

FINDING THE RIGHT MISSION AGENCY... HOW TO GET THERE FROM HERE

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Principles

- The Team you play on is more important than the stadium you play in.
- You are unique and know more about yourself than you think you do. (Psalm 37:3-6)
- God loves you and will not waste his investment in you.

What You Can Expect from the Mission

1. Compatible Goals

- Determine your and their purpose, objectives, goals (i.e. church planting, medical missions, education, music).
- Ask for the mission's five year goals, plans, visions for the future.
- Ask the mission if they periodically re-evaluate, review their goals and ministry.

2. Doctrinal Compatibility - Evaluate their positions on...

- Baptism
- Eschatology
- Church government
- Gifts of the Holy Spirit

3. Organizational Structure

- North American vs. international
- Home office driven vs. field driven
- Composition and role of the board
- Country and/or ethnic focus
- Governing style: family/individual vs. corporate/managerial

4. Ministry Scope

- How wide is the ministry scope for growth and change compared to your own possible changes in field and ministry focus?
- Read all of the mission's publications to get an overview. Ask for their prayer guide.

5. Policies, Principles, & Personality

Inquire about...

Financial policies: Is the mission agency funded by...

- Individual support promises?
- Pool or semi-pool system?

Note: While there are advantages and disadvantages to each, none is more spiritual than the other"

- Rules of behavior; expectations of personal conduct and life style
- Children's education - policies and options
- Policies on medical insurance, retirement, insurance, automobile
- Job descriptions, and later in the process, a field manual
- Policies for home leave (furlough, home service). Is further study required or expected? What is the norm?
- Role of the spouse - policy and expected norm
- Pastoral care and on-the-field mentor program
- Relationships with other mission age
- Accountability in morals, finances, relationships. To whom does the mission answer?
- Source of most candidates (i.e. area of North America, school, education level)

Also...

Visit the home office. How does it operate? How are phone requests and correspondence handled? This will be a reflection of how you will be treated in the future.

Meet with as many of the members of the mission as possible (the missionaries themselves!). They will be your co-workers and your new "family." Get an Email correspondence going with missionaries on the field, on home assignment, and in preparation for leaving.

Policies, principles of field operation, and people all join together in time and a set of circumstances to create a mission agency "personality." As you gather insight, you will find a "fit."

6. Track Record

After you define the mission agency's ministry focus, examine relationships with the national church, the attrition and retention rates of the agency, and the role of institutions on the field in order to evaluate the agency's track record. The best way to discover an agency's track record is through informal discussion with members of the mission.

7. Published History

Rarely do organizations change suddenly. Their past experiences should motivate you to want to associate with the same people and mission under God's leading.

What the Mission Expects of You

It is an extraordinarily expensive project to send you to another country and culture. However, many agencies have over 100 years of experience in doing just that. You will undergo interviews, fill out numerous forms, share your vision, dreams and expectations, have rigorous medical exams, attend orientation programs, and in general, feel like a prospective NASA astronaut! So, here's what they are looking for...

1. Spiritual stability and evidence of growing maturity.
2. A ministry-activity track record. What are you doing now? Are you taking initiative?
3. Academic fitness for the anticipated role.
4. Doctrinal awareness and compatibility. Can you apply biblical truths?
5. Personal integrity in morals, finances, word, and deed.
6. A clear statement of your missionary vision and goals for your life.
7. Good references from peers, teachers, co-workers, supervisors, and your pastor.
8. Active involvement in a local church both at home and on campus.
9. Willingness to partner, learn, accompany, and follow direction.
10. A spirit of discipline, adaptability, humility, and servanthood.
11. A willingness to develop a support base in prayer and finances.
12. Good medical and psychological health.