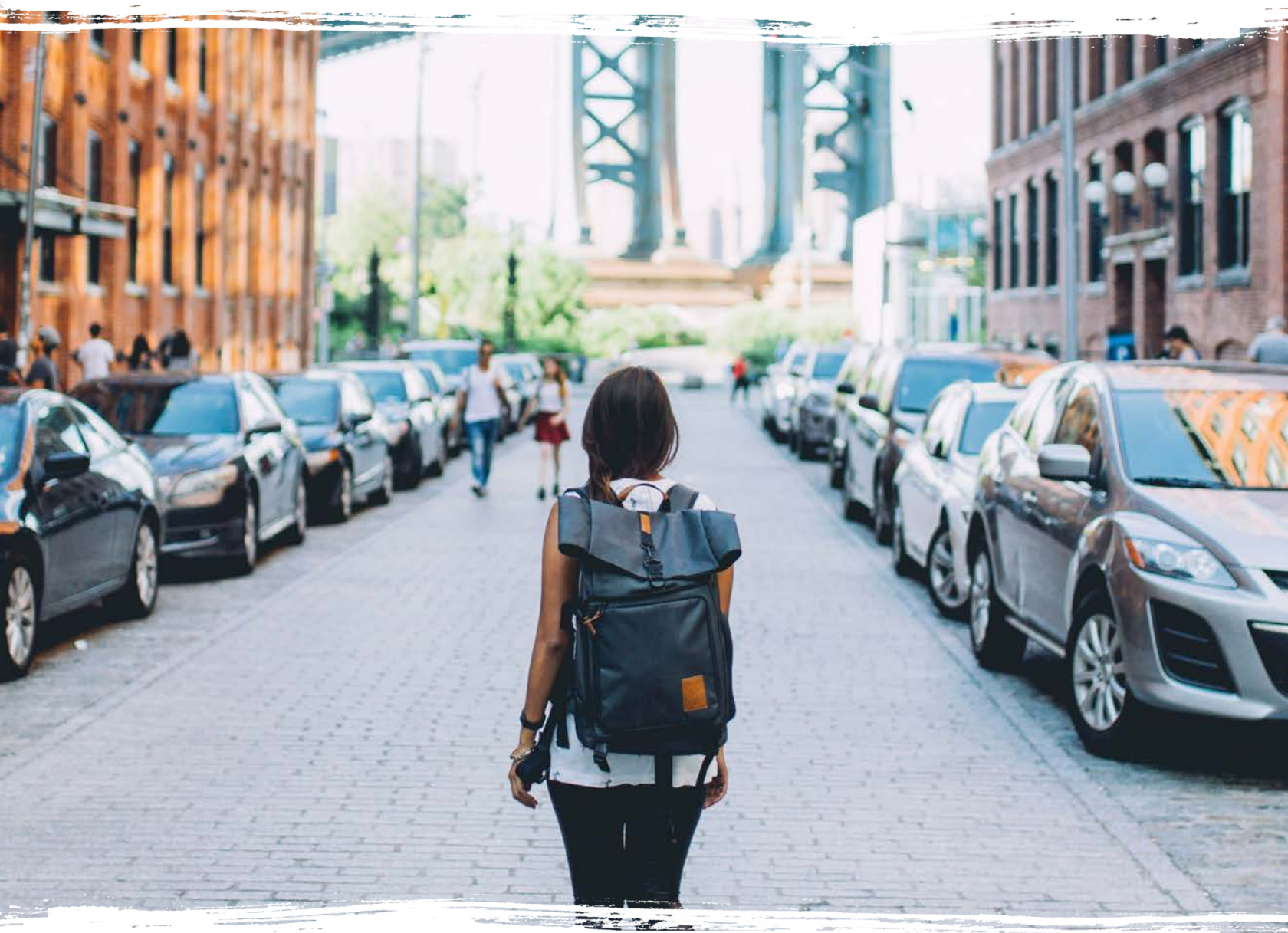


Am I Called to Missions?

Seven articles to help you explore God's purpose for your life



crossworld®

All Professions. One Mission.

