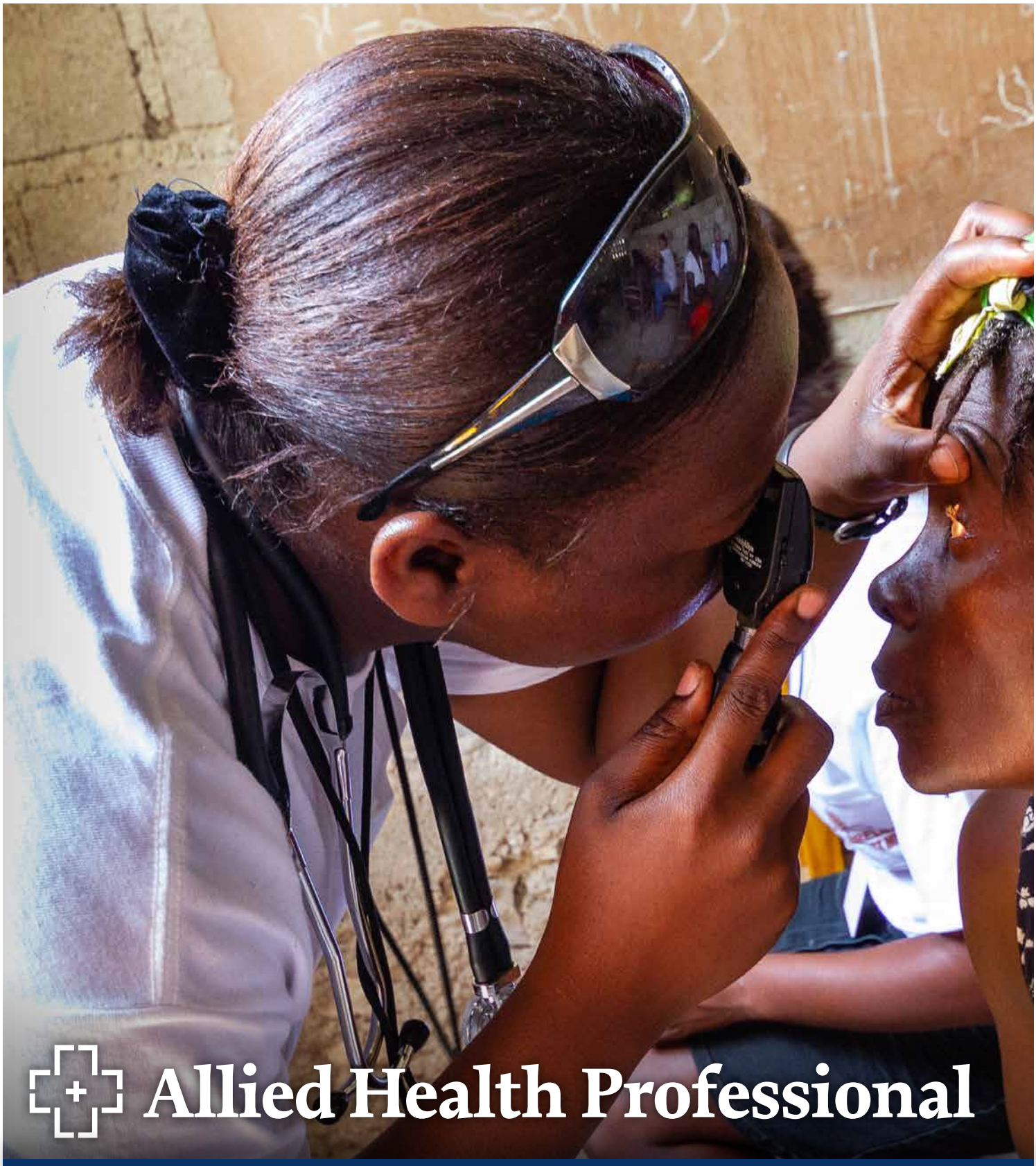


Allied Health Professional

A Guide for IMB Healthcare Students

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The Roadmap for Allied Health Professionals



Consider Your Opportunity

Where does your career fit in the idea of going to the nations as an ambassador for Christ? Thousands of people groups remain unreached. Many of these groups are even unengaged, meaning there are no churches or missionaries to offer them the gospel. You can use your skills and gifts to live and work among the world's unreached people.

