



# A GUIDE FOR THE JOURNEY

Your next steps when considering cross-cultural ministry

*“How beautiful are the feet of those who  
preach the good news!”*

*- Romans 10:15*

God rejoices over those who go, not because He needs us, but because He gets the most glory by working powerfully through people like us.

At ABWE Canada we celebrate the fact that you are prayerfully considering your role in God’s mission. And since you are probably full of questions, this booklet was designed to guide you in your next steps on the journey.

Wherever you are on your journey, we want to hear how God is working in your heart. Give us a call or email us at:

Phone: 877-690-1009

Email: [mobilization@abwe.ca](mailto:mobilization@abwe.ca)

Website: [www.abwe.ca](http://www.abwe.ca)

## Need Help Getting Started? A Guide for the Journey

When following God’s leading toward the mission field, many ask, “What should I be doing now?” This booklet contains the steps you should think about to help you in the process.

### NEXT STEPS

<b>1. UNDERSTAND MISSIONS</b> .....	3
<b>2. UNDERSTAND YOUR CALLING</b> .....	6
<b>3. CONNECT TO YOUR CHURCH</b> .....	8
Talk to Your Pastor	
Church Membership	
Serving	
Bloom Where Planted	
<b>4. ENGAGE WITH ABWE CANADA</b> .....	10
Our Mission	
Our Identity	
Ways to Serve	
Connect With Us	
<b>5. BECOME A MISSIONARY</b> .....	14
Phase 1: Application	
Phase 2: Doctrinal Interview	
Phase 3: Missionary Orientation	
Phase 4: Pre-Field Ministry	
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	18
<b>PRAYER REQUESTS/Questions</b> .....	19

## Step 1: **UNDERSTANDING MISSIONS**

***“The gospel is only good news if it gets there in time.”***

***Carl F.H. Henry***

God is a missionary God. He delights in spreading His glory across all human cultures. So how should we define “missions?”

We must start with what missions is *not*. God commands His people to serve the poor, care for the sick, and advocate for justice, but none of these endeavours are the root of “missions.” Missions also means more than crossing a national, cultural, or linguistic barrier. Instead, to define missions, we must understand the *gospel* itself.

From the beginning, He has made His existence and character clearly evident to *all* people, through His beauty shown in creation and our innate knowledge of Him (Romans 1:19-20)

But since humanity’s fall in Genesis, all nations, races, and cultures reject God (Romans 1:21-23). We are born in sin and trapped under God’s wrath (Ephesians 2:1-3). Since God’s standards of good and evil are written on every heart, we are accountable for our sin even if we have never heard of Jesus or read the Bible (Romans 2:14-15). All human cultures are equally lost in sin and in need of rescue.

The good news is that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Christ – the ultimate missionary - left the comforts of heaven,

crossed into our world, died in our place, and rose in victory. Now all who repent and trust in Christ are made perfectly right with God.

Christ told His followers, “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you” (John 20:21). We are commanded to disciple all the nations (Matthew 28: 18-20).

But the theologian Carl F. H. Henry remarked, “The gospel is only good news if it gets there in time.” Paul followed this line of thought in Romans 10:14-15:

*How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”*

Today, there are more than 6,000 people groups with little to no access to the gospel. That totals about 2.9 billion people who have never heard of Christ. Most of these unreached people groups live in North Africa, the Middle East, Asia, India, and the Pacific Islands.

Unlike most people in the West who could easily hear the gospel through a Christian friend or nearby church, these unreached peoples generally have no churches to visit, friends to call, or sermons to hear on the radio. Though some have heard of a “Jesus,” they have never understood the gospel itself.

Missions is the risky, rewarding work of the gospel of Jesus Christ to every people group where it has not yet been

heard. It is also the establishing of viable churches in every place to carry on the same work of reaching, teaching, and sending.

God is committed to finishing the task. Christ “ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Revelation 5:9). People of all nations will be saved. His mission is ours.

What is your role? Are you longing to devote your life to this task? Do you have the desire to cross cultural boundaries, or help send those who do? If so, God’s Spirit may be directing you. We implore you to pray, study God’s Word, and obey God wherever He leads. Eternity hangs in the balance for many.

