

**General Topics :: Missionaries of SI****Missionaries of SI - posted by dvndsn, on: 2012/2/9 14:01**

This is for the past/present missionaries of SI members. I have a few questions regarding your ministry:

What do you base your success off of?

What challenges have you faced in the field?

What about your children? How have they adjusted to the lifestyle of being a missionaries child? What about schooling them?

How have you comforted your family from afar if you have been called away from home?

What someone (particularly the world) would call a necessity in life (owning your own home, the American dream, etc.), how are you content to live without those things? My wife and I are called to missions in Africa, and we are already content with never owning our own home, but I would like some other input on how to deal with this in regards to family members and friends.

What organization did you go through? IMB, BMDMI, etc.

Did you experience persecution?

If you like, please tell where you served and how many years you were there. Also, if you feel I left anything out, please feel free to include it in your response.

Re: Missionaries of SI - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2012/2/9 14:38

This is a tremendous thread idea and I know there are ex-missionaries on these forums that would love to respond to this once they see it.

Re: - posted by dvndsn, on: 2012/2/9 14:39

Please find them! I am extremely interested in their experiences. I have been on mission trips, and realize I am on mission wherever I go, but to speak with one who has lived a life of foreign missions would be a great opportunity for me.

Re: Missionaries of SI - posted by dvndsn, on: 2012/2/9 21:16

Since I'm not getting much response, I'll widen the qualifications: Can anyone expound on a mission trip they went on?

Re: - posted by EverestoSama, on: 2012/2/9 22:09

Just to let you know, I'm currently working as a missionary in Japan. I don't have time at the moment to answer all of your questions, but I will try to answer them when time does allow.

Re: - posted by dvndsn, on: 2012/2/9 22:19

Thank you so much! I understand completely!

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/2/10 9:01

For what it's worth, my husband and I are ex-missionaries. We served with Trans World Radio in Bonaire Netherlands Antilles for a term. It is a conservative evangelical parachurch mission.

Quote:

----- What do you base your success off of?

We were a service mission. My husband headed up the maintenance crew and did some on-air programming. I used my music and nursing background quite a bit. Our success stories came from afar. A lot of fruit happened in remote places in the world - China, Brazil, and so forth. We received encouragement through their letters which were read (translated) at staff meetings. They were amazing stories - how God used the air waves to transform people for his glory. That made it all worth it!

Quote:

----- What challenges have you faced in the field?

The weather was usually very hot, and we had no air-conditioning in our homes. Scorpions were everywhere, so you never put on a shoe without shaking it first, and you thoroughly checked your sheets before jumping in bed. The biggest psychological challenge was what some viewed as extreme legalism among the missionaries themselves. You couldn't wear shorts, your shoulders had to be covered by at least 3 inches of fabric (females). Men were not allowed to wear beads. There was also a high turnover rate. Just as you got to know someone well, they'd move on. It was one loss after another. There were also health issues and emotional disturbances - more than I expected. Since those days in the 70's, there has apparently been remarkable improvement regarding the spiritual and emotional needs. God answered our prayers and sent some discerning, compassionate leaders. God cares!

Part of the culture shock, I think was the difference between Canadian and American way of thinking and expressing. I did not expect it, and sometimes I would be offended because I didn't understand. In a sense we were foreigners among foreigners on a foreigner field. That was both challenging and adventurous.

Quote:

----- What about your children? How have they adjusted to the lifestyle of being a missionaries child? What about schooling them?

Our two oldest children were born there, but we did not remain into school years. I probably would have homeschooled. I taught my daughter to read and write her letters at 2yo because she was ready and eager. I taught her a lot of songs to sing. And she enjoyed us reading books. We lived in an outback kind of area with local people, and they would come over to look at my white babies. We didn't know each other's language, but we sure had fun together.

Quote:

----- What someone (particularly the world) would call a necessity in life (owning your own home, the American dream, etc.), how are you content to live without those things?