Caring for the needs of people is integral to the missionary task of evangelism, discipling new believers, training leaders and forming healthy churches. Healthcare missions gives access to the unreached, allows for intimate conversations, meets needs, makes disciples and empowers the church.

Are you seeking to become a physical, occupational or speech therapist? Are you pursuing training in lab technology, radiology, nutrition, pharmacy or another allied health field? There are needs for such workers throughout the world. As the developing world rapidly works to improve healthcare, trained allied health professionals are needed to:

- Treat patients
- Dispense medicine
- Teach good health practices to people and communities
- Make disciples
- Multiply churches

This guide will help you learn more about missions, discern your calling and use your health career to serve people and share the gospel around the world. It will point you to tested and proven resources that will help you think biblically, prepare practically and discern spiritually. Remember, the Holy Spirit is your Counselor.

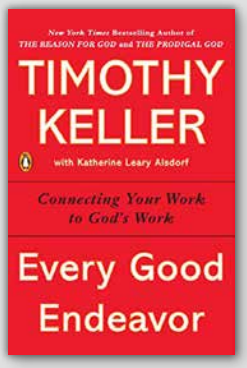
All this assumes that you are already a disciple of Jesus. Are you? A disciple is more than a person who has mastered some information, or even practices a set of spiritual disciplines and shares the gospel. Have you turned from sin and self (repented) and trusted in Jesus as Savior and Lord? Is the Holy Spirit at work in your life bringing about transformation in your heart and mind, leading you increasingly toward godly affections, relationships and purpose?

Essential Reading

Here is your prerequisite assignment for beginning your journey.

Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Plan for the World

By Timothy Keller



This book will provide you with practical guidance and help answer the following questions:

- What is the purpose of work?
- How do I integrate my faith with my work?
- What wisdom does the Bible give us in choosing our work?
- How do I thrive, or even survive, in a cutthroat, bottom-line-oriented workplace?
- Can I stay true to my values and still advance in my field?



STEP 1: Discernment – How Do I Know Missions Is for Me?

So how do you know if God is calling you to be a health professional living among and serving the unreached? Discerning the will of God is often a paradox for believers. In Scripture, it has both the qualities of crystal-clear clarity as well as mysteries to be pursued and explored.

Recognize some relevant things that God has already made clear about His will:

1. God has called you to Himself through salvation in Jesus Christ.
   Matthew 9:13; Acts 2:39; Romans 8:28–30, 9:22–26; 1 Corinthians 1:9, 24
2. God is to be our supreme passion and His glory our ultimate motivation.
   Habakkuk 2:14; Psalm 96:1-9; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 3:7-11
3. The call to salvation includes a call to missions. Every person who responds to God's call receives Christ's command to make disciples of Jesus.
   Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:8
4. Calling is the gracious act of God by which He directs disciples to make disciples in a certain way, at a certain time, among a certain people, in a certain location or through a certain vocation.
   Matthew 4:18-22, 9:9, 10:1-4; Acts 13:1-2, 16:10; Romans 1:1; Hebrews 5:4

This previous point means that there are items that will require exploration and confirmation in discerning God's will for you:

1. How to go
2. Where to go
3. With whom to go

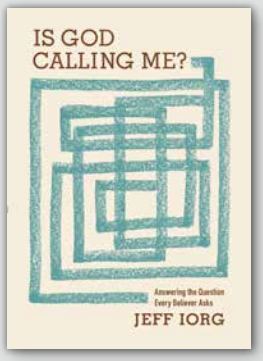
There is help in accomplishing this first step of discernment.

