

For the NAD Office of Volunteer Ministries and Adventist Volunteer Service

# Long-Term Missions Manual

For Volunteer and Site Processing Coordinators

By Office of Volunteer Ministries Staff



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## **Office of Volunteer Ministries Long-Term Processing**

The North American Division Office of Volunteer Ministries, under the NAD Secretariat, connects Seventh-day Adventist volunteers from our division to mission opportunities across North America and around the world. We are responsible for networking with the leadership of volunteer ministries, such as Adventist Volunteer Service, linking churches, schools, and supportive organizations toward common goals in outreach. Our inspiration comes from Jesus' Gospel Commission found in Matthew 28:18-20:

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’” (NIV)

### ***What is AVS?***

Adventist Volunteer Service (AVS) is a volunteer program that is administered by the General Conference (GC) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and facilitated by the GC and its divisions. This guide is especially created for coordinators within the NAD who are sending volunteers, as well as those requesting volunteers to serve at their organization.

### ***Why AVS?***

There are at least four basic reasons why it is important to work with the AVS program for long-term mission opportunities:

**Partners.** Working together helps us become a more effective team and church family than working separately.

**Providing Resources.** Working with AVS provides access to the global resources of the Adventist Church, including insurance, legal counsel, coordination with sister divisions/unions/conferences/ churches, and immigration offices.

**Protection.** The AVS system provides protection through travel insurance, visa support, as needed, and the mediation process offered by the church for resolving difficulties while serving.

**Preparation.** Volunteers are better prepared for service through an online training course (if training is not provided on campus) and assistance in answering questions about the location or assignment as needed.

### ***How We Serve Long-Term Volunteers***

The Office of Volunteer Ministries (OVM) serves long-term volunteers in a variety of ways, such as:

- Receiving and processing volunteers serving from two months to two years or longer.
- Processing service requests for volunteer mission opportunities.
- Providing access to mission preparation training to volunteers, as well as resources and training to volunteer coordinators and site coordinators within the NAD.
- Tracking and recording volunteer and community outreach statistics to monitor growth and trends for reports.
- Providing special services to volunteer applicants including volunteer insurance coverage, immigration/visa guidance if needed, and ongoing support throughout the application process, deployment, and return from assignments.

“The Lord calls for volunteers who will take their stand firmly on His side and will pledge themselves to unite with Jesus of Nazareth in doing the work that needs to be done now, just now. The talents of God’s people are to be employed in giving the last message of mercy to the world.”

—Ellen White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 494

## **SECTION I: Sending Long-Term Volunteers**

This section explains the process for Volunteer Coordinators who send volunteers (such as student missionaries) through Adventist Volunteer Service, as well as other recommendations for supporting volunteers.

### ***General Information***

[Go to the Website](#)

Volunteer Coordinators should be familiar with instructions for volunteers, as well as special resources for coordinators, on the NAD Office of Volunteer Ministries website, [www.hesaidgo.org](http://www.hesaidgo.org), as well as the Adventist Volunteer Service website, [www.adventistvolunteers.org](http://www.adventistvolunteers.org). Coordinators are given access to the AVS database with their own account, along with basic training on how the online database works, with the assistance of OVM staff.

### **How Long Does the Process Take?**

This depends on many variables, such as:

- The amount of time it takes for a volunteer to complete the application.
- If the call the volunteer wants to apply for needs to be posted or updated, or if they decide to choose a new call.
- The amount of time it takes for the receiving organization to communicate or take approval or denial actions on the database.

If everything goes smoothly without unusual delays, a volunteer should plan on at least three to four weeks from the time their application is submitted (including completing the Passport to Missions training) to the time they begin their volunteer assignment. This does not include the time it may take to obtain a visa or airline ticket. The process can go faster or much slower, but this is a basic estimate.

### ***Navigating the Volunteer Process***

The outline below gives a picture of how a Volunteer Coordinator can help guide a volunteer through the AVS application process. The volunteer can also find the entire process outlined on the OVM website, [www.hesaidgo.org](http://www.hesaidgo.org).

#### **Step 1: Volunteer Chooses a Call**

A volunteer may skip to Step 2 and start the application, but finding a call can help motivate the volunteer to apply. To find available volunteer calls, the volunteer visits [www.hesaidgo.org](http://www.hesaidgo.org), and goes to the “Long-Term Missions” section to connect to opportunities on the AVS database website. Volunteers can either search by country, position, or language. As a volunteer finds positions they are interested in, they should keep track of the Call ID numbers. The Call ID number looks like this: SPD.LAC.2016.01. The first part is the division; the second is the organization; then the year; and the request number. It is best to find calls that are listed as “active” and within the current year.

#### **Step 2: Volunteer Completes Online Application**

The volunteer will need to create a volunteer account on the AVS website: [www.adventistvolunteers.org](http://www.adventistvolunteers.org). There is also a direct link to the log-in page from [www.hesaidgo.org](http://www.hesaidgo.org). Volunteers attending Adventist universities will select their university as

the “Sending Organization” in the application. This gives the coordinator access to the account.

Once the volunteer has completed the online application, they will submit it, and the status should say “Pending Sending Org. Approval.”

### Step 3: Volunteer Completes Background Check

At the time of this printing, the OVM is working on a system to conduct background checks on all our volunteers. For more information on this step, and if it is currently available or required, please contact the OVM.

### Step 4: Volunteer Completes Forms

AVS forms may be downloaded at [www.hesaidgo.org](http://www.hesaidgo.org).

Coordinators should assist volunteers with any questions, and check to be sure forms are complete and accurate (please see Section IV for more tips on the forms). Once forms are ready, they should be attached to the volunteer’s online application.

The forms needed for the AVS application are:

- Resume or CV
- Beneficiary Form
- Release of Liability Form (“Funded by Calling Organization” or “Self-Funded,” as needed)
- Three confidential references (these can be sent and submitted electronically from the online application)
- Health Clearance Form

### Step 5: Screening Volunteer

The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for screening all volunteers from their organization. Basic screening may include:

- Checking all forms to make sure they are complete and accurate (see Section IV).
- Checking online application to make sure it is complete and accurate.
- Conducting a screening interview with each volunteer, which could include support from the university counseling services, such as personality testing (See APPENDIX for screening form).
- Evaluating, as a coordinator or as a ministry team, whether the volunteer is ready for long-term service, based on the interview and application. Coordinator or team should take into account the basic qualifications for AVS volunteers, and other screening factors (see below).
- Ensuring that the volunteer will complete Passport to Missions training either on campus or online.

#### **Qualifications of a long-term AVS volunteer**

In order to qualify to be an AVS long-term volunteer, an applicant is:

- At least 18 years old (before assignment begins).
- A baptized member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (if baptism is less than 12 months before assignment starts, extra pastoral recommendation is requested by the OVM).
- In good standing with their local church.
- Not receiving compensation for services, but may receive a living allowance.
- Able to meet their financial obligations before serving in the field.

- In good health.
- Serving in an assignment between 2 months and 2 years (with option of extending).
- Strongly encouraged to not begin a dating relationship during their assignment, if single.
- In possession of a Christ-like character with a passion to serve others in a spirit of humility and self-sacrifice.
- Flexible, available, and teachable.
- Less than 80 years old (before international assignment ends).
- Less than 84 years old (before taskforce assignment ends).

#### **Other important screening factors**

There are plenty of other questions to ask to make sure volunteers are ready for service and a good fit for their location. Below are some basic questions, but more can be found in Section IV.

- Do you see any concerns from the references?
- Is the volunteer aware of the basic requirements, preferences, or expectations of the calls they are looking at and applying for? Do they seem to fit them pretty well?
- Does the volunteer's personality type fit the culture and location of the kinds of mission locations they are looking at? For example, an extrovert might find an extremely isolated location very difficult; a liberal thinker might feel frustrated in a very conservative culture, etc.
- Is the volunteer in a serious dating relationship, and if so, have they addressed this with their significant other?
- On their online application, is their legal name listed? Is their contact information and emergency contact information accurate?

- What is the citizenship of the volunteer? If they are an international student, they should be cleared by the university's international student services office.
- Are the declarations and agreements complete on the volunteer's online application?

### Step 6: Volunteer Completes Missions Preparation Training

Before the OVM can approve a volunteer's application, the volunteer should complete the Passport to Missions training. Some universities choose to facilitate this in a class on campus, and base the curriculum on the book, *Passport to Missions*.

If a volunteer misses this class or if it is not available on your campus, volunteers are able to take the course online at [www.sdmissioncourses.org](http://www.sdmissioncourses.org). The volunteer will create an account and will need to enter an enrollment key. This key can be found on the home page of the volunteer's AVS application. The Volunteer Coordinator and OVM are both notified by the facilitator when the course has been completed.

### Step 7: Volunteer Coordinator Approves Volunteer

Once the application and training are complete, and the volunteer has been screened, the Volunteer Coordinator logs in to the AVS website ([www.adventistvolunteers.org](http://www.adventistvolunteers.org)) and approves the volunteer. First, all forms and documents should be uploaded in the "Attachments" tab of the volunteer's application. To approve, choose the "Actions" tab, select "Give Sending Org. Approval," and click the "Approve Applicant" button.

If needed, forms may also be faxed to our office at the number provided on [www.hesaidgo.org](http://www.hesaidgo.org).

### Step 8: Approval Process—Check Your Email

Email communication between the OVM and the Volunteer Coordinator is crucial throughout the approval process. If a volunteer changes plans or wants to pursue a different call, please let the OVM know right away. Unfortunately there are often delays at various stages of the process, so Volunteer Coordinators are encouraged to contact the OVM if they would like an update.

After a volunteer's application has been reviewed by OVM staff and any issues have been resolved, the volunteer's name is added to the agenda of the weekly Appointees Committee, where the volunteers are voted as approved volunteers for the NAD. The Volunteer Coordinator and the volunteer will receive an automatic notification by email that the volunteer has been approved by the NAD/OVM.

If the volunteer is applying for an AVS call within the NAD, then the OVM will send their application to the receiving organization. If the volunteer is applying for a call in another division, the GC will send their application to the receiving organization. The Volunteer Coordinator and the volunteer will receive an automatic email notification when this happens.

Once the organization has reviewed the application, they may choose to contact the volunteer for an interview. When the organization has made their decision whether to accept or deny the volunteer, they will record this action on the AVS database. The Volunteer Coordinator is automatically notified and expected to notify the volunteer.

There is one final vote on the assignment by the NAD or GC (depending on whether the call is inside or outside of the NAD). Although there are exceptions, this is usually when we recommend starting the visa and ticket-purchasing process.

After this vote is taken, the OVM sends an official welcome letter and small travel information packet, as well as an insurance information card. If school is in session, this packet is usually mailed to the Volunteer Coordinator who gives it to the volunteer. When school is not in session, the packet is mailed or emailed directly to the volunteer.