This was a big issue - material possessions. We were given a lot of advice for what to bring. Looking back, some of that advice may have been an expression of that American Dream. In hindsight I could have done with far less. At first we used sawhorses and plywood for a table. I think I could have lived with that. But we ordered a table, among a few other things.

Quote:

----- My wife and I are called to missions in Africa, and we are already content with never owning our own home, but I would like some other input on how to deal with this in regards to family members and friends.

We did not own our home so I cannot comment on this. The mission rented our house. I think you would do well to prepare yourself regarding these temporal needs by reading Hudson Taylor, Gladys Alyward, Amy Carmichael, Bruchko (Bruce Olsen), and those many others who served so sacrificially. Fill your mind with that material. And then whatever you do have will be a blessing!

Here's another crucial book (I think) for missionaries-to-be: "When Charity destroys Dignity: Overcoming unhealthy dependency in the Christian movement" by Glenn Schwartz. You get it off the Voice of the Martyr site. He addresses a prevailing concern in missions - which doesn't get talked about much - and is not going to go away anytime soon.

My husband and I were not armed with these missionary stories at the time. We were quite young and naive. Still, missionary life proved to be a powerful learning experience in itself. After leaving (his choice) I was sad and depressed for some time afterwards. I wanted to stay, and it felt like a big part of my heart was left behind.

Reverse culture shock added to the challenge. Even after being away three years, I was shocked by the decadence - especially in the churches. I could hardly walk in some of the churches - looking like posh hotels... those carpets... lights. And the people were singing away seemingly oblivious to the reality of another existence. It was a lonely and hurting time for me. I have heard that reverse culture shock is often worse than the initial culture shock. I can understand.

I don't know if any of this is helpful for you. Still, I believe you are wise to hear from others. May God direct wise counselors and godly seasoned missionaries into your life - that you may be well-equipped for the race ahead.

God bless you!

Diane

Re: - posted by flameoffire (), on: 2012/2/10 11:06

I've worked as a missionary (primarily to Bengali and Yemeni Muslim immigrants) for the last year and a half. These are excellent questions.

I judge my success by my relationship with the Lord Jesus, my daily experience and obedience with Him, and my faithfulness to sow in prayer and spread the message of the gospel in a discernible, bold witness.

I am single and I freely admit that this has shielded me from many struggles and sacrifices.

Through KP Yohannan (Road to Reality) and many others I have a different lifestyle ethic than most of the rest of North American Christianity. Keeping a daily understanding that our purpose is to live in the light of eternity and that if we have to answer to the LORD for every idle word, we shall surely answer for every idle dollar spent means a lot to me.

I'm affiliated with a CMA church plant and under their authority and accountability, but not a CMA employee.

I have not yet experienced any physical persecution. The opposition within the body of Christ has been the hardest to deal with as has been the spiritual, mental and emotional onslaught from the enemy.

The ugly conflicts between ideals, ethics and mental, emotional and spiritual health within the body have been the hardest to deal with. Satan is constantly trying to wear you down and cause division. Jesus is destroying his work praise the Lord (1 John 3:8).

You can find out more at my blog and at Acts 29 Fellowship's website.

Re: Missionaries of SI - posted by Nemo2006, on: 2012/2/10 12:15

My wife and two children live in Matagalpa, Nicaragua. We actually are home in Ohio now by the miracles of God for a short visit. We have lived there for 6 months and one priority we have is working with an organization called "Still Hope". We are currently building an orphanage.

We learned a hard lesson of success in ministry. How can one measure success compared to someone else in the kingdom of God. We went to the field expecting certain accomplishments. This is a great device of the enemy to think it is according to our strength. Then God broke us in a way that brought submission. We now understand that we are not called to succeed but to obey. HE IS ALREADY SUCCESSFULL.