- Talk to God about this. It needs to be an ongoing conversation that includes reading His Word, expressing your questions and concerns and looking for the ways He will answer.
- Start the conversation about calling with trusted friends and leaders who are believers. Remember, missions is not something you do alone.
- Learn more about the mission of God and the part we are to play in it.

Essential Reading

Is God Calling Me?: Answering the Question Every Believer Asks

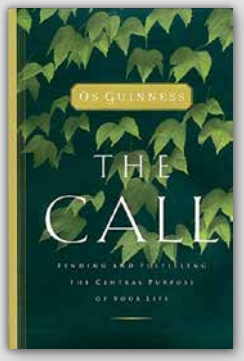
By Jeff Iorg



God is calling out a new generation of kingdom leaders who will accelerate the fulfillment of the Great Commission in this generation. This book will help you walk through biblical steps to discern God's will for your life. It will also help you see how God has called others.

The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life

By Os Guinness



This book goes beyond a surface understanding of God's call and addresses the fact that God has a specific calling for our individual lives. How do I fit God's call with my own individuality? How should God's calling affect my career, my plans for the future, my concepts of success? Guinness relentlessly and exhaustively exhorts the believer to honor his or her call to live as a child of the King in every way possible.

STEP 2: Find Mentors

While you study, train and learn from the experts on medicine and healing, it is critical that you also find mentors to assist you in preparing to live and work cross-culturally.

Do not expect to find one perfect mentor who can assist you in all aspects of life and ministry preparation—that person likely does not exist. Look for multiple leaders who have different strengths and experiences to help you:

1. Understand and complete the necessary education and licensing to work internationally.
2. Walk in a deep and growing relationship with God.
3. Share and practice your faith in a work context.
4. Learn how to start churches in a cross-cultural context.

Mentors are all around us. We often "have not, because we ask not." The list above is just a starter. Make a longer list of the skills you will need in your profession, as a follower of Jesus and as someone who will be living cross-culturally. Identify one person for each of your areas of preparation. Ask that one person to mentor you. You will be surprised how willing and responsive people are to being asked to serve as a mentor.

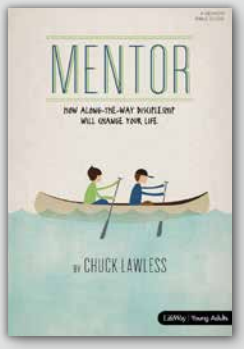
A few friendly reminders regarding mentors:

1. **Find the right person.** You will need someone wise and experienced but also available. Someone may have what you need but not really have the time to share it with you. Personality and manner are also important, but remember that "iron sharpens iron." Don't be afraid to pick someone who will challenge your perspective and expand your horizons.
2. **Approach mentoring as a two-way street.** Be ready to learn, but also look to add value and to bless your mentor. When possible, offer them assistance. Mentors will not be good at everything, and you may have a skill that will help them in a time of need.
3. **Come prepared.** Mentoring is not about filling a blank mind. Prepare for meetings with mentors by developing a list of questions or items to discuss. Follow through on their suggestions or assignments. Treat the gift of their time as valuable.
4. **Ask to shadow your mentor.** Discussions can be very helpful, but seeing someone actually do what you are preparing to do is even better. Professionals create rhythms and patterns to their work. Seek to learn the habits and practices that have led them to success.

Recommended Reading

Mentor: How Along-the-Way Discipleship Will Change Your Life

By Chuck Lawless



This study is both a practical and spiritual guide to biblical mentoring, providing easy-to-model life application for how to have and be a mentor. Lawless combines personal examples from his life with in-depth Bible study and practical how-tos (and how-not-tos) you can apply right away. Mentoring is a vital aspect of true discipleship, and it all begins with a desire to grow.



