

Article Review

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What is one concept that stood out to you in this article?

The one concept that stood out to me in this article is how dangerous red zones are to missionaries. The violence committed towards missionaries in red zone areas is life altering. In these red zone areas missionaries are killed for trying to teach the love of Jesus Christ. Missionaries travelling to these countries have to be extremely careful and aware of the present dangers. "Red Zones are areas of the work where there is regularly intense stress and real or perceived threats to one's safety" because of politics, revolution, disease, famine and insurgency or any other conflicts among the people. There are also many stress factors for cross-cultural workers which include learning a new language, adapting to a new culture, understanding verbal and non-verbal cues, and adapting to a new setting. Missionaries must also worry about getting raped, kidnapped, and constant death threats. This does not only affect the missionaries that are within the country, but it also affects their family members back in the United States.

What implications does this concept have for Missions?

Proper preparation is needed for a missionary to go into a red zone area. They should go through psychological testing, pre and reverse departure training, regular in-field contact and mini-furloughs are needed. They should also receive counseling upon return from the red zones. Psychological testing is needed for the stress factors of being in a red zone. This is not only for the missionary, but for their families as well. Family members may become stressed and worried about the loved one overseas. Both parties need to have mental countenance in order to deal with the trials that will arise.

During pre-departure training the missionaries need to focus on language acquisition and studying the local religion. They also should focus on interpersonal communication. It is necessary for missionaries to maintain contact with their home church and take time away from the red zones so they will remain affective and being away from the red zones can relieve stress. Post-return debriefing and counseling is very necessary especially for red zone missionaries. Those who have experience post-traumatic stress disorder should especially receive counseling. It will reveal hidden trauma the missionary may have experienced.

What needs to change in your life as a result?

One day I would like to find a church which has a missionary division and provide support that will be beneficial. I never realized how dangerous it can be to become a missionary in different areas of the world. Also, the impact of stress their families go through while they are doing God's work overseas. I believe having emotional, financial and spiritual support is greatly needed for each missionary and the host church.

References:

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