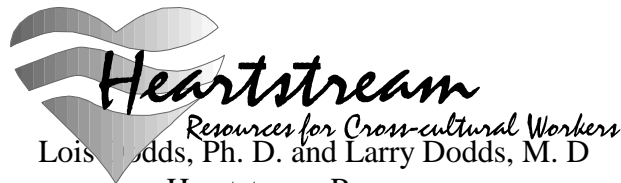


Selection, Training, Member Care and Professional Ethics: Choosing the Right People and Caring for Them with Integrity

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Presenters

Larry and Lois Dodds have been involved in the care of missionaries and other cross-cultural workers for over 25 years. Formally this has included providing medical care, counseling, human resource and personnel work, teaching adults and MKs, and many leadership roles such as field branch director and devotional committee chairmen. Informally this caring has included hospitality to many hurting missionaries, a ministry of encouragement, providing resources such as books, outfitting homes for missionaries and MK's. Their home (actually, 52 of them!) has been a hospital to the hurting from many lands and many ministries.

Lois and Larry Dodds served for 23 years with Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics, including thirteen years in the Amazon jungle of Peru. During these years Lois served in various support roles, including human resources/personnel, as the school and community counselor, as a high school teacher, and as a writer in anthropology and linguistics. Larry served as physician for the members of SIL and WBT and other missions, as well as caring for the indigenous peoples of Peru and overseeing health training programs.

Lois, a graduate of Westmont College, earned an M.A. in education, with an emphasis in human development, from Azusa Pacific University, an M.A. in confluent education at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and the Ph.D. in psychology and education at UCSB. She is the author of ten books and more than 100 articles. She served in WBT's candidate selection and training program, Quest, for several years, and in this program counseled and taught nearly a thousand candidates. She has over 11,000 hour counseling in the cross-cultural setting.

Larry earned his degree in medicine at the University of Southern California, after graduating from Wheaton College. After internship and service in the U.S. military he took a family practice residency in Ventura, California. He is board certified in Preventive Medicine and has much experience in tropical medicine as well. Before working with Heartstream Resources he served for seven years as director of the Public Health Department of Ventura County in California.

Both Lois and Larry teach in the summers with Azusa Pacific University's overseas extension Masters Program, Operation Impact. They teach a variety of courses and subjects related to leadership, including human development, whole person studies, spiritual formation, ethics, creative leadership, and counseling. They have taught cross-cultural workers from dozens of organizations in more than twenty countries.

The Dodds have three children and seven grandchildren. Their daughter and her husband are missionaries in Peru.

Heartstream Resources is a non-profit organization serving the needs of cross-cultural workers around the world. The four purposes are to provide programs of restoration and renewal for cross-cultural workers wounded or depleted in service, to provide education/prevention programs, to assist mission agency leaders through education and consultation, and to research matters related to cross-cultural ministry.

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Why Do We Care about Selection?

We present these ideas based on over 25 years experience in missions, many of these years directly involved in selection and training of missionary candidates and various aspects of personnel work. For 23 years we were members of WBT and SIL, and served in several roles related to the care of missionaries. For the past four years we have been devoted to the care of missionaries, especially those in crisis. For twelve years well we have taught hundreds of missionaries abroad in about thirty countries, representing dozens of mission agencies and national origins. This has all been valuable experience; we have learned something of what is important in the selection, training, and care of missionaries. We have learned that **who** is chosen and **why** has direct impact on effectiveness and longevity in field settings.

Besides serving as a physician involved in the spiritual and emotional care of field members, I (Larry) often served in leadership roles during our 13 years with WBT in Peru. I served as acting field director, director of government relations, and on various committees, including the executive committee. In all of these roles I was involved with the handling of matters relating to field members' needs and problems.