It is sad with the reputations that american christianity have in this world. It was asked by a native if we where planning to hire a servant/maid lady to work in our home. We were ashamed of such a question. We rent a house there with plenty of room that we can keep people, but we cannot picture ever again trying to buy a house. Vehicles also are very expensive and we prayed but felt it was the will of God to not worry about trying to use one. It is a great blessing to not be entangled again with the cares of this life as far as property is concerned. We have so many preachers who are pacing the floor at night because they cannot pay the bills instead of staying up all night because men are lost.

From our family we faced alot of discouragement telling us not to go, but the worst is to see the great need and feel that you are not making an impact. Everyday people coming with more and more needs. Struggling to allow Christ to live thru us is our great concern.

We have a 5 year old son and a 2 year old girl. They love Nicaragua. 5 year old is homeschooled and our girl is also eager to learn. They are picking up the spanish rather quickly by playing with many friends. It is a great blessing to watch your children play and become close to friends from another culture. Coming back to U.S. for a short visit has caused them to be spoiled by grandmas to the point where it will be hard to get them to go back with us.

I hope I have given some kind of insight for you but the most important is Christ and His glory. God will have you thinking and acting radically before you ever leave the country. This is the plan of God to prepare you in the midst of your own people.. It IS Amazing

Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2012/2/12 9:38

This goes through my mind ALOT when it comes to church.

DO you think the book you mentioned here could also go for people who aren't necessarily missionaries but do street preaching and so forth? The book intrigues me!

Quote:

Reverse culture shock added to the challenge. Even after being away three years, I was shocked by the decadence – especially in the churches. I could hardly walk in some of the churches – looking like posh hotels – those carpets – lights. And the people were singing away seemingly oblivious to the reality of another existence. It was a lonely and hurting time for me. I have heard that reverse culture shock is often worse than the initial culture shock. I can understand.

Here's another crucial book (I think) for missionaries-to-be: "When Charity destroys Dignity: Overcoming unhealthy dependency in the Christian movement" by Glenn Schwartz. You get it off the Voice of the Martyr site. He addresses a prevailing concern in missions – which doesn't get talked about much – and is not going to go away anytime soon.

Quote:

Re: - posted by dvndsn, on: 2012/2/12 17:38

roadsign, it means a lot to me that you took the time to respond! Thank you so much!
That is awesome that you were able to get on air to do what you did.

I can understand the weather issues and HVAC. My wife and I were talking to some missionaries from the IMB to Brazil last night and they do not have any HVAC. Winter causes the temperature to get in the 40's, but it is only for two weeks. I have heard of problems with monkeys and spiders in Africa, so I am expectant of the animal obstacles as well. I am glad God has answered your prayers in regards to the emotional disturbances. He does indeed care!

My wife and I have a 1.5 yr old. I hope he is just as eager as your daughter! We will more than likely homeschool our children, not because of the area in which we will live (we do not know yet), but mainly because we feel God leading us in that direction.

It's kind of funny you say that about the table, my wife and I had a TINY (I mean big enough for two plates and that's it) cardboard box for our table when we first got married. We ate on that thing for almost two months! Those were some good times for us. We definitely had some humble beginnings even with all of our family living in the same city as us. I do look forward to having only a few essential things in the future, though I do not know how hard it will be to boil everything down to that.

It's funny you mention Gladys Alyward, my wife just got done reading Noel Pipers' "Faithful Women and their Extraordinary God" and she has a chapter on her.

I have thought about reverse culture shock and I do not look forward to it. When you mentioned the carpet, it made me think a lot back to my mission trip to Nicaragua. I absolutely loved worshipping outside. It was a wonderful experience. What is the "prevailing concern in missions" he speaks of? I feel like I am missing the obvious for some reason, haha.

Thank you so much for the reply Diane! Thank you for your service, as well.

flameoffire

That is definitely a good way to judge your success.

I can understand how being single would relieve you from certain responsibilities. This is exactly what Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians.

What does CMA stand for? Could you describe the organization to me?