### **Step 9: Fundraising, Visa, Ticket, Insurance**

The Volunteer Coordinator is usually responsible for assisting volunteers with fundraising, navigating visa requirements, and purchasing airline tickets. Here are a few tips:

#### **Fundraising**

It is helpful for volunteers if they are able to provide donors with tax-deductible donation options through the university. Also keep in mind that online donation options usually draw a faster and stronger response from donors.

For volunteers of Latino or Native American heritage, the Sammy Gurule Memorial Missions Fund is available through the OVM. Please see [www.hesaidgo.org](http://www.hesaidgo.org) for more information and to apply.

#### **Visa**

The Volunteer Coordinator or volunteer should contact the receiving organization for instructions on applying for a visa. If there are any problems getting this information, please contact the OVM.

#### **Airline tickets**

Many university missions programs choose to work with a travel agent to help simplify the process of booking multiple tickets or making changes later on.

## Insurance

When the airline ticket has been purchased for a volunteer serving internationally, a copy needs to be sent to the OVM so they can request the Accident and Illness Travel Insurance for Volunteers through Adventist Risk Management, using the AVS database. Please see Section III for more details on ASV insurance.

For volunteers serving in taskforce volunteer positions within NAD, the organization is responsible for providing taskforce insurance through Adventist Risk Management. Proof of this coverage is sent to the OVM before it approves the assignment.

### Step 10: Support Volunteer in Preparations

The following are some ways a Volunteer Coordinator can support their volunteers as they prepare for long-term service.

**Make sure that the volunteer is in contact with the calling organization** (or mission site). If you have any trouble contacting the calling organization, please contact the OVM. Below are some examples of information that can be gathered by the Volunteer Coordinator or volunteer:

- Who is the main contact person on site?
- What are the instructions of the calling organization regarding volunteer's visa?
- Does contact person have the volunteer's flight itinerary?
- Who will pick up the volunteer from the airport?
- What are the emergency contact numbers for the calling organization? How will the living allowance be given?
- What is the best way to transfer money from home to volunteer? Is there access to an ATM?

**Organize an exit retreat and/or dedication vespers for volunteers before volunteers leave campus.** Many university missions programs provide a weekend retreat for volunteers who will be leaving the following school year. It is usually scheduled in the spring before students leave campus. Often the weekend includes time for volunteers to interact with and pray for one another; culture shock simulation activities or other group activities; and a speaker from the Institute of World Missions to help prepare volunteers for service. It can be helpful to ask former volunteers to assist with facilitating and mentoring. A dedication vespers is also often scheduled toward the end of the school year. The purpose is to recognize and dedicate volunteers before they leave for service, and can include a mission speaker, a dedication prayer, reading the names of the volunteers, and sometimes presenting each with a simple gift.

### Step 11: Support Volunteers in Service

#### Email

The best way to support your volunteers in service is to stay in contact with them by email. A Volunteer Coordinator may not be able to constantly reach out, but at least make it a priority to respond as promptly as possible to any emails or phone calls from volunteers in the field. This goes a long way in helping the volunteer feel connected and supported, especially if major challenges arise during their service.

#### Pray

Probably the most important thing you can do to support volunteers as a Volunteer Coordinator is to pray for them. Finding creative ways to invite others on campus to pray for those serving can help connect others on campus to volunteers as well.

### Care packages or notes

There are many other ways university mission programs have supported their volunteers, such as:

- Inviting students and/or faculty to adopt a volunteer for the year.
- Sending Christmas packages.
- Sending monthly or quarterly mailings with school newspapers, magazines, fall leaves, notes from friends, etc.

### Ask for help

OVM is always ready to help if challenges arise that the Volunteer Coordinator is not sure how to handle. The OVM Volunteer Coordinator is also available outside regular office hours to help with emergency situations. Updated contact information is available on our website, [www.hesaidgo.org](http://www.hesaidgo.org).

### Step 12: Support Returned Volunteers

Volunteers returning from their mission experience, especially those serving internationally, can expect to experience reverse culture shock to some degree. The Volunteer Coordinator can help provide systems and resources for support as volunteers re-integrate into “regular” life at home. Below are some ideas:

**Recognize service time by giving a Certificate of Service to each returned volunteer.** Certificates of Service can be requested from the OVM.

**Provide returned volunteers with a copy of *Re-Entry*.** Peter Jordan’s *Re-Entry* is a classic on navigating the challenges of reverse culture shock and re-entering life in the homeland. If possible, it is helpful to send this book to volunteers during their last few months of service or at least as soon as possible when they return home.

**Organize a re-entry retreat for returned volunteers at the beginning of the school year.** The purpose of a re-entry retreat is to connect other volunteers with each other and offer guidance and support in the transition from mission to home life. Some universities invite a speaker from the Institute of World Missions to facilitate the weekend, which includes short presentations and break-out discussion groups. Previously-returned volunteers can get involved with helping to facilitate the retreat as well. For more detailed information about facilitating a re-entry retreat, see the *Student Missions Re-Entry Retreat Facilitator's Manual*.

**Schedule a re-entry screening interview with each returned volunteer.** This is valuable to the returned volunteer, in addressing any concerns from their year, as well as to the Volunteer Coordinator as they collect information for future volunteers to that mission site. If volunteers are unable to attend a re-entry retreat, this is especially important. For a sample re-entry interview question sheet, see the Appendix.

## **Section II: Receiving Long-Term Volunteers**

This section explains the process for Site Coordinators who want to receive volunteers for their organization through Adventist Volunteer Service. This includes taskforce workers and international volunteers.

### ***General Information***

#### **What is a Calling Organization?**

A calling organization is any Seventh-day Adventist organization that requests a volunteer through Adventist Volunteer Service. Supporting ministries are not owned by the SDA church, but accommodations can be made with the sponsoring conference through a “Memo of Understanding.” For more information, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at the OVM.

#### **Guidelines for Accommodating a Volunteer in the U.S.**

Due to U.S. and Canadian tax laws, it is important to carefully follow the guidelines below to ensure the volunteer is able to receive a tax-free living allowance:

- A volunteer is not paid for what they do. Anyone who is paid for what they do is an employee. A person cannot be both.
- A volunteer term must be for one year or less to fit within legal volunteer definitions.
- A living allowance is not considered wages or compensation for work done. (The word “stipend” means wages, and should not be used.) It is strictly based on the volunteer’s need, not on the volunteer’s education, qualifications, hours or responsibilities.
- A living allowance is intended to cover only basic living expenses (food and shelter).

In order to qualify for the living allowance, a volunteer's permanent residence must be more than 50 miles from the organization at which they are volunteering (or reasonable commuting distance). Similar to a traveling employee's per diem, a living allowance is based on the volunteer's actual working days. It is strongly recommended that the volunteer's per diem is documented similar to the way it is done for employees. A volunteer's actual travel expenses may be paid or reimbursed.

#### Living Allowance—No Housing Provided

If no housing is provided, the living allowance should include enough to cover rent for adequate housing as well as food. This is an unusual situation, as most organizations provide housing. For more specific questions, contact the OVM Volunteer Coordinator.

#### Living Allowance—Housing Provided

If housing is provided, the living allowance should only cover meals and incidental expenses as defined under the Federal Income Tax per diem rules. It is usually recommended to stay within the NAD/GC maximum per diem of \$48 per day (as of 2016), but the acceptable maximum per diem range varies, depending on the location, from \$52 to \$65 per day (in higher cost areas).

#### Living Allowance—Housing and Meals Provided

If housing and meals are both provided, the only expense left is incidental expenses—such as toiletries and laundry. The maximum per diem in this case would be no more than \$5/day.

### **Disclaimer**

*A task force worker who does not meet the requirements of these guidelines is to be considered and treated as an employee rather than a volunteer. These guidelines are based on a reasonable and good faith interpretation of the Federal Income Tax per diem rules applicable to employee business travel. The tax laws and maximum per diem amounts do change over time, but this is current as of the date of this printing. There is some risk that if challenged, the IRS could disagree with this interpretation and application to volunteers. These guidelines do not and cannot account for state tax and employment laws or the laws of Canada and Bermuda. Any questions in that regard should be directed to legal counsel. Any questions about these guidelines should be directed to Tom Wetmore, Associate General Counsel at the General Conference. He can be reached at 301-680-6325, or by email at [wetmoret@gc.adventist.org](mailto:wetmoret@gc.adventist.org).*

### **How the AVS Process Works**

A Site Coordinator represents a calling organization and creates a service request through the AVS database website. The process is outlined in six steps below:

#### **Step 1: Request a Password**

Site Coordinators who want to receive volunteers begin the process by visiting [www.hesaidgo.org](http://www.hesaidgo.org), and finding the “Request Volunteer” section in the menu. The basic instructions for requesting a volunteer are outlined there, but the first step is to request a password by completing the online form, by clicking the “Request Password” link. This form is received by the OVM, and an AVS Coordinator account is created for the Site Coordinator. Once a Site Coordinator has been approved by the GC,

an email will automatically be sent giving instructions to log in to the site.

### Step 2: Create AVS Service Request

After a Site Coordinator logs into their AVS account, they are able to create a service request on behalf of the organization they represent. After the service request has been submitted, the OVM will contact the Site Coordinator if there are any changes that need to be made. Of course, OVM staff are available to answer any questions Site Coordinators may have while creating the service request.

If the service request is for domestic volunteers only, as in most cases, the call ID number will begin with “NAD-IN.” This means only volunteers within the NAD can view and apply for this call. Once this kind of service request has been reviewed by the OVM, it is approved by the OVM for the NAD.

If the service request is for international volunteers, the call ID number will just begin with “NAD.” This means that volunteers from NAD as well as other divisions can view and apply for this call, and is approved by the GC AVS office. When deciding whether or not to open a call to other divisions, the Site Coordinator should keep in mind that international volunteers will need assistance with obtaining visas, which can be difficult for volunteers from many countries to obtain. However, we do have several volunteers each year that come successfully with a B1 visa.

To check if a service request has been fully approved, a Site Coordinator can log into the AVS database and check for the “Active” status. They may also search for it on the public call search page at [www.adventistvolunteers.org](http://www.adventistvolunteers.org), or contact the OVM.

### Step 3: Screening Volunteers

Volunteers from within the NAD will be screened by the OVM. Once approved, their applications will be sent to the Site Coordinator via an AVS database action. The Site Coordinator will receive an automatic notification email that a volunteer has been sent to them for consideration. When the coordinator logs into the AVS database, they will be able to view the applicant's application, including documents and contact information for further follow up interviews, etc.

Volunteers from outside the NAD will be screened by the division in which they live before their applications are approved and sent to the Site Coordinator.

### Step 4: Accepting or Denying Volunteers

The OVM and AVS encourage organizations to accept or deny volunteers within two weeks. When a Site Coordinator is ready to accept or deny a volunteer, they will log into the AVS database, open the volunteer's application, choose the "Actions" tab, and then accept or deny volunteer.