Table of Contents

- 3 Introduction**
- 4 The DNA of a Disciple-Maker**
by Mark Silvers
- 6 You Are *Not* Called to Missions**
by Jim Beerley
- 8 “Church Planting Isn’t My Calling”**
an interview with Brandon (pseudonym), a disciple-maker in East Asia
- 10 Your Guide to Missionary Support**
by Crossworld
- 12 5 Tips to Help Your Kids Thrive**
by Chloe Wilson (pseudonym)
- 14 Jumpstart Your Missions Journey**
by Frank Roe
- 16 Is It Worth It?**
by Dale Losch
- 18 Resources**
- 19 Continue Your Journey with Crossworld?**



Since you became a Christ-follower, do you ache to know God's will for your life and follow his lead? Perhaps you worry if you don't find it, you'll make little eternal impact in the end.

Be encouraged, God has given you everything you need to live a fulfilling life of great eternal impact. Your unique personality, temperament, and spiritual gifts. Your upbringing, education, relationships, and home culture. Your hobbies that introduce you to new people. Your experiences that shape what you know about God. Your work that develops your résumé as well as your character. He's given you those things for your enjoyment, yes, and also for his mission. In your hometown? Great! On the other side of the world? Also great! How do you decide?

The following articles are written by cross-cultural workers around the world who've been in your shoes. Hear their stories and guidance for discerning a call to the nations.



The DNA of a Disciple-Maker

By Mark Silvers | Crossworld Missions Coach

How do you know if you have what it takes to be an effective disciple-maker among the least-reached? Maybe you have a Bible degree. Maybe you have a calling. Maybe you even have a short-term mission trip under your belt. Is that enough?

I read a lot of missionary biographies and I watch a lot of people go to the nations. There seems to be a set of characteristics shared by those who thrive in effective cross-cultural ministry. Let's call it a disciple-maker's DNA. This DNA has stood the test of time, separating those who have long-lasting impact from those who burn out or come home early.

1. Faith in the sovereignty of God

"Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need" (Philippians 4:11-12).

Missionary pioneer Adoniram Judson endured personal losses like burying several of his wives and children. He said, "If I had not felt certain that every additional trial was ordered by infinite love and mercy, I could not have survived my accumulated sufferings." To be an effective disciple-maker, you must trust that everything in your life comes from a loving Father's hand, and that he will sustain you through it.

2. Confidence in your salvation

"For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God" (Job 19:25-26).

Missionaries John and Betty Stam marched with their heads held high to the place where they would be beheaded. Even as swords were drawn, there appeared a slight smile on John's face and a look of peace on Betty's. How? They had counted the cost ahead of time. Confidence in their eternal salvation prepared them for the

life-sacrificing cost of being disciple-makers among the least-reached.

3. Love for God's Word

"Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble at his word" (Isaiah 66:5).

What is it that sustains those who live and work cross-culturally? Each one spends much time in the Scriptures. I can attest that the effective disciple-makers I've known personally are men and women of the Word. They have not stopped trembling (being awed) at the Word of God, and they faithfully obey God's commands, namely, to "go and make disciples."

4. A life of self-denial

"Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life" (Luke 18:29-30).

At the simplest level, it might be losing American comforts like air conditioning or your favorite food. But more than that, it will probably look like dying to your ambition, your dreams, even the approval of those you love. True disciple-makers choose to follow Christ above all others and all things, believing he is worth the sacrifice.

5. Willingness to dwell

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

Jesus modeled an incarnational life, dwelling among those he sought to reach. Effective workers don't isolate themselves from unbelievers who need to come to the cross, nor do they neglect those who have already come to the cross and need to grow in Christ. Disciple-making always happens in the context of relationships. To make disciples, you must dwell with people, just as Jesus did.

6. Motivated by the cross

"For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2).

Missionary Amy Carmichael once said, "God hold us to that which drew us first, when the cross was the attraction, and we wanted nothing else." If you have any other reason for going to the nations besides the work of the cross in your life and the desire to see Christ do the same in others, please do not go. It's not enough to have the right degree or to be a gifted evangelist. The *what* only matters when you have the right *why*. ●



You Are *Not* Called to Missions

by Jim Beerley | *Crossworld Canada President*

If there's a question in the mind of someone pursuing missions, it's usually, "Am I called?"

Let me be clear: No Christian is called to missions.

Rather, every Christian is called to God, who sends us on mission. That may not sound like a big difference, but it is. Here's what I mean.

Called then sent

Mark 3:13-14 says, "[Jesus] went up on the mountain and *called to him* those whom he desired, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve ... so that *they might be with him and he might send them out...*" (emphasis added). That order is important, as we'll see in a minute.