In Peru, I (Lois) too was involved in member care and had many opportunities to assess the impact of selection policies and procedures as reflected in field personnel. My roles involved teaching adult orientation programs for members, personnel work, counseling and informal roles of encouragement and nurture. In the US, I also served for seven years on Wycliffe's Quest staff. Concurrently I taught some other training programs for missionaries and served many times on Candidate Action Committees, spending hours, sometimes days, wrestling with the implications of candidate's life stories, their needs and limitations, their gifts and experience. In the Quest program I taught and assisted in assessment, selection and training of over eight hundred candidates.

Thus, we approach the matter of selection and the ethical treatment of candidates and members from several perspectives: the pre-field selection and training process, the on-field

perspectives of mission personnel work and leadership, counseling and medical care (seeing the fall-out of some selection), and from the educational and restorational side of caring for missionaries in distress.

Ethical issues for missions begin immediately, right up front in the recruitment, assessment and selection of missionaries. Choosing the **right** people is crucial to the survival and development of the person as well as being crucial to the organization's effectiveness. We believe that inadequate assessment and casual selection is a violation of ethics, for we have an ethical, moral and spiritual responsibility to select people suited for the complex and heavily stressful cross-cultural experience. Choosing and sending out those who lack the personal resources of spiritual maturity, resiliency, hardiness, solid ego-strength and relational skills is to set people up for failure and loss. If inappropriate selection is compounded by inadequate training, we increase the likelihood of failure or crisis on the field.

Key Factors in Missionary Selection

We believe the following are key factors in the selection of missionaries, based in our experience and observations of almost 30 years. These criteria, and others, when chosen by an agency or a sending church, should be described in writing, showing why they are important. One can document why mental health, emotional resiliency, and purity of life are essential requirements for anyone entering cross-cultural ministry. As religious organizations, missions and churches do have the right to recruit people who meet their standards of belief and Christian practice. It is important, however, to validate the importance of these beliefs and practices and their relevance to ministry in cross-cultural settings.

Ideally these factors should first be identified in candidates in the local church, since the selection process for mission usually begins there. We believe the church has a key role in getting to know those who believe they have a call from God for serving in missions. The sending church and the mission agency share the responsibility to assess the following factors in the person's life, because these factors exert great influence in survival, longevity and effectiveness in cross-cultural work. In reality, the home church probably has the best opportunity for assessment, as it will have a history with the person over a longer time than the mission agency.

1. Spiritual maturity and the ability to USE and APPLY God's Word (knowledge alone is insufficient). Questions to ask should include:

- \$ Can this person feed herself/himself from the Word? Can he/she feed others?
- \$ Does this person have a good working knowledge of the Word, without needing to rely on written helps?
- \$ How dependent on God is this person for daily direction, matters of life? What **evidence** of that do you see?
- \$ What is this person's history of obedience to God? In hardship does this person turn to God or away from Him in anger or rebellion?
- \$ Is personal fulfillment or satisfaction more important than obedience to God's standards of attitude and conduct?
- \$ What is the person's attitude towards suffering?

\$ Does this person demonstrate the call of God in his or her life through having already learned to serve God?

When spiritual maturity is lacking, and people can not sustain themselves spiritually, they are much more vulnerable to burnout, depletion, and discouragement. Lack of knowledge of the truth makes one susceptible to deception of all kinds, and even to disobedience. Is it ethical to send someone into battle, spiritual warfare, without the most important weapons and knowledge of resources?

2. **The “call of God” (motivation for serving and going).** Those who feel certain of God's call are able to stand firm, and are more likely to be effective in hardship. Certainty about God's call is usually demonstrated in some measurable ways, such as having already served within the church or para-church organizations. The best predictor of the future service is past experiences of being a God-centered and other-centered person. Those who go into mission due to desire for escape, travel, adventure, etc., do not have the staying power when culture shock, hardship, or trauma hit. We have a responsibility to identify such inappropriate motivation and redirect people who are not yet ready for the degree of commitment which mission requires.

