

Missionary Trauma pt. 2

Recognizing and Responding to the Reality of Missionary Trauma

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Introduction:

First. How can a missionary dealing with Post-Traumatic Stress be ministered to?

Second. What is our role in helping a missionary dealing with Post-Traumatic Stress...or the more significant question...What is our role in missionary care?

“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.”
Proverbs 17:22

“The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?”
Proverbs 18:14

First. How can a missionary dealing with Post-Traumatic Stress be helped?

Preventative

- A.** Past trauma should be explored in the application and interview process of a prospective missionary.
- B.** PTS should be taught about and reviewed regularly in the life of a missionary.
- C.** Missionary Care relationships should be developed early in a missionary career and maintained intentionally.
- D.** Excellent Bible teaching and preaching should not be considered adequate ministry to field missionaries.
- E.** Missionaries should be required to participate in a professional debriefing for their benefit vs. the agency's benefit when returning to their passport country for furlough, for an emergency, or when concluding their missionary career. This should be done by a professional outside of the sending agency that has training and experience in missionary debriefing.

Prescriptive

- A. An exhortation to practice more of the spiritual disciplines, such as reading the Bible, prayer, witnessing, etc., will likely make their problem(s) worse.
- B. They may need a thorough physical by a Christian physician who understand PTS.
- C. They may need counseling from a trained Biblical Counselor in order to understand the trauma that they have experienced, understand their response(s) to the trauma, and dealing with their responses to the trauma.
- D. They will very likely need a resource(s) on PTS from a Biblical perspective. All resources are **not** created equal. This may be true from either a PTS perspective or a Biblical perspective
- E. Those dealing with PTS need the assurance that they are not abnormal, lacking in spirituality, lacking in commitment, or lacking in dedication.
- F. Missionaries who are dealing with PTS need the assurance that those that are seeking to minister to them believe that PTS is real.

Second, What is the role of a pastor in helping a missionary deal with Post-Traumatic Stress...or the more significant question...What is the role of a pastor in missionary care?

There is a big difference between a **sending** pastor and a **supporting** pastor. They have different responsibilities. However, both have responsibilities. A **sending** pastor is responsible to a church for a missionary. This does not change when a church calls a new pastor. A supporting pastor is accountable to a church for the stewardship of missionary dollars.

- A. Pastors need to identify the essential issues when it comes to mission boards.
 - 1. The process by which a board accepts a missionary.
 - 2. What is the board's understanding of and approach to missionary care?
 - 3. Whose responsibility does the board consider missionary care?

4. What percentage of a missionary's support goes to the mission board and what is it used for?

B. Pastors need to be regularly updated on the essential subjects when it comes to mission boards.

Conclusion:

There is no such thing as a perfect mission board. However, remember...

A sending pastor is responsible to a church for a missionary.

A supporting pastor is responsible to a church for the stewardship of missionary dollars.

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