Later, Jesus travels with those same 12 men to Samaria, probably the last place on earth they would have felt called because of the Jews' and Samaritans' mutual animosity. But it's there that Jesus says, "The fields are white for harvest" (John 4:35).

The "fields" where the least-reached live aren't always desirable. Political, religious, racial, and cultural hang-ups — on both sides — could make us say, "I don't feel called there." But if "feeling called" was what the first disciples were waiting for, I doubt they would have ever left Jerusalem.

That's why Jesus called them *to himself*. By spending time with Jesus, they learned how he loves and whom he loves. That was a prerequisite for the disciples before Jesus sent them, and it's a prerequisite for us, too. God sends those he trusts — those who walk in close fellowship with him — to gather his harvest.

Called in community

When we talk about being called, we hold the control. I decide what a call feels like and whether I feel it today or not. When I don't feel called anymore, I am free to do what I want.

Where is the community of God in that mindset? Who can speak into your life without feeling like they're challenging God

himself? By holding tight controls over our call, we lose a lot of godly wisdom, direction, and discernment found in the church.

When God said he was calling Barnabas and Paul to a specific ministry in Acts 13:2-3, he communicated that to the church community — not to Barnabas and Paul privately. Then the church, under God's direction, sent them out. The church *then*, and the church *today*, affirms the heart and trustworthiness of the one being sent.

You, the sent one, then follow the authority and commands of the One who sent you — God, through your church. And given the Great Commission, his authority and commands are pretty clear.

So, what does all this mean for you? Stop waiting for a call and live *sent*.

1. You have been called *to God*, so abide in him. Remember, the Great Commandment precedes the Great Commission, both temporally and theologically. You become trustworthy as you draw close to our global God and understand the love he has for the world. Over time, you will begin to see with his eyes and love with his heart.
2. Remember that Jesus has sent you already (John 20:21). Live on mission where he has placed you and be active in your church community. Is your church affirming your heart and trustworthiness to be sent? Talk to us. ●



“Church Planting Isn’t My Calling”

An interview with *Brandon*, a disciple-maker in East Asia

Brandon, tell us how you ended up in Asia.

I was working in London when my mentor took me to a Business as Mission (BAM) conference. I thought, *When I get old that's what I want to do*. But just a short time later, I connected with some friends in Texas who wanted to start a factory in East Asia, and they asked me to run it. I didn't know anything about running a factory and I didn't know the language very well, but we all prayed about it and the Lord opened doors. Four months later I was on the ground.

What are some of the challenges you faced early on, and how did you overcome them?

I arrived in January and by September, I was frustrated that I wasn't seeing the spiritual results I wanted. I started to question my purpose for being there. My mentor reminded me that the Lord doesn't call us to results but to obedience. The most important thing is to seek him first and

enjoy him. Some days the job can feel like a boring 9-5, but if that's where he calls us to be, then that's where he will accomplish his will through us, even if we don't see it today or this month or this year.

Tell us a story about someone whose life was changed in the workplace.

In the factory, most of our management team were followers of Jesus, but most of our 80 employees were not — including our production manager, Rose. Sometimes Rose stood in our way of ministering to our employees.

One day a friend of mine asked if a church medical team could visit our factory. Our employees received free check-ups from this team of doctors and dentists, and they had the option of spending time with a local pastor. Almost everyone chose to do so. (They'd rather talk to a pastor than go back to work.)

More than a dozen people professed faith in Christ that day, including Rose. Not all of them continued in faith, but it did stick with Rose. She's still following Jesus and now she helps reach out and minister to the employees on the production floor.

What have you learned about integrating your faith with your work?

Every company is different. Some BAM companies focus on a missional product or environmental stewardship. When I worked at the factory, we focused our attention on our employees. We hired people with disabilities off the street — people that other companies wouldn't hire. We provided good jobs and employee benefits, and we shared about Jesus when we could.

What value do you as a marketplace worker receive by being part of a mission agency like Crossworld?

Someone said to me, "Going into the

mission field without prayer support is like sending troops without air support. If you have air support, you should use it." But besides the prayer support and logistical help, I love being part of a larger team and having accountability and direction. Crossworld brought me a mentor in my field who helps me stay focused. And while church planting isn't my calling, Crossworld's emphasis on discipleship rings home for me.

What advice would you give someone considering marketplace work overseas?