3. **Emotional health and maturity** is a critical factor in the person's ability to get along with others, and to adjust to the myriad changes demanded in mission. In most mission situations it may take years for fruit to be visible. Thus the ability to remain stable and defer gratification is essential to perseverance. An emotionally immature person will create hardship for others through making inappropriate demands, creating inappropriate dependency, and deserting a situation prematurely. It is critical that a person deal with past issues, such as family of origin problems, before going overseas, because the load of such problems may become unbearable when coupled with the new burdens of adjustment. Unfinished business created greater vulnerability to overload because new stressors are added to the emotional stresses already carried. It is not appropriate to send out those who lack the emotional resources for endurance. To do so is to set them up for failure. Dr. Ester Schubert has done extensive work on candidate selection, identifying psychological patterns and problems which are detriments to mission service (Schubert, 1996, 1993).

4. **Relationship maturity** is essential. Look carefully at the person's current relationships with family, friends, colleagues, members of the church. Are these healthy, nurturing relationships? Are there recurring problems in relationships? Past and present relationships are the best indicators of what kind a person will establish once in mission. Does the person have the ability and willingness to make many friends, and to do so quickly? During mission training, language study, and first term on the field, he or she will likely have to create hundreds of new relationships. Does the person withdraw in conflict, or become aggressive and angry, or know how to resolve conflict appropriately? Does the person have the ability to create a supportive, nurturing group around the self? That has much to do with survival! Living out the Biblical model of interdependency allows for long-term effectiveness. Disregarding the need for relationship and the value of interdependency leads to a host of personal and relational problems.

5. **Coping ability** is another key factor. How does the person do in handling stress, overcoming hardships, being resilient and adaptable? Look back over the person's life and ask: AHow did he

or she adjust to key events or obstacles, such as leaving home, parent's death, divorce of parents, going to college, the first job, change of room mate, loss of romance, meeting demands and expectations, sudden changes? How does he or she handle disappointments?@ If you see a pattern of anxiety, inability to cope and grow from challenge, and over-dependency, these are likely indications that the person lacks sufficient **hardiness** for the overseas challenge. Emotional resiliency is a crucial factor in determining how well a person does long term in field settings. The history of the person under heavy stresses is a crucial predictor of future patterns of coping. Over stress on the field may lead to relapses of maladaptive coping efforts, such as the use of alcohol, sexual addiction, reliance on pornography, and other destructive behaviors.

It is irresponsible to send out candidates who have been ineffectively screened for those behaviors and/or to not prepare them for the likelihood of the recurrence of these. This applies to those with other major unresolved issues. Careful judgements are required here! A careful and detailed history is essential, for it contains the seeds of behaviors which may become devastating when recurring in the field setting. We have worked with some priceless, cream of the crop young people who were jewels to their churches and sending agencies who had histories of sexual abuse and problems that were not attended to pre-field and thus broke out in the form of immoral behavior under the severe stresses of life overseas. Tragically, this has cost them their ministries and great grief to their missions, churches and constituency. We can prevent having lives devastated by doing more careful screening and making sure people are helped sufficiently before hand if they are to be sent out. Fine cracks in the foundation of personality and relationships become chasms under the weight of stress typical of the first years in mission. If this stress is compounded with normal life stresses, such as marriage, having babies and caring for young children with no social support, it can become overwhelming.

6. Record of service. Has this person clearly demonstrated the willingness, desire, and ability to serve others? How long and how reliably has she or he served within the church, the school, the community, the home? In mission the usual pattern is to end up doing many jobs and tasks one does not choose. Thus the willingness to serve is critical for maintaining a positive attitude. One may not get to practice the role or job chosen. One may have to do jobs for years which one has not been trained for, and may have no preference for doing. How does this person respond emotionally and cope when asked to serve in a "least favorite" way? On the other hand, missions bear an ethical responsibility to recruit people and place them in jobs matched to their gifts and training.

