

MASTER'S CLINICAL PROJECT

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE BIRMINGHAM THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

BY
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BIRMINGHAM, AL

CONVOCATION MAY 2014"

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ABSTRACT

Thesis Statement

This clinical project produces an Orientation Manual for new missionaries to the former communist country of Bulgaria in order to foster personal and spiritual formation necessary for life and ministry overseas.

Thesis Paragraph

The collapse of communism with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 opened the religious floodgates into Eastern Europe. Missionaries from every religion and denomination poured into the Communist Bloc to stake their claim on the souls of the downtrodden masses. The ensuing stampede calloused people past the point of receptivity to anything religious.¹ Evangelical missionaries now face the task of planting churches in hardened soil. It is important for new missionaries to understand the history and context of a country before engaging in ministry, lest they fuel the spiritual hardening. This clinical project produces an Orientation Manual for new missionaries to the former communist country of Bulgaria in order to foster personal and spiritual formation necessary for life and ministry overseas.

¹ Supporting information gathered from missionaries, Bulgarian nationals, and published works. Further documentation will be provided throughout the paper.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The story of a southern boy growing up in a Christian home and professing Christ at an early age is not likely to make the front cover of *Christianity Today*. The answer to the prayer of every believing parent—that their child would grow up never knowing a day without Christ—is the work of God, but is not as exciting a tale as the radical transformation of a wayward hopeless sinner doomed for destruction in this world and the next. My story is quite anti-climactic, yet as I reflect on my life to this point I am bewildered at God’s gracious hand of providence lovingly displayed in spite of my repeated sin and shortcomings. It is the knowledge of His grace and mercy at work in me that compels me to give my life to His service and is the basis for this project.

My Back Story

Stringer is a small community located fifteen miles outside of a small town in southeast Mississippi. There are no stop lights, and churches outnumber businesses at least three to one. People know their neighbors and are likely related. There is one educational institution: Stringer Attendance Center, which provides instruction for students from kindergarten through twelfth grade. The community knows nothing of smog, traffic, overcrowding, or any other problem facing cities of the majority world. It

is the kind of place one seeks to raise a family, and I was raised in Stringer from the age of one to eighteen.

Growing up in the country had both good points and bad. There was always plenty of room to run and play, but rarely were there other kids to run and play with. I could enjoy the fresh country air until I had to shovel horse manure out of the stalls in the barn. Our family ate fresh vegetables from our garden, but only after months of weeding, sowing, and tilling the soil. All things considered, my childhood was a positive experience and I would not trade it for another if given the choice.

As far back as I can remember my family was always in church. We attended Good Hope Baptist Church only half a mile from our house until I was about eight years old. My parents then joined Edon Baptist Church where my grandparents had been members for several years. As the younger of two children I enjoyed all the benefits of being the baby of the family. However, I always wanted to be as old as my sister (nearly three years my senior) so that I could do more grownup things.

At the age of nine I communicated to my parents that I wanted to be saved. So they took me to talk to the pastor and the following Sunday morning I walked down the aisle for membership; shortly thereafter on a Sunday night I was baptized. I recall being interviewed in the pastor's office. I cannot remember the exact questions that were asked but I distinctly remember sitting in a big chair surrounded by walls of books and thinking that I did not want to be the only person in my family not in heaven.

Whether I was actually "saved" at that moment I am not able to say; nor do I care to know the exact moment in time that my name was written in the Lamb's Book of Life. But I can say with certainty that I have always felt the peace of God in my life. I have

never been anxious regarding death, hell, or damnation. I do not know what it is like to live life having never solved the problem of life after death. The question was answered for me at an early age and I praise God for His graciousness in that way.

Throughout high school I tried to live a good moral life. My biggest struggle was finding Christian friends. My closest friends were all athletes like myself and few of them were interested in living a life pleasing to God. The result was many weekends spent at home with my family while my friends were out partying and chasing girls. My natural introverted behavior became even more pronounced during this time due to the lack of deep relationships.

By my sophomore year at Jones County Junior College I could no longer bear the struggle alone (humanly speaking—no Christian is ever truly alone). I made a conscious decision to abandon a right way of living for the sake of gaining approval among my peers, the players on my college baseball team. Acceptance, along with the appearance of being cool, became more important to me than my walk with Christ. I made a deal with God that I would only do this for a short period of time then I would allow Him to draw me back to himself. I thought it would make my testimony more interesting.

As I reflect on it now, my arrogance is appalling. To think that I could simply jump into a life of sin and then return to God on my own terms and with no lasting effect on my life is the epitome of pride and selfishness. The truth of course is that sin has consequences, and that is true in my life. By God's grace he did draw me out of my sin, but the result of living apart from Him took many years to repair. The scars of that time are still with me. One of the biggest losses is the time wasted. My years at university

could have been used in preparation for the Lord's service; instead they were a setback that was painfully obvious during my first year of marriage.

The bright spot of my time in college was meeting my future wife, Valerie. It was Valerie who introduced me to Reformed Theology—through the ministry of Reformed University Fellowship (RUF). Valerie and I spent hours discussing theology; I would raise all the expected questions, and she would patiently answer them while pointing me back to Scripture. I began to dig into the Word like never before, searching for answers to my new questions. It was the beginning of my road back to Christ.

Valerie and I married in June following our graduation from Southern Miss in May of 2004. The sanctification that comes with marriage is exactly what I needed. Although it was painful, I faced the reality of my sin—selfishness and pride mainly. The collision of sin discovery and a new hunger for God's Word led me—over the next few years—into a more intimate relationship with my Savior. I began to see and experience Grace in new ways.

If I were to attempt an illustration for this period of my life, it might sound something like this: Imagine that all my life I had eaten only canned food. I knew that I needed food to survive, so I ate. The food was not exciting or fanciful, but at least it kept me alive. One day I discovered a banquet hall of gourmet delicacies. At first I was suspicious of this new food but then I tasted. I was surprised and delighted that eating a meal could be such an enjoyable experience. From that day since I have returned over and over to the banquet hall to dine on the finest foods. I receive not only nourishment but also satisfaction and enjoyment. This is a picture of my discovery of grace.

Prior to the discovery of God's grace in my life I had merely survived on crumbs from His table. As C.S. Lewis said, "We are far too easily pleased." Once I began to devour His Word, the Holy Spirit revealed to me a feast. Having tasted the sweetness of God's grace and knowing His plan for creation, I could never return to the canned food, which says that salvation is merely a way to escape Hell. The joy of salvation is renewed communion with God; as long as I have breath I will praise Him for giving me new life to live with and for Him.

Call to Ministry

Perhaps the most important point of discovery for me during the early years of my marriage was a greater understanding of the Sovereignty of God in all things, or more specifically the implications of God's sovereignty in all of life. I had always believed that God created the world and was in complete control. However, I had not seen God's hand in many other ways such as God working in and through all things to accomplish His plan for the world. I realized that nothing could happen to me that was outside of God's ordained plan.

It was about this time that I read the book *Don't Waste Your Life* by John Piper. Piper reveals the hypocrisy of many Christians who profess Christ as Savior but do not live a life in accordance with that profession. Namely, that if God is who and what we proclaim Him to be, then our lives should not be wasted in the meaninglessness of temporal worldly pleasures. Rather than wasting one's life in worldly pursuits, the Christian should give his life completely to God.

I had already begun to see the emptiness of my professional career, so Dr. Piper's words were like water to a man dying of thirst. I read numerous biographies of

missionaries and other heroes of the faith. I saw verses of Scripture in new ways: Romans 12:1-2 and John 12:24-25 specifically. Through prayer, meditation, and talking with Valerie I began to sense God's call to the mission field in a foreign land. What once seemed an impossible idea slowly became all I could think about.

At Briarwood, our home church, Valerie and I were exposed to missions and missionaries on a regular basis. Even some close friends of ours left with their young family for the mission field. My understanding of God's sovereignty combined with reading biographies made the world much smaller to me. The other side of the world was no longer a concept; it was people who were without knowledge of the love and grace of Christ. I had the knowledge, and if God was willing, I would take it to them.

In 2008 we joined a group from Briarwood for a two-week mission trip to Northern Ireland. We had two personal objectives for the trip: see the sights of Ireland, and explore the possibility of God's call on our lives to long-term missions. The first objective was accomplished quite easily; Ireland is beautiful. The second objective would take longer than two weeks to work out. So the following year we returned to Northern Ireland, and we also traveled to Spain for one week to work in a Christian summer camp called L'Arcada.

While in Spain we quickly realized that camp life was not for us. However, God placed in our hearts a love and concern for the people of Europe. We saw what Jesus was talking about when He said, "They are like sheep without a shepherd." The Church has existed in Europe since Bible times, yet today many European countries claim less than 2% Evangelical Christians. It seems the Church in Europe is more a part of the past than a beacon of hope for the future. We are praying that God will change that.

One of the most obvious problems in a secular society is the breakdown of the family. When people deviate from the plan laid out by God, bad things happen. That is what has happened to the families of Europe. Various statistics (e.g. divorce, abortions, human trafficking, suicide, etc.) prove the point most horrifically. God has blessed Valerie and me with three children—age three and under. By God's grace we will seek to model the Gospel to make known the hope of Christ in Europe. This is a very humbling endeavor.

Call to Bulgaria

From 2008 to 2010 as I worked through discerning God's call for my life I met with several pastors and mentors in the church. All of them offered positive encouragement and feedback so we continued to pursue the call. I enrolled at Birmingham Theological Seminary in January 2011 to prepare for ministry. Also during this time Valerie and I were considering missionary agencies. We decided to contact Mission to the World (overseas sending agency for the Presbyterian Church in America) because we liked the team approach to missions and MTW's doctrinal statement aligns with our beliefs.

The next question to answer was, "Where in the world should we go?" Although we felt an affinity toward Europe, we wanted to be open to wherever the Lord would call us to go. After talking with the MTW recruiter we met with several team leaders based in Europe. In January of 2013 we attended Readiness Evaluation with MTW. This is a week long assessment by the mission agency to determine whether we are good missionary candidates. It was a challenging week physically and spiritually, but we were approved at the end of it.

Following Readiness Evaluation Valerie and I were both convicted that we had not truly opened ourselves to the possibility of serving Christ *wherever* He may call us to be. We had voiced as much in prayer but were not truly committed to it at the heart level. We prayed for forgiveness and for true openness. God seemed to answer immediately. That night we received an email from the MTW director for Africa and Latin America. Over the next few weeks we talked to the Uganda, Africa team at length. We were ready to schedule a vision trip to Uganda; that is when we met Dave Culmer.

Dave was attending the Briarwood Global Ministries Conference; he and I met during the conference and became fast friends. He invited Valerie and me to Bulgaria where he was serving. Initially we were not interested, but after hearing more about the team we saw the meeting as providential. The Bulgaria team had been praying for someone to develop a ministry to university and young families, and that is precisely the type of ministry we felt called to. We took a vision trip to Bulgaria in July and subsequently accepted the invitation to join their team on the field as missionaries.

We feel that God has called us to Bulgaria and to serve alongside the MTW team. Our ministry will be to develop relationships with university students and young families and draw them into the church plant in Mladost (Sofia, Bulgaria). My burden for university students stems from my own experience of shying away from God during my college years. It is such a crucial time of development; I long to share the hope of Christ to those who are looking for answers—as I was.

God's timing is perfect; we believe that our marriage is now strong enough to withstand the blows of missionary life and our kids are at the perfect age to make the transition. If God had allowed us to leave for the mission field when I first asked Him to,

I do not think that we would have lasted very long. Valerie and I have both grown in our faith over the last several years and I now see the arrogance displayed in my own actions. God's sanctification is truly a process. We are trusting God to provide and sustain us on this journey.

Introduction to this Project

Purpose

The purpose of this clinical project is to produce an Orientation Manual for new missionaries to the former communist country of Bulgaria in order to foster personal and spiritual formation necessary for life and ministry overseas. The focus of the project devolved from its beginnings. The original idea was to write a manual that would outline exactly what we would *do* in Bulgaria; now the project manual outlines who we will *be* in Bulgaria. The distinction is subtle yet very important.

Importance

In their book *Psychology of Missionary Adjustment*, Marge Jones and E. Grant Jones name "family problems" as ". . . probably the major reason for missionary attrition."² The authors go on to say, "The most important [step to success as a missionary] seemed to be the missionary's relationship with God, which had been developed before leaving for the field and maintained after arrival."³ This project seeks

² Jones Marge and E. Grant Jones, *Psychology of Missionary Adjustment* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1995), 139.

³ Ibid., 145.

to facilitate the missionary's relationship to God after arrival on the field given its obvious importance.

Hudson Taylor founded The China Inland Mission in the 19th Century. His words provide remarkable insight into the present topic:

Our attention is here drawn to a danger which is preeminently one of this day: the intense activity of our times may lead to zeal in service *to the neglect of personal communion*; but such neglect will not only lessen the value of the service, but tend to incapacitate us for the highest service. If we are watchful over the souls of others, and neglect our own—if we are seeking to remove the motes from our brother's eye, unmindful of the beam in our own, we shall often be disappointed with our powerlessness to help our brethren, while our MASTER will not be less disappointed in us. Let us never forget that what we are is more important than what we do; and that all fruit borne when not abiding in CHRIST must be fruit of the flesh, and not of the SPIRIT. The sin of neglected communion may be forgiven, and yet the effect remain permanently; as wounds when healed often leave a scar behind.⁴

Impact

As Christians we know the importance of a deep relationship with God. For the foreign missionary the stakes are even higher as this seems to be the area that Satan attacks most vigorously. It is my goal with this project to set a standard of personal communion and family worship for myself, my teammates, and future missionaries to Bulgaria that God may be glorified by our lives and that His Church may not be scarred by our sin.