How do you have opposition within the body of Christ? I do not understand. Unless you are relating it to my parents opposing me going to the mission field, I suppose that would be opposition from within.

Nemo2006

It is amazing you live in Matagalpa, that is where I went in 2008 with the BMDMI! We stayed in their mission house in the city, and traveled four hours away to a village called "Susuli" and did some work there.

Are you on furlough for 6 months here in the states?

God is definitely already successful. We are fighting the battle of life from the winning side, and moreso, the battle is not even ours to fight. God fights in our stead and has taken the punishment (death) away from the enemy!

I am glad your situation allows for you to be free from owning a vehicle. My wife and I are in the market for our second, and it is a big step for us to buy this one. It is a hard step to take, but I yearn to continue to hold on to my confidence in the Lord.

I am not in seminary yet and I have already faced discouragement, even from my Christian mother. Our whole life all of our immediate and close family have lived in the same city, so venturing out even to seminary will be hard for them to get used to. I yearn to be on the field and out of America so bad! I want to share Christ with those who have never heard His name!

I was wondering about your children in regards to other children in your area. Do they play together after the other kids

have come home from school? I want my children to have interaction with other boys and girls too. I suppose it would be logical for them to play together after school is out, so maybe I answered my own question.

I do hope God is preparing me for the field. Already I am feeling led to serve on my church's missions committee. I want to serve my church family, but I also want to glorify God more. I am meeting with my pastor and deacons tomorrow to give my commitment to go on mission to Indonesia later this year. I felt the call this past week. I am extremely nervous, but I know God will be with me.

All of these responses have been very encouraging to me. Thank you all!

Re: - posted by dvndsn, on: 2012/2/14 20:17

As a small side note, I met with my pastor and some deacons yesterday, committing to go on mission to Indonesia with another church member. It is a kind of double-mission trip. One group will be engineers from my church, scouting where to build a well for impoverished regencies. Another group (mine) will backpack for a week, sharing the Gospel with tribes met along the way. At the end we will meet back up and fly home. If you feel led, please pray for more people to be led to share the Gospel. These people need water, but more so they need living water!

Re: Missionaries of SI - posted by EverestoSama, on: 2012/2/15 0:57

Hey,

Sorry it's taken a day or two to reply, but I'll try to do my best to answer the questions here.

Just as a bit of a header, my name is Grant, I'm 26 (I think :P), and I've been working in Japan as a missionary for a little over two years so far.

Quote:

-----What do you base your success off of?

Interestingly enough, I'm asked this/I think about this on occasion, and there's really only one concrete answer I can come to when considering this:

Simply that there's nothing in this entire world I can base my success off of. The only time I'll ever truly know if I was successful in the task I was given is when I receive it directly from the Lord's mouth on judgement day.

I have to live, work, and strive every day in the firm belief that I'm doing exactly what Christ called me to do in following Him. If I start looking around to see sorts of "proofs" as my barometer for success it will only be to my ruin, as it has been to countless other missionaries before me in this country. In many circles Japan is nicknamed the "missionaries' graveyard" as many seasoned missionaries with good intentions came to this country also looking for results, and were absolutely staggered at the rocky hearts of the people, and eventually threw in the towel when they didn't receive the results that they were expecting/accustomed to.

If my sight is set on anything else than to fulfill the command of Christ and spread His Gospel, I've already started on the wrong foot, and can only expect failure and disappointment.

To work here, or on any mission field, I/we have to take to heart the men of Hebrews 11, and be willing to share in the lot of such men.

Hebrews 11:13

All these died in faith, WITHOUT RECEIVING THE PROMISES, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. (emphasis added)

Expecting anything else, will only lead to frustration, doubt, bitterness, and questioning.

Quote:
-----What challenges have you faced in the field?