7. Job skills and work experience. Does this person have sufficient work experience in any field or job to have proved his or her reliability, ability to be on time, ability to handle responsibility, etc.? Does he or she have skills which are needed in the mission context? Is he or she able to teach others and to pass on skills and knowledge? This is becoming increasingly important as governments seek people who can teach and train others. Does the person have sufficient experience in their chosen job role so that the first adjustments to the role itself have been made and will not be superimposed on the adaptation to mission life? (E.g., a first time teacher will be highly stressed. Going overseas to do one's first year of teaching doubles the stress.) A wise mission can reduce unnecessary stress by requiring teachers to first gain experience in the home land before going abroad.

8. **Resourcefulness** C the ability to create, re-use, re-structure, re-cycle and make-do and make-new in order to meet needs which can't be met in typical ways (e.g., financial resourcefulness which allows a shift from buying everything for oneself to procuring what is needed in a variety of ways). Is this person bound to a set way of things (Sunday dinner must be roast beef) or able to be flexible and develop new patterns (sandwiches might do)? Those who are tightly bound to their own culture's ways of doing and being are more likely to find it hard to adjust to another way. Resourceful people flex more and are more able to go with the flow of another culture and its different rhythms and resources.

9. **Able to generate support** of all kinds. Would you want this person to represent you, your home church, your organization? Is he or she able to communicate clearly his or her call and the need which he or she wants to fulfill? Will others be willing to invest in this person in prayer, money, time, other supports? Will he or she know how to generate emotional nurture and spiritual support to sustain them through years of ministry? Those who can not create their own support systems will likely not have their emotional and social needs met in a new setting. How ethical is it for a mission to allow support raising to go on for years, as it occasionally does, with little success?

10. **A theology of suffering** will enable the person to survive and make sense of hardships. Though the American church teaches little about this, it is important to enduring as a missionary. If people assume that doing God's will always bring blessing immediately, they are set up for disillusionment and dropping out. We find that missionaries from other cultures are often better at dealing with set-backs and hardships than are American missionaries who have been so exposed to a "health and wealth" gospel, even unwittingly, and who come from more affluent cultures. Candidates need to honestly face that they may suffer hardship, be beaten, captured or even die BECAUSE they are choosing obedience to God. Obedience does not insure blessing, at least in the short run of life on earth. Hebrews 11 bears eloquent testimony of that. Jesus Himself told of the servants who were beaten and sent home empty handed **because** they had obeyed their master.

It may seem paradoxical to admit that cross-cultural ministry is inherently hazardous and at the same time talk about the organization's ethical responsibility in protecting and caring for people. Yet, the two do go together. **Because** we know the risks, we have a greater responsibility to provide care, just as an army must provide for its troops in the field because they are in danger.

We believe that it is unethical to knowingly place people in situations characterized by chronic high stress without appropriate assessment, selection and training. Those who are unprepared, or are inappropriately selected while lacking sufficient personal resources will likely suffer, particularly through depression, burnout, and a host of illnesses. They may become drop-outs, lost to ministry and to missions. They will likely carry a life-long burden of shame because they did not "make it." (See our paper, "Stressed from Core to Cosmos" regarding the stresses of mission life.) Those chosen because of their (expected, predicted) resiliency, etc., have a greater likelihood of becoming effective in spite of the hazards.

You will probably notice that we put more emphasis on the quality of the person than on job or career training. This is intentional. Choosing the right people, in terms of maturity and attitudes, is far more difficult and important than finding people with skills to offer. Long term effectiveness is based more in the person than in the job skills. Given that so many missionaries, top leaders included, end up practicing a "job" they were not trained for anyway, placing more emphasis on the person makes sense. The right people can usually learn to do a given job, within reason. The person with the best skills or career preparation, on the other hand, may not gain the personal attributes to effectively relate across cultures.