### Step 5: Insurance for Volunteers

The Site Coordinator's next step is to purchase volunteer insurance from Adventist Risk Management to cover the volunteer during their service. For volunteers coming from within the U.S. or Canada, the coordinator should purchase one of the "Task Force" insurance options. Here are the basic steps to purchasing Task Force Insurance:

- Go to [www.adventistrisk.org](http://www.adventistrisk.org)—click on "Travel Hub"
- Log in with your username and password (create an account if you don't have one yet)
- Choose "Begin a New Application"
- Choose "Short Term Travel—Volunteer Labor" etc.

- When you get to the second page of the application, at the bottom, choose the last option—“Task Force.”

For volunteers coming from outside the U.S. or Canada, the coordinator will go through the same steps, except you will choose “Short-Term Travel – Plan B” insurance. This can only be purchased for six months at a time. It is crucial to set a reminder to purchase coverage for any remaining service time before the first six-month coverage expires.

Once the insurance is purchased, the insurance ID card should be emailed to the volunteer and to the OVM. The volunteer’s assignment will be voted after insurance is received by the OVM.

#### Step 6: International Volunteers

There are a few more steps needed for organizations who are accepting international volunteers. Here is an outline of the process:

- Organization accepts international volunteer in the AVS database.
- OVM checks the application and documents.
- Before final approval is given, the OVM sends Site Coordinator an email asking the coordinator to acknowledge and agree to their responsibility for the following tasks *before* the international volunteer arrives:
  - Provide B1 visa instructions to the volunteer, as well as a letter of invitation. (Contact the OVM for a sample letter and visa application instructions.)
    - Receive notification from volunteer when visa is approved.
    - Receive travel itinerary from volunteer.

Purchase Short-Term Travel Insurance (Plan B) from Adventist Risk Management.

Email volunteer's travel itinerary and proof of STT (Plan B) coverage to the OVM.

- Site Coordinator sends email acknowledgment and agreement to the OVM.
- OVM gives final approval for the NAD.
- GC AVS approves and votes the assignment.
- Site Coordinator follows through on tasks given in the email. All tasks should be completed before the international volunteer arrives.

### ***The Value of Volunteers***

Volunteers are more than “cheap labor.” They are an opportunity to strengthen an organization's program while investing in the volunteer's spiritual and life experience. Valuing volunteers is the difference between the “cost savings” and “cost effectiveness” of an organization.

### ***Shepherding Volunteers***

Volunteers respond to a leader just as sheep respond to a shepherd. The relationship between shepherd and sheep is the basis for biblical leadership. Organizations who accept volunteers will find this investment of shepherding can go a long way in the overall morale of the organization, as well as the spiritual health and effectiveness of the volunteer.

## **Section III: Insurance**

### ***Accident and Illness Protection for Volunteers (ASV) Travel Insurance for International Volunteers*** (For All Volunteers Serving Outside the U.S. or Canada)

#### About the Insurance Company

ACE USA is a leading provider of property, casualty, and accident and health insurance, financial products, and risk management services.

#### In an Emergency

1-240-330-1570 (call collect outside the U.S.A.)

1-888-927-5353 (within the U.S.A.)

Email: OPS@europassistance-usa.com

For more emergency information and official summary of coverages, go to our website at [www.hesaidgo.org](http://www.hesaidgo.org) and choose “Medical Emergency” from the menu.

#### ACE Travel Assistance Services

##### **Security evacuation services**

- On-the-ground security assistance in the event of a potentially life-threatening military or political situation while traveling abroad.
- A secure, web-based system for tracking global threats and receiving location-based risk intelligence ([www.ACETravelAssistance.com](http://www.ACETravelAssistance.com)).

##### **Emergency travel services**

- Legal assistance
- Emergency travel arrangements

- Location of lost luggage, documents, and personal items
- Assistance with foreign language and interpretation problems.

### Information services

- Online access to country specific health information, including trip preparation
- Cultural information
- Visa, passport, and inoculation requirements
- Temperature and weather conditions
- Embassy and consular referrals
- Foreign exchange rates
- Travel advisories.

### Coverage

The insurance covers all eligible individuals while serving as volunteers on behalf of the General Conference, provided such travel is to a point or points located away from the United States and Canada. Coverage applies from the time the trip starts until it is completed, and thus includes not only the hazards of travel, but also of sojourn on a 24-hour basis for the duration of the trip. Coverage begins at the start of the trip—whether from your office or home, whichever occurs first.

### Eligibility

#### Benefits

*Accidental Death, Dismemberment, Loss of Sight or Loss of Speech and/or Hearing and Paralysis*

If within one year after a covered accident injuries result in any of the following losses, the insurance will pay as follows:

FOR LOSS OF:	You	Your Spouse	Each Child
Life or two or more members* or speech and hearing.	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$5,000
Quadriplegia (total paralysis of both upper and lower limbs).	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$5,000
One member or speech or hearing.	\$25,000	\$12,500	\$2,500
Hemiplegia (total paralysis of upper and lower limbs on one side of body).	\$25,000	\$12,500	\$2,500

\*Members means hand, foot, or eye.

**Note:** Your spouse and your unmarried children (including step-children, and foster children) from birth to age 25, if accompanying you—with authorization of the General Conference—are covered as well. Age reduction applies.

## Medical expense benefit

### *Accident and illness*

- Work related injury/illness: \$1,000—all other expenses covered under Workers’ Compensation
- Any other illness/accident: \$50,000 per illness/accident—Deductible \$150 (max out of pocket \$350)
- Room and board: average semi-private room rate
- War risk coverage
- Pregnancy benefit: Up to a maximum of \$7,500
- Specified disease coverage (Malaria, Tetanus, Rabies, etc.)

*Emergency medical evacuation:* 100% of covered expenses

*Repatriation:* 100% of covered expenses

*International worker’s compensation:* Any covered illness/accident—up to a maximum of \$1,000,000

## **Repatriation expense**

### *Accident or illness*

Should an insured person die while covered under this policy, the insurance will pay for 100% of covered expenses, including cost of embalming and coffin with regard to international requirements for transportation of the remains from the place of death to the insured's home.

## **Medical evacuation**

A benefit of 100% of covered expenses is provided following a covered injury or illness for emergency evacuation required by the covered person outside his home country if the covered person's doctor determines that adequate medical treatment is not locally available.

### *Covered expenses*

Expenses for transportation, medical services, and medical supplies necessarily incurred in connection with emergency evacuation of the Insured Person. All transportation arrangements made for evacuating the Insured Person will be by the most direct and economical route. Expenses for special transportation must be:

- Recommended by the attending physician if one is in residence at location, for accident or illness.
- Required by the standard regulations of the conveyance transporting the Insured Person.

Expenses for medical supplies and services must be recommended by the attending physician.

If services provided are covered under any worker's compensation, then the covered person shall assign his rights to those benefits to the extent they are provided.

This benefit will not be payable in the event of the covered person's death.

Call EuropAssistance for worldwide global assistance for medical evacuation or repatriation to avoid unnecessary personal expenses. In North America, call 1-800-243-6124; Overseas, 202-659-7803 collect. OPS@europassistance-usa.com

### **Other travel benefits**

#### *Personal effects baggage*

Up to \$3,000 with limitations and exclusions.

#### *Trip interruption benefit*

We will reimburse the cost of a one-way economy air and/or ground transportation ticket for your Trip, up to \$500 if your Trip is interrupted as the result of:

1. The death of a Family Member ("Family Member" means your parent, sister, brother, spouse, child, grandparent, or in-law).
2. The unforeseen Injury or Illness of you or a Family Member. The Injury or Illness must be so disabling as to reasonably cause a Trip to be interrupted.
3. A medically necessary covered Emergency Medical Evacuation to return you to your Home Country or to the area from which you were initially evacuated for continued treatment, recuperation, and recovery of an Injury or Illness.
4. Substantial destruction of your principal residence by fire or weather related activity.

*Trip cancellation benefit*

We will reimburse you for the amount of non-refundable Covered Expenses you paid for your Trip, up to \$500 per Policy Term, if you are prevented from taking your Trip as the result of Injury, Illness, or you or your Family Member's death prior to the scheduled Trip departure date.

*Home country extension*

For Covered Medical Expenses if you obtain treatment of a covered Injury or Illness while you are in your Home Country provided the covered Injury or Illness:

1. Began during the course of a Trip for which a benefit is otherwise payable under the Medical Expense Benefit;
2. Begins when you return to your home country or country of principal residence for incidental visits of up to a maximum of a eight-week period, and;
3. Treatment is rendered within 104 weeks immediately following your return to your home country.

*Emergency reunion benefit*

In the event you have either been:

1. Confined in a hospital for at least 72 consecutive hours due to a covered Injury or Illness, where the attending physician believes it would be beneficial for you to have a Family Member at your side;
2. The victim of a Felonious Assault,

We will pay the expenses incurred for travel and lodging for that Family Member, up to \$5,000. Covered expenses include an economy airline ticket and other travel related expenses not to exceed the Daily Benefit Maximum of \$300 for up to 10 days. All travel arrangements must be made by the Company's assistance provider and approved in advance in order for expenses to be considered eligible.

### Exclusions

This policy does not cover pre-existing conditions for which each Insured Member during the five years prior to the most recent effective date of his insurance. Other exclusions are listed in the policy.

### Other Insurance

Coverage for volunteers away from home will be provided on a primary basis.

### Permanent Total Disability

#### Not applicable to dependents

If such injuries, within the 30 days after the date of accident shall cause "Permanent Total Disability," the Company will pay, subject due to proof of loss and commencing with the thirteenth month of such period of Permanent Total Disability, at the rate of 1% of the Principal Sum each month for a period which shall terminate on the earliest date that either of the following shall occur:

1. The Insured ceased to be continuously and totally disabled as defined below, or;
2. The sum of the monthly benefit payments equals the Principal Sum amount less any payment made under policy coverage for loss of life, limb, sight, speech or hearing.

"Permanent Total Disability" means complete inability, because of such injuries, to perform every duty pertaining to their usual occupation for a continuous period of 12 months and thereafter, without interruption, their completed inability, because of such injuries to engage in any occupation or employment for which they are fitted by reason of education, training or experience.

This benefit is not payable after an Insured reaches age 60.

### Claims Reporting

Claims shall be filed in writing after the occurrence or commencement of any loss covered by the policy to the Company within 90 days or as soon as thereafter is reasonably possible. Claim forms can be found in the “Emergencies” section of our website at [www.hesaidgo.org](http://www.hesaidgo.org).

Your claims report along with itemized bills should be sent to the address below:

Adventist Risk Management  
Attention: Irma Johnson  
12501 Old Columbia Pike  
Silver Spring, MD 20904  
Phone: 301-680-6867  
Fax: 1-301-680-6878

For more information, email [claims@adventistrisk.org](mailto:claims@adventistrisk.org).

### Important Note

With minor modifications, this information has been taken from past summary publications of Adventist Risk Management and ACE Insurance, and updated by the North American Division Office of Volunteer Ministries. This is intended as a quick reference guide and is not a contract of insurance. The terms and conditions of coverage are set forth in the policy issued to the policyholder.