⁴ J. Hudson Taylor, *Union and Communion* (London: The Religious Tract Society, Reprint 1914), Introductory.

CHAPTER II

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

1 Corinthians 9:19-22

For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more. To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some.⁵

First Corinthians was written by the Apostle Paul to the Church at Corinth as a strong letter of exhortation. The believers had fallen into sin and needed to be admonished for their behavior and practices. The first six chapters are a reproof of sin; chapters seven through sixteen offer instruction and answers to their previous questions.⁶ Chapters eight through ten specifically address their question regarding food offered to idols (1 Cor. 8:1). In the midst of his explanation of idols, Paul uses his own ministry as an example of how to approach the problem.

First Corinthians 9 is Paul's defense of his ministry approach, namely, his explanation of giving up his apostolic rights that more people may be won to Christ. Verse nineteen makes a bold assertion: Paul, even though he is a free man, made himself

⁵ Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptural quotations will be from the *New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update* (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

⁶ For a complete outline see: Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1996), 567.

a slave. The *New Bible Dictionary* introduces slavery, “Under the influence of Roman law, a slave is usually considered to be a person (male or female) owned by another, without rights, and—like any other form of personal property—to be used and disposed of in whatever way the owner may wish.”⁷

The Greek ($\delta\sigma\upsilon\lambda\omega\ \dot{\epsilon}\mu\alpha\eta\tau\omega\tilde{\nu}$) shows us that Paul was not forced into this slavery but chose it of his own accord. He gave up his earthly rights, his apostolic rights, and his political rights. What would drive Paul with such eagerness to give up everything to become a slave? He provides the answer no less than six times in these four verses: “so that I may win more.” Paul’s passion for the Gospel was stronger than his desire to “live the good life.” In short, he did not allow worldly pleasures to become idols. Paul provides specific examples of his “slavery” in the verses that follow. He is a slave to Jews, to those under the law, to those without the law, and to the weak.

We can see many examples of Paul living as a slave throughout his ministry. Paul had Timothy circumcised “because of the Jews” (Acts 16:3). We know from the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 that circumcision was not necessary for salvation. Timothy was circumcised because his mother was a Jew, and the Jews (to whom Timothy would minister) would have taken offense if he had not been circumcised. So not for Timothy’s sake, but for the sake of “those under the law” he is circumcised.⁸

The closing verses of 1 Cor. 9 compare the Christian life to that of athletes competing in the games. Paul compares training the body for competition to preparing

⁷ D.R.W. Wood, I. Howard Marshall, *The New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 1110.

⁸ Toussaint, S.D, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. John F. Walvoord and R.B. Zuck (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1985), Vol. 2, p. 398.

the soul for ministry. Competitors must “exercise self-control in all things.” Likewise, Paul disciplines his body and makes it a slave that he may not be disqualified from ministry through sin. *Living* a Gospel life among the people is just as important as *teaching* the Gospel message to the people.

The Bible is full of paradoxes; this passage is an example. As a *slave* of Christ, Paul is *free* to live in the manner that will draw more people to Christ. The popular term for this idea today is contextualization—“showing the whole Bible relevant to the total individual in all his relationships of life.”⁹ Contextualization is simply living in a way that does not contradict the law of Christ *and* does not bring offense to the people. In order to live out the Gospel among Bulgarians, new missionaries must prepare themselves intellectually and spiritually. They must discipline their bodies and exercise self-control as illustrated by the Apostle Paul.

Paul did not shy away from preaching the whole Gospel, but he was careful to live and minister in a way that would not be a stumbling block to others—the weak and unbelievers.¹⁰ Missionaries around the world face the same issue that Paul is addressing. That is, how to live and minister to people from a different culture without becoming a stumbling block. The question becomes “How do I contextualize *method* without compromising *message*? ”

Pastor Gitotis Kantartzis (Pastor of First Greek Evangelical Church, Athens, Greece) answers the question of contextualization by saying that missionaries must know

⁹ Richard W. Engle, "Contextualization in Missions: A Biblical and Theological Appraisal," *Grace Theological Journal* Vol. 4 (Spring 1983): 91.

¹⁰ cf. 1 Cor. 2:2 and 1 Cor. 8:9

the context.¹¹ That is, missionaries must study the country, the language, and the culture of the people to whom they seek to minister. They must also show respect for the customs and traditions when appropriate. We can see this example in Acts 17. Paul goes up to Mars Hill, acknowledges that the people are very religious, he speaks in their language, and quotes their poets. So doing, he gains a hearing with the people by being a slave to those without the law.

Not far from where Paul traveled through Macedonia is the modern day country of Bulgaria (in Paul's time it was called Thrace). In seeking to minister to people in Bulgaria, new missionaries must study the context. The country has a long religious and political history; to ignore this history would be detrimental to any ministry. Dramatic changes have taken place in Bulgaria within the last two decades that greatly affect young people in the country. Protestant missionaries in Bulgaria today face the added challenge of sorting through the bias and misunderstandings attributed to Protestants.

Following the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, Bulgaria experienced “religious freedom” for the first time in decades. According to *Mission Handbook*, no fewer than fourteen Protestant mission agencies arrived in Bulgaria between 1990 and 1998 from the United States and Canada alone.¹² One can imagine the confusion Bulgarians experienced when they had been sheltered from the Church for decades and overnight a plethora of religious options lay before them. Adding to the confusion were the various

¹¹ Gitotis Kantartzis, "Sharing Christ with the Orthodox," speech delivered to PCA Global Missions Conference, November 9, 2013, Greenville, SC.

¹² Dotsey Welliver and Minnette Northcutt, eds., *Mission Handbook: U.S. and Canadian Protestant Ministries Overseas (2004-2006)* (Wheaton: EMIS, 2004), 363.

groups such as Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses as well as other religions like Islam. All the while the Orthodox Church was calling Bulgarians back to the “true Church.”

Margarita Todorova describes the situation in Bulgaria following communism:

Few Bulgarians were aware of the missionaries' activities prior to WW2. In the few articles concerning their work, their activities were always portrayed as purposeful attempts of infiltrating American influence and interests to the detriment of the Bulgarian people. With the closing of the foreign schools the missionaries were left with no other option but to leave. Missionary work during Communism could only occur within the context of Christian literature and material relief smuggled in from abroad.

The first missionaries to visit Bulgaria after the falling of the Iron Curtain were the representatives of various cults who took advantage of the spiritual vacuum and people's ignorance. Quickly they found followers not only among the searching atheists but also among some believers. And since they all declared to be Evangelical Christians, the Protestant Churches were under constant attack by the Orthodox Church, nationalistic groups, local authorities, the media and ordinary citizens. The damage caused by the cults made it difficult for real Christian missionaries to obtain visas and work permits.¹³

The Orthodox Church has a long history in the country as the “official” and “state” Church; Bulgarians associate being Orthodox with being Bulgarian.¹⁴ The government of Bulgaria makes life difficult for protestant congregations even after communism. Persecution comes in the form of denying building permits, prosecuting Church leaders as imposters, and passing laws favoring traditional faiths.¹⁵

His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (Archbishop of Constantinople) provides the following summary of the Orthodox Church:

¹³ Margarita Todorova, *The Effect of Communism on the Work of the Protestant Churches in Bulgaria* (PhD diss., George Fox University, Newberg, OR, 2011), 11; secondary source: *Vestiteli na Istinata, Bulgarsko Bibleisko*, ed. Kulichev, H (Druzhestvo: OOD, 1994), 407-412.

¹⁴ Gitotis Kantartzis, "Sharing Christ with the Orthodox," speech delivered to PCA Global Missions Conference, November 9, 2013, Greenville, SC.

¹⁵ Felix Corley, "Religious Trends In Southeastern Europe," *East & West Church Ministry Report*, 2008, <http://www.eastwestreport.org/40-e-19-3/321-religious-trends-in-southeastern-europe/> (accessed November 13, 2013).

The Orthodox Church numbers some 300 million people worldwide. Geographically, its primary area of distribution lies along the coast of the (northeastern) Mediterranean, in Eastern and Northern Europe, and in the Middle East. Composed of several self-governing or Patriarchal churches, it constitutes a form of international federation within which each local church retains its independence while remaining committed to unity in faith and worship.¹⁶

The Orthodox Church does not have a Papal leader like the Roman Catholic Church. The Ecumenical Patriarch is considered the “first among equals” asserting authority through coordination rather than administration.¹⁷ Daniel Clendenin spent four years in Moscow as a visiting professor. He offers, “The so-called Eastern Orthodox Church is actually not one but thirteen ‘autocephalous’ or independent, self-governing churches. . . . The first four enjoy special honor due to their antiquity.”¹⁸ The thirteen autocephalous churches are: Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Russia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Cyprus, Greece, Poland, and Albania.

The Orthodox Church claims (as does the Roman Catholic Church) to be the true Church tracing its founding to Pentecost.¹⁹ The Christian Church grew throughout the Roman Empire and beyond for centuries. However, unity could not be maintained. Perhaps the first source of division arising within the Church was language. The Western portion of the empire spoke Latin, while the Eastern portion spoke mainly Greek.²⁰ This

¹⁶ Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew, *Encountering the Mystery: Understanding Orthodox Christianity Today* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 1.

¹⁷ Ibid., 2.

¹⁸ Daniel B. Clendenin, "Why I'm Not Orthodox," *Christianity Today*, January 6, 1997, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1997/january6/7t1032.html?paging=off/> (accessed November 15, 2013).

¹⁹ Katherine Clark, *The Orthodox Church* (London: Kuperard, 2009), 26.

²⁰ Thomas E. Fitzgerald, *The Orthodox Church* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995), 4.

fact, if nothing else, should prove the importance of language to missionaries. In many countries language is associated with national identity.

Many factors contributed to the growing split between east and west. The larger points of contention include: Pepin's land donation in central Italy which led to the Pope fixing attention more on the West, Charlemagne (son of Pepin) "formally crowned Holy Roman Emperor" by Pope Leo III, Augustine's argument that the Holy Spirit proceeded from "both the Father and the Son," and a controversy over the dating of Easter.²¹ All of the geographical, doctrinal, and liturgical differences collided in the year 1054.

The Great Schism is recognized as the lethal blow to unity between East and West. Clendenin explains,

On June 16, 1054, Pope Leo IX's legate, Cardinal Humbert, delivered a Bull of Excommunication to the Orthodox Patriarch Michael Cerularius on the altar of the Church of the Holy Wisdom at Constantinople while the patriarch prepared to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, condemning him and his court. Without waiting for a response, Humbert exited the church and declared, "Let God look and judge." He promptly left Constantinople.²²

Following this event all hopes of reconciliation were dashed. The Orthodox Church was firmly established as distinct from the Roman Catholic Church. Both East and West endured many hardships in subsequent years including the Crusades, the rise and spread of Islam (Bulgaria was occupied by the Ottomans for 500 years until the late nineteenth century), two world wars, Nazism, and Communism. The Orthodox Church, remarkably, has maintained its doctrine and liturgy very much the same for 1,000 years without experiencing another major split (such as the Protestant Reformation).

²¹ James P. Eckman, *The Truth About Worldviews* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004), 108. Electronic Version: Logos Bible Software.

²² Daniel B. Clendenin, "Why I'm Not Orthodox," *Christianity Today*, January 6, 1997, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1997/january6/7t1032.html?paging=off/> (accessed November 15, 2013).

Despite its longevity, the Orthodox Church faces tremendous challenges. One Orthodox Priest identifies three major issues facing the Church: secularism, nationalism, and nominalism.²³ The first two threats are external and the third (and most important) is internal. Secularism describes the loss of catholicity and movement toward atheistic thinking and practices. People think and act more like the world than like Jesus.

A recent interview with a missionary to Bulgaria confirmed the problem of secularism especially among young people. The missionary estimates that 95% of young people in Bulgaria are practically atheist or agnostic.²⁴ Young people are not taking their cues from the Church but from the broader culture. A Bulgarian Christian agreed, adding young Bulgarians are more interested in alcohol, drugs, money, and sex rather than spiritual things.²⁵

Nationalism has long been a part of the Orthodox Church. As noted above, the thirteen churches are separated by country. Father Andrew contends that nationalism produces a petty ethnic religion leading to isolation. Nationalism is not sustainable; succeeding generations cannot bear the weight placed on them by their fathers. Therefore, they reject the church outright opting for an easier road of secularism.

Father Andrew also describes the problem of nominalism:

Despite the external irritants of Secularism and petty Nationalism – and not only Greek – the real enemy of the Church is internal. It is called Nominalism. This is the spirit that decides that membership of the Church is defined as three visits to church per lifetime, for baptism, marriage and funeral. This is the spirit that decides

²³ Father Andrew, "The Struggle For Orthodoxy: Secularism, Nationalism And Nominalism," *Orthodox England*, October 23, 2013, [http://www.events.orthodoxengland.org.uk/the-struggle-for-holy-orthodoxy-secularism-nationalism-and-nominalism//](http://www.events.orthodoxengland.org.uk/the-struggle-for-holy-orthodoxy-secularism-nationalism-and-nominalism/) (accessed November 21, 2013).

²⁴ Personal interview conducted with an American missionary living in Sofia, Bulgaria (October 5, 2013).

²⁵ Personal interview conducted with a Bulgarian Christian (November 9, 2013).

that membership of the Church is defined as a fifteen-minute visit on Easter Night. This is the spirit that decides that membership of the Church is defined as a thirty-minute visit once a month to ‘listen to the choir’.²⁶

This consumerist approach to church is not only an Orthodox problem it can be seen throughout the world. Indeed the Church in America faces a similar problem. Affluence and globalization are generally credited with contributing to the rise of nominalism. The Church must recognize these societal trends and adjust its approach – like Paul – to remain relevant.