Essential Elements of Mission Preparation

1. **Strengthening the spiritual life** should include attention to these:

- * the preparation of prayer--learning many ways to pray
- * the preparation of the Word--learning many ways to feed oneself from the Word; memorization, meditation, journaling, and other exercises
- * teaching about the reality and the power of the Holy Spirit
- * exercise of faith--expecting God to act, trusting Him for needs, experiencing His faithfulness
- * knowing how to lead another person to Christ
- * developing more effectiveness in ministry within the church while getting started in the mission process

2. **Self study** is essential! It involves coming to understand who one is and how one got to be that way, with personality type, personal history, family of origin, questions of authority. All of these have impact on ability to adjust and become effective.

- * Without adequate knowledge of one's self the process of adaptation and becoming effective will be hampered.
- * Taking care of any "old business" or unresolved issues in one's life is essential, since they will drain one's energy and become even bigger under the weight of adjustment to mission life.

3. **Cross-cultural awareness training and anthropology** is also essential to making the major shifts and adjustments required.

- * physical health training (food, water, etc.)
- * language acquisition skills (principles and skills for learning any new language)
- * cycle of adjustment, culture shock, etc.
- * acceptance of and willingness to work in different cultural values
- * hands on experiences and simulation of cross-cultural situations

4. **Orientation to the agency or organization**--history, purpose, values, policies, style.

Is this a "fit" with the person's own purpose and values, etc.? What are the expectations about the extent to which the organization has power and influence in the life of its members? How much can one depend on the organization to meet members' needs? Who will have authority in the life of the member? How will that relate to the authority of one's sending churches?

5. **Orientation to the country, language, and peoples** where one is going--history and other

aspects of culture. Knowing what to expect is like a "stress inoculation" which allows for better and quicker adaptation. Understanding the difficulty of language learning, the need to change one's identity, the exhaustion of adjustment are important types of psychological preparation.

6. **Relationship and team building** are essential. Training should increase communication and conflict skills, knowledge of team variables, provide hands-on experience in forming and growing in small groups, and include team projects under hardship conditions.

7. **Professional and/or job preparation** should provide specific skills needed to fulfill the assigned role in mission.

8. **Physical health and maintenance** are crucial aspects of training. Being in the best possible shape provides more energy, enhances adaptation and resilience, and reduces the prospects of illness. Staying in shape is a critical aspect of overcoming stress and maintaining balance.

Commitment to Caring Comes After Choosing

The ethical practice of missions, of course, goes beyond the selection and training phases of mission life. Once it chooses its people the organization should make a complete commitment to preparing and assisting the person to be fully effective in the new ministry. This means ongoing care. Providing for the nurture, ongoing spiritual and relational support is crucial to enabling persons to contribute their best. Providing clearly understood avenues of interaction and feedback with leadership is another means of caring for people.

Serious break-downs in the caring process sometimes arise due to ethical mistakes (we might call them "mission malpractice," which implies that there is an acceptable standard of practice.) These include:

1. **Making decisions about people's lives and ministry without consulting them.** This includes financial decisions, places of ministry, ministry roles, relationships to children, decisions that affect their children and other highly personal matters. Ethical care includes people in all such decisions.

2. **Acting on third party information or allegations rather than on face-to-face interaction with the person.** Such third party information is always filtered by someone else's projections and interpretations, and labeled with their meanings. We know of several cases of people being "sent home" without even having a face to face interview about the perceived problem. Usually the allegations prove to be untrue, but by then great damage has been done by robbing people of their ministries, their homes, their support network, and their honor. Ethical care involves due process, such as face-to-face interactions and fairness and justice.

3. **Giving away confidential information which the person does not want shared.** This is sometimes justified on the belief that others have a "right to know." If there IS a need for others to know anything, the organization should work out **with the person** in writing exactly what is to be shared, and then stick to the script! Great hurt and damage is caused by inappropriate telling of secrets and confidence. Ethical care safeguards confidence, personnel files and other sensitive

material.

