

GOING ON A MISSION

Preparation Booklet



This booklet is a summary of what is issued by GOSPELLIFE INTERNATIONAL to its mission participants.

The contents are intended as a partial guide based upon Rev. Baker's extensive experience as a missionary. Full guidance for every mission trip should be obtained from the organisation with whom you are travelling.

If you are embarking on your first mission trip, Rev. Baker trusts that this booklet will give you some guidance towards your preparation.

Preparing For A Mission

Everyone has an idea of what they think is involved in a mission trip. Most of us have heard stories about particular missions, and some of us may have met a missionary. Usually, it is from these stories and people that we draw our own conclusions about missions.

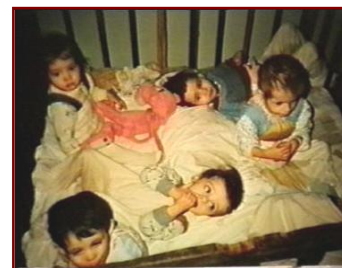
The most common concept regarding missions involves travelling to a foreign land, standing in front of a multitude of people, preaching God's Word and seeing many saved, healed and set free. Another common concept is that missionaries undertake projects that bring significant changes to a community or nations, such as building schools or digging fresh water wells.

These ideas are right in both thought and in practical implication. Yet, there are many factors to consider even before we leave the shores of our own nation.

The aim of this booklet is to help you prepare for your own mission experience. Every situation and country is different, but the basic preparation is the same.

My First Mission Trip

When I went on my first mission trip in 1989, I had no idea what was ahead of me. I remember being directed by the Pastor of my church to go on a 'MISSION' that had been organised. That mission took me across Europe with two 7.5 ton trucks laden with aid to the far North-Eastern city of Iasi, Romania.



At that time, there were no sat-navs and the mobile phone was in its infancy and very expensive. The only road map we could find of the area was basic; very few main roads were listed, and only the occasional town name appeared. As for villages, unless you knew where they were, you did not stand much chance of finding them!

On leaving Western Europe, there were no road-side restaurants, no toilet facilities and the poor roads made driving hazardous.

Once into Romania, we did not even know if fuel would be available between the major towns. We carried everything we needed in the back of the trucks – food, water, fuel, etc., and we slept in shifts on top of the aid! In total, we drove non-stop for three and a half days.



Many stories were told by other truck drivers coming out of Romania. We heard about the border guards demanding bribes, the bandits waiting for gullible European drivers to cross into Romania in order to hijack the goods they carried, and even the peasants blocking the roads with animals so they could have a share of the contents before permitting the drivers to continue travelling.

Thankfully, today things have changed in many countries, but there are still many places affected by poverty and similar conditions are still found.

Communications

Today, internet cafés, mobile phones and satellite phones make a huge difference in communications. But in many countries, you may have no satellite navigation, limited mobile phone networks, no broadband and the internet café is a small shed with three computers and a slow dial-up connection (sitting so close together you virtually sit on each other's laps!).

It's essential to remember that people are the reason for the mission; it is people who count. Home comforts are for home and something to look forward to when you return.

Planning And Thinking Ahead

I have found that planning is the key to a successful mission regardless of whether the mission is to Romania, USA, Germany, Uganda, Kenya or Australia. It is not only the obvious planning that you need to consider, such as booking plane tickets and accommodation, but also the culture and traditions of the country you are visiting. Such considerations might be how you will travel from the airport to your accommodation; or if you are being met by someone, whether you are expected to pay for the taxi; or if you are being taken out for a meal, are you expected to pay?

These are the sort of scenarios I have encountered. On my first mission, I was naive regarding some of these issues, but I have learnt from my experiences.

Financial Differences

It is important to consider the differences in church income between Western churches and churches in third world or poorer countries. In the traditional Western church, the average amount of money put into the collection is around £2 to £5 per person (in a faith church, this could be more). But in churches of much poorer countries, the average offering can equate to just 5p, with the majority only able to give around the equivalent of 1p.