One thing that's been a bit of a tough pill to swallow is the fact that from the very get go, the Japanese people will make it abundantly clear that as a foreigner, you are irreconcilably different than they are, but beyond that, you will never fully understand them or have any idea of what it feels like to "be Japanese", thus whatever you say to them has to be viewed through the lens of some "unknowing outsider" giving his irrelevant advice on something. This mindset permeates every part of the culture, and will even seep into the church.

However, there is quite a noticeable difference between Japanese people who've lived in Japan their whole life, vs. the ones who have lived in another country for a year or two. It's like their eyes are opened and they realize that there's this world outside of Japan that cares nothing about how the Japanese think things should be done, and there are other ways to think than they way they've been told to see things. Free thinking is not encouraged in Japan, and is viewed with skepticism. The most honest Japanese will admit this, and as strange as it sounds, some are even proud of this fact.

So when something new is presented to an individual, you must understand that it's not being presented to just one, but to the opinion of the entire country. They view ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING through the eyes of what their fellow Japanese people might think. They even have a phrase for their own people "the culture of shame" meant to describe how detrimental it would be to possibly be the one who dares do something different than everyone else. Everyone here is well aware of the old Japanese proverb, "The nail that sticks out shall be hammered down."

Another great difficulty when trying to open up doors and relate to/understand people, is the concept I guess that Japanese people can hold two completely polar opposite views at the same time, and somehow be OK with this. It's a country that redefines relativism, and makes the concept of something being completely true an alien way of thinking. There are no truths here, there are only ways of doing things.

At the same time one must accept that the way something has always been done by the Japanese, is clearly the best way of doing it, for no other reason than that it's always been done that way. Thus you must not do anything different than the way it has always been done, for this is truly the right way to do it.

If you're already scratching your head about how there are no absolutes about anything, yet there is a right way of doing something that is completely closed to interpretation, then you've just took your first step onto the foothill of the mountain of confusion that is the Japanese mindset.

And if you ever decide to ask anyone how these two concepts can coincide and be believed at the same time (which I have on a few occasions), you'll simply be treated to the aforementioned, "You're not Japanese and thus could not possibly understand the Japanese mind."

As basic as this may sound, this is a major hurdle, and one of the crowning features that makes it so difficult to work here. Christ is not the way things have always been done here, thus must be rejected from the start because it is not the native religion of Japan (most Japanese refer to themselves as Buddhists, which like Christianity, does not find its origins in Japan) yet practice a religion that is not indigenous to Japan either.

Romans 1:22-23

Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

Quote:
-----What about your children? How have they adjusted to the lifestyle of being a missionaries child? What about schooling them?

I'm unmarried, so I can't comment about this personally. I do know a few missionary kids around my city though, and some find it difficult especially in Japan because they're raised as what's referred to as "third culture kids". The Japanese do not except them as being like them because they're foreign, yet Japan is the only country they know, thus they do not fit into their home country either, and find it extremely difficult to find a place where they truly fit in outside of their own home.

usehold. Many of them feel very alone here.

Quote:

-----How have you comforted your family from afar if you have been called away from home?

Because I live in a technologically advanced culture, it's not very difficult to keep in touch with my family via the internet. My parents were very happy about my decision to work in missions, thus they don't really feel that I've just gone off or left or anything of that nature, so I haven't had to comfort them much, or anything along those lines.

Quote:

-----What someone (particularly the world) would call a necessity in life (owning your own home, the American dream, etc.), how are you content to live without those things?

The standard of living in Japan is about the same as in America, so I can't say there was a large transition for me personally. I live by myself in an apartment, and have the internet and a phone for communication. Japan doesn't use insulation, so that can be challenging at times, (especially in winter and summer:P) but apart from that I don't mind that I don't own my own home, or make much money or anything like that. I was blessed to be able to buy a smaller motorcycle to get around with (as owning a car, plus a parking spot, plus the money to pay the bi-annual tax needed to own a car is financially impossible), so it makes transportation quite a bit easier here, especially since it's just me. I don't have much money, but compared to others I could never call myself poor. I'm highly content with what God has provided for me.