Exchanging confidences between homeland and field is really dangerous ground, especially with today's ease of e-mail. Carefully managing records which contain any potentially damaging information is crucial. Access to files should be controlled, locked up and used only by those who have responsibility to guide the person's life and ministry. There are many relevant questions, of course. What about storing records? How long do you keep them? Do you want to keep them? What about potential liability if you keep personnel records with some delicate information that might indicate a possible problem in the future? Do you destroy the documents to prevent "discovery" or keep them for possible future use? Who is the custodian of those documents? When would they be destroyed, if ever? What do you do with written evaluations on new candidates? Do you keep them for follow up in case there are any difficulties? We have seen several people about whom we wondered how they ever got into a mission in the first place, because of things they reported to us, but there was no record of anyone noticing these things. Records do provide a valuable basis for research, so destroying them is not necessarily a good idea.

4. Failing to keep confidences when sought out for advice and feedback. Leaders or co-workers may pass on voluntarily shared information, misgivings, questions, concerns and so on in inappropriate without asking permission of the person to do so. This is a fast way to destroy group morale! When something appears important enough that it should be disclosed to someone else, the listener needs to ask the person to share it themselves, not take it upon themselves to pass it on. Ethical care is listening, keeping confidences, sharing with a third person only with permission.

5. Failure to give regular performance reviews so that a person knows how he or she is doing, whether living up to expectations, etc. Regular review provides a safe way to give appreciation, affirmation, and suggestions for growth and change. Ethical leadership coaches and teaches in order to support people in growth in ministry. Without feedback, people flounder and may lose heart. To be fired in absentia, without having had any discussion of reasons, is devastating.

6. Failure to give feedback for positive and appropriate behavior, but giving criticism for failures, unmet expectations, etc. How many of us hear we are doing a good job or are making a positive contribution rather than being told of our shortcomings in situations in which everything we are learning is everything new, such as is typical in the first years of overseas life? Ethical care means leaders use authority to "build up" others, as Paul said of the authority God gave to him. Ethical care means making expectations clear from the beginning and giving regular feedback.

7. Failure to make expectations clear about the kind of ministry, the work hours involved, the requirements of involvement, and so on. Candidates should be told as much about every facet of life, especially the impact each will have on him or her and the family before going. Such stress "inoculation" is effective as a means of preventing a variety of problems. Knowing ahead of time one will not have electricity or running water, for instance, or that it usually takes twenty years to gain a convert, averts the shock of learning such things on the spot after having established illusions of something better. Ethical care is pro-active care. It tries to avert,

minimize and mitigate as much unnecessary stress as possible.

8. **Measuring people's "spirituality" by compliance**, lack of assertiveness, and other attributes which are more likely indicators of personality type and conflict styles than spiritual depth.

There is sometimes a tendency to de-value outspoken, articulate new members who point out redundancies, inaccuracies, and make leaders uncomfortable by what they see and say. Young prophets usually don't get good reviews, because by nature they observe and point out problems within systems. Ethical care by leaders means to be open to listen and slow to judge, and to acknowledge the insight and contributions of newer, younger or outspoken members.

9. **"Firing on furlough" and hit and run attacks** which do damage to persons when they are not in a position to defend themselves or to seek resolution to a problem. We see this happen when people return home on furlough, expecting to return to the field, but are told, once home, that they are not wanted back. This cowardly lack of confrontation by leaders or team members does enormous damage, preventing any closure to the wounds created. We saw this happen to a couple recently, based on allegations of wrong doing which were later confessed to be lies by jealous national workers. Even when corrected, the hurt and loss of trust so affects workers that it is very difficult to resume their former roles with those who have mistreated them. Ethical care provides regular, on-going feedback and confrontation when necessary.