Given the long and storied history of Bulgaria, it is vitally important for missionaries to study and understand the context. Following Paul’s model of becoming a slave so that more people may be won to Christ is the biblical model for foreign missions. Those seeking to minister to young people must not assume that children think and believe as their parents do. Advances in technology as well as political changes (Bulgaria joined the European Union in 2007) are rapidly transforming the country.

A humble spirit and a willingness to live as a slave are necessary to show the love and hope of Christ. Despite outward changes, man’s ultimate problem is still a heart issue. Presenting the mystery of the Gospel (a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles) is still the means by which God draws people to himself. Finding creative ways to present the Gospel in order to avoid offense allows people to “hear” the message clearly. Living out the Gospel in a disciplined way will bring credibility to the missionary and his message. Both teaching and living the Gospel were part of Paul’s method to make disciples of all nations. These principles are as applicable in Bulgaria

²⁶ Father Andrew, "The Struggle For Orthodoxy: Secularism, Nationalism And Nominalism," *Orthodox England*, October 23, 2013, [http://www.events.orthodoxengland.org.uk/the-struggle-for-holy-orthodoxy-secularism-nationalism-and-nominalism//](http://www.events.orthodoxengland.org.uk/the-struggle-for-holy-orthodoxy-secularism-nationalism-and-nominalism/) (accessed November 21, 2013).

today as they were in Corinth during the first century. The remainder of this project will be aimed at developing missionaries who will *live* the Gospel well.

CHAPTER III

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

One Caveat

The pride in my sinful heart tries to convince me that my plans and ideas are far superior to others' plans. If I were to listen, then I would attempt to implement this project at all costs and against any advice to the contrary. However, by God's grace, I have learned to listen to wise counsel when attempting such a feat. It is important to spend time observing processes and understanding why things are done a certain way prior to making changes. Given my lack of experience in Bulgaria it would be arrogant to think that this project will be exactly what is needed there. The following story illustrates the point.

My first professional job out of college was as a Management Trainee in Tuscaloosa, AL, with a company called Cintas Corporation, a work apparel provider and industrial laundry. As a Management Trainee I was given various projects to work on. One such project was in the stockroom where the inventory was kept. My assignment was to review the order fulfillment process and find ways to make it more efficient and seamless in an effort to reduce time and expense. One problem came to my attention rather quickly.

Our plant in Tuscaloosa also filled orders for the Cintas location in Montgomery, AL. The orders from Montgomery came to us on Garment Request Forms (GRFs). On

any given day we would receive around one hundred GRFs from Montgomery. We would use each GRF to fill the order then send it to their location within the week. The customer service manager in Montgomery began to complain that she was not consistently receiving back a copy of the original GRF. She needed the form to double check each order for accuracy before delivering it to the customer.

I immediately set to work on the problem, which seemed quite simple. I observed the process of order fulfillment from start to finish following the path of the GRF. I quickly noticed an obvious solution to the problem. Joyce was the stockroom worker in charge of finding emblems to go on the uniform shirts. She would use the GRF to determine the type of emblem to go on each shirt then pull them out of inventory to place with the order. The GRF was a three-part form, that is, there were three carbon copies of each form.

Joyce would use the original white copy to fill the emblem order and keep it for her file. She would then separate the yellow and pink copies from the white. She sent the yellow copy along with the shirt, and placed the pink copy in the trash bin. I asked Joyce why she threw away the pink copy and she said it was not needed. I suggested that she send the pink copies to the customer service manager in Montgomery. Immediately a light came on in her head. She saw that as the answer to the problem. It took a little while for Joyce to get used to the new process, but it worked quite flawlessly and everyone was happy.

One of the lessons I learned from this experience was to not make changes before observing the current processes and procedures. There were many stories of Management Trainees making changes with disastrous results. Many of these could have

been avoided if the trainee had taken time to observe the process and ask questions about why things were done a certain way.

One caveat to the implementation of this clinical project is that I do not yet have on field experience. I have not been able to observe the current processes and ask questions. My learning, to this point, is purely intellectual and not practical. I am aware of this problem so I approach the project with humility and caution trusting God to guide the project. The problems I attempt to solve through the implementation of the Orientation Manual all stem from reading books and interviewing missionaries. In addition, the manual is written from a male perspective; most principles are applicable to females but may not be sensitive to all issues faced by missionary women. Nevertheless, I believe strongly that the findings are accurate and that the manual will be beneficial.

Scope of the Project

Upon receiving a missionary call, many Christ-followers become caught up in the Spirit-filled moment—as well they should—and commit to forsake all and take up their cross to some unknown land. We might call such people *enthusiastic beginners*. The young missionary lands on the field and is excited to launch into ministry and save the heathen people. But after a few months he notices that some team members are not pulling their weight, the people are not responsive to the Gospel, and he cannot even manage to buy groceries from the local supermarket without assistance. The missionary enters the *disillusioned learner* phase—reality has set in.

What should he do? Does he address performance issues with the team leader? Does he stand on the street corner proclaiming the Gospel to any who will listen? Does he pack his bags and go home where things are “normal?” The goal of this clinical

project is to bring the missionary through the *disillusioned learner* phase to become a *peak performer*—a Spirit-filled missionary prepared to fight the good fight even in the most difficult circumstances. The orientation manual is designed to provide intellectual and spiritual guidance through the learning process by implementing daily habits of study, devotion, and work and by teaching the missionary to learn and appreciate the country and culture in which he or she now lives.

The orientation manual is not meant to be an encyclopedia of missionary knowledge. It does not encapsulate everything a person needs to know to live and minister in a foreign land (there are plenty of books on that topic already in print). Of course there are many things a missionary needs to do to prepare for service overseas, not the least of which is spiritual maturity, but this project is specifically designed to provide new missionaries with only a six month road map. The manual provides enough resources and guidance to propel the missionary “over the hump” of disillusionment and into fruitful ministry service.

Reason for the Project

The Need

Before elaborating further on the proposed solution, we should first consider the problem. Here we will look at the need for missionaries in the country of Bulgaria and the need for an orientation manual to new missionaries. Christianity has been in Bulgaria for more than one thousand years, and it became the official religion in the ninth

century.²⁷ According to Operation World, Bulgaria is 80% Christian.²⁸ Given the long history of the Church in Bulgaria one might be tempted to question the need for outside missionaries in this country. However, reading further we see that nominalism is rampant within the Orthodox Church, the Church is having little impact on society, and Evangelicals make up less than 2% of the overall population.²⁹

Moreover, younger generations are abandoning the Christian faith for secularism and materialism, globalization is erasing Bulgarian culture, and young people (age 15-29) are fleeing the country for Western Europe and America in pursuit of a better life.³⁰ Immense challenges face the Church of Jesus Christ as it seeks to reach young people. It is widely held that young people today have more in common with people their own age around the world than they do with older people in their own country.³¹ Given these challenges, it is clear that outside help is needed in Bulgaria to help revitalize the Church within the country and to provide guidance for reaching young people.

Having outlined the need for missionaries in Bulgaria, let us take a closer look at the need for spiritual orientation among missionaries. While the problem of missionary attrition cannot be solved with one tool, the causes of missionaries leaving the field

²⁷ Erwin Fahlbusch and Geoffrey William Bromiley, *Vol 1: The Encyclopedia of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI; Leiden, Netherlands: Wm. B. Eerdmans; Brill, 1999-2003), 308.

²⁸ *Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide To Every Nation*, "The Republic Of Bulgaria," <http://www.operationworld.org/bulg/> (accessed November 13, 2013).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ For more on globalization and its effect on Christianity see Chapter 15 of Stan Guthrie, *Missions in the Third Millennium: 21 Key Trends for the 21st Century* (Crownhill, Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster Press, 2000).

³¹ For more information on European youth culture see *Eurostat*, "Youth In Europe," http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Youth_in_Europe/ (accessed November 13, 2013).

should be examined. It is common knowledge of any missionary team that when certain team members abandon the field they leave a gaping hole in the ministry work. The spiritual and financial costs of missionaries leaving the field are enormous, so it is important that we take steps to avoid attrition when possible.

Sung-Sam Kang served as Executive Missions Director of the Presbyterian Church in Korea; he has also served as a pastor, a missionary to Nigeria, and a professor of Missiology. Kang observes that more than 36% of missionary attrition may be attributed to factors relating to the missionaries' spiritual life.³² These spiritual factors, when taken together, represent the largest cause of "preventable" missionary attrition. Kang offers the following exhortation to mission leaders:

Supervision of missionaries' spiritual life is vital, because spiritual life tends to effect emotional well-being. A broken spiritual life will likely cause family conflicts and relational problems, and it may eventually lead to an immoral lifestyle. Ministry is also affected. In fact, there is a direct link between ministry success and spiritual life. Ultimately, a missionary whose spiritual life has deteriorated becomes ineffectual on the mission field.³³

The need for spiritual discipline is compounded with younger generation missionaries (also called "busters"). Kath Donovan and Ruth Myors find, "The average booster missionary was quite disciplined about the daily quiet time ("no Bible, no breakfast"). In contrast, missionaries of the new breed find it difficult to discipline themselves to a regular time. The busters in particular cry out for help in disciplining themselves and maintaining their devotional lives. Spiritual mentors and times of retreat

³² Kang, Sung-Sam, *Too Valuable To Lose: Exploring the Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition*, ed. William D. Taylor (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1997), 252.

³³ Ibid.

are therefore especially needed for them.”³⁴ Donovan and Myors point to the need for new missionaries to have devotional accountability as well as times of emotional refreshment.

A spiritual development orientation manual, along with mentoring from team leaders, is an effective way to provide the needed structural support for these younger missionaries as well as a means to celebrate milestones of achievement by setting realistic goals. The authors also highlight the need for on-field orientation in addition to pre-field seminars.

Attendees at missionary orientation courses often seem unable to hear much of what is taught in lectures. Comments such as, “It’s mostly common sense,” or, “They all seem to be repeating themselves,” are very common. However, on the first leave there is often the cry, “We should have been told such and such” about something that had been stressed repeatedly, confirming the suspicion that people who are excitedly preparing for work overseas cannot hear about missionary stress, the cost of adjustment, etc.³⁵

Donovan and Myors suggest “experiential and competency-based learning” for young missionaries. Younger generations value hands-on learning as opposed to formal classroom lectures. They need to “see” the problems and encounter them firsthand before forming conclusions on how to address them. The young missionary is likely to pay attention to training on adjusting to culture shock, for example, once she has experienced it for herself. This approach is not a sink-or-swim test. Rather, the missionary is allowed to wade into the deep water while being guided by an experienced mentor. This way the missionary is allowed to *experience* what she is learning.

³⁴ Donovan, Kath and Ruth Myors, *Too Valuable To Lose: Exploring the Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition*, ed. William D. Taylor (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1997), 48.

³⁵ Donovan, Kath and Ruth Myors, *Too Valuable To Lose: Exploring the Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition*, ed. William D. Taylor (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1997), 58.

The orientation manual is designed to facilitate spiritual growth while on the mission field—the importance of which is outlined by Kang in the above quote. It also sets the stage for experiential and competency-based learning through the completion of Mentoring Modules. These modules are arranged in a way that allows the missionary to grow systematically within the new culture. The modules facilitate experiential learning in a mentored controlled (relatively speaking) environment. Through the use of the manual the missionary will grow to love and appreciate his new home and working environment. The mentor will have the opportunity to set clear goals and expectations which allows for accountability and feedback.

Hopeful Results

There are many things I would like to accomplish through this project but a few items are of first importance: I would like to develop (in myself and others) personal and spiritual formation, promote team unity, and foster team preservation. These three goals maintain a natural progression from one to the next. If each team member is continually growing spiritually, then the team will be unified in seeking God's will. When all team members are growing spiritually and seeking unity, team members are less likely to leave the field, therefore, preserving the team and God's work.

A spiritually mature, unified, preserved mission team will be one that lives by grace. As we more fully understand the magnitude of grace given to us by Christ, we are able to extend grace to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Grace must permeate the team. When grace is absent, selfishness is present. Each team member goes about his work only to glorify himself. We must not become so consumed by the busyness of "work" that we forget the real work of ministry. Therefore, the unity and preservation of the

team—for the furthering of God’s Kingdom—to the glory of God is the desired result of this project.

Design of the Project

We turn now to the design of the manual. In this section the content and order of the manual will be explained and defended. First it must be made clear that the manual is only a guide—that is, it is only useful as a tool. The missionary must commit to using the tool if any value is to be gained from it. A primary condition of using the manual is that the team leader (or someone of similar experience and wisdom) will mentor the new missionary providing guidance and accountability. But ultimately it falls on the missionary to be serious about drawing closer to God and pleasing Him with fruitful service.

The manual covers the first six months of the new missionary’s time on the field. Two questions are obvious regarding this sentence: “Why six months?” and “Why start after the missionary arrives and not before?” The short answer to the first question is that six months coincides with the amount of time the new missionary will spend in dedicated language school upon arrival. When my wife and I arrive in Bulgaria we will have a language tutor for the first six months; we will not engage in ministry until we have this foundation. So the manual will carry us (and other missionaries) through this time.

Regarding the second question, I decided to limit the scope of the project to after arrival and not before. The primary reason for this decision was the change in dynamics which occurs after arrival. The secondary reason was outlined in the above evidence: many candidates do not “hear” the instructions given in pre-field orientation. Therefore, I found it important to attack the issues of culture shock, acceptance on the team, and

spiritual development immediately upon arrival. This manual provides the team leader with a tool to ensure that new missionaries to the team feel welcomed and cared for as soon as they set foot in the country—both are important for the missionary’s long-term success.