Quote:

-----What organization did you go through?

I actually didn't come with an organization. The way I got here is a very long story (which I might have posted forever ago on here, though I honestly can't remember), but basically a Japanese pastor needed a missionary to work with, and I got in touch with him and he asked if I could come out and work with them and their church, so that's what I've been doing. In all honesty though, as much of a blessing as sending organizations can be;

1. If God wants you to do work in a country it doesn't matter if you have an official sending organization or not, as He'll get you there.
2. I've seen just as much difficulty arise from being officially under an organization as I've seen blessing come from it (the details would be too long to get into here).

I currently know some missionaries who are trying to set up a girl to come over here as a missionary in a similar style, trying to avoid if possible coming under the umbrella of a sending organization (the one they're under themselves actually) because of all the difficulties that would arise from it.

Quote:

-----Did you experience persecution?

Not in the way that believers are experiencing in other parts of Asia. Sometimes I even think the Gospel might flourish under some persecution (not that I want it), as it would give the Japanese a chance to see that Christ is just not a part of western culture that can be abandoned if it became an inconvenience. As grim as it sounds, that might just be what could wake this country up.

Pray for us.

-Grant

Re: - posted by Solomon101, on: 2012/2/15 1:09

@ EverestoSama (Grant)

Great post. Thank you for sharing your story. I have enjoyed many of your observations in your past contributions to the forum as well.

I have a couple of questions for you given your unique understanding of missions.

1. What do you feel is the single most important spiritual issue to settle in a persons mind before they move into a transcultural ministry?
2. What do you feel are the 2 or 3 most important natural issues for a person to prepare for that is feeling they may be called to transcultural (missions) ministry?

Appreciate any input you have as well as believing for you to have wonderful fruit over time in your field of Japan!

Blessings,

Jason

Re: - posted by EverestoSama, on: 2012/2/15 1:52

@ Solomon101

Thanks, Jason. I have to head out to work right now, but when I get back in later tonight I'll try my best to answer those questions.

-Grant

Re: - posted by dvndsn, on: 2012/2/15 10:23

EverestoSama, I can understand your reasons behind basing your success off of what God says in the end. Definitely a good thought to keep in mind when doing anything in this borrowed life!

Your post has made me understand more why it is so hard to minister to the Japanese over there. It is almost similar to the United States too. Many people do not want to take the steps necessary to fully give their life to Christ simply because they do not want to know what others around them would think.

I wholeheartedly believe in your emphasis on not going with an organization. When the time comes (which is a long way from now) my wife and I will apply to the IMB. If we get denied, we are still going to pack up and go, simply because we know our calling is in Africa. The whole reason for application is because to cut through so much red tape now relieves certain constraints that could be placed on us in the future (in regards to visas, customs, etc.).

How did the earthquake experience roll over with you in regards to your ministry? Was it easier to share with people because of their calamity, or did it not effect you at all?

Solomon101, those are great questions and I look forward to EverestoSama's reply. In regards to #2, understand that missions is not just transcultural. I have a friend who is feeling called to missions in America. Even if one were to stay in their native land and do missions, to live such a life would feel transcultural because of their nature. With that said, I believe all are called to missions. Not all are called to go physically speaking, but we can go by supporting others through financial gifts, prayer, wellness support, and many other means. Even fellowship!

I agree with you though, it is a great post!

Re: - posted by EverestoSama, on: 2012/2/17 10:45

Sorry it's taken so long to get back on these questions.

To Solomon101:

Quote:
-----What do you feel is the single most important spiritual issue to settle in a persons mind before they move into a transcultural ministry?

I think the most important thing a person has to settle spiritually is who they're truly working for when doing a job in missions. I understand that probably sounds redundant and obvious, so I'll try and clarify what I mean.

If you were to ask any missionary who they're working for, I would not expect to receive any other answer than Jesus. That's the correct answer, and I don't doubt for a second the sincerity of those who say the answer, however unbeknownst to many, they actually might be working for something else as well.