There's nothing better or worse about being a marketplace worker compared to a pastor or missionary. If the marketplace is where the Lord has called you, that's where you want to be. Moving overseas is a step of faith and it will have challenges, even dangers. But we only get this one lifetime to exercise our faith. Choose to pursue things different than what the world pursues — not riches or comfort, but treasure in heaven. ●



Your Guide to Missionary Support

There's a long list of exciting reasons to become a missionary: to obey Jesus' command to make disciples, to use your gifts to make an eternal difference, and to experience another culture, to name a few. But one thing that rarely tops anyone's list is raising financial support for ministry.

Whether that stems from fear, negative past experiences, or something else, we want to set the record straight. Truly, the financial journey can be one of the greatest blessings of being a missionary!

1. Do missionaries get paid?

The short answer is yes — missionaries receive a paycheck, have a bank account, set a budget, track expenses, and manage their finances, just like you do. *Where* their paycheck comes from can vary. Some missionaries are paid by their church denomination or are self-funded. (This could be the case if they've retired from their career and want to serve overseas for a few years while living off their retirement savings.)

The majority of missionaries raise the funds to pay their salary through a process of support-raising. They partner with a missions agency like Crossworld, which processes tax-deductible donations, pays their salary, and provides financial accountability.

2. Are there paid missionary jobs?

Yes, you can get paid to be a missionary without raising financial support. Often this involves engaging your professional skills on the mission field. For example, you can get a paying job teaching English in Thailand and earn a salary from your school. You can do the same as a missionary doctor at a hospital in the Middle East, a missionary IT professional in Central Asia, or a missionary business consultant in Africa.

It takes some effort to find a job you're qualified for in another country, but when you do, you can get to the field faster and you gain immediate influence among the local people.

3. What does the Bible say about raising support?

Though some people have a less-than-favorable view of fundraising, God esteems it. About 2,500 verses in the Bible mention money. Some of those verses talk specifically about money as a means for God's work in the world — in other words, financial support for ministry.

From the building of the tabernacle to Paul's missionary journeys, God intended his people to provide for his work. Read through passages like Luke 8: 1-3, 2 Corinthians 8-9, and Philippians 4: 14-20. You can be confident that this is the way God designed his kingdom to function.

4. What do missionaries raise support for?

Most missionaries raise support for two broad categories: personal funds and ministry funds. The personal side includes their salary, housing, kids' education, healthcare, insurance, taxes, and retirement savings. The ministry side includes the funds they need to do their work, such as supplies, hospitality, travel, training, continuing education, and membership with a missions agency.

5. How much support do they raise?

Everyone raises a unique amount of funding, determined by factors like cost of living in their host country, type of ministry, family size, and other sources of income. In general, Crossworld starts with the average salary of a teacher in the U.S. and modifies it based on the missionary's situation to determine how much he or she should raise.

It's important to raise enough funds (perhaps more than you think) to have a buffer to cover unexpected crises or to take advantage of unexpected ministry opportunities. Living cross-culturally is stressful enough without the added burden of financial instability!

6. How long does it take to raise support?

The length of time it takes to raise support varies for each worker, depending on the amount they need and the time they can devote to support development. Some raise full support in a few weeks and some work at it faithfully for a few years.

On average, expect to spend 6-12 months raising your funding, but don't be discouraged if it takes you longer than that — God uses every minute of your support-raising experience to shape you into a more effective missionary.

7. Is there support raising training?

Yes! One of the benefits of joining a missions agency is the training and help you receive in every aspect of missionary life, including fundraising. Crossworld's training includes in-person and online sessions about the biblical foundation for raising support as well as the practical aspects of giving a ministry presentation, asking for financial partners, and cultivating ongoing partnerships with donors. ●



5 Tips to Help Your Kids Thrive

by *Chloe Wilson* | *Crossworld worker and missionary mom*

I'm a Third Culture Kid (TCK) myself — I spent my childhood in Asia, and I loved growing up overseas so much that I wanted the same experience for my own children. Now I'm in the trenches of raising my own TCKs.

If you're considering missions, you might hesitate at the thought of what it might do to your kids. I've talked to a lot of parents who've struggled through that fear too. From their experience and mine, let me share five tips to help your family thrive cross-culturally.