Each month of the manual has a topic of focus. The topics are as follows:

- Month 1: Spiritual Formation
- Month 2: Importance of Context
- Month 3: Gaining Historical Perspective
- Month 4: Engaging the Culture
- Month 5: God’s Mission
- Month 6: Team Ministry

The topics were each chosen to provide specific instruction. Similarly the order in which they are arranged is meant to be a progression of training. Each month builds on the previous one. The reasoning behind the topics and the order will be explained in the following sections.

Spiritual Formation

The first topic of focus is Spiritual Formation. The objectives and activities for this month lay the foundation for the missionary’s field tenure. Lord willing, the missionary will be serving in the field for many years to come. Therefore, the importance of these formative weeks cannot be overstated. New missionaries may come to the field with an assortment of differing ideas on what they will face upon arrival. Whatever views they may have on the country or the work of ministry one thing should remain constant: prayer and devotion grounded in the Word of God.

The objectives for the first month are:

- Establish daily/weekly personal prayer times
- Plan for daily personal devotional time (and family worship if applicable)
- Meet with mentor for orientation and goal-setting
- Complete assigned mentoring modules
- Read *Pray With Your Eyes Open* and discuss with mentor
- Begin language acquisition (if applicable)

As you can see, these objectives set the standard for building habits of prayer, study, and personal and family devotion. Due to the chaotic nature of starting a whole new life on the mission field many missionaries fail to reestablish healthy habits they may have had back at home. Some missionaries may want to dive right into the work of ministry forsaking themselves and their family. The first month of this manual allows the missionary the freedom to spend time thinking about the “big rocks” of ministry, namely, personal ministry must take precedence over the business of work.

This first month is also important to lay the groundwork for the mentor/mentee relationship. The new missionary needs to understand that it is ok to struggle with the pressures of missionary life—it is ok to have doubts. Voicing fears and repenting of sin will bring restoration and spiritual growth to the missionary. Another priority for the first month is establishing relationships with teammates. Activities such as sharing a meal with a teammate or interviewing a teammate to gain understanding on a certain topic are built into the manual to force the missionary to know and understand everyone on the team. Many disagreements can be avoided all together when people are communicating.

Each month the missionary will read a chosen book and discuss with his mentor. The book chosen for Month 1 is *Pray With Your Eyes Open* by Dr. Richard Pratt. This is an easy-to-read and practical book on prayer. The book is meant to supplement establishing patterns of prayer and study for the new missionary. As with any of the books and readings provided in the manual, the team leader may replace the chosen book with another or scrap it altogether if he feels it unnecessary.

The two mentoring modules for the first month are “Shopping and Markets” and “Street Smarts.” These modules were designed by the Global Training and Development department at Mission to the World and are used by permission for this project. All of the modules are designed to help the missionary become acclimated with her new culture. The first two modules deal with the basics of living in a new place. They force the missionary out of her home and into the community to learn about her new surroundings. This is the best medicine for overcoming fear and culture shock.

The final objective for the first month is to begin language acquisition. This will likely involve working with a language tutor four or five days a week and will take up the majority of the missionary’s time for the first six months. Learning the language is the first prerequisite to understanding the culture and communicating with Bulgarians at a heart level. So the first month of the manual essentially lays the groundwork for the future. The second month teaches the importance of understanding context.

Importance of Context

Having given the missionary an opportunity to place the big rocks in the jar first (prioritize prayer and the Word), the second month turns to understanding this foreign culture in which he now finds himself. The missionary has now lived in the new country

for several weeks and has likely noticed many differences from his home country. Perhaps he has run out of the toothpaste or aftershave he brought with him on the plane and realized that he cannot find his brand in this country. This and countless other instances can lead to frustration with the new culture. That is why the second month of the manual gives the missionary the chance to reflect on *why* the culture is different.

Cultural difference can be frustrating but they can also be fascinating. Studying, for example, why Bulgarians do not like a cross-breeze inside their homes is interesting. The goal is to show the missionary that there are many amoral differences within cultures. That is, there are many things that are neither right nor wrong just different. We can either choose to embrace those differences and live in harmony with our new culture, or we can choose to reject them as foolish and become bitter towards the country and people.

Duane Elmer does an excellent job of explaining the previous scenario in his book, *Cross-Cultural Connections*. It is the recommended reading for Month 2 of the orientation manual. Here are the objectives for Month 2:

- Learn how to L.O.V.E. Bulgaria
- Three R's
- Three A's
- Acknowledge the differences in Bulgarian culture and seek understanding
- Read *Cross Cultural Connections*

The objectives for this month are not time consuming. It is expected that the missionary will be quite busy with other activities during this time so we do not want to overburden him. The goal here is to have the missionary reflect on his experiences thus

far. So he is asked to spend time meditating—on Scripture, prayers, and cultural experiences—and journaling. This exercise will hopefully bring to the surface any bitterness toward the culture that the missionary may be harboring within his heart.

The book choice for this month should prompt conversations with fellow missionaries. Elmer’s knowledge and personal experience with crossing cultures provides great insight to the new missionary. If nothing else, just acknowledging that differences exist can be healing for a struggling missionary. Ideally the missionary will embark on a journey of discovery during this time—a mission to uncover the hidden secrets of the Bulgarian culture.

The mentoring modules for Month 2 are “Personal Disciplines” and “Day Trip.” The first module reinforces the habits established in the first month and the second module gives the missionary an opportunity to enjoy Bulgaria as a national. One provides internal examination and the other provides external perspective. Part of gaining perspective is learning about the history of Bulgaria. That is where we take the missionary in Month 3.

Gaining Historical Perspective

Month 3 begins with “A Brief History of Bulgaria” by Tim Lambert. More detailed volumes of Bulgaria’s history may be found but few people can be expected to undergo such an in depth study. This brief survey will provide missionaries with a backdrop for future study. Bulgaria’s geographical location (between Europe and Asia) lends itself to instability. Political instability flows down to material uncertainty for Bulgarians, which forms the basis of their worldview—hopelessness.

Missionaries from the Western world do not (generally speaking) struggle with hopelessness, nor can they imagine a scenario in which a person is not able to “pull themselves up by the bootstraps.” To appreciate the depth of this hopelessness one needs to understand centuries of oppression placed on the necks of the Bulgarian people. Bulgarians do not expect anything for free (such as the free gift of salvation) and are therefore suspect of anyone who wants to “help” expecting nothing in return.

The objectives for Month 3 are:

- Learn and appreciate the volatile history of Bulgaria
- Seek understanding in how Bulgaria’s past shapes its people
- Find the hand of God working in Bulgaria through several centuries
- Learn the history of the Church in Bulgaria
- Read *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective* (or a similar book approved by team leader)

Learning the country’s history is the next logical step in understanding the broader culture. Studying the history of Bulgaria will also provide insight into the various subcultures within the country. The missionary may learn about the large Muslim population—a remnant of the Ottoman Empire which ruled Bulgaria for 500 years. These Turks were severely persecuted under communism. So rather than just feeling sorry for their poverty living conditions, the missionary can understand how to better show love to the unloved.

A large part of the history of Bulgaria is the Orthodox Church. The missionary is asked to read the book *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective*. Bulgarians consider being Orthodox as part of their national identity. Learning the

history of the Orthodox Church and its influence in Bulgaria in particular will provide valuable insight to the missionary.

The exercises for this month include visiting cathedrals, museums, and other historically significant sights (of which there are plenty in Bulgaria). The mentoring modules for Month 3 are “Important Historical Figures” and “Religious Practices.” The first module asks the missionary to interview nationals about certain important Bulgarian figures. This exercise encourages interaction with Bulgarian people and allows the missionary to see how the national pride that Bulgarians hold for their country. The second module asks the missionary to attend a religious service and record her thoughts.

Engaging the Culture

Any missionary will tell you that learning the culture is ongoing—you never stop learning new things. In fact it is nearly impossible for a foreigner to any country to think like a local. But just as Christians are to strive for unattainable earthly perfection, the missionary should strive for “local” cultural understanding. Month 4 of the orientation manual brings the new missionary face to face with the Bulgarian culture. Through interviews, readings, and outings the missionary is forced to experience life outside his safe “bubble.”

The objectives for Month 4 are:

- Learn and appreciate the storied culture of Bulgaria
- Seek understanding of how Bulgaria’s culture shapes its people
- “See” the world with a Bulgarian worldview
- Attend a cultural event such as a folk festival
- Become familiar with the “old wives’ tales” and folk beliefs/sayings

➤ Read *God is the Gospel*

There are many levels to culture. One level is the historical/folk culture which many countries only celebrate but no longer practice. Another level is the day to day or life culture. The missionary should become familiar with all levels of culture because they all weave together to form the tapestry of the country. Having lived in Bulgaria for several months the new missionary has experienced enough of the culture to begin to dig deeper. She has seen the differences on the surface; now she must discover *why* there are differences.

The objectives for this month will require more time spent out among the people than previous months. The exercises should be enjoyable to the missionary; Bulgaria is a beautiful country to explore and the people can be warm and inviting. The mentoring modules for this month are “Become a Fan” and “Holidays.” The first module asks the missionary to learn about popular sports teams in the country, to interview Bulgarians about those teams, then to pick one team and become a fan. This exercise is designed to encourage interaction with Bulgarians and to help the missionary understand the people.

The book for this month is *God is the Gospel*. While this book falls in the “culture” month, it is not a book about culture—as you may surmise from the title. This book was chosen for spiritual development. At this point the missionary may be going through depression or disillusionment having been on the field for four months. He may be feeling overwhelmed or even helpless to make a difference. This book reminds us of the primacy of communion with God. The work of ministry is not possible separate from God. We go to bring God to the people. We must always wave His banner high.

God's Mission

Month 5 is meant to be another month for personal study and reflection. Last month the missionary was asked to get out and meet people and experience Bulgaria. This month the missionary is encouraged to dig into Scripture to compare his mission plan with God's mission plan. Sometimes in ministry we lose track of the mission (Missio Dei). We pursue rabbit trails of self interest falsely thinking that it is God's will. We must always come back to Scripture and keep God's mission at the forefront.

The book for this month is Paul David Tripp's *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*. The book is to be used in conjunction with several passages of Scripture for personal study as well as meeting with the mentor for feedback and ideas. The missionary will also meet with her accountability partner for wisdom and insight. The missionary is drawing near the end of her orientation period and preparing to plunge full time into ministry work. Before she begins, she must understand the importance following God's plan rather than her own.

The objectives for Month 5 are:

- Study the biblical approach to missions
- Allow God to guide you in the work He has for you
- Identify your weaknesses in ministry
- Begin to see where God has worked and is working
- Further develop your Bible study habits
- Read *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*

The mentoring modules for this month are "History of MTW in the Country" and "Team Vision, Values, and Goals." These modules segue into the final month of orientation in which the missionary will learn more about the MTW team in Bulgaria.

These modules ask the missionary to learn about MTW's work in Bulgaria outlining significant events along the way. The missionary will learn about the team's specific mission and the reason for being in the country. This information will be important as she begins to form her own plan for ministry.

Team Ministry

The objectives for Month 6 are:

- Become familiar with MTW-Bulgaria
- Begin to determine the focus of your work in the ministry
- Practice your language skills
- Read *Total Church*

The main goal this month is to familiarize the missionary with all of the ministries of MTW-Bulgaria. Once the missionary understand how the various ministries work, he can begin to understand his own role and how it ties into the team's overall plan. It is likely that after six months the missionary's initial plans for ministry have changed. Perhaps God has presented a new opportunity for work or resources dictate a new course of action. This month should be spent reviewing the initial plan and making changes when appropriate.

The book reading for this month is *Total Church*. This book is recommended by the team leader and is one that all team members are asked to read because it serves as a loose model for the ministry in Bulgaria (in principle). The mentoring modules for this month are "Team Time Line" and "Team Culture." Both modules provide further insight into team history and makeup allowing the missionary to see God working through the team.

Implementation of the Project

Participants

This section will outline the “who” involved in the implementation and use of the orientation manual. The first step of implementation will be approval of the manual by the Global Training & Development department at Mission to the World. This department oversees the spiritual life of MTW missionaries and designs programs to enhance spiritual health. Given the experience of this department and the use of their material in this manual they will need to give the “OK” to move forward.

Secondly the team leader in Bulgaria will be given the manual for his insight. Responsibility ultimately falls on his shoulders to use this tool with his team—in part or in full. Thirdly my teammates in Bulgaria will be given the opportunity to provide their input on the document. Finally, my wife and I will be the first new missionaries to use the manual. We will pilot test the manual and provide feedback to the team leader to determine whether it should be used for future missionaries. Adjustments may be made to the manual as needed.

Presentation of the Manual

The manual should be presented to the new missionary within the first week after arriving on the field. Ideally it will be given as part of a larger orientation by the team leader. The team leader will explain that the manual is not an exhaustive guide to everything the missionary will be doing, but that the manual should be followed as closely as possible.

Use of the Manual

The orientation manual is written to the new missionary directly. The instructions are meant to be self-explanatory so that the team leader acts as a mentor and sounding board and not a director—telling the missionary every step along the way. The missionary takes the manual, follows the instructions, and then returns to the team leader periodically (as determined by the team leader) for follow-up. The missionary can always reach out to the team leader for assistance if needed. However, the missionary must bear responsibility for his/her own spiritual health while on the field. The manual is provided as a resource for instruction and accountability.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

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CHAPTER V

PROJECT TRANSFERABILITY

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APPENDIX A

ORIENTATION MANUAL FOR NEW MISSIONARIES TO BULGARIA

Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to prepare the new missionary to Bulgaria for fruitful ministry by developing habits of personal devotion and appreciation for Bulgarian culture. The manual is a guide to be used during the first six months on the field. It is most effective when presented by an experienced mentor who is able to walk the young missionary through the exercises and provide wisdom and accountability. The information and exercises in the manual will facilitate personal and spiritual formation and introduce the missionary to the Bulgarian culture equipping the missionary for long-term service in a team environment.

