

Sending Them Out Well

Suggested Markers Of Health;

Anticipated Problems

Laura Mae Gardner, D. Min.

1999

*Wycliffe Bible Translators International
7500 West Camp Wisdom Rd.
Dallas, TX 75236*

International Member Care

How is an organization to know at the pre-sending stage whether a given candidate has the necessary psychological and spiritual health to cope with a future of service full of uncertainty, inequity, disappointment and loss? WBT and SIL's International Member Care Department suggests:

Some markers of health to be considered:

- ◆ Biblical expertise, that ability both to feed oneself and sustain oneself spiritually and utilize the standards, examples and teachings of God's Word for daily living.
- ◆ Interpersonal skills with diverse colleagues—communication, conflict management and resolution, building trusting relationships, working together with people of different work styles and values, etc.
- ◆ Living in an authority/worker relationship with different authorities, and learning to build trusting relationships with leaders and authorities.
- ◆ Coping with disillusionment and discouragement, learning to incorporate failure into the growth and learning process.
- ◆ Submitting to the evaluation and scrutiny process; learning to handle negative feedback, viewing it as inevitable, and growth-enhancing.
- ◆ Impact awareness and assuming responsibility for one's impact, and all that is involved with relating to others.
- ◆ Managing old baggage from life-wounds, and moving toward resolution and healing.
- ◆ Working harmoniously as husband/wife units or singles in macro and mini-teams.
- ◆ Maintaining the health and well-being of the family in foreign environments.
- ◆ Knowing what constitutes health for this person, when he or she is no longer healthy, and where and how to get help when it becomes necessary.
- ◆ Learning to be innovative and creative, using parts of reusing old materials to form new products or meet needs.
- ◆ Managing surprises, pleasant or not—crises, disaster, loss, grief, etc.
- ◆ Learning to view negative matters in perspective, and find the positive aspects of these—"the carrot cake fell so we'll have carrot bars for super; I know you'll like them".

- ◆ Learning to live gratefully, without demanding more—from donors, from colleagues, from administration, from support services, while at the same time knowing how to ask for more or for help when it is needed.
- ◆ Managing many roles, but able to prioritize them, able to move smoothly between them without feeling deceitful.
- ◆ Choosing standards for self and family even when coming from a dysfunctional or unhealthy background—knowing what constitutes health and working for it, by choosing a mentor or role model.
- ◆ Knowing what is meant by Biblical concepts—i.e., moral purity, seeking peace, living above reproach—and living that way, and seeking God’s grace to maintain these characteristics.

Some Problems Anticipated By Missionary Counselors:

- ◆ Personality disorders (these are often the results in adults of childhood wounding, and express themselves in three general categories:
 - a) people who are highly suspicious, mistrustful, sometimes ‘odd’ (paranoid, schizoid, schizotypal)
 - b) selfishly flamboyant, self-centered, avoiding people, unstable (histrionic, narcissistic, antisocial, borderline)
 - c) those who are overly independent, highly dependent, compulsive, passive-aggressive
- ◆ Abuse issues
- ◆ Family dysfunction (not only experiencing the results in adulthood of childhood family problems, but carrying these into one’s personal nuclear family as an adult male or female or parent)
- ◆ Addictions of various sorts
- ◆ Increased individualism—maverick or loner behavior, or insisting on doing things my way

To these, the following less medical concerns have been added:

- ◆ Addiction to artificial entertainment; need for fun, but can’t create their own fun;
- ◆ Lack of role models; don’t recognize health so can’t duplicate it in either myself or my family;
- ◆ Inadequate life maintenance or management skills; don’t know how to live within a budget, keep family records, plan ahead, repair one’s setting and make it safe and attractive, discernment on the basis of ‘this is what is needed for that,’ etc.;
- ◆ Low tolerance for quiet; need for noise and stimulus;
- ◆ Low tolerance for monotony and routine and inability to delay gratification;
- ◆ Disillusionment and discouragement because of a false sense of entitlement.

©Copyright 1997; 1999 by

*Wycliffe Bible Translators International and Laura Mae Gardner, D. Min.
Permission granted to copy for non-profit use*