

HOW TO BECOME A MISSIONARY: *First Steps for Answering the Call*

by Cassie Adorney

This guide walks through the steady realities most missionaries share for success—from discernment and prayer to finding a sending community and preparing for the road ahead.

1 ANCHOR YOUR FOUNDATION IN PRAYER AND COMMUNITY

Prayer is how you remain in real relationship with God. God invites us to do things *with* Him, paying attention to what He is already doing and joining Him there. As you continue walking with God, doing things with Him and not just for Him, His voice will become clearer. Here's the thing: usually that clarity doesn't come all at once; it grows as you keep taking small steps forward with the Holy Spirit as your guide.

Here are three simple ways to help you discern as you move forward:

- Does it align with Scripture (Psalm 119:105)?
- Does it advance God's Kingdom and bring Him glory (Matthew 6:33)?
- Do trusted people in your life confirm it (Proverbs 15:22)?

(Read Learning to hear God's voice to learn more about this topic.)

2 START EXPLORING WHILE YOU DISCERN

While you discern, do the next thing in front of you. A few of the most useful options:

- Have real conversations with missionaries. Ask what they wish they had known before they started, what the biggest challenges have been, and what has kept them going in the hardest seasons.
- Practice cross-cultural ministry where you already live. Most cities and towns have people from somewhere else: international students, refugees, immigrants, workers who are far from home.
- Prayerfully read through [these mission stats](#) on the state of the world.
- Go to [JoshuaProject.net](#) and explore the interactive map with dots showing people groups (Click on "Resources" and then click on "Google Maps" or "World Map"). Explore the red dots in various countries and pray for them.
- Go on a short-term trip. Many people first sense their long-term calling [from a comfort-to-calling moment in another country](#).

3 FIND THE PEOPLE WHO WILL SEND YOU

Here are few starting points to consider:

- Connect with your church leaders and ask them if your church has specific steps you need to take in order to be sent by them to the mission field.
- If you desire more educational training, or your church / denomination requires a Biblical / Missions degree or a certain level of education and you do not have a specific a school in mind, we recommend you prayerfully consider [Columbia International University](#) / Biblical Seminary.
- If you do not have a church or your church does not have any specific next steps to send you as a missionary, you might prayerfully consider exploring [this missions sending network](#) that focuses on church planting and unreached people groups, which has been helpful for others.
- Or you may want to explore and search out other missions organizations that best fit you and your calling! We recommend you consider an organization focused on the unreached, evangelism and disciple-making, and ultimately establishing locally led biblical churches. [Click here](#) to begin exploring other mission organization options.

4 PLAN FOR A LONGER ROAD THAN YOU EXPECT

The road to become a missionary is often longer than expected—usually two to four years. Discernment, training, and (for most people) raising financial support, all take time.

If your path involves raising your own support, plan on it taking 12 to 24 months of focused effort. Budgets vary enormously by country, family size, and organization, so this is not a set number.

5 PREPARE YOUR HEART AND RELATIONSHIPS NOW

Who you are before you go shapes who you become once you go. The more rhythms you establish ahead of time, the better, even if some of them need to be adapted when you get to the field.

Move your relationships toward peace as much as it depends on you (Romans 12:18). Don't carry unresolved conflict into a new season if it can be addressed now. This is slow work, and it should be. Hold onto this promise from Philippians 1:6, "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion." That is what this season is really about.

**Every Christian is meant to be a Kingdom Laborer,
called to love God and love people wherever they are.**

**THE GOD WHO IS CALLING YOU IS ALSO THE GOD WHO
GOES WITH YOU, AND HE HAS BEEN PREPARING THE
WAY LONG BEFORE YOU EVER SENSED HIS CALL.**