As you begin this training period, remember that it is a six month process of orientation—just to begin to familiarize yourself with life and ministry in Bulgaria. Pace yourself. This is a marathon not a sprint; finish well. These first few months you will need to build the foundation on which you will stand for years to come. You may not progress through your goals as quickly as you would like, but keep your focus on the reason you are here. There may be times of frustration or sadness; that is why you are using this manual as a guide—to keep you grounded in the midst of chaos.

How to Use this Manual

The manual is separated into six broad segments each with its own topic and each devoted to one month of your time. Each month begins with a set of objectives that are to be accomplished during that month. The months are then separated into four weekly sections that define specifically what you are to do each week. The manual is only a guide—that is, it is only useful as a tool. The missionary must commit to using the tool if any value is to be gained from it. Follow the instructions and seek accountability from peers and mentors to ensure that you extract maximum benefit from this resource.

Month 1 – Spiritual Formation

Our attention is here drawn to a danger which is preeminently one of this day: the intense activity of our times may lead to zeal in service *to the neglect of personal communion*; but such neglect will not only lessen the value of the service, but tend to incapacitate us for the highest service.

— Hudson Taylor

Objectives

- Establish daily/weekly personal prayer times
- Plan for daily personal devotional time (and family worship if applicable)
- Meet with mentor for orientation and goal-setting
- Complete assigned mentoring modules
- Read *Pray With Your Eyes Open* and discuss with mentor
- Begin language acquisition (if applicable)

Week 1

1. Spend an hour this week thinking through your weekly schedule. Consult with your team leader and other team members to find out what their schedules involve.

2. As part of creating your schedule, plan time each day for prayer and devotion.

You are free to plan as much or as little time as you feel necessary, but it is recommended that you spend thirty minutes to one hour each day in pray and devotion. If married, you should also plan time for family worship. It is important to make these plans from the beginning. If you find it hard to squeeze in time for prayer now, it will be impossible once you are further involved in ministry work. Prayer IS the work of ministry.

3. Create a prayer map – if you do not already have one. A prayer map is simply your prayer list (the people and things you pray for regularly) organized in a way that allows you to pray systematically. For example, you might list out the days of the week listing three of four prayer items under each day. When Thursday comes you already know what to pray for that day. Again, find out what others are doing and create a strategy that works for you.

4. Luke 10:38-42. Memorize and meditate on the passage journaling your thoughts. What does it mean to abide in Christ? Why is that more important than serving Him?

- “If we can muster the courage to turn 180 degrees from society and its humanistic thinking, we’ll find that spending time with Jesus—surrendered at His feet, as God intended—is really the foundation from which we do all things well.”³⁶

5. Read Part One (chapters 1-5) of *Pray With Your Eyes Open*

6. Review your plan for Bible reading and Bible study. As Christians we must be “people of the Book.” Whether you plan to read through the Bible in a year, or conduct an in depth study of a particular section, make a plan and stick to it. Live in the Word.

Week 2

1. Begin this week by meeting with your team leader/mentor. During this meeting you will want to establish short and long term goals, review your job description,

³⁶ John W. Stiles, *All The Damn Christians: A Glimpse into the Mirror of Hypocrisy* (Galax, VA: Sonfire Media, 2014), 120.

discuss team vision and mission statements and team goals, and begin to see how you fit into the puzzle.

2. Share a meal with a team member(s). If possible, share a meal with team members in your stage of life (single, married, family). Involve families—spend time getting to know one another. You may need to take the initiative to set up the meeting or the team member may offer to host.

3. Read Part Two (chapters 6-9) of *Pray With Your Eyes Open*

4. If applicable, you may begin language study this week. You will want to begin language study as quickly as possible. This will help you to become acclimated to your new surroundings and will ease culture pressures.

5. Stick with your prayer and devotional plans and have your accountability partner ask you questions about your time in the Word and prayer.

6. Select a passage from the Bible on prayer and memorize it.

7. Complete Mentoring Module: Shopping and Markets³⁷

Shopping and Markets

This module is designed to help you explore new aspects of the culture and gain practical daily living skills. You will need to engage with people in the community in order to complete this assignment.

Step 1: Identify five foods that are popular and (preferably unique) in your country. They could include special breads or pastries, fruits and vegetables, or meats and cheeses.

1.

³⁷ Used by permission from MTW. Small changes were made to fit the format of this document. Peter Beck, John Burch and Susan Burch, "Mentoring Modules: A Handbook for New Missionary Training" (Atlanta: Mission to the World – Global Training and Development, 2012, in house document), 7.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Step 2: Your job this week is to find the five items you have selected and eat or sample all of them. It is preferable that you go to two or more different places (i.e., open air market, bakery, grocery store, restaurant, street vendor, etc.) to sample all these items.

Step 3: Identify at least 3 cultural practices related to shopping that are different in your country than those of the U.S. (This could include the way people stand in lines, negotiate prices, transport their purchases, interact with shop keepers, etc.)

Step 4: Debrief with your mentor

Discuss your experience.

Where did you find each item? How did you get there?

What did you enjoy most about your experience?

How did the people in the markets or stores act? Did they form lines? Bargain for cheaper prices? Linger to exchange pleasantries? Etc.

What do your observations suggest about cultural values such as orderliness, interpersonal relationships, and enjoyment of food or willingness to help others?

Week 3

1. Reevaluate your schedule. How is your time being spent? Are you able to prioritize prayer and time in the Word or is it slipping through the cracks? Do you need to eliminate less important items from your regular schedule? Ask yourself these questions and discuss with your mentor.

2. Start or continue language study. Try to practice what you have learned so far with team members and Bulgarians.
3. Read Part Three (chapters 10-14) of *Pray With Your Eyes Open*
4. Take some time (at least one hour) for personal reflection. Think through the events of the last two weeks. What surprised you? What caused you to be happy, angry, sad, stressed, excited? What emotions are you feeling? Journal these thoughts and discuss them with your spouse and/or accountability partner.
5. Meet a Bulgarian. Perhaps you have met a neighbor or a shopkeeper with whom you were able to exchange pleasantries. Find out what you can about the person and their family (while being culturally sensitive – do not interrogate) and begin to pray for them.

Week 4

1. Meet with team leader/mentor to discuss the events of your first month on the field. Discuss the book *Pray With Your Eyes Open*. Discuss what you have been learning. Evaluate your progress on short term goals.
2. Share a meal with a team member – one that you do not already know well.
3. Meet with accountability partner. Be open about your time in prayer and time in the Word. Does it feel legalistic? Are you able to keep your appointment to study and pray regularly? Are you able to *commune* with God?
4. Fast at least two meals this week and replace eating with praying.
5. Complete Mentoring Module: Street Smarts³⁸

³⁸ Used by permission from MTW. Small changes were made to fit the format of this document. Peter Beck, John Burch and Susan Burch, "Mentoring Modules: A Handbook for New Missionary

Street Smarts

This module is designed to help you establish points of connection with nationals by understanding the nuances of safety in your area. You will need to engage with people in the community in order to complete this assignment.

Step 1: Ask your mentor to identify three people who know the area where you are living. These could be nationals, missionaries, or other ex-patriots.

Step 2: Interview each of the people who your mentor identified as experts. Some of the questions you may want to ask could include:

- Are there areas of the city, town, or region that are especially dangerous?
- Are these areas dangerous all of the time or just at night?
- Is it safe to go to these areas if I am with a group? Are the rules for safety different for men and women?
- For women, are there behaviors or dress that should be avoided while on the streets?
- If I am walking the streets, what should I do to make sure that I am not an easy target for criminals? (wallet in front pocket, don't carry much cash, be aware of people following you, etc.)
- Are there any special dangers for someone using public transportation? Taxis? Driving in private cars?
- What are some ways that people might try to deceive me to try to get money?
(Con Games)

Step 3: (Optional) Have a person with street smarts accompany you through an area that is moderately dangerous. Ask the “street smarts” person to help identify people or situations that might be risky and which situations are “safer”. Try to identify people and situations that the new missionary might feel to be dangerous but are not and vice versa.

Step 4: Discuss strategies a new missionary should take in the event of the following:

- An attempt to steal a wallet or purse while walking on the street (bump and run)
- How to respond when confronted with a robbery attempt
- An attempt to distract the victim while ganged up by one or more accomplices.
- A public demonstration
- What to do in case of being involved in a traffic accident.

Debrief

- Tell your mentor about what you learned.
- Is there agreement about which areas are dangerous? Disagreement?
- Do you feel that you have enough information to identify dangerous areas or situations?
- Can you respond to danger with confidence in God’s protection of you and your family?
- If this situation is more dangerous than the new missionary is used to, what does it mean for the new missionary to walk in faith in spite of facing challenges and dangers?

Month 2 – The Importance of Context

It is essential that we talk to God about people
before we talk to people about God.

– John Stiles

Objectives

- Learn how to L.O.V.E. Bulgaria
- Three R's
- Three A's
- Acknowledge the differences in Bulgarian culture and seek understanding
- Read *Cross Cultural Connections*

Now that you have lived in Bulgaria for a month you may be experiencing some culture shock. You have noticed many differences between your home culture and the one in which you now live. You now have a choice to make: will you choose to Love Bulgaria or merely survive it? If you are to be successful in ministry (glorifying to God), you must choose to L.O.V.E. Bulgaria.

- **L**isten – be quick to listen to the people around you (your teammates, neighbors, Bulgarian Christians). By listening you will show respect for Bulgarian culture and you will learn about the people.
- **O**bserve – observe your surroundings. Try to take off your “Western glasses” and see your new home without bias. Ask yourself and others about things you do not understand (e.g. Why is it bad to have a cross breeze in the house?)

- **Value** – every culture has value. The Bulgarian culture has been growing for hundreds of years. Find the value in a slower pace of life, for example. Find the value in living with elderly parents.

- Rejoice
- Reject
- Redeem

As a missionary, you need to Rejoice, Reject, and Redeem the culture. Each situation will call for a different response, but initially the missionary should not condemn a practice unless it is glaringly sinful. Rejoice in the cultural practices that are not sinful just different, reject those aspects that are anti-biblical, and redeem stories and practices in the culture that may be used to tell the Gospel story.

- **Experience** – experience the culture! Do not live in an American bubble.

Get out of your house and mingle with the people. Go with your newest Bulgarian friend; ask him or her to show you around. Just go!

- Acknowledge
- Assess
- Adjust

Finally, regarding expectations, the missionary should Acknowledge, Assess, and Adjust expectations accordingly. It is important to have clear communication on what each person expects in a given situation and be flexible to change expectations when necessary. Adopt the saying “isn’t that interesting” to deal with surprises. You will begin to see how your own culture has shaped your worldview. Adjust it to fit your new culture while remaining true to Scripture. That is every missionary’s challenge.

Week 1

1. Memorize and meditate on Romans 12:1-2.
2. Spend time thinking about how you can L.O.V.E. Bulgaria. Write your thoughts in a journal as well as your reflections from the last few weeks.
3. Share a meal with a team member.
4. Read chapters 1-3 of *Cross-Cultural Connections*
5. Continue learning and practicing the language.

Week 2

1. Choose a passage from your quiet time and memorize the verse for meditation this week. Share the verse with your spouse or friend.
2. Share a meal or coffee with a Bulgarian. Discuss differences between your home culture and that of Bulgaria. Specifically address items that are *different* but are not necessarily *right or wrong*.
3. Read chapters 4-8 in *Cross-Cultural Connections*
4. Using Duane Elmer's "Cultural Adjustment Map" consider your own sources of frustration, confusion, tension, and embarrassment over the last month.
5. Complete Mentoring Module: Personal Disciplines³⁹

Personal Disciplines

This module is designed to help you plan how to maintain your spiritual health and growth while adjusting to life in another culture. This exercise is designed to help the

³⁹ Used by permission from MTW. Small changes were made to fit the format of this document. Peter Beck, John Burch and Susan Burch, "Mentoring Modules: A Handbook for New Missionary Training" (Atlanta: Mission to the World – Global Training and Development, 2012, in house document), 16.

new missionary think broadly about spiritual health and growth. While it emphasizes “traditional” means of spiritual growth, it also encourages the new missionary to think about how physical health, relationships, and cultural adaptation affect spiritual growth.

Step 1: Think about a time when you experienced real spiritual growth. Jot down some observations about what was going on during this time of growth. Use the following categories as a framework to think about factors that affect spiritual growth.

- Bible reading and study
- Prayer
- Relationships
- Accountability
- Dealing with sin
- Ministry

Step 2: Identify three or four things you could do to maintain a healthy spiritual life.

(Note: it is important to have appropriate expectations about spiritual disciplines, ministry duties, relationships, and other factors which affect spiritual health.)

Step 3: In discussion with your mentor, identify some ways to measure steps that you can take to maintain spiritual health. Develop some measurable goals for involvement in these areas.

Debrief

Three or four weeks after developing goals and activities designed to maintain spiritual health, review the goals you developed and ask yourself what is going well and what is not going well. If something is not going well, discuss (with your mentor) why things are not going well and develop steps to address roadblocks.