1. Invest in integrating into your host culture.

The opportunity to learn another culture and language is such a gift to your kids. Don't waste it. "Mainstream" your kids in the local culture when you can. Find a local school, join local extracurriculars, hire a language tutor for your kids, or choose housing in a neighborhood of locals rather than an expat enclave.

Putting my kids in local schools was scary for me at first, but we (including our kids) have come to love it. The educational philosophy is different, but some of those differences have great benefits.

2. Don't force integrating into your host culture.

Many a TCK has grown up to resent their parents for valuing the ministry over their needs and spiritual health. If local schools will significantly compromise your kids' academic or spiritual development, don't send your kids there. If learning the local language is too much for your kids, don't sweat it. Allow them the time and space they need to transition well, and reconsider it down the road.

Our kids attend local schools but their best friends are from an expat, Christian family. They bond over the experience of being the only foreigners. While we want them to have local friends too, it's more important to us that they feel the deep connection of friendship, with whomever that might happen.

3. Let go of trying to give your kids a normal childhood.

Your children will not be “normal” compared to kids from your home country. Neither will they be “normal” in your host country. That’s a hard desire to let go. But when you do, you’ll find tremendous freedom! You don’t have to keep up with either culture; you can, in wisdom and faith, embrace the unique story God is giving your kids. (And is society’s “normal” what you want for your kids anyway?)

Our country doesn’t celebrate Christmas and I’m tempted to feel sad about the holiday things our kids miss out on, but I’m also grateful for the lack of pre-planned events so we can focus on celebrating as a family.

4. Always pursue a positive attitude toward your host culture.

We adults go through a great deal of stress living away from our home country. We need to be honest about the challenges. However, your kids will — and should — feel more deeply attached to the local culture than you do, especially if they’re young when you move there. It will, in a large sense, be their home.

A couple of years ago, I returned for the first time to the country where I grew up. I was surprised how familiar everything still seemed. My kids will likely feel the same way about where we live now. For me to speak ill of it would either attack their sense of home or build into them an attitude of cultural superiority.

5. Speak to them early and often of their true home.

One of the painful aspects of cross-cultural life is the loss of belonging. I will be a perpetual foreigner in my host country, yet I no longer feel at home in America either. This sense of displacement is even more pronounced for TCKs. My heart longs for home but it doesn’t know where that home is. And I’m grateful for that. Scripture tells stories of exiles and foreigners, culminating with the ultimate culture-crosser, Jesus. We who follow him must identify with that story first, above any narrative of our earthly country, culture, or even family. Those of us who literally belong nowhere on earth probably find this easier.

Every time my kids feel the ache of not belonging, I want them to anticipate their only true home — the future one. I don’t want this hope to be a dismissive platitude in our family; I want it to define us to the core of our beings.

It’s true that a cross-cultural life requires sacrifice, but I’ve found that the more we give to Christ, the more he returns to us in blessing upon blessing. To me, the deepest blessings of a cross-cultural life more than compensate for the sacrifices.

Don’t let the fear of raising your kids overseas stop you from going. You won’t be robbing them of any essential childhood experiences. Instead, you’ll give them an incredible gift. ●



Jumpstart Your Missions Journey

by Frank Roe | *Crossworld Missions Coach*

Are you planning to become a missionary but you're in a waiting period? Maybe you still have a few years in school, or you need some time to pay down debt. Maybe you're starting a family and exploring options for the future.

Whether or not you're ready to go, it's never too early to start preparing.

Here are 12 ways you can invest in your future missions career right now.

1. Pray

This is the most important thing (now and ever) you can do. Spend time praying for the nations and for your own journey. Ask God to give you wisdom and direction in following him.

2. Talk to your pastor

Start the conversation now about your desire to serve overseas. Ask for prayer and suggestions on your next steps.

3. Be disciplined and make disciples

Ask someone in your church to mentor you in your faith. Also look for someone you can invest in. It's important to learn how to make disciples before you go.

4. Start crossing cultures

Visit ethnic restaurants in your city, attend cultural festivals, and get to know immigrants in your neighborhood. You could even watch an international church service online. The more time you spend observing and participating in another culture, the smoother your transition will be later.

5. Get to know a missionary

Learn about life and ministry overseas from someone who's ahead of you on the journey. If you don't know any missionaries, ask your pastor or a missions recruiter to connect you.

6. Take a Perspectives course

Learn about God's heart for the world throughout history, and see how you can be part of his mission.