STEP 3: Prepare Spiritually

Spiritual preparation is the most crucial step in any plan to live and work internationally for the gospel. Your decision to be in the marketplace for this purpose makes you a missionary. You will be using your skills and gifts to share the gospel with people who have never heard. The missionary assignment requires that you have an authentic personal walk with God and participation in corporate worship, discipleship and service through a church.

Let's make this clear: Your spiritual preparation is both individual and communal. There is no substitute for your private worship, Bible study and prayer. You need time alone with God, and that needs to be a regular and even daily discipline. It is also true that to follow Christ means to be vitally linked to His body—the church. Most of the admonitions of the New Testament cannot be obeyed and practiced alone.

Questions to consider as you determine how to prepare spiritually:

- **Are you an active member of a healthy, gospel-focused church?** Remember, the biblical pattern is that churches send out those whom God calls. Is your church aware of and supportive of your desire to serve God in missions?
- **Are you engaged in personal habits of Bible study, prayer and Scripture memory?** Spiritual disciplines help you to abide daily in Christ and rely on Him. They also undergird your ability to serve God and join Him in His work.
- **Are you struggling with any habitual sins or addictive behaviors?** Recognize that you have a spiritual enemy that wants to distract and even disqualify you from opportunities to serve God in missions. To overcome sin, it is essential to take proper steps of repentance, change and accountability.

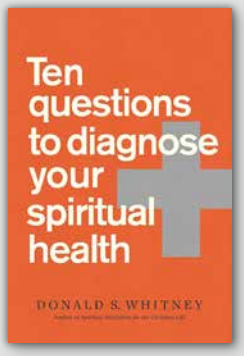
Your spiritual preparation is an investment not only in yourself but also others. Take this step seriously and:

1. **Ask a mentor to lead you through a discipleship assessment.** Just like a yearly medical examination helps you to evaluate, improve and protect your physical health, the right kind of spiritual assessment can identify areas in which you need to grow or heal. Lifeway (lifeway.com) offers the Discipleship Pathway Assessment as such a resource.
2. **Engage in a discipleship study with a group.** IMB offers several free online courses that focus on missions and can be done with others. Find these at imb.pathwright.com.
   a. God's Glory among the Nations is designed to explain the mission of God and how He purposes the people of God to join Him in His redemptive plan—through the missionary task—so a multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language will know and worship Jesus to the glory of God the Father.
   b. Ready to Go is an 8-session study that helps students prepare for a summer or semester of missions service.
   c. Deepen Discipleship is a 6-month course designed to be done with a mentor or small group in the context of your local church. The lessons and activities will help you develop or deepen habits of obedience in your Christian life. You'll also walk through the entire New Testament and learn to see your whole life in light of the gospel.
3. **Connect with others who are balancing academics with spiritual development.** Medical training is rigorous, demanding and sometimes even competitive. The challenge will be to find time and energy for church engagement and personal devotion. Whether through a campus ministry, your church or fellow Christian students, find or create a team who can support your spiritual journey as you study.

Recommended Reading

Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health

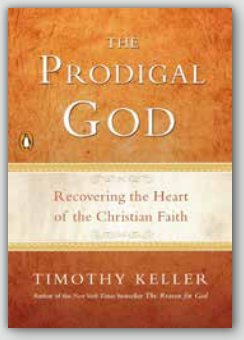
By Donald S. Whitney



In the distractions of daily life, it can be hard to evaluate how we are doing spiritually. But monitoring the pulse of your spiritual health is just as important as monitoring your mental and physical health. No matter where you are in your walk with Christ, bestselling author Don Whitney makes it easy to do a self-check on your spiritual wellbeing.

The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith

By Timothy Keller



Being a follower of Jesus is easy to complicate. We can be distracted by thousands of teachings and practices that keep us from concentrating on the main thing of the Christian life. Keller uncovers the essential message of Jesus, locked inside his most familiar parable. This focus on the simple, amazing gospel will lead you to the heart of God and provide the inspiration you need to find your role in His mission.