Week 3

1. Read chapters 9-12 in *Cross-Cultural Connections*
2. Discuss with a Bulgarian Christian the importance of trust and respect.
3. Think about ways to show openness and acceptance to Bulgarians. Is this natural for you or do you have to work at it? How can you build trust with your new Bulgarian neighbors and friends?
4. Pray for opportunities to build trust with three specific Bulgarian people. Pray for the souls of these individuals. Pray for your own heart—that you would show love to them.
5. As you grow in your language ability, think about how Bulgarians view their language. Is it a source of pride for them? How does it play in to their cultural heritage?

Week 4

1. Read chapters 13-20 in *Cross-Cultural Connections*
2. Discuss the book in your monthly debrief with your mentor. Takeaways?
3. Share a meal with a team member this week. Ask for feedback on how you are adjusting to the culture so far from the missionary's perspective. Be prepared for honest feedback.
4. Complete Mentoring Module: Day Trip⁴⁰

Day Trip

⁴⁰ Used by permission from MTW. Small changes were made to fit the format of this document. Peter Beck, John Burch and Susan Burch, "Mentoring Modules: A Handbook for New Missionary Training" (Atlanta: Mission to the World – Global Training and Development, 2012, in house document), 17.

In this module, you will learn how people like to spend their non-structured time.

In order to complete this activity, you will need to spend a free day outside of your normal context, enjoying activities that many nationals enjoy.

Step 1: Your job is to find out how people get a change of scenery for the day. The goal is to find a place or activity within an hour's drive or bus ride from where they live where they can relax and have fun with their family or friends.

Step 2: Identify a recreation area that is fairly close to where you live. This could be a park, beach, lake, hiking area in the hills or mountains, a cultural festival, amusement park, etc. The area should be a popular place that local people enjoy visiting on the weekends.

Step 3: Plan a day-long excursion to the recreation area. Talk with cultural informants to find out:

- The best way to get there (car, bus, train, etc.)
- The kind of activities that are available at the recreation area (picnic tables, playground equipment for children, bathrooms, etc.)
- Anything that should be brought (or not brought) to the recreation area (food, drinks, picnic blankets, towels, toilet paper, etc.)
- The costs associated with the day off activities (transportation, entrance fees, purchasing food, etc.)

Debrief

Discuss with your mentor how you did on the day off activity.

If the whole family went, did everyone enjoy the activity equally?

Did the nationals that were at the recreation area seem to be enjoying themselves?

If you were to go back to the same area, would you do anything differently?

Are there any other day off activities you would like to experience?

Month 3 – Gaining Historical Perspective

We ought to be Martha and Mary in one: we should do much service, and have much communion at the same time.
 For this we need great grace. It is easier to serve than to commune.

– C. H. Spurgeon

Objectives

- Learn and appreciate the volatile history of Bulgaria
- Seek understanding in how Bulgaria's past shapes its people
- Find the hand of God working in Bulgaria through several centuries
- Learn the history of the Church in Bulgaria
- Read *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective* (or a similar book approved by team leader)

Week 1

1. Read the following brief history of Bulgaria.

“A Brief History of Bulgaria”⁴¹

by Tim Lambert

ANCIENT BULGARIA

From about 400 BC a race called the Thracians lived in parts of what is now Bulgaria.

The Thracians were a tribal society and they were superb horsemen. They were also known for making beautiful gold and silver jewelry.

⁴¹ Tim Lambert, "A Brief History Of Bulgaria," *Local Histories*, 2013, <http://www.localhistories.org/bulgaria.html>. (accessed March 4, 2014).

By 100 AD the Romans conquered Bulgaria. The Romans founded the city of Trimontium (modern day Plovdiv). They also built the city of Serdica on the site of Sofia. In 395 the Roman Empire split in two. Bulgaria became part of the Eastern Roman Empire (later called the Byzantine Empire). However Byzantium grew weaker and about 500 AD Slavs settled in Bulgaria.

Then in 680 the Bulgars invaded led by their ruler Khan Asparukh. They were descended from the Huns from Central Asia. They crossed the Danube and founded the state of Bulgaria. They then intermarried with the Slavs.

In 716 the Byzantine Empire recognized the state of Bulgaria.

However, in the late 8th century the Emperor Constantine V tried to destroy Bulgaria - but without success. Then the pendulum swung the other way. From 809 Khan Krum attacked the Byzantine Empire. Led by Khan Krum the Bulgars were victorious. In 811 the Byzantine Emperor, Nicephorus was killed in battle. Krum had his skull covered in silver and used it for drinking. In 813 Krum even lay siege to Constantinople, the capital of Byzantium but he failed to capture it. Finally in 816 Khan Omurtag made peace.

Then in 846 Boris I of Bulgaria accepted Christianity and his subjects followed. Bulgaria accepted the Eastern Orthodox Church rather than the western Catholic Church.

Bulgaria reached a peak under Simeon the Great 893-927. He called himself 'Emperor of all the Bulgars and Greeks'. The pope recognized him but the Byzantine emperor did not! However in the later 10th century Bulgaria declined. In 971 the Byzantines took the capital Preslav along with a large part of eastern Bulgaria. Finally in 1014 after the battle of Belasita the Byzantines captured 15,000 Bulgars. Out of every 100 men 99 were

blinded and one was left with one eye to lead the others home. In 1018 Bulgaria became part of the Byzantine Empire.

BULGARIA IN THE MIDDLE AGES

The Byzantines ruled Bulgaria until 1185. Then heavy taxation provoked rebellion. A new Bulgarian kingdom was founded with its capital at Turnovo. In 1202 the Byzantines accepted the situation and made peace.

Then in 1204 the Crusaders captured Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire.

The Crusaders claimed that the Bulgars were their vassals however the Bulgars defeated them in battle.

The second Bulgarian kingdom reached its peak under Ivan Asen II 1218-1241. Bulgaria became prosperous and powerful.

However the Bulgarians had powerful enemies. In 1330 the Bulgarians were defeated by the Serbians at the battle of Velbuzhd. Bulgaria came temporarily under Serbian domination.

The Bogomils in Bulgaria

From the 9th century to the 15th century a religious sect called the Bogomils flourished in Bulgaria. The Bogomils were probably named after an 8th century priest named Bogomil.

The Bogomils were dualists. It was a very old belief in the Middle East that there were two gods, one good and one evil. The evil god created the material world while the good god created the spiritual one. This belief entered Bulgaria and took on some Christian elements. Bogomils believed that Satan created the material universe while God made the soul.

Bogomils did not believe in incarnation (the doctrine that God became a man - Jesus).

They did not believe in infant baptism or in the Eucharist (sharing bread at mass). They also rejected the whole organization of the Orthodox Church.

The leaders of the Bogomils led austere lives. They abstained from marriage, eating meat and drinking wine. However their followers did not have to live such strict lives.

The Bogomil sect spread to the Byzantine Empire and other parts of Southeast Europe. However it died out after the Turks conquered the area.

BULGARIA UNDER TURKISH RULE

In the 14th century the Ottoman Turks were a rising power in the region. In 1393 they captured Turnovo. All Bulgarian resistance to the Turks ended in 1396. Bulgaria was under Turkish rule for nearly 500 years.

However the Muslim Turks were more tolerant of other religions than Europeans. Bulgarian Christians were, usually, allowed to practice their faith although some did convert to Islam.

Nevertheless the Bulgarians had to pay taxes to the Turks. They also had to surrender their sons. At intervals the Turks would take the cream of Bulgarian boys aged 7 to 14. They were taken from their families and brought up as Muslims. They were also trained to be soldiers called Janissaries.

In 1688 the Bulgarians around Chirpiest rose in rebellion. However the rebellion was crushed. Nevertheless from the late 17th century onward the Turkish Empire went into inexorable decline.

Then in the 19th century nationalism became a powerful force in Europe including Bulgaria and the ideas of the French Revolution spread. There was a growing interest in Bulgarian culture and history and a growing resentment of Turkish rule. Finally in April 1876 some Bulgarians rose in revolt. However the Turks easily crushed the rebellion.

INDEPENDENT BULGARIA

Then in April 1877 Russia declared war on Turkey. In January 1878 the Russians captured Sofia. Then on 3 March the Treaty of Stefano ended the war. The treaty created an independent Bulgaria. However the British and Austro-Hungarians were afraid that this new Bulgaria might be a powerful ally for Russia and they insisted the treaty be revised.

By the treaty of Berlin, July 1878 Bulgaria was split in two. The northern half was not allowed to be totally independent. Instead Bulgaria was to be a vassal state of Turkey called a principality. It was to be ruled by a prince with a parliament called the subranie. The southern half of Bulgaria was made only semi-autonomous within the Turkish Empire. It was given the name Eastern Rumelia.

The Bulgarians would not accept this solution. In 1885 people in Eastern Rumelia staged a coup and they united with the northern half of Bulgaria. However other countries intervened again. In November 1885 the Serbians declared war. However they were crushed at the battle of Slivnitsa.

The great powers then drew up a new agreement. The two halves of Bulgaria were not allowed to completely unite. Instead they remained two separate entities but the Prince of (northern) Bulgaria was made 'governor-general' of Eastern Rumelia.

This arrangement was only a stopgap measure. In 1908 the Bulgarians overturned it. On 5 October Prince Ferdinand announced the complete independence of Bulgaria. He became King Ferdinand of Bulgaria.

BULGARIA IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Meanwhile at the beginning of the 20th century Turkish rule in Europe was crumbling. The Turks were faced with rebellions. The Balkan states feared that the great powers might intervene. They wanted to liberate the territories still held by the Turks - and impose their own solutions. So they formed a triple alliance of Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece.

In October 1912 the three countries invaded Turkish territory in Europe. However the great powers did interfere. They insisted that an independent Albania be created. The three allies could do what they wanted with the rest of Turkish territory.

However the allies soon quarreled and on 29 June 1913 Bulgaria attacked Serbia and Greece. However Romania intervened and Bulgaria was forced to make peace. Bulgaria was forced to surrender some of its territory.

Then in 1914 came the First World War. In October 1915 Germany persuaded Bulgaria to join its side promising territory as a reward. However an allied blockade caused severe shortages in Bulgaria and eventually near starvation. Then in September 1918 French and British troops entered Bulgaria and on 29 September 1918 Bulgaria signed an armistice. On 3 October 1918 Ferdinand abdicated. His son Boris III replaced him.

In 1919 Bulgaria was forced to sign the treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine. She lost significant parts of her territory. Furthermore Bulgaria was not allowed to have more than 20,000

men in her army and she was forced to pay reparations (a form of compensation for the war). However the reparations were cancelled in 1932.

In the elections of 1919 those parties who had supported Bulgaria's entry into the war lost votes while those who had opposed it (The Communists and the Agrarian Party) gained them.

In December 1919 the Communists and the Social Democrats joined forces and called a general strike in Bulgaria. However Prime Minister Stamboliski arrested the strike leaders and the strike was called off on 5 January 1920.

Despite its troubles in 1920 Bulgaria was allowed to join the League of Nations, the first of the nations on the losing side to do so.

However democracy in Bulgaria gave way to an authoritarian regime. In 1922 some disaffected army officers formed an organisation called the Military League. In 1923 a group of conspirators including members of the Military League seized power in a coup. Prime Minister Stamboliski was murdered.

A new government was formed by Aleksandur Tsankov. Then in 1925 the Communists exploded a bomb in a Sofia cathedral. Afterwards thousands of Communists were arrested and many were executed.

However in 1926 Tsankov was replaced by Andrei Liapchev. He removed some of the restrictions imposed by Tsankov. Trade unions were allowed to form and in 1927 the Communist Party was allowed to reform. In 1931 elections were held in Bulgaria.

However in the early 1930s Bulgaria suffered severely from the depression. Peasant incomes fell by half and in the towns unemployment rocketed. Then in May 1934 a group of officers carried out a coup.

However the new government was split over what to do with the king. Their leader Colonel Damian Velchev was a republican but in January 1935 his opponents managed to force him out of office. In 1936 Boris dissolved the Military League and promised to return to constitutional government. Elections were held in 1938.

When the Second World War began in 1939 King Boris was, at first, determined to keep Bulgaria neutral. However from March 1941 he agreed to allow German troops to pass through Bulgaria on their way to Greece. As a reward Bulgaria was given territory in Thrace and Macedonia. However although some anti-Semitic laws were passed in Bulgaria the Bulgarian Jews were not deported to concentration camps. King Boris died in August 1943.

By the summer of 1944 Germany was obviously losing the war and the Russians were approaching Bulgaria. Russia declared war on Bulgaria on 5 September 1944. Bulgaria declared on Germany on 7 September 1944 (with effect from 8 September). However on 8 September 1944 Russian troops entered Bulgaria.

COMMUNIST BULGARIA

In 1942 the Fatherland Front or FF was formed. It consisted of Communists, Social Democrats and Agrarians. On 9 September 1944 the FF staged a coup and formed the new government. Crucially in the new cabinet the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Justice were Communists. (They were also helped by the fact that Russian troops were stationed in Bulgaria).

The Communist takeover of Bulgaria was gradual. From the start they controlled the radio and many newspapers. However the Communists removed their opponents one by one. New Peoples Courts were formed under the Ministry of Justice to try 'war criminals'

and 'collaborators'. All the supporters of the old regime were rounded up and executed or imprisoned in labor camps. They included not just politicians but priests, teachers and policemen. Furthermore they removed 'unreliable' officers from the army. Eliminating all right-wingers made the Communists even more powerful.

The Communists then turned on their fellow left-wingers in Bulgaria. They managed to cause splits in the Social Democratic Party and the Agrarian Party between pro and anti Communist factions. In both cases the Communist controlled Ministry of Justice decided that the property of the parties belonged to the pro-Communist factions.