## **RECOMMENDED READING**

*Let the Nations Be Glad* - John Piper

*Theology and Practice of Mission* - Bruce Riley Ashford

*Radical* - David Platt

## Step 2: **UNDERSTANDING YOUR CALLING**

***“To know the will of God, we need an open Bible and an open map.” - William Carey***

What is your role in missions? Discovering God’s will for your individual life can seem daunting. What if I miss God’s best? What if it’s outside my comfort zone? What if I can’t hear God speak? These questions can create anxiety – or avoidance.

God doesn’t want us to be frozen by fear. While God can certainly give us inner “nudges,” His will doesn’t need to be found – it was never lost! We have His Word:

*Your word is a lamp to my feet and light to my path.  
(Psalm 119:105)*

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

*His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises... (2 Peter 1:3-4a)*

God’s Word reveals His will for Christ to be known among all nations. His ultimate plan for the details of our individual lives is hidden (Deuteronomy 29:29).

But if we simply obey what we know, He will guide us:

*The steps of a man are established by the Lord, when He delights in his way. (Psalm 37:23)*

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6)*

We cannot decipher God's sovereign will for every detail of our future. In scripture, God simply shows us the whole target board of His will – it's our job to aim.

Augustine wrote, "Love God and do as you please." In other words, if we truly love God, we will aim to please Him. John MacArthur says this means that living by God's as it is plainly put forth in Scripture is that we be "saved, Spirit-filled, sanctified, submissive, and suffering" (Found: God's Will, 53).

Does that free us to live for our own pleasures? Hardly. "To whom much was given, of him much will be required" (Luke 12:48). If we trust that God's will is sufficiently revealed in Scripture, we will begin to see His missionary heart bleeding through every page, and we will sense that we are all called in some way, whether as goers or senders, to serve that mission.

As William Carey, missionary to India, stated, "To know the will of God we need an open Bible and an open map."

## **RECOMMENDED READING**

*Found: God's Will - John MacArthur*

*Decision Making and the Will of God - Garry Friesen*



## Step 3: CONNECT WITH YOUR CHURCH

***“Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.” - Acts 13:3***

Making decisions in isolation is unhealthy. God’s mission is too big to be accomplished alone. He designed the local church community as the sending base for His mission.

Note Acts 13:1-3:

*Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.*

The Holy Spirit sent the first missionaries when the local church gathered. So how can we be sure the church is sending us, and we are not flying solo?

### TALK TO YOUR PASTOR

“...in the abundance of counselors there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14). We must seek counsel from trusted influences including spouses, family, mentors, and friends. But most of all, since we see in Acts 13 that the local church is to commission those who go, any decision about missions should begin with a conversation with your local pastor(s). Here are some ways to start the conversation:

1. Explain your current burden and circumstances.
2. Ask him to join you in prayer.
3. Invite honest feedback on your life and ministry.
4. Ask to hear his heartbeat for missions.
5. Ask about the sending process or agency if any.
6. Schedule multiple follow-up conversations.
7. Find opportunities to share your heart with your church's staff, elders, or missions committee.

Whether you agree with your pastor's response or not, Scripture commands us both to us discernment and submit to our church's leadership (Hebrews 13:17).

Perhaps you're now thinking, "Well, this all assumes I'm a member of a church and know my pastors." Exactly!

## CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

The New Testament depicts the church as a distinct community that one can be added to (Acts 2:47), removed from (1 Corinthians 5:4-5), or confronted by (Matthew 18:17). And when Paul calls the church a "body" in Ephesians 4, he implies that there is real commitment.

If you have not yet officially joined your church, explore your church's membership process. Commit to God's people before you ask them to commit to you.

## SERVING

Are you involved in your church? Remember that missions is about both exporting the gospel and the church. Your history of serving the local church reflects on your ability to carry forward the church as God's vehicle for mission. If you've served faithfully, God is already using you— rejoice!

## Step 4: ENGAGING ABWE Canada

You're ready to take a step towards becoming a missionary, but you have plenty of unanswered questions, so we want you to get to know us.

### OUR MISSION

***“Assisting Canadian churches to achieve their local and international mission objectives.”***

Our vision is to fulfill the Great Commission among every people (Matthew 28:19-20). We want to see every field where we serve go from “unreached” to leading their own church-planting missions movements. We labour for the day when people of all tribes and tongues will know Christ (Revelation 7:9-10).

### OUR IDENTITY

ABWE Global Inc. operating as ABWE Canada (Across Borders for World Evangelism) is an independent, unaffiliated missions agency. Together with our US counterpart there are about 1000 missionaries serving in about 75 countries. About 500 churches send missionaries through ABWE and about 5000 churches support ABWE missionaries.

