

# Personal Costs/Risks in Cross-cultural Short-Term Missions



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## **Description**

Counting the cost is part of the Christian life in following Jesus, especially in serving missions cross-culturally. Whether we serve two weeks or longer term cross culturally, we need to have a good grasp of the Word as well as understand the culture so our message can come across to our hearers unhindered. We also recognize there are costs/risks involved especially in this day and age. This workshop will address some essential aspects that would help to prepare short-termers before, during and after the trip: What are some potential personal costs/risks? How can we prepare physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually? How can we overcome these challenges before and during the trip and serve our God and the nationals effectively?

It is estimated as many as two million Americans go on international short-term trips each year in partnership with some 100,000 churches, 3,500 organizations and 1,500 schools.

Brian Heerwagen, CEO  
Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Mission

Home STM Avg.	Cost Per Person	Total Annual Cost
30% (48,000 people)	\$650	\$31.2 million
Foreign STM Avg.	Cost Per Person	Total Annual Cost
70% (1.552 million people)	\$2,000	\$3.1 billion
<b>Total Cost</b>		<b>\$3.44 billion</b>

Cross Cultural Missions involves a deliberate and conscious effort to break loosed barriers placed by men – tradition, culture, language, norms, ethnicity, remoteness, exposure – with sacrificial and humble approach of coming low to the level of obscure people in order to win them for Christ over a period of time. It is tasking, humiliating, risky and enduring.

~ Allen Olatunde

A cross-cultural worker is one who leaves the comfort and familiarity of his or her culture to go to a place where the gospel needs to be presented.

~ Mission Across Cultures



- Short-term missions opportunities abound
- Cross-cultural missions opportunities around the world are widely available
- These opportunities could be blessings to both the goers and the nationals
- Making the most of opportunities depend on good preparation, willingness to do what it takes, and having a life-changing experiences





**Cost**

**-Risk**

**FOR WHICH OF YOU, INTENDING  
TO BUILD A TOWER, DOES NOT  
SIT DOWN FIRST AND COUNT  
THE COST, WHETHER HE HAS  
ENOUGH TO FINISH IT —  
ELSE, AFTER HE HAS LAID THE  
FOUNDATION, AND IS NOT ABLE  
TO FINISH, ALL WHO SEE IT  
BEGIN TO MOCK HIM, SAYING,  
'THIS MAN BEGAN TO BUILD  
AND WAS NOT ABLE TO  
FINISH'?**

**LUKE 14:28-30**

Counting the cost is part of the Christian life in following Jesus.

- What are some of the costs?
- How do we calculate the cost?
- How do we count the cost in advance when we do not know what cost will be exacted from us in the end?

## **1. Sign on the Dotted Line**

A commitment to the highest possible cost

(In other words, you don't need to know the specifics of the cost in your own particular situation if the agreement you sign is "I'm yours at any cost.")

"I go anywhere. I'll do anything, at any time and at any cost."

"Authentic discipleship may exact from you the highest price relationally and the highest price physically."



## 2. No Negotiating

Luke 14:33 “So, therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33).

You must be ready at any time to let go of everything for Jesus’s sake.

“There is no cost you can pay in following Jesus that won’t be made up a thousandfold in the resurrection.”

“You must count the cost in order to be a disciple. The cost is total in principle and may be total in actual experience. In the end, having Jesus means gain, like Paul says: “I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (Philippians 3:8).”

~ John Piper

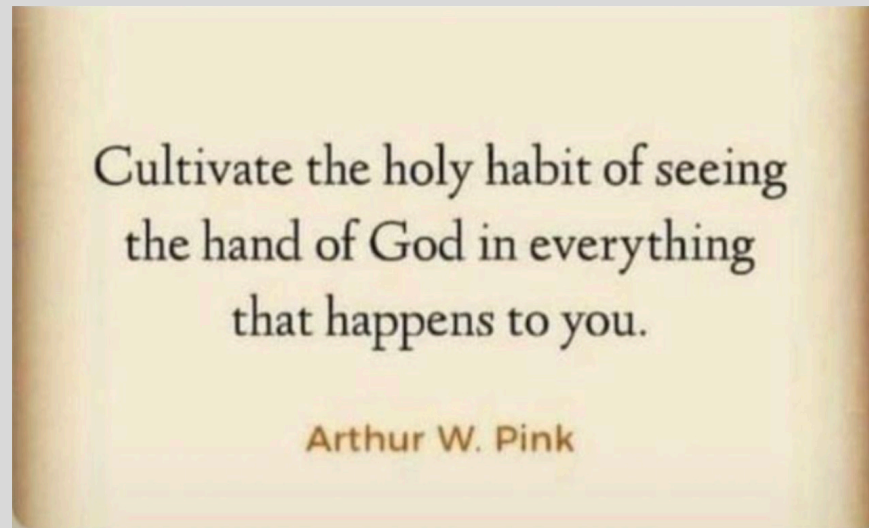
Some of the possible costs of missions trips:

- Time
- Money
- Giving up your rights
- Physical comforts
- Convenience and ease
- Confusion/embarrassment
- Control
- Community
- Change

## Ways to Calculating Costs:

- Recognize them
- Accept them
- Be willing to adapt to them
- Enjoy them

What to do if I don't know the costs in advance?





**Cost**

**Risk**

Risks:

Known and Calculated Risks

- Disease
- Weather-related: earthquakes, flood
- Violence
- Political unrest

Unexpected and Accidental Risks

- Kidnappings
- Robbery
- Sudden illness

Honorable Risks

Reckless Risks



- Many groups running mission trips aren't prepared for worst-case scenarios, said Brian Heerwagen, CEO of the Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Mission, an organization whose 150 members have developed risk-measurement metrics for mission trips.
- "Only about one-fifth of these sending groups have proper risk assessment and crisis management plans in place," said Heerwagen. "The majority of short-termers may be going overseas with groups that do not have people on the ground in-country to do risk assessment, that lack proper insurance and that have not trained leaders about what to do when things go wrong."



- Bad things can happen, Heerwagen said, and groups need to know how to deal with them. Best practices include assessing risk beforehand with reliable in-country sources, developing plans to mitigate risk, having a crisis management plan in place for when the worst happens and training all staff and volunteers to know how to respond.
- Getting all groups prepared would be a massive undertaking.

Questions

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Answers

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