Meanwhile in 1946 the Bulgarian army was purged again. This time about 2,000 officers were removed. In September 1946 a referendum on the monarch resulted in Bulgaria becoming a republic. In an election in November 1946 the Communists insisted that all FF candidates should form a single list. Previously the voters had been able to vote for individual parties (Communist, Agrarian or Social Democrat). Now they would only be able to vote for the FF or against it. The FF gained most of the seats in the National Assembly. However most of the FF seats were taken by Communists rather than Social Democrats or Agrarians (far more than support for the Communists among the voters would justify). In this way the Communists gained control of the Assembly.

Finally in June 1947 Nikola Petkov (1889-1947), the leader of the anti-Communist part of the Agrarian Party and the leader of opposition to the Communists was arrested. He was executed in August 1947 after a show trial. Then in 1947 the Communists introduced the Dimitrov Constitution. It was named after Georgi Dimitrov, leader of the Communists after 1945 and it brought in a full Communist regime in Bulgaria.

The Communists nationalized industry and collectivized agriculture in Bulgaria. They also persecuted the Orthodox Church.

Finally after imposing Communism the Communist Party turned on its own members.

After the anti-Communist uprising in Hungary in 1956 there was a purge in Bulgaria in which many communists were expelled from the party. Some were sent to labor camps.

So for many years, Bulgaria was burdened with a totalitarian regime, slavishly obedient to the Soviet Union.

From 1954 it was ruled by Todor Zhikov. He reigned until 1989.

During the communist era attempts were made to increase industry in Bulgaria but it remained a mainly agricultural country.

In 1985 Zhikov tried to 'Bulgarianise' the Bulgarian Turks. Bulgarian Turks were ordered to choose from a list of Bulgarian names. If they refused one was chosen for them.

Troops were sent to enforce the law but the Bulgarian Turks continued to resist. Finally in the summer of 1989 Zhikov announced that Turks could leave Bulgaria and go to Turkey if they wished. Many of them did.

MODERN BULGARIA

Finally in the late 1980s the Communist tyranny in Bulgaria began to crumble. On 10 November 1989 Zhikov was deposed. In April the Communists renamed themselves the Bulgarian Socialist Party. The totalitarian regime was dismantled. On 6 March 1990 strikes were made legal. However multi-party elections were not held until June 1990. The Bulgarian Socialist Party continued to hold power.

However state socialism was scrapped in Bulgaria. From 1991 controls on prices were removed and industry was privatized. Collective farms were dissolved. A new

constitution was introduced in July 1991 and after further elections in October 1991 the Socialist Party lost power.

Today Bulgaria is a relatively poor country and it suffered badly in the recession of 2009.

However Bulgaria recovered and there is reason to be optimistic.

Today tourism is a rapidly growing industry in Bulgaria. Tourists are attracted by the beautiful architecture and beaches in Bulgaria.

Bulgaria joined NATO in 2004 and Bulgaria joined the EU in 2007.

Today the population of Bulgaria is 7.3 million.

2. Study Matthew 3:16-4:11 – discuss in a group or with accountability partner. Ask: “Where do I see the incarnation of Christ in my life and the lives of those around me right now?” Discuss the implications of being children of God, equal with Christ.

3. Visit the National Museum of History in Sofia

Week 2

1. Read chapters 1-3 in *Eastern Orthodox Christianity* (or similar book)
2. Visit the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral and surrounding churches in the city center
3. Discuss the history of the Church in Bulgaria with a local pastor
4. Complete Mentoring Module: Important Historical Figures⁴²

Important Historical Figures

This module is designed to help you learn about the important historical figures in the host culture. While it is possible to gather this information through books or the

⁴² Used by permission from MTW. Small changes were made to fit the format of this document. Peter Beck, John Burch and Susan Burch, "Mentoring Modules: A Handbook for New Missionary Training" (Atlanta: Mission to the World – Global Training and Development, 2012, in house document), 29.

Internet, it is more beneficial to gather this information by talking with people on the street, neighbors, and national colleagues.

Step 1: Identify five important historical figures from your country. For ideas of important historical figures, you may want to look at the people who are on the currency, historical monuments, statues, names of major boulevards, etc.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Step 2: Talk with cultural informants about these historical figures. Gather at least the following information:

- When did this person live?
- What did this person do?
- Why is this person so famous?

Debrief

Identify any common themes regarding the reason why each person was famous. Were most of the people military figures? Poets or artists? Political figures? Scientists?

Did any of your conversations with people give you additional insights into the values of your host culture?

Do people seem to value their history and know a great deal about historical figures, or do most people view it as irrelevant to their daily lives?

Week 3

1. Read chapters 4-7 in *Eastern Orthodox Christianity*
2. Visit the Museum of Communism
3. Explore the city's historical sites. Perhaps use one of the free tours.
4. Memorize and meditate on Genesis 1:26-28. Consider that Bulgarians are made in the image of God the same as you. How should this shape your behavior?

Week 4

1. Reevaluate your schedule. How is your time being spent? Are you able to prioritize prayer and time in the Word or is it slipping through the cracks? Do you need to eliminate less important items from your regular schedule? Ask yourself these questions and discuss with your mentor.
2. Spend time reflecting on Bulgaria's turbulent history journaling your thoughts on the following: Given that Bulgaria lived under Ottoman rule for 500 years and under communism for 40 years, how do you think that has shaped the people of Bulgaria? How should the Gospel message be presented to such a people? What is the "Good News" for Bulgarians?
3. Share a meal with a Bulgarian. Probe their thoughts on the history of their nation. Ask how you (as a Westerner) can show respect to the tumultuous history of Bulgaria.
4. Complete Mentoring Module: Religious Practices⁴³

Religious Practices

⁴³ Used by permission from MTW. Small changes were made to fit the format of this document. Peter Beck, John Burch and Susan Burch, "Mentoring Modules: A Handbook for New Missionary Training" (Atlanta: Mission to the World – Global Training and Development, 2012, in house document), 30.

This module is designed to help you understand the formal religious practices of the major religion of the culture of Bulgaria. Not only will this help you understand the religious and spiritual background of most people in the country, but it may also help to think through ways to make Christian worship contextualized to the culture.

Step 1: To the extent that it is appropriate, attend religious ceremonies that are practiced in the culture. This may entail visiting a mosque, cathedral, or temple during services. If there are special instructions that are important (wearing a head covering, taking off shoes, sitting in a certain area, etc.) be sure to prepare yourself before visiting services.

Pay attention to:

- Is the ceremony well attended?
- What kinds of people were at the ceremony? (Men, women, young, old, families, rich, poor, etc.)
- Are people expected to participate actively in the ceremony? In what way?
- Is music or chanting used as part of the religious ceremony? What is the music like?
- Do people seem to be personally engaged in the ceremony?
- Is there a sense of community with other believers during worship?
- Other

Debrief

Report back to your mentor on what you observed during the ceremony.

How would someone from that religion view the services of the local church?

Would incorporating practices from other styles of worship (posture for prayer, music style, seating arrangements, etc.) make attending a Christian worship service more comfortable for people who are interested in learning more about Christianity?

What aspects of Evangelical Christianity might be particularly appealing or relevant to people coming from an Orthodox Christian background?

Month 4 – Engaging the Culture

‘To abide in me’ expresses the continual act by which
the Christian sets aside everything which he might derive
from his own wisdom, strength, merit, to draw all from Christ.
– Frederic Louis Godet

Objectives

- Learn and appreciate the storied culture of Bulgaria
- Seek understanding of how Bulgaria’s culture shapes its people
- “See” the world with a Bulgarian worldview
- Attend a cultural event such as a folk festival
- Become familiar with the “old wives’ tales” and folk beliefs/sayings
- Read *God is the Gospel*

Week 1

1. Plan to attend (this month if possible) a Bulgarian folk festival such as the Rose Festival in Kazanlak (held in late May or early June each year).
2. Share a meal with an older Bulgarian (bring along an interpreter if necessary). Ask about Bulgarian culture. Prepare a list of questions beforehand. Find out what is important to Bulgarians, how Bulgarians view America and the rest of the world, national holidays and such.
3. Study Deut. 6:4-9 and Mark 12:29-31. Jesus named “Love for God” as the most important commandment; secondly love for your neighbor. How then should we live? How should this shape your life, priorities, and God’s ministry through you?
4. Read Introduction and chapters 1-3 in *God is the Gospel*

Week 2

1. Meet with your accountability partner (if you have not met recently). Discuss your emotions—fears, frustrations, excitement—living in this “strange” country. How are you adapting? What do you need? What are you learning? Where is God revealing your sin?
2. Find a good museum or art gallery and go through it with a friend—preferably a knowledgeable friend who can explain the significance of the displays. Or ask for a guided tour.
3. Read chapters 4-6 in *God is the Gospel*
4. Complete Mentoring Module: Become a Fan⁴⁴

Become a Fan

This module is designed to help you establish points of connection with nationals by getting involved in popular culture. You will need to engage with people in the community in order to complete this assignment.

Step 1: Identify a sport that is popular in your country (soccer, rugby, cricket, cycling, etc.) preferably one which is a topic of everyday conversations.

Step 2: Select three different teams that have a significant following in your country. (For example, in the U.S. we might select, the Atlanta Braves, New York Yankees, and Los Angeles Dodgers.)

Step 3: Become a fan of one of the teams that you have selected. In order to become a fan, you must tell three different people, “I am new to your country and want to learn about your sports teams. I am thinking of becoming a fan of the _____, or the

⁴⁴ Used by permission from MTW. Small changes were made to fit the format of this document. Peter Beck, John Burch and Susan Burch, "Mentoring Modules: A Handbook for New Missionary Training" (Atlanta: Mission to the World – Global Training and Development, 2012, in house document), 11.

_____, or the _____. Which team do you think I should choose? What kind of people are the fans of each team?"

Step 4: After talking with at least 3 people, you should become a fan of the team you think that you will like the most.

Step 5: To complete the assignment, you must buy some sort of souvenir (jersey, hat, banner, etc).

Step 6: Finally, you must learn three interesting facts about the team by talking with people in the community. These could include their star player, or the last time they won a championship, their style of play, when they were founded, etc.

Debrief

Discuss your experience with your mentor.

What kinds of reactions did you get when you asked people about sports teams?

Did you learn anything about the fan base of different teams? (i.e. Are some teams "working class" while others are more "elitist"? Are some teams dominant? Are there teams that are underdogs, but people love?)

What did you learn about your ability to interact with nationals through this experience?

How do you think this process will help you engage with your community and neighbors as you go about ministry?

Week 3

1. Read the pamphlet "An Introduction to the Bulgarian Soul". Discuss with mentor.
2. Read chapters 7-9 in *God is the Gospel*

3. Spend time reflecting on and journaling your thoughts and feelings this week. As you are learning the Bulgarian language, history, and culture how are your views being shaped? Do you see the people differently than when you first arrived?
4. Choose a verse from your quiet time this week to memorize.

Week 4

1. As you have already learned, the key to overcoming “culture shock” is to learn and experience the new culture. You must face your fears! Think about what you are afraid of (e.g. riding the metro, shopping, eating local food, language, etc.). Ask a friend to help you overcome your fears this week. Have them accompany you for a ride on the metro or a shopping trip or whatever your particular fear is. Pray for the strength that only God provides.
2. Share a meal with a team member. Ask how they experienced culture shock and how/when they overcame it. Talk about interesting cultural insights.
3. Spend time this week learning about “folk” beliefs and sayings in Bulgaria. What is the origin of such beliefs? How much “power” do they hold over the people?
4. Complete Mentoring Module: Holidays⁴⁵

Holidays

This module is designed to help you engage in new social interactions within the culture and learn what kind and how people celebrate holidays.

⁴⁵ Used by permission from MTW. Small changes were made to fit the format of this document. Peter Beck, John Burch and Susan Burch, "Mentoring Modules: A Handbook for New Missionary Training" (Atlanta: Mission to the World – Global Training and Development, 2012, in house document), 27.

Step 1: Identify and list four or five local or national holidays that people in your culture celebrate. (i.e. New Year's, Independence Day, Mother's Day, religious holidays, or other historical events)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Step 2: Interview two or three people to get answers to the following questions:

- How did the holiday start?
- What does the holiday mean? What does it celebrate?
- What do people do to celebrate? Does this differ depending on the type of person (i.e. parents, children, teens, rich, poor, religious, etc.)?
- What specific traditions are associated with this holiday?

Step 3: Find an event for an upcoming holiday and ask friends and neighbors if you can attend the festivities.

Debrief

Discuss your experience with your mentor.

How did you learn about what kind of holidays people celebrate?

How did the people dress? What did they bring? What time did they show up or leave?

Did they come all at once or one by one? Did they stay the whole time or just drop in?

What kinds of games or activities are parts of a celebration? Are they time-structured or do they happen organically?

What do you learn about the culture from the holidays that they celebrate? Don't celebrate?

What do your observations suggest about cultural values such as interpersonal relationships, enjoyment of food and drink, what they value about their lives or each other?

Month 5 – God’s Mission

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

– Jesus Christ

Objectives

- Study the biblical approach to missions
- Allow God to guide you in the work He has for you
- Identify your weaknesses in ministry
- Begin to see where God has worked and is working
- Further develop your Bible study habits
- Read *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*

Week 1

1. Study 1 Cor. 9 – What is Paul’s approach to ministry? (verse 19) Why did Paul conduct ministry in this way? Why did he give up his apostolic rights? What have you given up to follow God’s call? How did Paul acclimate to various people groups? What can we learn from him?
2. Read chapters 1-4 in *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*

3. Meet with your accountability partner. Discuss the sin of selfishness. In what ways have you made this “my ministry” rather than serving in God’s mission?