We value evangelism and gospel-centered discipleship, the local church, life-long learning, excellence, teamwork, compassion, and equipping nationals.

Most of all, we are committed to the purity of the gospel and upholding sound doctrine. Our missionaries and sending churches all embrace our statement of faith. See <https://www.abwe.ca/explore-our-resources/about-abwe/our-doctrine>.

## BLOOM WHERE PLANTED

Perhaps you've heard the "747 principle"—that no one becomes a missionary in midair before they step off a plane and onto the field.

Do you share your faith with friends, neighbors, family, strangers, and people of other cultures? Before being sent in Acts 13, Paul and Barnabas were already involved in evangelism and discipleship activity through the church in Antioch (Acts 11:19-30). Reflect honestly and use your present ministry activity to assess your future missionary fitness. Consider how God has already used you. Consider your wiring, spiritual gifts, and past experiences.

Finally, perhaps you don't have the kind of relationship with your church that you've been reading about. If so, don't lose heart. God uses imperfect people and imperfect churches. If your church does not send missionaries, pray that your situation will spark a burden for missions and seek to offer solutions rather than giving critiques. If perhaps you feel that your church does not have the marks of a biblical church, do not consider leaving until you've spoken with your pastor(s), prayed, evaluated the legitimacy of your concerns, and found a more missional minded church.

Honour the church as the bride Christ bled for (Ephesians 5:25) and trust God to honour your efforts in return.

## RECOMMENDED READING

*Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* - Mark Dever  
*Gaining by Losing* - J.D. Greear

## WAYS TO SERVE

ABWE missionaries serve across the world in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, and the Americas. ABWE missionaries raise their financial support from churches and individual donors with coaching from ABWE.

**Long-Term.** For career missionaries, ABWE serves by providing administrative oversight, training, member care, financial and benefit coordination, team building, professional development, and strategic leadership.

**Mid-Term.** A mid-term missionary is typically someone who has experienced short-term and wants to have a bigger impact. This type of person is seriously considering long-term service but wants to get to know a culture first. He or she is a full member of the field team and receives training that is both in-depth and timely.

**Short-Term.** In addition to career Missionary service, there are endless opportunities for vocational ministry trips through ABWE Canada's short-term program. Whether you are a nurse, educator, computer technician, pastor, engineer, etc., you can be used to the fullest in cross-cultural service as part of our global mission's team. Our short-term program is also a great way to "date" a missionary life before you "marry" it. Short-term opportunities are posted on our website and are frequently updated.

**Team/Trips.** Our missions trips are for individuals or teams who have a particular ministry role to fulfill for a special event, outreach, project, or need facing a field team or missionary supported by their church.

## CONNECT WITH US

You may have questions this booklet can't answer. We're here to pray with you and help you find the right fit. Your journey with ABWE Canada is never impersonal.

Call 877-690-1009 or email [mobilization@abwe.ca](mailto:mobilization@abwe.ca), or follow us on Facebook for up-to-date, inspiring missions content.

The 24-Hour Demo event, held at the ABWE International Headquarters (IHQ) in Harrisburg, PA, offers the chance to spend a full day of exploring your next steps of ways to go. This event is occasionally offered in Canada, in which it will be listed at <https://www.abwe.ca/demo/>

Call 877-690-1009, email [mobilization@abwe.ca](mailto:mobilization@abwe.ca), or visit <https://www.abwe.org/resources/events/24-hour-demo> for more information.

You can also browse current ministry opportunities by field, duration, or skills on our website at: <https://www.abwe.ca/serve-with-us/why-go>.

## Step 5: **BECOMING A MISSIONARY**

Your church stands behind you. You've engaged ABWE Canada and embrace our vision and statement of faith. Now you want to enlist.

If you are still unsure of how God is leading you long-term, you might consider enlisting with ABWE Canada on a trip, as a short-term, or mid-term missionary – serving anywhere from a few weeks to two or four years. This type of apprenticeship could help you make an informed decision before you commit long-term, or it could simply be a valuable season invested in cross-cultural ministry before God leads you to serve elsewhere.

Or you may be ready to apply as a Long-term missionary now. Welcome! Whether you begin in long – or short-term, your application will follow a similar route.

