

Sending Churches: Church-Initiated Requirements

Q: How does Pioneers view the pre-field training requirements that our church places on our missionaries? What if the church has their own requirements that they want to ask people to fulfill?

A: First of all, we're supportive of that and we're encouraged when churches are actually saying, "We have a way that we want to train people and prepare them to go." I suppose the fine line to that might be [if] the requirements are too onerous. I think that we would have a talk with that church to say, "Is there any way that some of these things might already be duplicated [by] some of the things that we are requiring?" [Maybe] we can come to a compromise and rather than doing two different things, let's choose one and really help that person.

Pioneers wants to help see church-planting movements among unreached people groups. And the way that we do that, we feel our core contribution, is to remove obstacles to people getting to the field.

[So] we want to make sure that neither of two extremes is going on: "You need a seminary degree and a doctorate and three or four years of cross-cultural training" on one side, or "You don't need much of anything, just get on a plane and go." The reality is, it's somewhere in between that.

We would really like to work with the church to determine what way we can best really advance this person and move forward. And some people, it takes a while. I met someone who literally took eight years to go to the field. And they were in deputation for eight years. And they were trying to get to a specific part of the world, and their means and access to get there was to become an airline pilot.

The average [time it takes for appointees to get to the field] is around 18 to 24 months, depending on whether they are single or whether it's a family. If it's a larger family it might take longer. But that's pretty much the average.