10. **Forcing public confessions** of wrong doing when a person is not ready to publicly address a problem behavior. This destroys trust, creates humiliation and shame, and seems to serve no good. On the other hand, when a sinning person agrees to confess his or her wrong doing, and is supported by others in doing so appropriately, the outcome can lead to faster healing for both the individual and the community. Ethical care means doing what is best for the injured person, not hasty attempts to satisfy the curiosity of or pressures from onlookers. The question also needs to be asked, "Is this something that **should** be confessed to a group? How many people have been affected by it?" If few have been, it may not need public confession.

11. **Misuse of power and "spiritual authority"**: Because missions are based in religious faith and practice, the lines of power and authority may become blurred. Seldom is there discussion of whom one is accountable to as a "spiritual authority." Is that always synonymous with a field leader, a supervisor, a devotional leader? How do these work roles and these lines of authority relate? Who has most authority C the sending church, the field entity, the home office, the board of directors? We've never heard any teaching to help us differentiate the many voices which claim to speak for God. Yet, missionaries suffer the consequences when some individual leader assumes for himself or herself to have spiritual authority and power, making decisions without regard to due process. We know situations where people have lost their ministries (and all that accompanies it in a place of service) because one leader considered he or she had the power to terminate their work. When it takes many people, much prayer, and a long time to permit people to enter ministry is it reasonable or proper for one person to quickly snuff it out?

12. **Allowing persons to continue in ministry without intervention** when they have become exhausted, depleted, burned out and empty or ineffective. Loving, ethical care takes them out of the battle for restoration, without condemnation. Loving care provides resources for recovery, and for continued growth.

13. **Mismatch and incongruity between recruitment and actual field life.** The incongruities seem especially glaring when the field experience and the job role assignments bear little resemblance to what recruiters promised or preached. For instance, you can't honestly say that anyone can "do missions." We know that is not true. Research bears out that those who are successful over the long haul have higher than average ego strength, resiliency, and so on.

Recommendations for Improving Ethical Practice in Missions

We propose two things which missions could improve to consistently live "above the law," practicing member care with ethical, spiritual and moral responsibility and excellence. An ethical code of conduct regarding personnel/organization relationships to which mission agencies can voluntarily subscribe needs to be developed. Something along this line has been proposed previously. This seems an excellent time to make it a reality. Such a code would serve missions the way the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) does. It would provide an ethical standard for practice based on fairness and justice, as well as current legal mandates. It would serve to keep member organizations alert to abuses of power and mishandling of people. It would be displayed, along with the ECFA symbol, as a way to tell sending churches and interested parties that ethical care of members is a commitment.

A second need goes with the first--to establish a body, a council of some kind, which can hear and adjudicate grievances of missionaries with their organizations. In that most missionaries are reluctant to go to court and put "in house" problems out for public display, and leaders may hide their mistakes behind this screen, an impartial body with power to arbitrate would be a major step forward in protecting missionaries who are betrayed and violated in some way within their organizations. Likely, just the existence of such a body and the public commitment of an organization to abide by its code would eliminate some abuse because leaders at all levels would be more alert to how people are handled.

Conclusion

When we serve the body of Christ, His precious and chosen children and servants whom He has called into missions worldwide, we are living lives of privilege. To recognize God's high call upon ourselves, and upon each one He places within our care and sphere of influence is to participate with Him in that person's growth into the beauty and likeness of Christ. Such privilege demands the highest level of commitment to integrity and excellence. We dare not fall into the trap of rejecting, damaging, warping or destroying these who are so precious to Him and so important to the growth of His kingdom around the world. Jesus said that if we offend one of His little children, it would be better if a millstone were hung around our neck so that we drown. Those are serious words! We may need to repent of offenses we have caused, to make restitution, to seek reconciliation, to restore the wounded. In so doing we breathe new life into His body, and all of us will more brightly shine with His image and likeness. This is our joy--and our goal--to make Him visible so that the world may know that Jesus loves and cares for them--each of them, just as we love and care for one another.

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