### *Phase 1: Application*

To begin an application, go to <http://go.abwe.org/register/>. You can switch to a long-term, mid-term, or short-term application at any time.

First, you will complete a not-binding questionnaire covering your basic personal information, personal salvation testimony, residency (only citizens or legal residents of Canada or U.S. may apply), prior experience, sending church information, education, employment history, and local church involvement.

Once we have reviewed your preliminary application form, we'll connect with you personally and with your pastor(s). Our goal is to establish a three-way partnership between you, your sending church, and ABWE Canada.

If approved, you will be invited to the full application, which delves deeper into your experience, family, employment, and more. Long-term applicants are asked to provide a bit more detail. You will receive email notification on the status of your application.

### *Phase 2: Doctrinal Interview (Long-term)*

Long-term applicants undergo a 1½ - 2½ hour doctrinal interview to ensure they align with our statement of faith and can articulate core Christian beliefs with biblical support. The interview takes place at your church with your pastor(s) present. You may use your Bible, and married couples can work together.

### *Phase 2: Field Prep (Short-term)*

Short-term applicants complete Online Short-term Field Prep training before embarking onto the field to join an existing ABWE team. Our team then walks short-term missionaries through any needed training and linguistic prep, and we continue to mentor you when you are on the field.



### *Phase 3: Missionary Orientation (Mid- & Long-term)*

Mid- and Long-term applicants, upon passing the doctrinal interview, become missionary “candidates”, and are invited to attend a 7-day Missionary Orientation at the ABWE Int., office in Harrisburg, PA in either March, July, or October (your choice).

Missionary Orientation immerses you into our vision, helps you evaluate your fit with us, and offers in-depth trainings on topics in missionary life including raising financial support and adapting to culture. You will bond with other candidates in your shoes. ABWE covers lodging and food, so your only responsibility is travel. Our goal is to help confirm God’s call in your life and equip you for the Pre-Field phase of your ministry.

During Missionary Orientation, you will meet with and be interviewed by your Executive Director. Your Executive Director and the VP of Global Ministries will then recommend you to the ABWE Canada Board as an official ABWE Canada missionary. (ABWE Canada missionary appointees will usually have already been conditionally approved by the ABWE Canada Board prior to attending Missionary Orientation).

During this event, we celebrate newly appointed mid- and long-term missionaries in a celebration reception welcoming you to the ABWE Family. You may invite your relatives, friends, and pastors to attend this meaningful service as you officially begin your missionary career. A formal Recognition Service will be held at Missionary Enrichment.

For more information about Missionary Orientation, please contact 877-690-1009 or [mobilization@abwe.ca](mailto:mobilization@abwe.ca) or go to <https://www.abwe.org/resources/events/new-missionary-orientation>

### *Phase 4: Pre-Field Ministry*

After you are appointed with ABWE Canada, you enter the pre-field phase. We call this pre-field “ministry” because it’s about more than gaining financial support – it’s an exciting and challenging time for you to impart your vision to believers and churches and invite them to partner with you in prayer and generosity. You will grow in your faith as you see God provide for your spiritual, emotional, and material needs during pre-field.

Pre-field is when you will complete any required Bible/theology classes (depending upon your prior education) or classes expounding on our philosophy of missions and church-planting.

You will be assigned a coach with a pastoral heart to serve you during your transition to the field. Our coaches will hold your hand through support-raising, language learning, transitioning your family, securing visas, surveying the field, and learning the culture.

Once you are fully financially supported and your field prep training is complete, you are ready for the field! You will have the blessing of working alongside qualified teammates, continuing to receive prayer support and strategic leadership from our thriving missionary family. Once you arrive on the field, backed by your church and our team, your journey with ABWE has only begun.

## CONCLUSION

***“Only one life, ‘twill soon be past; only what’s done for Christ will last.” C.T. Studd***

We hope this resource has been useful for you as you map out your journey. We want to conclude where we began - with the gospel.

If you are a follower of Christ, you “died” with Him and have been raised to a new life under His lordship.

*If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. (Colossians 3:1-3)*

In saving us, God calls us to set our minds on the spread of His glory to all nations via the gospel. We each have a role to play, as goers or senders. As you journey on, remember the words penned by C.T. Studd: Only one life, ‘twill soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last.





**Are you interested in taking the next step?**

Call or email us today!

877-690-1009  
[mobilization@abwe.ca](mailto:mobilization@abwe.ca)

A Global Family of Ministries