**HMA THOUGHTS** (updated 10 Feb 2014)

**Scheduling your HMA**:  In conversation with your team leader, plan the best time to be away for your family and the ministry – have a debrief of your term. Forms and testing may be available and asked for by the MTW resource team. MTW has to know ahead when you are coming back... Try to make transition near when a RE-Entry conference is planned – helpful to do this Re-Entry Conference soon after your arrival.

Talk to your MTW Resource Rep about any requirements or helps they might have also in helping your make this transition.

**Helpful Reading Ahead:**

Re-Entry by Peter Jordan

The Art of Coming Home by Craig Sorti

ReEntry booklet on www.missionarycare.com

Interaction Articles on Transition and “RAFT” Available from Sue Burch, Paul Meiners and Resource Reps (attached to this email)

**Housing:**

1) Where to live? Is there a church with a missions house as central as you can get to where your supporters and supporting churches are? Or maybe you would like to live near your family so that you can have support with baby-sitting and child minding if you go to a conference or visit and leave the kids.

2)We asked for free or really cheap housing each time we went...  We were able to find a home close to most of our supporting churches both times.  I think I would choose to be near good friends and supporters over just a free place somewhere.

3) Decide ahead of time if you are going to take the children with you on each church visit. We have seen families get exhausted and kids not be very settled and secure if they are going hither and yon on each weekend.

4) Be careful about ‘using’ your children as your best visual tool for your ministry. It puts a lot of pressure on their little selves. This is unique to each family and you have to come to a decision that is best for your family.

**Car:** Several Different organisations that try to help missionaries on Home Ministry Assignment . Asking for help in obtaining a 2nd older car to be left with the family when husband goes on a HMA visit on his own, which will probably happen, is a good request to make of your supporters.

MATS International, Inc. (Richmond, Indiana, USA) / [www.mats.org](http://www.mats.org)

Christian Missionary Technical Services (Pennsylvania, USA) / www.cmtsministries.org

Missionary Motors – Kansas City, MO

[www.missionarymotors.com](http://www.missionarymotors.com)

Righteous Rides - St Louis, MO

[www.righteousrides.org](http://www.righteousrides.org)

Missionary Tech Team

<http://www.missionarytechteam.org/index.php> Longview, TX

It may be worth the airfare to fly to where some of these organisations are located to get a car – if it is a good deal. I would put in a reservation NOW if you think you may need one of these cars. One of our MTW families is using Righteous Rides, one is using Missionary Motors, and others have used MATS.

During one HMA we had - we contacted a friend who owned a FORD car dealership. They told us to come see them when we got in the country and they would "sell" us a car... what happened is that we told them what type of vehicle we wanted (which was a used Explorer SUV) and they sold it to us... no money down, we financed through Ford Motors for a payment we could afford each month... and then at the end, the dealership bought the car back from us at the cost of whatever was left on our contract... No extra cost to us... This was a huge blessing... we paid the monthly payments from being reimbursed from MTW for the mileage travelled...  it adds up and was very helpful.  We also had to pay for car insurance and repairs – which there were none.

Car insurance can be a problem if you have a break in your driving and insurance record. Some have had to be put on a family member’s policy for that reason. Some states may see that you have a license from overseas and treat you as a new driver. Point out that you have had licenses in whatever states you lived in the past. But, you may still need to get an international license or be licensed in whatever state you are in to obtain insurance. An insurance agent in a home church may be able to help.

**Video Presentation:** Gone are the slide presentations in the trays that go cha chink cha chink.

1. We have found that when sharing about your ministry and the need for the Gospel where you are, it is best to have several different options.
2. A 2 minute, 5 minute and 10 minute video presentation is ideal. Don’t just do a PowerPoint and explain every slide. That is boring. We were told that by some very honest people – our kids!
3. Have a couple of versions of your ppt, or the option to show it at quicker speed (with music/recorded narration) or slower where there is time & interest, or to jump right in at later point and skip intro/background/family update. Flexibility is helpful, as you may be promised 20 min but it turns out to be 10, or you find you’re presenting to the K-1st grade class instead of the 20-30’s.
4. LOTS of photos and music along with it. Audio clips and some short video clips to see you all in action. I would start working on this as far ahead as you can. If you are not very cluey as to how to put this together on the computer – then get an outline together, record some audio clips about what you want to communicate, and then put the photos in order and insert them and video into the order and ask someone who knows what they are doing to help you. There are software programs that can do this. Don’t leave it ‘till the last minute. Our daughter, Ruthanne, helped us with ours – and I betcha you all can do it too!
5. Put the presentation on a jump drive, DVD’s and your computer so that you have several different options in how to use it. For some churches, we did not have an opportunity to show the DVD, so we burned some extra ones, and sent it along afterwards in a packet to the missions committee or group there that would be interested.
6. Make sure you have speakers to use if it includes audio. Be ready to go with all the Tech stuff that you need, in case the churches don’t have it.
7. Getting this ready is another thing.... you need a script to work from and decide if you are going to be live on the video or just your voices or someone else's... we have done both ways... We like speaking ourselves on the audio portion since the people are hearing from us – but also having some nationals add thoughts to the report... we have done this 5 times now... once in raising support and several times reporting back on HMA visits.

