

Missions without a Suitcase

17 ways to be a world Christian without leaving home

by Len Woods

1. Learn about the 10/40 window. This rectangular geographical area (located between 10 degrees and 40 degrees north latitude from the equator, and bounded by Africa on the west and Japan to the east) is home to more than half the world's population, includes 80 percent of the world's poorest people, and is dominated by Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism. No other area on earth has so few Christians or established churches. Reaching the lost in this part of the world is the great missions challenge of the 21st century.
2. Read at least one missionary biography a year. You might want to start with a classic such as *Lords of the Earth* or *Peace Child* by Don Richardson, *Through Gates of Splendor* by Elisabeth Elliot, *Death of a Guru* by Rabindranath Maharaj, or *To the Golden Shore* by Courtney Anderson. Contact the William Carey Library (WCLBooks.com) in Pasadena, California, and ask for a current catalog of their resources about missions.
3. Invite missionaries (furloughed or retired) into your home. Ask them to join you for dinner. Or perhaps you have an extra bedroom and can offer to house them whenever they pass through your part of the country. You can't help but benefit from rubbing shoulders with believers whose hearts beat for the nations of the world.
4. Pray daily along the lines of Lk. 10:2. That is, faithfully ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest. Pray that some, even from your own church, would be thrust into ministry among those who have not heard the gospel.
5. Fast one day a week. Use those meal times to pray for the salvation of an unreached people group (these are distinct, identifiable groups of people linked by a common language and culture who do not yet have an indigenous church in their midst). Save the money you would have spent on food each day you fast (e.g., \$1 for breakfast, \$3 for lunch, and \$4 for supper), and give it to a missionary you know who is living among the people group for whom you've been praying.
6. Buy an acrylic photo holder. Put it in the center of your dining room table, and place a different missionary picture or prayer letter in it each day. Make it a regular part of your family's dinner experience to pray for the ministries and needs of the featured missionaries.
7. If you are financially able, don't sell or trade in your old car. Instead, donate it to your church or to a favorite missions agency for use by missionaries who are on furlough and must travel to visit their supporters.
8. Write or email a missionary you know and ask, "If I could get you any two books, what would you want?" Purchase those resources and mail them to the missionary.
9. Gather a friend or two, and go on a prayer walk through an area in your town where different ethnic groups live (e.g., Chinatown, Little Havana). A prayer walk is just what it sounds like: You walk and pray at the same time. Pray for the salvation of those in the neighborhood who do not know Christ. Ask God to empower the Christians in that neighborhood to be strong witnesses.
10. Check out travel videos from your public library. These videos can give you an "up close and personal" peek at places and peoples around the globe.
11. Make an appointment with a Christian financial advisor about getting out of debt and living by a budget. For some, this may be a long, slow, difficult process. For others, it may require only a minor adjustment in lifestyle. For all, it opens up opportunities to allocate more resources to eternal ventures.
12. Read the international news in your daily newspaper or weekly magazine. Many of us ignore these articles, claiming we don't understand political or economic events taking place around the world. As we get better informed, however, our understanding will grow and can lead to more effective prayer for the nations.
13. Purchase a copy of *Operation World*. This practical resource takes a country--by--country look at the world, giving a glimpse of what God is doing in each place, and suggesting ways you can pray for the peoples of that nation and the Christian workers who serve there. There's even a kids' version called *Window on the World*.
14. Volunteer (if you have the ability, time, and passion) to take charge of your church's missionary bulletin board. Make it informative, creative, and snazzy! Change it frequently so that people are always looking to see what's new.

15. Set your watch alarm to go off daily at an easy--to--remember time as a trigger to pray. For example, when your watch beeps at 2:22 P.M., stop and pray for two missionaries for two minutes.
16. Most colleges and universities have sizable international student communities. These bright, gifted, influential visitors are often very open to your friendship. Many times the wives and children of international graduate and doctoral students are isolated and lonely. The international student office of a nearby college or university can help you reach out to these future leaders.
17. Adopt author David Bryant's "5--4--3--2--1 Plan" for becoming a world Christian.
 - Spend **five** minutes each day in personal devotions learning what the Bible teaches about God's global plan. (Working your way through the book of Acts is a great place to start.)
 - Spend another **four** minutes reading current, world--related literature such as magazine articles or missionary newsletters.
 - Take **three** minutes for intercessory prayer for the world's lost, utilizing the insights and information gained in the previous nine minutes.
 - Share with another person for **two** minutes (through conversation, email, etc.) what God has been showing you about His global plan (and your part in it).

Before bedtime, take **one** minute to ask God to speak to you about how you can grow as a world Christian.