7. Research missions organizations

Each missions agency has a unique vision, values, and culture. Be intentional about asking questions to help you find the right fit.

8. Investigate ministry opportunities

Do you already have a location and type of ministry in mind? Ask your pastor, mentor, or a missions recruiter to help you explore options that fit your skills and interests.

9. Do language study

If you know where you want to serve, start your language study early with a language-learning app or tutor. You probably won't be fluent before you leave, but you'll have a head start.

10. Get TEFL/TESOL certified

Most countries in the world are looking for native English speakers. Even if you don't plan to teach English full time, having the certification will give you another option for ministry. Bonus: You can get certified online!

11. Take Bible classes

You don't have to have a Bible degree to serve with Crossworld, but you do need a solid understanding of Scripture so you can disciple others. Ask your pastor for a recommended course or program in your city or online.

12. Build your team

Talk to friends and family about your interest in missions, and start sending email newsletters about your journey. You'll be building a network of potential partners, and you might even find a few people who want to join you in going overseas.

These ideas will give you a head start on your missions journey. When it's time to go, you'll be ready. ●



Is It Worth It?

by Dale Losch | *Crossworld President Emeritus*

What will it cost you to become a missionary? How much will you have to give up? Will it be worth it?

Missionaries make sacrifices every single day. Some of those sacrifices are common to every believer as Jesus calls us to take up our cross and follow him (Matthew 16:24). But others are specific to cross-cultural workers.

1. The familiarity and comfort of home

They leave everything familiar and the relationships they've spent a lifetime building to start a new life on another continent.

2. Physical security

One worker endured a knife held to his neck by a man with whom he was sharing the message of life.

3. Professional identity

One family walked away from high-paying jobs in America to battle searing heat, choking dust, and professional obscurity in

a country where people desperately need their skills.

4. Financial stability

One couple raised support to live in an affluent country where gas, groceries, and clothes cost twice as much, and they must justify to people back home why their support level is "so high."

How much are these sacrifices worth?

It can seem like it's not worth it. But then I remember Jesus.

He gave up his well-deserved respect. He, too, had to justify every word and action to people who didn't get it. He, the Creator of the universe, endured not a knife to his throat but thorns on his brow, nails in his hands and feet, and a spear in his side.

How much was that worth?

When I think of Jesus, I remember that this call is worth my life and so much more.

- Do I rally to his cause?
- Do I empty my wallet when I hear of places where he is still without honor?
- Do I empty my schedule of trivial engagements so that I can invest in a life-giving relationship with my next-door neighbor?
- Do I empty myself of the pursuit of my own comfort, security, and significance?

It might be obvious to answer yes, but the obvious answer isn't an easy one. Every day is a battle.

This is what I wrote in my journal a few weeks ago:

The flesh dies hard. Godliness is not a permanent state of being in this life. It is a daily choice. It's as if we're forever on a steep incline, and every time we coast, we lose momentum and find ourselves rolling backward. Only a continual expenditure of energy fueled by the grace and strength of Christ Jesus will assure progress toward the summit.

Will you join us on the journey? ●



Resources

Keep exploring your role in the Great Commission with these resources.

Operation World by Jason Mandryk

Unreached of the Day podcast

Let the Nations Be Glad by John Piper

Prayercast.com videos

GotQuestions.org

A Better Way: Make Disciples Wherever Life Happens by Dale Losch

CROSS conference and podcast

Evidence Not Seen: A Woman's Miraculous Faith in the Jungles of World War II
by Darlene Deibler Rose

The Insanity of God: A True Story of Faith Resurrected by Nik Ripken

KAIROS missions course

Continue Your Journey With Crossworld

Crossworld helps followers of Jesus engage their profession and passions to make disciples among the least-reached.

If you believe God is calling you to the nations, let's talk. You may have questions or fears, and that's okay! You don't have to face them alone.

- 1 We value all professions — including yours.
- 2 We help you become an effective disciple-maker, wherever life happens.
- 3 You will grow and thrive with our expert training and personalized care.
- 4 You're not alone on the field. We welcome you into an authentic community.
- 5 We take care of the details so you can focus on making disciples.

We're here to help you overcome any obstacles that might be standing in your way so you can start the greatest journey of your life.

Take the first step toward the nations.

Talk to a Crossworld missions coach today at crossworld.org/go.



Scan to talk
to a missions
coach today!