For up-to-date summary of coverage, please contact ACE Travel Assistance Services at:

**1-202-659-7803** (from outside the U.S.) or  
**1-800-243-6124** (from anywhere in the U.S.)  
or visit the AVS website at: [www.adventistvolunteers.org/  
Emergency/default.aspx](http://www.adventistvolunteers.org/Emergency/default.aspx)

## ***Task Force Insurance for Volunteers Serving Within the U.S. or Canada***

**Insurance Provider:** AIG

**Assistance Provider:** Travel Assist

**Insurance Type:** Task Force Workers

**Policy Number:** SRG 0009139774-A

For emergency evacuation and travel assistance:  
(877) 281-2344 (Toll Free)

To report claims or verify eligibility:  
Adventist Risk Management  
1-888-951-4276  
claims@adventistrisk.org

Customer Care & Operations  
12501 Old Columbia Pike  
Silver Spring, MD 20904

### **Summary of Task Force Coverage**

#### **Who is eligible for this coverage?**

Individuals participating in Taskforce/1-year mission opportunities in the U.S. can purchase this special coverage. The Miscellaneous Accident Insurance policy provides taskforce workers with Accidental Death & Dismemberment benefits up to \$50,000 and medical expense benefits up to \$50,000.

Eligibility includes the North American Division and subsidiary institutions and organization members for whom applications has been made.

Schedule of benefits

*Eligibility and coverage*

All members of an insured group—100% participation required  
 Coverage for accidental bodily injuries or illness (contracted whenever applicable) sustained while participating in church- or organization-sponsored and supervised group activities, including authorized direct travel to and from the place of activity.

**CLASS I: ELIGIBLE PERSONS SHALL INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING GROUPS:**

- (11a1) Taskforce—NAD (Accident & Illness),
- (11a2) Taskforce—NAD (Accident & Illness),
- (11b1) Taskforce—NAD (Accident & Illness),
- (11b2) Taskforce—NAD (Accident & Illness).

*Benefits offered*

- Accidental Death & Dismemberment
- Accident & Illness Medical Expense
- Dental Expense limited to \$2,000 per accident

**Benefits per selection:**

Group	Accidental Death & Dismemberment Principal Sum	Accidental Medical Expense	Illness Medical Expense
11a1	\$20,000	\$50,000	\$10,000
11a2	\$20,000	\$50,000	\$25,000
11b1	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$10,000
11b2	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$25,000

**Accidental Death & Dismemberment**

Loss of	Percentage of Principal Sum
Life	100%
Two or More Members	100%
One Member	50%

**Accident and Illness Medical Expense**

Maximum benefit subject to \$0 deductible; Primary excess over \$100.

The Company will pay the first \$100 of the expense incurred. Additional expenses are paid only when they are in excess of amounts payable by any other plan providing medical expenses.

- In hospital medical services—100% of covered expenses
- In hospital surgical expenses—100% of covered expenses
- Out of hospital medical expenses—100% of covered expenses

The deductible is the dollar amount of covered expenses that must be incurred as an out-of-pocket expense by each Insured, for any one disablement.

**Dental Expense**

Dental expenses are limited to \$2,000 per accident.

Benefit Period: 52 weeks

Coverage Type: Excess

In no event shall the Company's maximum liability exceed \$25,000 in covered expenses per person per year. First treatment of an injury must occur within 30 days from the date of injury, during the period of coverage.

**Paralysis**

If Injury to the Insured results, within 365 days of the date of the accident that caused the Injury, in any one of the types of paralysis specified below, the Company will pay the percentage of the Maximum Amount shown below for that type of paralysis.

Type of Paralysis	Percentage of Maximum Amount
Quadriplegia	100%
Paraplegia	75%
Hemiplegia	50%

\$100.00 Minimum Premium required.

**Exclusions**

The Plan does not cover any loss, fatal or non-fatal, caused by or resulting from:

1. Suicide or any attempt thereat by the Insured Person while sane or self destruction or any attempt thereat by the Insured Person while insane;
2. Disease of any kind;
3. Bacterial infections except pyogenic infection which shall occur through an accidental cut or wound;
4. Hernia of any kind;
5. Injury sustained in consequence of riding as a passenger or otherwise in any vehicle or device for aerial navigation, except as provided in Part B of Section II, Definition of Injury and Scope of Coverage;
6. Declared or undeclared war or any act thereof;
7. Service in the military, naval or air service of any country.

No benefits shall be payable for medical expenses provided by this Plan with respect to expenses incurred:

1. As a result of pre-existing conditions
2. For services, supplies or treatment, which were not recommended, by a physician;
3. For suicide or any attempt thereat
4. As a result of declared or undeclared war
5. For Injury sustained while participating in professional, interscholastic, sponsored scholastic, amateur, intercollegiate, community athletics;
6. For pregnancy, childbirth, miscarriage, or abortion;
7. For routine physical or other examinations
8. For cosmetic or plastic surgery, except as the result of an accident;
9. For elective surgery which can be postponed until the Insured returns to his/her country of residence;
10. For any mental and nervous disorders or rest cures;
11. For dental care, except as the result of injury to natural teeth caused by accident;
12. For eye refractions or eye examinations unless caused by accidental bodily injury incurred while insured hereunder;
13. In connection with alcoholism and drug addiction, or use of any drug or narcotic agent;
14. For congenital anomalies and conditions arising out of or resulting there from;
15. For expenses that are non-medical in nature;
16. For the ordinary cost of a one-way airplane ticket used in the transportation back to the Insured's country where an air ambulance benefit is provided;

17. For expenses as a result or in connection with intentionally self-inflicted injury;
18. For expenses as a result of or in connection with the commission of a felony offense;
19. For specific named hazards: scuba diving; sky diving; professional or amateur racing; piloting any aircraft; parasailing; paragliding; bungee jumping; hot air ballooning; extreme sports; motorcycle riding;
20. For treatment paid for or furnished under any other individual or group policy.

**NOTE**

*This is a brief description of the insurance benefits. The insurance is underwritten by The Insurance Company of the State of Pennsylvania, a Pennsylvania insurance company, which has its principal business at 70 Pine Street, New York, New York, 10270. It is currently authorized to transact business in all states and the District of Columbia. NAIC No. 19429.*

*Under Policy #SRG 0009139774-A, the policy will contain reductions, limitations, exclusions and termination provisions. Full details of the insurance coverage are contained in the policy. All coverage may not be available in all states. If there are any conflicts between this document and the policy, the policy shall govern in all cases.*

## **Short-Term Travel (Plan B)**

For international volunteers serving in the U.S.

For all volunteers serving in Canada.

### Eligibility

All approved volunteers, employees and retirees (not Plan A/Class 1) whose names are on file with the Participating Organization while traveling worldwide. Dependents of Insured are also eligible for Coverage.

### Benefits

- Medical Expense Benefits
- Emergency Medical Benefits
- Emergency Medical Evacuation Benefit
- Repatriation of Remains Benefit

### Additional Benefits

- Chaperone Replacement Benefit
- Emergency Reunion Benefit
- Home Country Emergency Benefit
- Home Country Extension Benefit
- Hospital Confinement Benefit
- Personal Property Benefit
- Security Evacuation Expense Benefit
- Trip Cancellation and Interruption Benefit
- Accidental Death & Dismemberment Benefits
- Coma Benefit

### Medical Expense Benefits

Total Maximum for all Accident or Illness Expense Benefits:

- Insured: \$280,000 or \$500,000 for enhanced plan election
- Spouse: \$280,000 or \$500,000 for enhanced plan election
- Children: \$280,000 or \$500,000 for enhanced plan election

### Schedule of Benefits

Limitations and exclusions may apply.

- Maximum for Dental Treatment (Alleviation of Pain): \$500
- Maximum for Emergency Medical Treatment of Pregnancy: \$10,000
- Maximum for Room & Board Charges: Average Semi-Private Room Rate
- Maximum for ICU Room & Board Charges: Two (2) Times Average Semi Private Room Rate
- Pre-existing limitation: 6 months
- Maximum for Prescription Drugs:
  - Inpatient Co-insurance: 100% of the Usual and Customary
  - Outpatient Co-insurance: 100% of the Usual and Customary
  - Deductible: \$0 per Covered Accident or Illness
- Co-insurance Rate: 100% of the Usual and Customary Charges
- Incurral Period: 30 days after the date of Covered Accident or Illness
- Maximum Benefit Period: The earlier of the date the Covered Person's Trip ends, or 365 days from the date of a Covered Accident or Illness
- Maximum Period of Coverage: 365 days
- Chaperone Replacement Benefits
  - Benefit Maximum: \$5,000
- Emergency Medical Benefits
  - Benefit Maximum: up to \$10,000
- Emergency Medical Evacuation Benefit
  - Benefit Maximum: 100% of the Covered Expenses
- Repatriation of Remains Benefit
  - Benefit Maximum: 100% of the Covered Expenses
- Emergency Reunion Benefit

Benefit Maximum: \$5,000  
 Airline Ticket Maximum: \$2,000  
 Daily Benefit Maximum: \$500  
 Maximum Number of Days: 10

- Home Country Emergency Benefit
  - Benefit Maximum: Up to the Medical Expense Benefit Maximum
  - Deductible: \$0 per Covered Accident or Illness
  - Maximum Benefit Period: 52 weeks
- Home Country Extension Benefit
  - Benefit Maximum: \$30,000
  - Deductible: \$0
  - Maximum Benefit Period: 90 days
- Hospital Confinement Benefit
  - Daily Benefit: \$200
  - Time Period for Confinement: 25 days
  - Benefit Waiting Period: 5 days
  - Maximum Benefit Period: 365 days from the date of the Covered Accident or Illness
- Personal Property Benefit
  - Deductible per Trip: \$25
  - Benefit Maximum per Trip:
    - Class 2 and Dependents of Class 2: \$3,000
  - Benefit Maximum per Item or Set of Items:
    - Class 2 and Dependents of Class 2: \$3,000
- Security Evacuation Expense Benefit
  - Benefit Maximum: \$5,000
- Trip Cancellation and Interruption Benefit
  - Benefit Maximum: \$1,000 per Policy Term
- Security Evacuation Expense Benefit
  - Benefit Maximum: \$5,000

- Trip Cancellation and Interruption Benefit  
Benefit Maximum: \$1,000 per Policy Term
- Accidental Death & Dismemberment Benefits  
Principal Sum:
  - Class 2—\$25,000 or \$100,000 for enhanced plan election
  - Spouse of Class 2—\$25,000 or \$100,000 for enhanced plan election
  - Children of Class 2—\$25,000 or \$100,000 for enhanced plan electionTime Period for Loss: 365 from the date of a Covered Accident
- Coma Benefit  
Benefits are payable initially as 1% of the Principal Sum per Month up to 11 months and thereafter in a lump sum of 100% of the Principal Sum.

Underwritten by ACE American Insurance company.

## Section IV: Resources for Student Missions Coordinators and Volunteers

### *Application Checklist*

- 1. ONLINE APPLICATION
  - Check for completeness and accuracy.
  - Items in online checklist are checked/green (in “Edit” tab).
  - Approve application for your organization when all is ready including paperwork (“Actions” tab).
  