Many on the mission field work for a vision. Sometimes it might be a vision that Jesus may have given them, though sometimes it's easy to work for a vision that we want to see fulfilled. Some work for the vision of being the first church in their area, being full to the brim of new converts. Some work for the vision of seeing hundreds tens/hundreds/thousands of converts. Some still work for the vision of personally being a noticeably influential force in their community (for Jesus of course). And some work for any other sort of good Godly sounding vision you can think of.

Now, I don't think any of these things in and of themselves are bad things, but if they are left to stand on their own will obscure a persons focus on what is truly the only vision that matters. Some will strive and strive to accomplish these ends, and come crashing down when these things don't materialize. That's why I mentioned before that even many missionaries who have been "seasoned" on other fields come to Japan thinking that they're going to flip the country on it's head, and when things don't fly the same way they did in the previous countries that they worked in, they just get fed up and quit. I'm actually the replacement of a long line of those who just didn't "see the point in sticking around", as sad as it is to say. There's a large mission organization that recently cut off it's funding for Japan because they simply "couldn't see the fruit" or the reason they were putting any of their efforts into this country when it could go somewhere else.

Conditions such as these are honestly I believe the results of many being unsure of who they're solely working for, and the cost of what it might take. My grandfather's brother actually has been a missionary in this country since right after World War Two, but had never returned to the States, so I was never able to meet him growing up. He doesn't live anywhere near me here in Japan (opposite side of the country actually), but I was able to meet him once when he came to do street ministry in the area. He took me out and around and said something quite interesting to me. As he sat with me explaining mission work he told me something along these lines,

"Grant, you've come to work in a very hard country to share the Gospel in. People here are hard of heart and are not going to want to listen to you. You're going to work very hard, and it's not going to look like you're doing anything, but let me tell you something; You may stay here working away your entire life until you're an old man like me, and through all of your struggle, perseverance, prayer, and everything else, it's possible that you'll only see one saved. Yes, just one. But I want you to understand something, it will be worth pouring out your entire life just for the sake of the one. That's truly the heart of Christ, Grant."

My grandfather's brother was quite aware who he's working for. And I would encourage any considering going into the mission field if they can grasp only one thing, to make sure that it is that. Know EXACTLY who you're working for, and don't let any ambitions get in your way, as they'll only cause one to falter if they put their stock in them (and let me assure you that it's probably the easiest rut to fall into when on the field). You put your full effort into serving Christ with your whole heart, no matter what it entails, and let Him worry about the fruit. Make good and sure you know what you're getting into.

Quote:
----- What do you feel are the 2 or 3 most important natural issues for a person to prepare for that is feeling they may be called to transcultural (missions) ministry?

Natural issues, hmm. There are a few basic ones I think you should be aware of. One is food. If you're going to a culture radically different than yours, you're probably going to be presented with a fair amount you've never seen/heard of before. In Japan I've eaten parts of animals that I wasn't even aware could/should be eaten. GFA's website said one of the reasons that they prefer regular native missionaries vs foreign ones (that is if I remember correctly) is that foreigners many times just don't get into eating the local food (amongst many other things of course).

This can be problematic on a few levels.

One, it's going to be difficult if you're offered to eat with someone else and they make something that grosses you out (being very picky about food as a kid I fully understand the concept of being physically unable to put something in my mouth and swallow it without my gag reflex going off the charts).

Two, the Western diet can be maintained in many foreign countries, but at a hefty price. I know missionaries that have been here for YEARS that have never accustomed their diet to that of the locals.

If you're in a foreign country and have to pinch pennies, I personally think it's just a bit much to have to pay double (or more) to suit the tastes of a lifestyle that goes beyond how most of the locals are living. And I'm not going to lie, some stuff I just had to force myself to come to appreciate. Bite after bite, at my house, gagging it down (Haha, I won't say what I was eating lest it grosses some out) until finally I was able to eat it without a problem, and eventually went from tolerance to acquiring a taste for it. But I had to do that in the event that I was ever offered it (being a widely accepted food) at another's home, I wouldn't turn my nose up at it, or have to sit there turning green bite after bite :P.