In churches of Asia, Eastern Europe and Africa, I frequently see *'the parable of the widow's mite'* in operation; I watch extremely poor people give all they have, and if they have no money, they will bring an egg, or maybe a chicken or goat.

I have watched families give everything they have in order to be hospitable. They have taken their own supply of meat, through the slaughter of a chicken or goat, to offer a meal to the team. This often means depriving themselves of their own desperately needed supply of nourishment, possibly for many months to come (bear in mind the chicken they offer is their supply of eggs, and the goat is their supply of milk).



Cultural Differences

There are many cultural differences that might be encountered, and if we're not aware of them or sensitive to them, we can easily cause offence. For example, men in the West often greet a lady with a friendly arm around the shoulder, but in many African cultures this is an offence; only the husband, father or brother of the woman has this privilege, because this actions means you are laying a claim of marriage on her! Not even a brother-in-law has this privilege.

Another example: in some countries, you may have your right hand full and quite innocently offer the left hand in greeting. This can be an insult. The reason for the insult is linked to their toilet facilities, which are few and far between and are mainly the 'long-drop' style. Most of the time toilet paper is not available and, traditionally, the left hand is used to wash, therefore the left hand is never offered in greeting and can be taken as an offence to do so.



It is important to learn cultural differences before travelling, because it may be too late once an offence is made.

Toilets!

In third world countries, toilet facilities may be far from what we are accustomed, so it's advisable to carry a supply of toilet tissues, hand wipes and nappy sacks with you (nappy sacks are small clean handy hygienic disposable bags).

Personal Hygiene

I cannot express enough the importance of personal hygiene, especially in countries that have not yet established the same hygiene standards that we have in many Western nations.

The West is now so clinically clean that we no longer have the antibodies in us to combat many simple diseases.

Ladies: be aware that you may not be able to buy your requirements for personal hygiene in the area you go, so take what you will need with you.

Hand Washing

Solid hand soap used in communal settings is one of the biggest carriers of bacteria because it collects bacteria and is transferred from one person's hand to another. Wet wipes are the best option for cleanliness and hygiene. Barrier Gel is good but should be used after cleaning with wet wipes on clean hands.

Water

Do not, under any circumstances, drink local tap or well water. Use bottled water for drinking and cleaning your teeth. Ensure there is a seal on the cap before opening.

You should do research on bottled water as it will surprise you that certain types of plastic emit harmful toxins which carry into water when exposed to long periods of heat. And of course, always use a reputable bottling company.

Try to keep water cool, it is not always good to drink large quantities of extremely cold water as this can cause adverse stomach problems.

Beware of locally prepared salads. Salads and fruit washed in local tap or well water carry bacteria and should be avoided. Wash fresh fruit in bottled water before eating.

Top Tips

- Never promise, suggest or even hint that you may be able to offer anyone help. If you do, you will be sought after to do what you may have hinted.
- Do not give phone numbers or email addresses unless you are prepared to receive **a lot** of communication and requests for help.
- Do not give money or you will be harassed.
- Do not give sweets to children as you will not have enough for the numerous children that will suddenly appear after you have given the first one!

Inoculations And Medical Travel Advice

You are advised to consult with your medical practitioner regarding your inoculations for the country you are traveling into (and those you are travelling through, where applicable).

THIS SHOULD BE DONE AT LEAST THREE MONTHS BEFORE YOU INTEND TO TRAVEL.



Anti-Malaria Tablets

In most African countries, you will be advised to take anti-malaria tablets. Consult your medical practitioner about this (on a personal note, I take *Malerone*. I have found these to have the least amount of side-effects. It's available either by prescription or over the counter at permitted dispensaries. I advise that you shop around because prices can vary dramatically from one chemist to another). Whichever you use, be advised by your medical practitioner.