- 2. FORMS
  - A. **Beneficiary Form**
    - Name
    - Birthdate
    - Beneficiaries/relationship listed
    - Signature of volunteer
    - Date
  
  - B. **Release of Liability Form (FUNDED or SELF-FUNDED—circle one)**
    - Name
    - Signature of volunteer
    - Date
    - If self-funded, email the OVM to confirm that your program will accept insurance bill*
  
  - C. **References (3)**   
    - Name of volunteer and reference
    - No more than 4 empty sections on the first page
    - At least two questions answered (or one answered well) on the second page

- If relationship is listed as “friend,” find out the reference’s profession if not listed
- Referee info at end of form is complete (e.g. at least one form of contact info)

**D. Health Clearance Form (aka Health Certificate)**

- Name and birthdate of volunteer
- Agreement checked
- Signature and name of doctor, nurse practitioner, physician’s assistant, or equivalent
- Credentials (M.D.) and/or license number of medical provider
- Phone number of medical provider
- Date form was completed

**E. Résumé**

**3. PASSPORT TO MISSION TRAINING**

- Enter date in “Training” tab in online application when training was/will be completed.
- Add note to “Training” tab log if SM applicant will be taking online course (not on campus).

**AFTER NAD & GC APPROVAL:**

**4. EMAIL FLIGHT ITINERARY**

- Email itinerary to [andreakeele@nadadventist.org](mailto:andreakeele@nadadventist.org) so that insurance can be arranged.

## ***Application Forms Explanation***

### **Beneficiary Form**

This form asks volunteer to identify who receives insurance benefit money if they should die during their term of service. It also asks volunteers to list dependents who will accompany them.

### **Release of Liability (Funded by Calling Organization or Self-Funded)**

This form gives the limitations of liability. If it is self-funded, it means the volunteer will pay for insurance, but it will need to be billed to an organization such as a university. The limitations are a bit different depending on whether it's funded by the calling organization or the volunteer.

- The “Sending Division” line and coordinator signature line can be left blank.
- To find out which form to use (“Calling Org. Funded” or “Self-Funded”), go to the volunteer’s first choice call and look in the “Finances” section at the “Insurance” line:
- If it says “Calling Organization” next to it, use the “Funded by Calling Organization” form.
  - If it says “Volunteer/Sponsor” next to it, use the “Self-Funded” form.
  - If it makes it simpler, ask SM applicant to sign both just in case.
- If the call is “Self-Funded,” please provide an email from the coordinator stating that the school/mission department is willing to be billed for the insurance since ARM will not bill individuals. Insurance is billed in two parts throughout the year, half at a time—around January and June.

### Confidential Reference Form

This form is to be given to three references. One must be from a pastor or elder, and others should be from professionals who know the volunteer applicant well.

- References may complete the physical form or complete the form electronically if the volunteer chooses this option in their application.
- References from relatives are not accepted.
- If the reference lists their relationship to the volunteer as “friend,” then the OVM asks for the profession.
- The OVM prefers complete references as much as possible. That is loosely defined as 4 or less blank sections on the front page, and at least 2 questions answered on the second page (or a decent paragraph for one answer). We make exceptions, but it’s helpful for everyone to have as much info as possible.

### Health Clearance Form

This form should be completed by a medical professional with nurse practitioner or physician’s assistant credentials or higher (such as an M.D.).

- The Health Clearance Form may be attached online or faxed. It is safer not to email it.
- Missing info on this form often slows down processing, so it’s helpful if the coordinator can double-check everything before sending it.
- If there is a significant health issue, the OVM may ask for a letter of recommendation or clarification from a doctor or specialist, as well as ask them to sign an additional waiver form so they acknowledge that pre-existing conditions most likely will not be covered by insurance.

## Résumé

Volunteers should keep in mind that mission organizations are looking at their résumés, so if it is up-to-date and as accurate as possible, it will give a better impression. It is best to include things like: education, job history, volunteer experience, hobbies or interests, certifications, baptism date, and contact info.

## ***Considering Long-Term Missions\****

How do you know if long-term volunteer missions is for you?

Here are some points to consider:

**Do I adapt quickly (within approximately a month or so) to major changes in my life or does it take me a long period of time? How stressful is it for me to make adjustments?**

Living in a new culture requires major adjustments with food, housing, pace of life, entertainment, language, lifestyle, companionship and worship. Expect that you will need to make some adjustments in these and other areas, and ask the Lord to help you prepare for them. Do not expect the culture to conform to you. Ask the local people or your Receiving Organization Supervisor questions to better understand the culture.

**Do I take initiative in my work and life?**

Or do I prefer having a prescribed plan and direction? There is no guarantee that your duties will be exactly as outlined. You may find that many decisions rest on you or that there is a set plan with little room for innovation. Be prepared to be flexible in order to deal with whatever comes your way in a specific assignment.

\*The information in this section was taken from [www.adventistvolunteers.org](http://www.adventistvolunteers.org)

Could the following factors substantially affect my state of mind or performance: physical discomfort, constant rain, insects, unvaried diet, lack of sleep or privacy?

Wherever you are, the comforts of home will probably not be there. And when the comforts of home are taken away, it may exacerbate other, smaller problems that you might have during your assignment. Make sure to do research on all countries where you are interested in serving to see if your physical and emotional needs will likely be met well enough for you to effectively serve there. For example, if you are vegan, there are some countries where you may have a very hard time finding food you can eat. Other countries may have local diets that are ideal for vegan eaters. Another example: if you are not the camping type, you probably should not serve at Bere Adventist Hospital in Chad, where some of our past volunteers have lived in mud huts! Take time to check these things out! To do your research, you may ask your Sending Division Volunteer Coordinator for information about a country, as well as look on the Internet or in the library. Once you have been accepted for a position, you may also contact your Receiving Organization Supervisor for more information about the local environment, weather, etc.

How rigid am I in my expectations for myself and others?

Being able to accept other people and their different ways is vital—dealing with changes in yourself is just as important. Co-workers in your new culture will have varied backgrounds and a system of values different from yours. Learning to understand the perspectives of others is a necessary trait that you will need to develop. You will find that you get along with people better when you try to understand them.

### How do I deal with misunderstandings with authority?

Sometimes, due to miscommunication or a difficult situation, you may be treated unfairly. How will you cope with this? Do you tend to naturally hold a grudge? Being willing to try to understand and be flexible enough to submit to authority even when you disagree will help you find peaceful solutions. However, if a situation escalates to the point of others being harmed by someone in authority, of course you are encouraged to prayerfully communicate with the appropriate people to find a solution. This might include your Student Missions Coordinator or your Division Volunteer Coordinator. (See “Contact Information” section.)

### Can I cope with the unknown?

Life is full of surprises, especially in foreign settings. Be prepared to encounter many and varied surprises and be willing to go with the flow.

### Do I have to succeed in everything?

Dealing with failure is more important than you think. If this is your first time abroad or your first time serving in a certain type of position (i.e. teaching), don't expect to do everything perfectly at first. Give yourself room for improvement. Volunteer service is a learning experience.

### Am I independent enough to live on my own and with others I don't know?

Make sure to look at the lodging section of the service requests you are interested in. If you like a lot of privacy, you may want to steer clear of an assignment where you'll be living in one room with other volunteers. If you crave company, on the other hand, you may be unhappy serving in place where you will be the only volunteer and will be living by yourself.

**For married couples: Is our marriage stable?**

Do we thrive when together for a long time or are we happier living largely independently from the other? Sound relationships usually grow stronger in the mission field, but unstable relationships can fall apart under the stress and demands of a new environment. Before thinking about going on a volunteer assignment, it is a good idea for you and your spouse to do some soul-searching about your relationship and, of course, pray about whether this is what God wants for the two of you.

**What are my physical limitations (allergies, illnesses, etc.)?**

Someone with mold allergies should think twice before serving in a rainforest environment where there may be lots of mold. Along the same lines, people with severe asthma may want to avoid serving in South Korea, where there is heavy air pollution in the cities. If you are sick all the time during your volunteer service, you will be miserable and you probably won't be as effective a volunteer as you'd wish to be. Volunteers with more serious health conditions will want to be very careful when choosing a country in which to serve. They should find out whether "their" country has the medical facilities to care for them should something go wrong. This is another reason why it is important to do research on the countries where you are interested in serving. To do your research, you may ask your Sending Division Volunteer Coordinator for information about a country, as well as look on the Internet or in the library. Once you have been accepted for a position, you may also contact your Receiving Organization Supervisor for more information.

## Limitations

Long-term volunteering isn't for everyone. The following situations could affect your ability to serve internationally.

### Specific health problems

Medical provision in the field may be inadequate for people with conditions such as unstable asthma, heart conditions, cancer, insulin dependent diabetes, uncontrolled epilepsy and/or chronic psychiatric conditions. Please raise any concerns about your health early in the application process.

### Criminal record

Most AVS positions require a visa, which sometimes entails the obtaining of a national police clearance from the police department in your country. Should you have a criminal record, it may be unlikely a visa will be issued.

### Major financial commitments

All your financial obligations in your home country must be taken care of before your departure. This includes student loans, credit card bills, etc. You will most likely need to pay these bills while you are volunteering, so you will need to make sure that the stipend you will earn from your position is enough to cover your bills. If you are not able to pay your bills from your location abroad, you will need to make arrangements for someone at home to pay them for you while you are serving.

### Marriage and children

If a volunteer will not be accompanied by their spouse on assignment, they may not serve longer than three months. Volunteers who serve at the SDA Language Institute (SDALI) in South Korea may only serve one term of two months if unaccompanied by their spouse.

It is more difficult for married volunteers to find positions than for singles—even if both spouses would like to volunteer. Lack of appropriate housing and small (if any) stipends for living expenses narrows the list of possibilities available for married couples. The possibilities will be even more diminished for couples if one of them will be a dependent spouse.

Lack of appropriate housing and small (if any) stipends for living expenses make it very difficult for families with children to find volunteer opportunities. In the field, child care and educational opportunities for children may also be difficult to find.

### **Short time period**

For many positions, volunteers may need up to six months to become productive. Orientation and adaptation to a new culture can take a lot of time.

### ***Passports and Visas***

The Office of Volunteer Ministries does not assist with passport applications, but we have included the following information as a basic reference for U.S. and Canadian citizens.

#### **Who Needs A Passport?**

Any time you exit and/or re-enter your country, you need a passport. For U.S. citizens, in most cases, it is better to get an actual passport rather than a passport card, since the passport card is only valid for land borders with the U.S. (Canada and Mexico).

#### **Lost or Stolen Passport**

Make a few copies of your passport to keep in a safe place in case your passport is lost or stolen. Report lost/stolen passports to the nearest embassy or consulate office.

**HOW TO APPLY FOR U.S. PASSPORT**

Most post offices are able to process passport applications. The following list from the website listed above gives a basic idea of what is needed.