STEP 4: Start Making Disciples

This roadmap is about the possibilities of you using an education in healthcare to minister to both the physical and spiritual needs of people. More specifically, you can follow the powerful biblical example of proclaiming the gospel in both word and deed. As one of the recommended books in this guide puts it, "Jesus preached and healed."

The missionary task requires that you embrace the call to make disciples.

Disciple-making is the Christ-commanded, Spirit-empowered duty of every disciple of Jesus to evangelize unbelievers, baptize believers, teach them the Word of Christ and train them to obey Christ as members of His church who make disciples on mission to all nations.

(Matthew 28:16–20; 1 Corinthians 12:4–31; Ephesians 4:1–16; Colossians 1:27–29)

Your missionary task of making disciples starts now.

Your medical training will include many actual experiences of treating the sick. Your missionary training needs the same practice. A Southern Baptist initiative, Who's Your One?, offers the simple challenge to be intentional about evangelizing and discipling someone. When you think of someone far from God, who's the first person who comes to mind? Is it a neighbor? Coworker? Parent? No matter who it is, God can use you to reach them. The Who's Your One emphasis includes a 40-day devotional guide (whosyourone.com) to lead you through the effort to love someone who is lost and lead them to Christ.

A prerequisite course for IMB long-term missionaries is Deepen Discipleship, a 6-month discipleship resource designed to be done with a mentor or small group in the context of your local church. As you walk through the lessons, you'll read and do activities designed to help you develop or deepen habits of obedience in your Christian life. You'll also walk through the entire New Testament and learn to see your whole life in light of the gospel. Find it at imb.pathwright.com.

The essential tools for discipleship are the Word of God, the Spirit of God and the people of God.

Disciple using the Bible. There are many good resources to help you make disciples, but there is no substitute for Scripture. Every disciple needs to develop a thorough knowledge of the Word of God.

Disciple in reliance on the Holy Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit can take the Word of God and use it to transform every area of a disciple's life. Discipleship must be done in conscious dependence on the power and work of the Holy Spirit.

Disciple in the context of the church. God provides the local church as the necessary setting and the primary relationships for the full measure of biblical discipleship. One-on-one discipleship has a useful role, but it is not enough. Biblical discipleship requires the gifts and input of everyone in the body of Christ.

Learn Other Languages

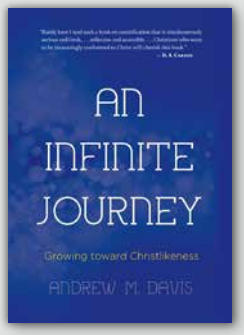
Making disciples involves the ability to communicate the gospel to people in ways they can understand. In cross-cultural missions, this means that learning their heart language is invaluable. If you are preparing for long-term service, don't miss the opportunity now to begin to master another language. A second language opens up more job possibilities, communicates that you are serious about working abroad and helps you make international contacts.

A few practical ways to go about language learning:

1. **Make international friends –** As a friend of an international, you will have the opportunity to learn language from your friend.
2. **Use free language-learning resources –** Local and campus libraries have free audio, video and print resources. Research the best apps.
3. **Use electives wisely –** As a pre-health or healthcare major, you will have few spaces for electives, but when you do have the option, choose language electives. They are fun and offer a change of pace.
4. **Take a community course in language –** Many colleges offer free or low-cost language classes for the community, often at night, over the weekends or during summer. Start your search with your school's office of continuing education.
5. **Pursue volunteer opportunities in multi-lingual environments –** Having this experience will not only assist you in taking the gospel to those in need, but it will also help you find a job.