Week 2

1. Reevaluate your schedule. How is your time being spent? Are you able to prioritize prayer and time in the Word or is it slipping through the cracks? Do you need to eliminate less important items from your regular schedule? Ask yourself these questions and discuss with your mentor.
2. Spend time this week reflecting and journaling on prayer.
3. Study Eph. 6:10-20. The work of ministry is spiritual warfare. Have you been wrestling against flesh and blood, forgetting the work of the Spirit? Ask God to show you where He is working and how He would have you engaged in the fight.
4. Read chapters 5-8 in *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*
5. Complete Mentoring Module: History of MTW in Country⁴⁶

History of MTW in Country

This module is designed to help you understand the ministry context in which you work. By learning about the history of MTW’s ministry in your country, you will gain a better understanding of ministry highlights, key events in the ministry, and how it might impact the ministry.

Step 1: Identify two or three people who have been with the mission for a long time who are nationals, team members, or missionaries.

⁴⁶ Used by permission from MTW. Small changes were made to fit the format of this document. Peter Beck, John Burch and Susan Burch, "Mentoring Modules: A Handbook for New Missionary Training" (Atlanta: Mission to the World – Global Training and Development, 2012, in house document), 18.

Step 2: Interview the people you have identified and attempt to find the answers to some or all of these questions:

- When did MTW first come to this country to begin ministry?
- Who were the first people who started the ministry?
- What are some of the highlights of the ministry? (Beginning of new churches?
New ministries begun? Cooperative agreements with other organizations?)
- What are some challenges that the team has faced?
- Who are the people that are most respected because of their work in the country?

Step 3: Summarize what you have learned in a time line showing the people and events that have influenced where the team currently is.

Debrief

Talk to your mentor about what you learned.

Do you have any questions about the history of MTW in our country?

How do you think that the events and the people who have preceded your arrival here influence how others perceive you?

Does understanding the history of MTW's work in this country influence how you will approach starting new ministries or the ongoing work of your ministry?

Week 3

1. Study 2 Tim. 2:1-7. These verses describe the principle of multiplication—developing leaders who develop leaders. Think through how this applies to the work God has given you. Are you involved in *multiplying leaders* or merely *adding followers*?
2. Read chapters 9-11 in *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*
3. Do something fun with your family and team members this week. Enjoy Bulgaria!

Week 4

1. Study Col. 1:24-29. What does Paul mean by “filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions?”
2. Read chapters 12-14 in *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*
3. Complete Mentoring Module: Team Vision, Values, and Goals⁴⁷

Team Vision, Values, and Goals

This module is designed to help you understand how your team works, what it is working toward, and how you fit into the big picture of the team’s ministry.

Step 1: If your team has written vision, value, and goals statements in place - review these documents with the team leader. You may want to discuss how the team has decided to get involved in certain ministries or to stop investing in certain areas of ministry.

Step 2: Answer the following questions with your team leader:

- What is the main focus of your ministry?
- Describe a time when you had to decide between two different competing ministry needs and you couldn’t do both. How did you decide what you would do and what you wouldn’t do?
- Describe a problem or challenge that you are trying to work on right now.
- If you had all the resources you needed and God were working powerfully in your ministry, what would be happening? How would things be different? What would you be focusing on?

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- What is the biggest need the ministry faces right now?
- What do you spend most of your time and energy focusing on?

Month 6 – Team Ministry

Then one day I stopped eating. It was a protest – against what, I didn't quite know, but clearly something had to be done. And if you can't do anything to the world around you, you do it to yourself.
 — Kapka Kassabova
 (From her autobiography on growing up in Bulgaria)

Objectives

- Become familiar with MTW-Bulgaria
- Begin to determine the focus of your work in the ministry
- Practice your language skills
- Read *Total Church*

Week 1

1. Our team motto is, “Showing the love of Christ to make known the Hope of Christ.”

Think through this statement on your own then discuss it with the team leader and other team members. How does this statement describe our work?

2. Share a meal with any team member you do not know well.
3. In your devotions and Bible study this week focus on the Church. What is the role of the Church? What is the responsibility of the local church? How does God expand the Church?
4. Read chapters 1-4 in *Total Church*

Week 2

1. The objective this week is to ensure that you have a grasp on the mission of MTW-Bulgaria and each person's role in that mission. If there is an area of the ministry that

you are not sure about, meet with the team member in charge of that aspect. If necessary, discuss at the next team meeting.

2. Read chapters 5-7 in *Total Church*
3. Complete Mentoring Module: Team Timeline⁴⁸

Team Time Line

This module is designed to help you understand and appreciate the history of MTW's work in your area. You will research how the MTW team was formed, the key players in the development of the ministry, and any relevant events that impact present ministry.

Step 1: Using the questions below, interview at least 3 people to gather information about the team.

- When did the first protestant missionaries arrive in your country?
- When did the first MTW missionaries arrive in your country? Your city? Your team?
- List all of the MTW missionaries with their years of service who have worked in your country for more than 1 year over the last decade.
- When the first MTW team arrived in your area, who was a part of the team? What was their vision for ministry?
- What national leaders have emerged as a result of the ministry?
- What have been the challenges, conflicts, or difficulties that the team has experienced?

⁴⁸ Used by permission from MTW. Small changes were made to fit the format of this document. Peter Beck, John Burch and Susan Burch, "Mentoring Modules: A Handbook for New Missionary Training" (Atlanta: Mission to the World – Global Training and Development, 2012, in house document), 21.

- List all of the teammates, their children, and national partners currently working on the team.
- How does the team see God at work right now in the team's ministry?

Step 3: Write up a timeline for the last 10 years (or since the beginning of the ministry).

Above the line, list key people's arrival and departure dates. Below the line, note key events such as starting new ministries, leadership responsibilities given to nationals, conflicts, or milestones in life of the team or church.

Debrief

Review the timeline and summarize the contributions that each team member has made over the years.

Are there any themes you see in the timeline?

How do you see God at work in this ministry over the course of time?

Did anything surprise you as you spoke with others about our team's history?

Review components of the ministry that you is involved in. How does the history of the team impact current ministry plans?

Week 3

1. If you are not already doing so (and you should be), find opportunities this week to practice your new language skills with Bulgarians. Be intentional about speaking to people in Bulgarian.
2. Spend some time this week planning. Now that you have been in the country for several months you have a greater knowledge of the team's goals and you see opportunities and challenges for your own work. Ask yourself the following:
 - Do I have a target group? If so, who? (not everyone should have a target)

- Have I allowed the Holy Spirit to guide my decisions?
- Do I have a written job description and written ministry plan?
- Where do I see God working? How should I be involved?
- Have I identified any potential Bulgarian leaders? How can I grow them?

3. Read chapters 8-11 in *Total Church*

Week 4

1. Meet with your mentor this week. This should be a “goal-setting” meeting. You are now at the end of your first six months; it’s time to take stock and reset your game plan. Review your long-term goals and then set new short term goals as needed. The goals should be S.M.A.R.T. – Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic Time-bound
2. Meet with your accountability partner. Review your spiritual development over the last six months. Have you grown or stalled out? Are you leading your family spiritually (if you have a family)? Discuss your overall spiritual, emotional, and physical health.
3. Read chapters 12, 13, and conclusion in *Total Church*
4. Complete Mentoring Module: Team Culture⁴⁹

Team “Culture”

This module is designed to help you understand the team “culture.” That is to say, the way the team works, how people on the team relate to one another, and what is important to the team. The new missionary will gather this information by talking with teammates and national colleagues.

⁴⁹ Used by permission from MTW. Small changes were made to fit the format of this document. Peter Beck, John Burch and Susan Burch, "Mentoring Modules: A Handbook for New Missionary Training" (Atlanta: Mission to the World – Global Training and Development, 2012, in house document), 23.

Step 1: Talk with each member and ask them to “rate” the team on the following scales.

Focus on how the team actually behaves, not on how you feel it should work.

Our team prefers to:

	Completely	Partially	Completely	
Be structured				Be open
Plan ahead				Go with the flow
Be intentional				Adjust to the environment
Be thoroughly reformed				Be broadly evangelical
Focus on theology				Focus on relationships
Maintain purity of the church				Build relationships with others
Work before we play				Play before we work
Deal with every conflict				Overlook minor disagreements
Follow directions of team leader				Make decisions by consensus
Do ministry together				Function independently
Think carefully, then act				Take risks and fail boldly
Train others fully				Give people responsibility early

Debrief

Discuss with team leader.

What were the areas in which there was agreement and what areas where there was disagreement?

Identify (1) where you would put your personal preferences and (2) any areas that were surprising.

Discuss any areas in which the team feels that they would like to adjust (become more intentional about planning, having more fun together, training more intentionally, etc.)

Reading List & Additional Resources

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW WITH MISSIONARIES TO BULGARIA

5 October 2013

American Missionary to Bulgaria:

- Practically speaking 96% of Bulgarians are Atheist/Agnostic
 - That is, the way they live their lives is very secular; but they are open to talk about spiritual things
- Young people are caught up in materialism – money runs the world
- Bulgarians put more emphasis on family and relationships than Americans
- High school age kids mostly sit at home on computer and video games
- Challenge to missionaries: trying to find areas to help with felt need
- Must have a common ground on which to meet Bulgarians (e.g. ESL or baseball)
 - This way they will not be suspicious of your motives
- Must spend time building trust
 - Being the Gospel in life
 - People want companionship; they want contact with other people
 - People are busy – especially university students – there are logistical challenges to finding time to meet with people
- Initial challenges to missionary: learning the language and culture! Very important.

Bulgarian National Christian Missionary:

- Have to spend a lot of time with Bulgarians to earn trust and respect.
- Respect is very important!
 - There are many cults so people are not trusting – cults try to give things and be friendly to get people to come to their meetings
- Key is to always speak the truth; be honest about being a Christian
- Don't push the people to talk about God – build the relationship first
- There is a political debate going on in Studentski Grad; government wants to do away with clubs and entertainment so the kids can concentrate on studies
 - Some students want to study and some do not
 - Education is cheap so there are many foreign students
- In order to begin a relationship you must provide them with some product or service (e.g. ESL) or have something in common (e.g. a sport or hobby)

- People pretend to be “Christian” but are practically Atheist; because it’s a Christian culture
 - They visit the Church on holidays; some pray to icons, burn candles; some would like to find peace in the Church
 - They do not think about Jesus, only about God
 - They do not read the Bible
 - Orthodox Church does not want to translate the Bible into new Bulgarian; Church uses old Bulgarian language – people don’t understand it
 - The OC is more about traditions – they think our Bible is different
 - Communists convinced the people there is not God but they did not close churches – they put spies in the churches
 - New generation is more open to talk about God
 - This has led to more cults – people are seeking
 - More Eastern religions are creeping in
- More Mormons, Adventists, Jehovah’s Witness, etc.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW WITH A RETIRED MISSIONARY COUPLE

Interview with Norm & Sue Patterson

1/17/14

1. Describe your calling to missions.
 - a. Confirmation by: the word of God, counsel of godly men and women.
 - b. A need doesn't necessarily constitute a call
 - c. He called both spouses; God doesn't break up the family
2. How many years? Countries?
 - a. Swaziland, Zimbabwe, South Africa
3. What organization and specific ministry?
 - a. Crusade – reach business and government leaders (affinity groups – reach different levels of the culture)
4. What was your target group?
 - a. Leaders in various groups
 - b. Observing and calculating the felt need of the people
5. How were you prepared for life on the mission field?
 - a. Norm was discipled by their pastor in Colorado prior to leaving
 - b. Joined CCC – 3 months cross cultural training in California
 - c. It was a mentored training
 - d. Always being trained, even on the field
6. What initial challenges did you face upon arrival?
 - a. Readjusting to a new culture
 - b. Much easier to adjust to Swaziland b/c they spoke English
 - c. Simplifying your life – no television radio, dishwasher, disposal; no comforts
 - d. Time – the framework of time
 - e. From a woman's perspective – she went to a older style home
 - i. First big adjustment was the team – seemed to tension between the women
 - ii. Relating with teammates and with other teams
 - f. Must learn to transcend differences and remember you're there to serve the Lord
7. Fill in the statement: If I had known _____ things would have been much better for our ministry and/or family.
 - a. The team wasn't perfect

- i. Having unreal expectation
8. What role does personal and spiritual formation play in the life of a missionary?
 - a. Must be ongoing and continuous even on the field
 - b. Daily personal devotions need to be maintained
 - i. Among the family and with the team
 - ii. Praying with one another – personal prayer and family prayer
 - c. Forgiveness is crucial
 - d. Team had once a month day of pray – allowed opportunity for forgiveness and prayer between teammates
 - e. Do not let things build up
 - f. Accountability to the Lord and to each other
9. How can a missionary remain grounded in the faith and continue growing in maturity?
 - a.
10. What further advice would you have for new missionaries?
 - a. The goal is to keep your family intact, your marriage strong and people will see the Gospel through that
 - b. People think differently around the world – need to form a Christian world and life view – some things will still be different
 - c. Having people in the home – start with team then church then friends; then invite people to bring their friends
 - i. See what the culture dictates as far as entertaining; whether to serve a meal, alcohol, etc.
 - d. Building bridges and relationships in everything you do
 - e. What to take?
 - i. Things that remind you of home
 - ii. Those familiar things that make your home
 - iii. Don't take digital clocks or other electronics
 - iv. Don't take something so valuable that if you lose it you'll be crushed
 - v. Take photo albums
 - vi. First aid kit

antibiotics that haven't been activated yet

APPENDIX C
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BULGARIAN SOUL