1. Fill out Form DS-11: Application for a U.S. Passport
2. Submit completed Form DS-11 in person
3. Submit evidence of U.S. citizenship
4. Present identification
5. Submit a photocopy of the identification document(s) presented (Step 4)
6. Pay the applicable fee
7. Provide one passport photo

For specific instructions on applying for a U.S. passport or renewing a passport, please visit the following website:  
[http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first\\_830.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_830.html).

**Renewing a Passport (U.S.)**

If you already have a passport, please note that **it must be valid for at least six months AFTER you are scheduled to return from your trip**. If it is already expired or will expire before that time, make sure to renew it before you leave.

**To renew your U.S. passport by mail**, you must submit *Form DS-82, Application for a U.S. Passport by Mail*, along with your passport. (See website for more details.)

**Cost (U.S.)**

**New passport:** “Routine service” fee is \$135 for adults at the printing of this manual, not including shipping.

**Passport renewal:** “Routine service” fee is \$110 for adults at the printing of this manual, not including shipping.

### How Long Does it Take? (U.S.)

The time it takes to process a passport can vary depending on several factors, but in general, “routine service” takes about 4-6 weeks, and “expedited service” takes 2-3 weeks, when overnight mail is utilized (extra fees are applied). Please see above website for more information on “expedited service.”

### **HOW TO APPLY FOR CANADIAN PASSPORT**

Please check the website for more detailed and current information: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/residents/passport.asp>

The basic steps are listed below:

#### 1. Collect the following:

- Adult General Passport Application Form
- Proof of Canadian citizenship (original only)
- Document to support identity
- Two identical passport photos (one signed by guarantor)
- Required fees

#### 2. Find a guarantor and two references

- A guarantor can be a family member or any individual living at your address, as long as they meet the requirements.

(See website). They will need to:

Complete and sign the “Declaration of Guarantor” section of your application;

Write “I certify this to be a true likeness of (applicant name)” on the back of one of the passport photos and sign it;

If applicable, sign and date the photocopies of each document you have submitted to confirm your identity.

- The two references must:
  - Have known you for at least two years

Not be your guarantor

Not be a family member

Be 18 years of age or older

Agree to you using their name and contact information for your application.

3. **Submit passport in person at passport office** or through receiving agent (Canada Post or Service Canada), or by traceable mail or courier (see website for address). Fees must be paid by credit, prepaid, debit card or certified cheque or money order (no cash).

#### 4. **Receive passport**

- Check for accuracy
- Add signature
- Fill out emergency contact information page

### **Renewing Passport (Canada)**

If you already have a passport, please note that **it must be valid for at least six months AFTER you are scheduled to return from your trip**. If it is already expired or will expire before that time, please make sure to renew it before you leave. Check the website to find out if you qualify to renew your passport rather than applying for a new one.

To renew your passport, you will need to submit the following:

- Adult Simplified Renewal Passport Application Form
- Your most recent passport (still valid or expired for no more than one year)
- Two identical passport photos (must include name and address of photographer and date the photos were taken on the back of one photo).
- Required fees

- Two references to list on your application. They must have known you for at least two years.

#### Cost (Canada)

New and renewal: C\$120 (5 year), C\$160 (10 year)

Cash and personal checks are not accepted.

#### How Long Does it Take? (Canada)

##### Standard

- In person at the passport office: 10 business days
- In person through a receiving agent (Service Canada or Canada Post): 20 business days
- By mail: 20 business days

##### Expedited (in person at passport office only)

- Urgent pick-up (additional C\$110): 24 hours
- Express pick-up (additional C\$50): 2-9 business days
- Standard pick-up (additional \$20): 10 business days

#### Visa Resources

A visa is an endorsement in a passport that allows a traveler to legally enter, travel, or stay in another country for a specified amount of time and for a specified purpose. Visa requirements depend on your passport country, the country you intend to visit, and the purpose and duration of your visit. This is why it is very important that you follow any instructions on the service request for your call, and any additional information given to you by your Calling Organization regarding a visa. If you are a student missionary, be sure to check with your Missions Coordinator as well.

### **Visas for U.S. citizens**

For country-specific visa guidelines for U.S. citizens, you may look up the nearest embassy online and contact them if needed, or you may visit the following website: <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html>.

### **Visas for Canadian citizens**

For country-specific visa guidelines for Canadian citizens, you may look up the nearest embassy online and contact them for more information, or you may visit the following website: <http://travel.gc.ca/assistance/embassies>.

## ***Health and Safety***

### **Immunizations**

Immunizations are often necessary when traveling to other countries, especially tropical climates. Some immunizations must be started several months in advance, which is another good reason to begin the application process and preparations as soon as possible!

For country-specific health and immunization guidelines, you may visit the following website: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>

### **Medications and First Aid Supplies**

Follow any instructions from your doctor, and bring with you any medications you are currently taking or that the doctor suggests you take with you. For on-going medication needs, some volunteers arrange for medications to be sent periodically. Before choosing this option, make sure the postal system is reliable in your mission location. If you plan to purchase medication at your mission location, it is important to note that medications go by different names in different countries, and that they are not always made to the same specifications. These are good

reasons to consider taking any medication you might need for your entire trip with you, if your doctor agrees.

It's also a good idea to bring some kind of first aid kit. Remember that small cuts or burns can turn serious if they get infected.

#### Suggested List of First Aid Supplies\*

**Antibiotic cream:** Very useful for cuts and scrapes. Clean the area very well first with soap and water, then apply antibiotic ointment.

**Bug spray:** Buy bug spray that is 99% DEET and spray only a small amount on your clothing. You'll reek of bug repellent, but the bugs will stay away. Also, use a mosquito net at night!

**Water purification tablets:** You can get them at Wal-Mart in the camping section; buy the iodine tablets that also come with Vitamin C neutralizing tablets. These are only for short-term use, but good to have in an emergency.

**Pepto-Bismol®:** Some people use Pepto-Bismol® to treat mild gastrointestinal symptoms, such as diarrhea, cramping, and bloating due to bacterial infections or food poisoning. Carefully read the instructions on the package before using.

**Charcoal capsules:** Activated charcoal has many uses in the mission field. It can be ingested to alleviate stomach problems, especially diarrhea. The powder can be made into a paste and applied to wounds for an anti-infective result. The paste can also be applied to insect bites and stings to reduce swelling and decrease pain and itching.

**Band-Aids®:** Don't worry about taking a year's supply; some-one from home can always include a box in the mail.

**ACE™ bandages:** You can always improvise with socks or strips of cloth. However, if you are prone to twisting your ankle, having an ACE™ bandage is helpful.

\*From [www.southern.edu/studentmissions](http://www.southern.edu/studentmissions)

**Tweezers:** Clean the dirt out of wounds or remove splinters.

Make sure tweezers are boiled for 10 minutes in water or scrubbed with soap and clean water before using.

**Sterile needles:** Useful to have a few in the event of a really bad splinter.

**Tylenol® and Motrin®:** Use for treatment of headaches, fever, joint pain, etc. For a person with high fevers or pain due to injury, 400 mg Motrin® (ibuprofen) can be given every 6 hours. For fevers or headaches, 650 to 1000 mg Tylenol® can be given every 4-6 hours. Be sure Motrin® is taken with a small amount of food. Drink plenty of water when you take these medications.

**Hydrocortisone cream:** This cream reduces swelling in inflamed areas and also reduces itching and pain.

**Washcloths:** You can buy a pack of cheap washcloths at Target or Wal-Mart. These are great to have around for placing cool and wet across the forehead of someone who has a fever or is nauseated. You will find many other uses for them as well.

**Claritin®/Loratadine:** If you take allergy meds at home, take some with you to the mission field. It doesn't hurt to take a box even if you don't usually have trouble with allergies. You may react to new plants or animals that you're exposed to in a foreign county. We recommend a box of Loratadine—it's generic Claritin® that can be purchased over the counter at Wal-Mart and it isn't very expensive.

**Airborne® tablets:** Some people find them very effective for warding off illness.

**Other suggestions:** Cough drops, anti-itch cream, small scissors, a thermometer, medical tape, gauze, vitamin C tablets, multivitamin tablets, sunscreen, aloe, herbal tea bags, Vic's VapoRub, etc. Take supplies that you would normally use at home.

## First Aid Recipes

### **Nutritional treatment for a person with diarrhea/vomiting:**

- BRAT diet: Bananas, Rice, Applesauce, Tea/Toast.  
It doesn't have to be these exact foods, but stick to a diet of simple carbs and no fatty foods. Avoid fruits, vegetables, and grains that have a lots of fiber.

### **Charcoal treatment:**

- Mix 2-3 capsules activated charcoal with a dribble of water and a few drips of oil, then apply to bee sting or insect bite within five minutes of sting for pain and swelling relief.

### **Sore throat treatment:**

- Place 1 pure peppermint tea bag in a cup, add a squirt of honey and the juice of half a freshly squeezed lemon. Pour boiling water over mixture. Stir. Drink when cool enough to tolerate. Warm lemon juice, water, and honey can also be helpful.

### **Oral rehydration fluid:**

- Mix 1 liter (1 full Nalgene bottle) of clean potable water with one big spoonful of sugar and one small spoonful of salt. Mix well, and give a spoonful of the liquid every five minutes by mouth to persons who are dehydrated due to diarrhea, heat stroke, excessive sweating, and/or vomiting.

## Mosquitos

For those in tropical locations, try to protect yourself from mosquitos as much as possible. These insects are responsible for carrying at least five serious diseases. Plan to use a mosquito net and bug spray, and any other preventative measures available to you at your site. You might want to research or ask your doctor for information regarding Dengue fever and malaria, which are two common mosquito-borne illnesses in tropical climates. Some preventative medicines are

available for malaria, but their effectiveness depends on the strain of malaria in your region. Dengue fever has no preventative medicine or immunization, and avoiding it requires a healthy immune system, rest and good hydration.

### Allergies

Before you leave, write down a list of all known allergies, including medications, food, insect bites or stings, animals, molds, etc. Give this list to your mission site supervisor in case of an emergency or an extreme allergic reaction. Make sure to bring anything which your doctor may have recommended to counter the effects of an allergic reaction, e.g. antihistamine or EpiPen®.

Most common allergies are due to pollen and mold, which are often found in tropical climates, so be prepared with your allergy medication if you think this could be an issue for you.

### Exercise

Exercising regularly is important for keeping a healthy immune system. It can help improve energy levels, sleep quality, and is helpful when dealing with stress and depression. Keep in mind that where and how you exercise is also important to your health and safety. Observe the following guidelines:

1. Do not exercise alone.
2. Dress modestly when exercising, even when it is hot.
3. Exercise only during daylight hours.
4. Check with your local administration about when and where it is appropriate and safe to exercise.
5. Follow any guidelines given to you regarding cultural sensitivity. For example, a man and woman exercising together (without a group) can be misunderstood or considered inappropriate in some cultures.