Medical Insurance

For travel into a foreign country, you are required to obtain medical insurance. If you intend to travel overseas again within a 12 month period, then an annual cover may be more cost effective (many banks and building societies include travel insurance within their account offers. If you intend to use this option, ensure it will give you the cover you need for where you are going and for what you are doing).

Carrying And Exchanging Money

1. Never go to an ATM or Forex Bureau or Bank to exchange or draw money alone. Make sure no one can see the transaction you make.
2. Always know what the exchange rate should be before making a transaction.
3. Do not carry large amounts of cash on your person.
4. When paying for items, do not show the contents of your wallet, purse or body bag to any other person.

Mission Cost

If you are going on an organised trip, ensure that you know:

1. Exactly what you are paying for.
2. What it covers.
3. What expenses you may be liable for.

What Your Payment Covers

Always make sure you know what you are paying for. Ask your organiser whether it covers:

1. Flights, ferry and/or bus travel from meeting point.
2. All accommodation on departure from the UK.
3. All arranged meals from time of arrival at country of destination until the departure (know before you leave how many meals per day your payment covers).
4. Visa fees (if it's not covered, you will have to purchase you own).



What You Are Responsible For

This is based on a Gospellife mission; please check the specifics of your mission with the organiser.

1. All necessary inoculations and anti-malaria drugs.
2. Personal clothing.
3. Items for personal hygiene.
4. Personal items.
5. Refreshment during travel.
6. Transport to meeting point (plus return).
7. UK residents must ensure their passport has a minimum of 6 clear months to run from date of return to UK.
8. Overseas student or visitors must ensure their visa and/or passport has 6 clear months to run from time of return to UK (if visa/residents permit is in an old passport you must carry this with you).

Items To Take

- Passport
- Bible
- Christian material of own choice (reading for travel)
- Note pad for diary keeping
- A prepared message/testimony
- Spending money
- Sufficient clothing for duration of the trip
- Toiletries
- Tube(s) of Travel Wash for washing clothes
- Wet wipes (Johnson's, Huggies, Pampers, Safeway's, Sainsbury's etc. Note: cheap versions not recommended)
- Toilet rolls / tissues x 2
- 1 box of nappy bags
- Emergency sewing kit
- Torch
- Carrier bags for dirty laundry
- A travel iron is useful

For tropical countries (if needed)

- Anti-malaria tablets
- Mosquito repellent (personal application) containing a minimum of 50% Deet (test before you travel)
- Mosquito net (ensure it has been treated before you travel)
- Sun screen
- Sun hat if required
- Sun glasses
- Long-sleeve blouses/long-sleeve shirts for the evenings as an added protection from the mosquitoes

Electricity Supply

Find out what system is used in the country you are visiting so the appropriate adaptors can be taken with you.

Laundry facilities are available at most established hotels, but make sure you know how long it will take for your laundry to be returned to you.

Valuable Personal Belongings

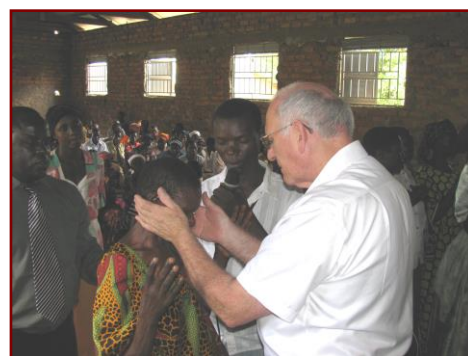
Cameras, mobile phones, laptops and all other valuables are your responsibility.

I do not recommend taking jewellery with any value; this will be an attraction you do not wish to make. Often, it's possible to buy some locally made jewellery that will be sufficient for your stay.

A Word Of Encouragement

No one can find the words to explain what going on a mission is like; once experienced it will impact your relationship with God and your outlook on life. However, you will only get out of it what you are prepared to put into it, so go prepared to make the most of every opportunity.

I would like to encourage you, the reader, to consider joining a mission – you may only have this opportunity once, do not live to regret not going.



Booklet Prepared by
Rev. Robert Baker
Gospellife International.