**Display**:  A table display is very helpful to make contact with a lot of people...

There are so many different things you can do with this. We had a fold out display board with 3 sections to it. It is about two feet high and three or four feet wide. There is a piece that fits on the top that has the proper Mission to the World logo on it...

2) It fits on top of tables – card tables and rectangular tables alike... and then you can put things out front on the table like things from your country, sign ups for your prayer letter, prayer cards... other information...

3) The display all folds up in a little case and has a carpet like background that we "stuck" pictures and display things on with Velcro tabs... Looked pretty good and professional.  But we have also seen more screen typed displays. You could talk to Amy Glass and the communications team or your resource rep for ideas. You probably have some of your own.

4) You can also buy foam display panels at Office Depot and put pics & stuff on with rubber cement. It can be cut in half vertically and could reconnect with binder clips (smaller table) or display them side by side (larger table, more space for folks to see pics and display materials). At that size they fit in airline overhead

5) There are several companies that can help you design or make a display. Costs vary…

This organisation helps with displays also - Missionary Tech Team

<http://www.missionarytechteam.org/index.php> Longview, TX

**Prayer Cards:**

1. Go ahead and send in a RECENT picture a few months before you return for HMA. You might need to update the back of the card. Information is on the MTW Roundtable under the communications tab about the word limit and photo size needed.
2. 200 word maximum on the back of prayer card!!! At least 300 dpi photo file. Contact Melanie Benedict [melanie.benedict@mtw.org](mailto:melanie.benedict@mtw.org) for your prayer card to be updated so that it is ready for when you get there....
3. It takes a while for these to be done and if you wait until you get there, then you may not be able to use this in a prayer letter or to have handy to give to people right away.
4. I am pretty sure that you could do some other format for your prayer card – like a photo with everything printed ON it or one made into a magnet– you have seen these from other mission organisations I am sure. These make good supporter gifts. You can print magnet sheets at Office Supply stores.
5. BUT… you HAVE to have the MTW ‘old’ traditional one too. Check with communication dept on that. We have seen a few very creative prayer reminders. Round little ‘chip’ like cards, cards in shape of the country… etc.

**Church Visits:**

1. DO TRY TO SCHEDULE CHURCH VISITS before you leave your field....
2. ALSO schedule time with extended family and a vacation before you start on your church visits. We see time with extended family as different from our own family vacation and recharging time. Sometimes visits with parents and siblings can be exhausting. Whatever is appropriate and will help you. ....very important to make these plans just as much a priority as visiting your supporters.
3. Depending on how long you are going to be on HMA... have a vacation at the end of time too..... very important, because you will be tired from all the "**H** urriedly **M** oving **A** round"...  (that is what HMA really means :).  Take your time in between church visits. Sometimes you just need to have some time in a hotel to recharge between being with people so much.
4. We had opportunities in Sunday services, Sunday schools, mid week meetings, special gatherings just to hear from us, supporter meetings in people's homes (really good and intimate and great time to pray)... and missions conferences where you are asked to do so many different things. People are eager to go to the missions conference of a church, but sometimes you may find exposure is actually quite limited. Times on HMA in the summer we often had more contact- lunch w missions committee, preaching, SS class, picnic with church, etc, because you and your ministry were sole focus and the people in the church had time to spend with you.
5. Decide ahead of time if you are going to take the children with you on each church visit. We have seen families get exhausted and kids not be very settled and secure if they are going hither and yon on each weekend.

**Conferences:**We took advantage of being in America to hear as much good teaching and preaching as we could get a hold of.  We went to several different conferences just for our growth and encouragement.

1. If you are in America during an official Re-Entry conference with MTW... you are required to go unless you get "permission" not to.  Do go! It is about 4 days and is really helpful.  Fun to be with other missionaries and they do share some helpful things about going back into the "home" culture, time seasoned missionaries, MTW office staff from the IT and HR departments and Alice Hatch and other counsellors are there to help also.  If you are not there for the conferences that happen 2x a year, then you will probably have a couple of days around the office in meetings with staff and Alice Hatch.  I personally would try to schedule an HMA so that this conference is in the beginning of your time at home.
2. ALSO – don’t miss MTW Summer Conference. It is an encouraging time to be together as a family and there are special ‘camp’ programs for the kids. The teens actually have their own camp put on by MTW’s GYFM team and the Ridge Haven counselors, while the rest of the family is cared for by CMI and MTW’s Spiritual Life Team.
3. There are so many other good resources. MTW Summer Conference, Living in Grace, Sonship, Global Church Advancement, Ligonier, PCA CE&P conferences, John Piper’s pastors conferences, Perspectives, Peacemakers conference or training event and others.

**Financial Considerations:** You will be paid your salary in the states... same as you get on the field and your housing allowance if you need it.