### Sleep

Regular sleep also keeps your immune system healthy. Good sleeping habits begin with good time management habits, as well as learning how to set realistic expectations for your day. It might be tempting to stay up late to finish your work, but in the end it will usually make you less productive and more irritable the next day. This can make things extra difficult in the mission field which is usually quite physically and emotionally demanding. Make sleep a priority.

### Water

Good hydration is also extremely helpful in building a good immune system, and of course is especially important in hot climates where it is very easy to become dehydrated. However, be aware of the water quality. For most places, especially in warmer climates, plan on bringing some kind of water purifying device and/or boiling your water. Contaminated water often causes all kinds of illnesses.

### Mental Health

Stress is unfortunately part of any transition, but can intensify with culture shock. It is best to have a plan before you leave that will to help you cope when you are feeling overwhelmed. This should include finding support at your mission site, and/or from home if you are able to maintain good communication. You know best what is stress-relieving for you—journaling, exercising, listening to music, talking, praying, reading the Bible or other encouraging Christian books. Invite God on this journey of the unexpected, and you will find Him to be a strong foundation when you need it most.

Stress and other factors can sometimes lead to depression. If you find yourself experiencing symptoms of depression for longer than two weeks, talk with someone you trust at your mission site and at home, and ask them to help you find the support you need. Below are activities that may help relieve episodes of depression:

- 1. Establish a routine.** Make a simple schedule, and stick to it. Structure your down time.
- 2. Set goals.** Small, daily goals are more effect than long-term goals in this case.
- 3. Exercise regularly.** Any kind of activity will help. It doesn't have to be a full workout.
- 4. Eat healthy.** Try to stick with fruits and veggies, and avoid junk food.
- 5. Get enough sleep.** Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.
- 6. Stay hydrated.** Water helps you clear your thinking and gives you energy.
- 7. Challenge negative thoughts.** Identify them and fight them with prayer and promises from Scripture.
- 8. Keep things in perspective.** One day at a time. Don't let yourself get overwhelmed.
- 9. Try something new or do something just for fun.** Spontaneity can break negative thought patterns.
- 10. Seek social support.** Withdrawing is natural, but social support is needed most.
- 11. Seek spiritual support.** Spiritual warfare is real. Ask people to pray with you and for you. Utilize Bible promises.

### Assault or Sexual Harassment

It is important to report a situation where you have been assaulted or harassed. If you are not able to talk to your supervisor, please contact your Missions Coordinator or the NAD Office of Volunteer Ministries at (301) 680-6492. Your report will be kept in strict confidence.

### Preparing to Serve

The best way to find out specific information on what to bring to your mission location is to talk with someone who has been there recently. Contact your student missions office or the Office of Volunteer Ministries if you would like to be connected with someone who has recently served in your location.

You may also download some basic lists of what to bring by continent according to a few former and current volunteers at our website [www.hesaidgo.org](http://www.hesaidgo.org).

### What to Bring

#### BOOKS AND SUPPLIES

- Bible\*
- Journal\*
- Praise song lyrics/chords\*
- Hymnal in local language
- Worship talk ideas\*
- Language dictionary of host language
- Supplies for your position—classroom materials, etc.

#### CLOTHES

- Clothes/shoes according to the climate\*

#### FOOD

- A few favorite snacks for the transition
- A few pictures of family/friends

#### ELECTRONICS

- For hot/humid climates: laptop cooling fans, desiccant packets and box to store/dry out electronics

- Camera\*
- Laptop computer and/or other communication device\*
- Electronic reading device to save on weight of books\*
- Cell phone and/or list of emergency contact numbers\*

#### HEALTH

- Enough personal hygiene products for a few months
- Medication for at least 3 months or more (if not available)
- Water purifier, such as Steri-pen (in most cases)
- First Aid Kit\*

## What to Bring

### OTHER

- Musical instrument\*
- U.S. Debit or Credit Card(s) for cash or emergencies\*
- Small amount of cash for trip
- Gifts for missionaries or locals at your mission site
- Copy of passport

### INTANGIBLES\*

- Relationship with Jesus and regular talks with Him
- Readiness to surrender self & trust God's way
- Flexible attitude and willing heart
- Humility/teachable spirit
- Adaptability to communicating and living within culture
- Creative problem-solving skills
- Conflict resolution skills

\*Applies for most Task Force volunteers also.

## What to Leave Behind

- **Lots of books.** Just bring a few favorites, or an electronic reading device.
- **Copy of passport.** And documents used to obtain passport. Leave them with a trusted family member or friend in case it gets stolen.
- **Irreplaceable or extremely valuable jewelry, clothing, sunglasses, or other items.**
- **Excessive make-up.**
- **Weapons, alcohol, tobacco, illegal substances, etc.**
- **Distractions.** Consider taking a break or at least reducing secular movies, books, music, and Internet to be free of distraction from your mission focus.
- **Romantic relationships.** While it's possible and permissible to maintain long-distance relationships, it can prove to be challenging. It often requires time and emotional energy that is needed at your mission. Consider putting romantic relationships on hold for the year to seek God's will for your life and your relationship.

- **The idea of starting a romantic relationship with a local or fellow volunteer during your time of service**—This is not only distracting, but also can cause harm and complications to the local mission work due to cultural issues.
- **U.S./Canadian patriotic shirts, etc.** You are ambassadors of Christ rather than your country. Sometimes these things can get in the way of the universal Gospel message you are trying to share.
- **Ethnocentrism.** This means judging another culture through the lens of your own, with the idea that your own culture is superior to another. This is obviously harmful when trying to serve another culture.

### Financial Responsibilities

You are responsible for making arrangements for all of your financial needs while you are gone. Though you may receive a living allowance, it may not be enough to keep up with ongoing bills. Think through any loan payments or bills that you may need to make arrangements for, such as student loans, car payments, or mortgage payments.

Research ahead of time methods of receiving money in your mission location. Most countries have banks which will allow you to use your ATM/debit card to receive cash for a fee, from your bank account (Canadian debit cards will not work this way). Other options include Western Union, or bank transfers from your home bank to a bank in their network in your mission location.

Consider going through the process of giving Power of Attorney to a parent or trusted family member or friend. This can make it much easier for someone else to take care of any financial issues that may arise while you are out of the country. You can

set it to expire as soon as you get back. The process varies by state, so make sure you locate the correct information before proceeding.

## ***Travel Tips***

### **Travel Warnings**

For up-to-date information and travel alerts, warnings, and safety information concerning the country you will be going to, please see the U.S. Department of State's Alerts and Warnings page at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html>.

### **Air Travel**

- Research airline baggage restrictions and fees before you pack your bags.
- Check out an option for expedited service with Global Entry, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection program designed for pre-approved, low-risk travelers upon arrival in the United States. Though intended for international travelers, there is no minimum number of trips necessary to qualify for the program. Participants may enter the U.S. by using automated kiosks located at select airports.
- Check in on time. On international flights, most airlines require that you check in at least two hours before your departure.
- When you arrive at the airport where you have a layover, be sure to reconfirm your next flight before leaving the terminal.

### **Hotel Safety**

- Keep your hotel door locked at all times and meet any visitors in the lobby.
- Do not leave money and other valuables in your room.
- Do not get on an elevator with a suspicious-looking person.
- Act as if you know where you are going; walk with purpose.

- When possible, ask directions only from individuals in authority.
- Learn a few phrases of the local language so you can signal your need for help.
- Make a note of the phone number of the nearest U.S. embassy.

### Travel Safety

- Stay alert and tuned-in to your surroundings.
- Safety begins when you pack. Avoid the appearance of affluence. Bring travelers checks and one or two major credit cards instead of cash.
- Put your name inside and outside of each piece of luggage.
- Don't travel with anything you would hate to lose.
- Always memorize emergency phone numbers.
- Leave a copy of your itinerary and emergency contact information with family or friends at home in case they need to contact you in case of emergency.

### Stolen Items (Including Passport)

You should keep identifying information for all your valuables in case you need to fill out a baggage claim form with Adventist Risk Management. Make a few copies of your passport to keep in a safe place in case your passport is lost or stolen. Report lost/stolen passports to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate office.

### Overview of Culture Shock

If you plan to serve as a volunteer in a different culture, it is important to understand and prepare for culture shock. This topic is covered more extensively in the online course, "Preparation for Mission," and covered in the book *Passport to Mission*. This training, whether you take it on-campus at your school or the

online course, is required for volunteers serving outside of the U.S. and Canada. The explanation below is a partial overview.

Culture shock is “a [temporary] psychological upset that stems from unfamiliar cues and unmet expectations in a new culture.”\*

Our original culture helps us know how to relate to the world around us. It gives us the sense of what is acceptable and appropriate. When you enter a new culture, you are trying to interpret your surroundings and experiences through the filter of your original culture. This can create misunderstandings and frustration which can be mild or severe, depending on your personality, the degree of difference between cultures, and your adaptability to change. The main causes of culture shock include:

- Inability to communicate
- Changes in routine
- Changes in relationships
- Loss of understanding
- Emotional disorientation
- Disorientation of values.

Some of the main symptoms of culture shock include:

- Irritation over the local way of life
- Homesickness
- Boredom and loneliness
- Overall feeling of dissatisfaction
- Rising stress, distrust and depression
- Physical illness, especially chronic headaches, hypertension
- Overconcern with one’s health.

\*Quote and subsequent material taken from *Passport to Mission*, Chapter 11.

### Four Phases

There are four phases on the journey to adjusting to a new culture and becoming “bi-cultural,” or able to appreciate and understand your original and host cultures.

**Phase 1: Initial High**—the “honeymoon phase” when everything is still new and exciting.

**Phase 2: Frustration**—Reality sets in and you realize there are no shortcuts, and it can feel overwhelming.

**Phase 3: Recovery**—The culture starts to make a little more sense, and you see your efforts starting to pay off.

**Phase 4: Acceptance**—You start to feel comfortable again. What was once strange is now normal, and you even enjoy it.

### Surviving Culture Shock

A few helpful tips on handling culture shock:

- Recognize culture shock. Don't deny it.
- Know yourself.
- Set goals that are realistic.
- Seek a reasonable amount of escape.
- Get to know your host culture.
- Improve communication.
- Don't isolate yourself.

### *Incarnational Missionary*

In the Bible, Jesus was also called “Emmanuel,” or “God with us.” Just as God has endeavored to be with us throughout human history, especially through Jesus, so we should seek to live *with* those we are serving. Those we are serving will be able to understand the Gospel better as we serve in this way.

Eating, dressing, shopping, playing, worshipping, and housing arrangements will especially be affected by the attitudes of an incarnational missionary.

### Attitudes of an Incarnational Missionary

- We consider others as equals, even superiors, accepting the role of a learner.
- We become a servant, giving up our rights to be “in charge.”
- We experience life as much as possible the way those around us do.
- We try to see the world through their eyes, rather than asking them to look through ours.
- We choose to see the good around us, cultivating a sense of tolerance and acceptance.
- We admit that our own culture is less than perfect.

This is only an introduction to what is covered in *Passport to Mission*. For more, please see Chapter 14 in *Passport to Mission*.