My mom always jokes with me that it was probably an act of God that I'm able to eat what I eat here, considering how I was one of the pickiest kids she had ever seen when it came to food (and I'm probably inclined to believe her).

Another natural thing that's worth looking into is what might be required of you physically from day to day life. Westerners take a lot of things for granted (cars, public transit, things being close, etc etc) that might not be as RIGHT THERE for you as in your home country. When I came to Japan I had to learn how to walk. EVERYWHERE.

In the States, the farthest I could recall walking was from my front door to my car door in the years right before I moved here. I was in for a surprise that in Japan, if I wanted to get places, I had to walk. Sometimes rather far, and in all sorts of weather conditions. It took me a few months to not get winded walking to the train station, but I eventually got to that point. And Japan is a walk in the park compared to many places that missionaries might end up.

I think it was Jim Elliot (though I heard this when I was very small so I could be mistaken) that really trained up to be physically fit to make sure he was in fit enough shape to survive well in his mission field. It makes a rather large difference, and I honestly think is something that should be considered.

Now both of these things are non-consequential and don't say much about the heart, but they are two things that will be beneficial to anyone willing to serve in a foreign country.

There are actually quite a few other things I can think of as well, but my response is getting quite long-winded as it is, so I'll elaborate more in a different post if any are curious.

To dvndsn:

Quote:
-----How did the earthquake experience roll over with you in regards to your ministry? Was it easier to share with people because of their calamity, or did it not effect you at all?

Because the earthquake was so far removed from where we are, it effected us a bit like the way the Katrina thing (if you're from the US for a reference point) effected people who didn't live directly around it. People talked about it, and showed a sort of comradery towards the victims, but like Katrina, soon found that it really didn't effect their day to day lives, so it made no noticeable impact. That's in my area though. My grandfather's brother that I had mentioned earlier and his gro

General Topics :: Missionaries of SI

up of missionaries live right up in that exact area (which is an interesting side note, and one of the reasons I believe personally that the disaster might have struck there, though I'll leave that for another thread) and have been able to do quite a bit of outreach because of all the need then, and now.

If I missed something, or if you have any other questions, I'll try to answer them to the best of my availability. Thanks for taking the time to ask.

-Grant

Re: - posted by dvndsn, on: 2012/2/17 21:07

EverestoSama - When you spoke on that missions organization that quit going to Japan because they weren't bearing fruit, it made me think of what someone said to me, though I cannot remember who. Abraham was promised so much in his life. Yet all he got was a son. I think we sometimes expect too much from God, when we need to realize that we may never see the fruits of our labor. A lot of people need to hear that, you know? All Abraham got was a son, yet look at his whole line of descendants. I do believe that we should pray for God to answer our prayers. Elijah said "Answer me, Lord, answer me." When he prayed over his altar. We should also expect God to answer our prayers, but we cross a line when we pull away from action because we are not bearing fruit. It's saddening.

The food issue is very interesting. I leave for Indonesia in August and am rather excited to see what I will encounter in regards to food.

I am pretty fit as it is. I am in college, and the university I attend is on a super steep hill. I get a workout every semester! I also enjoy cycling in the spring, summer, and fall. My mission trip to Indonesia is actually a backpacking trip. We will backpack for a week, sharing the Gospel with tribes we meet. I am getting more excited by the day!

I do not mind knowing what kinds of things were hard for you to eat. I live in Kentucky, so we pretty much call anything food around here, haha!

I understand your situation in regards to the earthquake. When Katrina hit, I went down a few years later on a mission trip. You could dig down into the ground on the mainland, and hit a layer of sand that was covered up by the lowering of the earth's layers (geology stuff). I put some in a gatorade bottle!