessness to help;
- Shortage of news of various sorts

Further Ways of Providing Support

Prayer

- Home base prayer groups – say groups of ten, already praying before you go
- Fridge magnets
- Community group support
- More specific mission groups
- Use OCC web site (needs sensitive care e.g. D&S, A&E)
- Produce set of bullet points of prayer needs for the month. E-mail out if possible (church e-mail list)

Communication

- Note: All communication is valid whether good or bad (real not super-spiritual world)
- Kids communicating with MKs

Finances

- Train people to raise their finances; living by faith
- Review missions budget

Pastoral support

- Community group support
- Crisis support

Medical support/preparation

Training Issues

- Team-building
- Language learning
- Culture