

Holding Pattern Activities

(What to do while you wait on God)

By Jeff Boesel

So God has you in a holding pattern, waiting on his timing for entry into missionary service. If you are jazzed about getting involved, waiting to “get there” can be hard. Waiting, however, should not be seen as a necessary evil to be endured or a waste of time. Remember that, as believers, we are to be about Kingdom business wherever God has us at the moment. Here are some suggestions for how to be involved **now** with God’s global cause. Most of these suggestions

- 1) **Focus on your own walk with Christ.** There are at least two reasons for this.
 - a) It is through this relationship being evident in your life that others will be drawn to him.
 - b) Going cross-cultural will test the very fiber of your commitment and relationship with God. You want your roots to go down as deep as possible in him and into his grace before you get there. Then as things get hard, and they will, you will have an assurance of nourishment that comes from within. There is something about going to church in a language you don't understand that makes spiritual growth difficult, if you are not in the habit of feeding yourself.
- 2) **Get involved in ministry at your local church.** Become "visible" to the membership at large. This is important in two ways.
 - a) It will give you ministry experience, which is critical for use by God later.
 - b) It will give you exposure to many who may feel led of God to join your prayer and financial support team.
- 3) **Get very familiar with the missions people at your church.** Make sure they know of your desire to do missions longer term (whatever that means to you). Join the missions committee, if possible, or be involved with them in some way.
- 4) **Pray for the people groups that God is laying on your heart.** You are probably already doing this. Get "Operation World" and begin praying daily for different people groups. Pray for the work of the missionaries already there as well as for those who are trusting God in going.
- 5) **Get involved with people of that nationality in your area.** Find out where they are and what they do. Begin relationships and grow them. Whatever your ministry will be, it will include relationship building with host county people. As you get to know them let the Holy Spirit lead you to spiritual things in his way and in his time. It will be clear.
- 6) **Get involved with a mentor** who can speak into your life about the real issues. Be intentional about this. Focus on being moldable and teachable. These two things are critical when getting involved in missions. You will be stepping into a life that you don't know at all but where others have gone before you and can help you if you let them. Begin practicing now and a mentoring relationship is a great way to start.
- 7) **Take a variety of short term mission trips**, some to your area of interest and some to other areas.
- 8) **Take the Perspectives Course**, if you haven't already.

9) **Start communicating with missionaries already in the area where God leading you.** Find out what life and ministry are really like. Get on their prayer letter lists and pray for them. Support them financially if you can. The amount doesn't matter but the commitment does.

10) **Start communicating with missionaries doing what you want to do.** Find out what this ministry is like. What are the ups and downs? How can you best prepare yourself - from their viewpoint?

11) **Make a list of people you think may want to be part of your prayer and financial support team.** Start to correspond with them about what you are doing now and your vision for the future. You are not asking for money. You are just making them a closer part of your life. If God leads them to give in time, that will be his business, not yours.

12) **Try to stay out of significant debt.** If you have large amounts of debt, try to work on paying them down. Most agencies hesitate to send people if they have high consumer debt. Talk with the agencies you are considering about what their policy is on debt.

13) If you are within two years of a longer term commitment to missions, **begin searching for an agency partner.** You may already be involved in this to some extent. In the search, look for a fit in the area of values. What is most important to you in life, spiritual walk and ministry? Then look at areas of focus in the world and ministry opportunities that are available. These last two may change in the process so the "values" piece is the more important one. Start with websites and agency reps. Go on from there to communicating with some of the agency's missionaries in the area you are considering. Find out how they feel about their agency and ministry with them.

14) **Go to some agency orientations.** Most have one. I would do this after you have narrowed the field down to two or three. There may be travel expense involved so going to more than a couple could be cost prohibitive.

15) **Pray Luke 10:2;** that the Lord of the Harvest would send more workers into his harvest field - even today.