### Whom to Contact for Support

Sometimes questions or more serious issues arise during your mission service that you may not be able to solve on your own or within your group of missionaries. In these cases, please follow the steps below:

#### 1. Local Mission Site Supervisor or Other Local Leadership

Ask your site supervisor or other respected local leadership for help in resolving the issue before taking it to your SM Coordinator.

#### 2. Student Missions Coordinator

If your site supervisor or leadership is unable to help for some reason, contact your SM Coordinator.

### 3. Local Division Coordinator

If you are unable to reach your SM Coordinator, you may try contacting the Volunteer Coordinator for the division in which you are serving. Contact information for division coordinators is listed here: <https://www.adventistvolunteers.org/Contacts>.

### 4. OVM Coordinator

If you are unable to reach your host division Volunteer Coordinator, you may contact the Processing Coordinator for the NAD Office of Volunteer Ministries.

## ***Re-Entry***

Re-entry is the process of transitioning from your mission-world to your home-world. While most challenges in re-entry are due to re-adjusting to the home culture, there can also be challenges in transitioning from volunteering in the U.S. or Canada if the assignment was unusually difficult. Either way, it can take awhile for life to feel normal again, and to be able to think through the various experiences, emotions, and lessons learned. Your home-coming experience may be less than what you were expecting, and you might find yourself in a familiar place only to discover you have changed.

The re-entry experience also often includes “reverse culture shock.” Just as it took awhile to get used to the cultural differences at your mission location, it also takes some time to readjust to your home culture. For example, you might feel frustrated by materialism; overwhelmed by the fast-paced society; indignant at the apathy you see in your church.

It is important to go through the process of unpacking and understanding the reasons for varied emotions of your re-entry experience. As you anticipate serving, it’s important that you plan

to utilize the following resources upon your return from service:

- Student Missionaries: Follow up with your chaplain or SM Coordinator. Plan to attend the re-entry retreat that may be offered, and ask for whatever resources, chaplaincy care, or counseling you think may help you. Get involved with your campus missions club.
- Read *Re-Entry*, by Peter Jordan, toward the end of your service or as soon as you return, if possible.
- Complete the online returned volunteer survey at [www.hesaigo.org](http://www.hesaigo.org). Or you may choose to complete the Position Assessment Form, which is available on the AVS website.
- Contact the Office of Volunteer Ministries for more resources or assistance, or if you would like to share more about your experience.
- Most importantly, find a way to talk about your experience. For some, it might be sharing with a pastor or counselor; a trusted relative, friend; or former missionary who is willing to hear your stories or difficulties with adjusting. For others, you might be excited to share your experience at your church or school. Do whatever is most comfortable and helpful for you in your transition process.
- Remember that the same God who called you will walk through this transition with you as well.

### ***Reapplying for Service***

Many of our former AVS volunteers reapply to serve again. This is done by logging in to your original volunteer account on [www.adventistvolunteers.org](http://www.adventistvolunteers.org), and clicking “reapply” on your homepage. Depending on how long it has been since you last applied and served, our office may be able to use some of your previously submitted paperwork, and you will not need to

re-take the training course unless you would like to refresh. Otherwise, the application process will follow the same course of approval as when you first applied.

### ***Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)***

#### ***How long does the application process take?***

Applicants should allow up to two weeks per approval, which totals about 6-8 weeks. A variety of factors may change this estimate, such as the amount of time it takes for the applicant to complete all requirements, including the mission preparation course, if applicable. Another factor is the amount of time the calling organization takes to review and accept or deny your application.

#### ***Am I allowed to bring a spouse and family?***

Yes, as long as the service request indicates that there are accommodations for a spouse or family. There are a few other guidelines regarding spouses:

- It is recommended that married couples should be married for at least one year before serving.
- All married volunteers serving more than three months must be accompanied by their spouse, per Church policy.
- In the event that a spouse will accompany the volunteer as a dependent (spouse is not a voted volunteer) for an international assignment, spouse forms need to be submitted with the volunteer's application. These may found on our website.

#### ***Will OVM take care of my financial obligations while I'm serving?***

Unfortunately the Office of Volunteer Ministries is unable to provide any financial assistance to volunteers, other than limited awards from the Sammy Gurule Missions Fund, available to volunteers of Latino or Native American heritage. For more information, see [www.hesaidgo.org](http://www.hesaidgo.org).

### Who pays for my insurance coverage?

When viewing a service request, under the “Finances” section, the financial responsibilities are listed, including the cost of insurance. For most service requests, the calling organization (through their local division) covers the cost of the volunteer’s insurance. Some, however, will state that insurance is the responsibility of the “Volunteer/Sponsor.” In this case, the coordinator and/or volunteer will be notified so that appropriate arrangements can be made by the volunteer to cover the cost of insurance. (The bill cannot be received by an individual, so the volunteer will be paying an SDA institution that is approved for billing.)

### What do I do in a medical emergency?

Seek immediate medical attention. If you need help finding medical attention, or after you have already secured medical attention, call Europe Assistance:

**1-240-330-1570** (call collect outside the U.S.)

**1-888-927-5353** (inside the U.S.)

If you are acting on behalf of someone else in case of an injury, follow these steps:

1. Assess situation and environment where injured is located.  
Do not walk into a dangerous situation.
2. Ask injured where they are hurt. Trying to move an injured person may cause more harm.
3. Secure immediate medical attention, without leaving injured person alone, if possible.
4. Call ambulance or emergency care unit.
5. Contact Europ Assistance (or contact supervisor or designated person to do this on behalf of injured).

6. After medical attention has been secured, continue communicating with Europ Assistance to ensure expenses are covered. This will include completing an Accident and Illness Medical Claim Form.

### How long may I serve?

Most volunteer assignments are for 10 months to one year, but a long-term assignment can be created for two months up to two years. If you choose to stay longer than your original commitment, you should talk with your mission supervisor about extending your service, once you are nearing the end of your assignment. You may extend as many times as the mission site allows. Volunteers serving in the U.S. are legally limited to 12 months of volunteer service within the same conference.

### What happens if I can't finish my term?

While we hope and pray that each of our volunteers are able to honor the time commitment agreed upon in the service request, there are some cases that necessitate returning early. Whatever the case may be, it is important that you communicate with your site supervisor and Student Missions Coordinator. They will help you make the arrangements, and communicate with AVS to process your “early return.”

Once you have returned, your campus mission office and the OVM office are available to help with supporting you in your transition home. We would also appreciate your feedback on your experience by completing the online returned volunteer survey, or contacting our office.

**What are some reasonable causes for volunteers to return early?**

Reasons for an early return might include personal illness or injury, a family emergency, or a high risk situation or political climate at the mission site. Unfortunately, there are a few cases each year when a mission site asks a volunteer to leave. In this case, it must go through an appropriate process before the volunteer is sent home. Whatever the case, the volunteer is encouraged to give at least a basic explanation for their early return to their supervisor, SM Coordinator, mission site division, and/or Office of Volunteer Ministries office when appropriate.

**APPENDIX**

# Student Missions Screening Interview Form

## PURPOSE FOR GOING—QUALIFICATION (self-image and motives)

Why do you want to be a student missionary?

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What do you believe you can contribute at your desired mission location?

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What do you perceive to be your personal strengths and weaknesses?

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Have you discussed this with your family? Are they supportive?

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Tell me about your background. How did you grow up? Do you live with both parents? How many siblings?

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## SPIRITUAL & LIFESTYLE ISSUES

Are you a baptized member of the Adventist Church? How long?

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How would you describe your personal relationship with God?

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How is your devotional life?

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How do you spend Sabbath?

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What kind of witnessing programs have you been involved in?

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How do you feel about getting up front and leading out in a religious service (i.e. Sabbath School or church)?

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How do you feel about the Adventist church and are you supportive of the doctrines?

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Recognizing that there is a broad range of lifestyle preferences within the church, are you willing to set aside your own personal cultural preferences in order to be more effective in your mission? Y  N

Describe your experience with drugs/alcohol/smoking.

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How do you deal with temptations/doubts/struggles?

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Are there any issues you are struggling with currently?

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If you have had struggles in the past, what is your commitment level at the present time to be true to your convictions?

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## RELATIONSHIPS

Where do you find support when facing difficulties or frustrations?

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How would you cope without your normal support group around?

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Do you have a girl/boy friend? Y  N

Have you talked this decision over with them and how it might affect your relationship?

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How would you cope with a breakup during your year of service?

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If not in a relationship, do you feel confident that you can handle a year without dating as the SM policy requires?

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## **STRESS/COPING**

How do you deal with stress?

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Have you had issues with depression or suicidal thoughts?

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Have you ever been treated for depression or any mental illness?

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What do you do in your spare time?

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## RESPONSE TO AUTHORITY

How do you relate to people in authority?

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How do you relate to rules? Are you are "rule follower"?

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What would you do if a person of authority was being unfair to you?

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What do you do when you get discouraged?

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## CULTURAL CHANGE

Have you ever lived outside of the U.S.? Y  N

Do you speak another language? Y  N

Have you traveled to foreign countries? Y  N

Do you like trying new foods? Y  N

Which of the following words or phrases best describes you?

- |   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passive            | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Aggressive                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sheep              | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Shepherd                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early Riser        | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Night Owl                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tactful            | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Blunt                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Follow the Rules   | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Let's Be Practical        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My Way or No Way   | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Let's Compromise          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Starter       | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Instructions Please!      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life of the Party  | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Wall Flower               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Happy All the Time | or | <input type="checkbox"/> "I Have My Ups and Downs" |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Get It Done!"     | or | <input type="checkbox"/> "Procrastinator"          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Glass Half Full"  | or | <input type="checkbox"/> "Glass Half Empty"        |

What other questions or concerns do you have about your mission year?

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Are you ready to commit to spending a year in \_\_\_\_\_ ? Y  N

NAME:

SCREENED BY:

DATE:

DESIRED MISSION LOCATION:

JOB:

YEAR OF EDUCATION:

MAJOR:

GPA:

LOANS?

HOME AREA:

AGE:

FOLLOW-UP NEEDED? Y  N

# Student Missions Re-Entry Screening Form

Name of return student missionary:

Mission site:

Name of interviewer:

Date:

Begin with prayer.

Tell me about your mission experience. Prompt questions if you need them:

- What was it like when you first got there?
- How did you adjust to your new location and work?
- What did you love about your experience?
- What were your biggest challenges?
- Do you have regrets?

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If someone was thinking about being a student missionary, what would you tell them?

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If someone was thinking about being a student missionary at your mission location, what would you tell them?

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Any information you could share to help us better prepare future student missionaries?

- Cultural awareness
- Safety
- Expectations/style of administration
- Other concerns

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How would you describe your experience coming back home? (Circle one, and explain if needed)

- Really hard! I miss it every day!
- I miss it, but it's good to be home.
- I've been too busy to think about it.
- Glad to be home! Don't like thinking or talking about my experience much.

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HE SAID



OFFICE OF VOLUNTEER MINISTRIES