1) The GSA, vehicle adjustments and other allowances for living overseas will most likely not be given in your monthly pay check. Remember that when considering your budget. Check with your MTW resource rep to get a clear picture of what your pay check will be when you are on HMA.

2) All of your travel and ministry expenses, which are many when back on HMA, are covered by the amount from your SQW that has been coming out each month while you have been with MTW... But be careful when considering a trip – check and see if it is less money to rent a car than to claim the mileage allowance on your car – (and consider the wear and tear on your own car too) We have been renting cars for these HMA visits and found it more economical…

3) It does seem like we spent more money in America than on the field... just living... maybe because we bought things to set up a temporary office for us and home/house things that we just could not do without in the house we were in... like a cordless phone... like a tv and video player... like a printer for our laptop... We either left these things to the church that gave us the house or gave them to our daughters who were in college in the States. It does take a bit of $$ to set up a home base – even if it is for HMA.

**Computer and Internet:** It would be lovely if you live in a mission house, that the church have the Internet service hooked up for you. Then you can pay them (if they require that) for the monthly bill).

**Forms...forms... forms....:** There seems to be A LOT more form filling out when you are in America... forms for mileage reimbursement, forms for expense reimbursements, forms for medical, forms for this and that....

**Medical Insurance:** I found it much more challenging to be in the states with the Medical Insurance coverage than being here.

1. When you are overseas, you do not need prior approval for anything. Now in America, our insurance policy does now require pre-approval for specialists – unless it is outpatient surgery, in patient, and some special tests like CT or MRI. Check the policy summary you have been sent or call Brenda Ward at the office. Usually the doctors and dentists offices in America will send in the bills right to AIR and then it gets taken care of by them.  Don’t forget to tell them to send bills to AIR and not the CIGNA network
2. Same with Prescriptions... you pay what the Pharmacy and insurance won't pay... somehow most Pharmacies know what that cost is through the Partners Rx pharmacy drug coverage program.
3. Get in touch with the CareHere clinic at the office to get prescriptions filled first. If CareHere can not provide the meds, then go to online ordering and then if you can not get the meds, get it filled at a pharmacy and present your insurance card. Saves a lot of money going through Care Here.
4. It would be a good idea to peruse the Medical Insurance manual – and the document on the HR tab on the MTW Roundtable called “Welcome Back to the United States”. It is all about medical and insurance information. As of Feb 2014 – document needs to be updated.

**Doctors and dentist visits:** Take the opportunity to have thorough check ups for yourself and the children while you are in America.

1. This can be done through the Care Here Clinic at the MTW office. Dr Mark Henson does a great job and is a wonderful supportive doctor who cares more about you than just your body needs… although he is really good with that too. Check to see if he will see children it may be best to have a paediatrician locally that you can call on also.
2. Also, your home church may have a doctor & dentist who’d be glad to serve by doing physicals and being a repository of medical records. If so, send them copies of records from overseas care and get reports from them you can share with providers where you serve so you have a better medical history for the sake of consistent care. Make sure if they are charging you – that they are a part of the CIGNA network that is required by our insurance.
3. The same can be true for other professional services like wills, banking. Ask the church if there is someone they would recommend to you.
4. This would be a good time to get a consult on the children’s teeth... get the idea of what they would do in America so you know what to ask for in your country overseas...  Sometimes care overseas is just as good or better and much much less expensive. Annual physicals with your doctors and check ups with the dentist are 100% COVERED under our medical plan.... Maybe not the labwork, but the physical is. Check with the policy.
5. Take advantage of what is covered in your insurance policy, but be careful how you use it. We have a self funded policy.

**What do you do with all of your stuff on the field?:** We have been able to leave everything in our home for both HMA's since we "rented" our home out or had people "house sit" both times... Some folks have to pack up all of their belongings and put them in a storage facility each HMA that they have had.  Big pain to do that, but if you are not keeping your home, I do not see any way around that.... Try not to have things scattered too many places... just a pain to get everything back and to know where it all is.

**What to take back to the US?:** I would not take as many clothes as I did both times I went.

1. I found that what clothes were purchased in my ‘home’ country overseas just did not seem the right things to wear in America or were "not the look" I wanted to portray.
2. We ended up buying John two suits and me several things right when we got back and a whole lot of other stuff from LL Bean, and Land's End... MTW has a discount code with a good men’s store - Joseph A Bank.
3. Churches’ missionary clothes closets were not that helpful for us, but others may have some good experiences with them... for the children too.  The First Baptist Church in Atlanta allows any missionary to make a visit each time they are on HMA. First Baptist also has other resources available like dishes and kitchen supplies, paint, linen. If you are supported by 1st PCA in Chattanooga, I hear they have a good resource, as does Briarwood PCA in Birmingham, AL.
4. There are often BIG consignment sales in neighbourhoods that can outfit your children or yourself for a bid reduction in price. You get gently worn or not worn clothes and equipment for a huge discount. Ask your friends in the area when these sales happen. Usually young moms will know.