Recommended Reading



An Infinite Journey: Growing toward Christlikeness

By Dr. Andrew M. Davis

After we've come to faith in Christ, God leaves us in this world for a very clear purpose: His own glory. But how are we to glorify God for the rest of our lives? The Bible reveals that God has laid before every Christian two infinite journeys which we are to travel every day: the internal journey of growth into Christlike maturity, and the external journey of worldwide evangelism and missions. An Infinite Journey is a road map for the internal journey, laying out how we are to grow in four major areas: knowledge, faith, character and action.

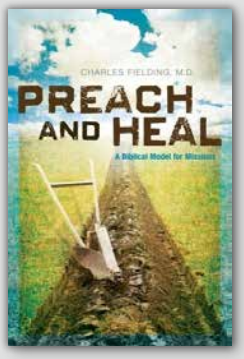


What Are You Going to Do With Your Life?

By J. D. Greear

God has a plan to make your life count for eternity. Stop wasting it. You want your life to matter. To mean something. But if you're like most people, you probably don't have a compelling answer to the question, "What are you going to do with your life?"

In this book, J.D. Greear considers Jesus' radical call to give your life away to the greatest cause of all. To view your life from the perspective of eternity. To start making decisions now that you'll be glad you made then. It's time to put your "yes" on the table and let God put it on the map.



Preach and Heal, A Biblical Model for Missions

By Charles Fielding

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus sent His disciples to preach the kingdom of God and heal the sick. Jesus practiced both. This book explores the ideology and practical ways for balanced ministry so that you can effectively reach the lost.

STEP 5: Build Your Resume/Curriculum Vitae, Portfolio and Networks

Create a Resume

Work on your resume throughout your time of training, both in college and in graduate school if it is required. Your resume is not mainly about the format and look, it is about the content. Do you have novel, unique experiences related to healthcare or working cross-culturally (i.e. volunteering with refugees)? There are many great online resources for building resumes. Here are a few:

1. Monster.com/career-advice/article/resumes
2. Joyjobs.com/seekers/sampler.htm
3. Indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/steps-for-building-a-resume
4. Resumegenius.com/resume-samples
5. Youtube.com/watch?v=u75hUSShvnc

Develop a Portfolio of Experiences

These show employers that you care deeply about your healthcare career. Portfolio experiences typically include your rotation experience and volunteer projects (international and domestic). Be sure to document these experiences with pictures and simple write-ups. These can be included when applying for jobs.

Build a Network

It is important for you to develop relationships regarding the "who you know" aspect of securing a job. This process can be easier than you think.

Five steps to building your network while a student:

1. **Attend healthcare missions events and ask questions.** Visit with presenters and exhibitors. Ask questions. Learn about opportunities for service or employment.
2. **Contact faculty who have lived or worked internationally.** During college and graduate school, conversations with them will help you learn about healthcare systems and healthcare needs in other countries.
3. **Leverage opportunities to attend professional meetings.** Especially during graduate school, intentionally meet allied health professionals with interest and experience in global health.
4. **Seek out Christian professionals in the allied health disciplines.** Ask people in your church or campus ministry to connect you with those whom they know. You can make an appointment with these new contacts, share your desire to serve cross-culturally and ask for advice on getting started.
5. **Volunteer as an intern.** While paid internships are extremely helpful, taking some time to volunteer and shadow a professional in your area of study will allow you to meet his or her network and garner some real-world experience.



STEP 6: Explore Needs and the Possibilities for Service

God is calling you to join Him on mission, but where and with whom? A major step along your journey is discovering possible locations to live and serve. There are so many options it may be difficult to narrow them down and discern God's leading. What is the best way to find direction and move forward? Nothing is more helpful than to visit locations.

During college

A few main options for these visits are:

Take a short-term trip

- A mission trip can introduce you to a people group and a team of missionaries who will be important components in your future service in missions.
- Start the search with your church, your local Baptist association of churches, your state Baptist convention or your school's Baptist Campus Ministry.
- IMB offers trip opportunities. Explore these at imb.org/opportunity-finder.

Semester Hands On

A Hands On trip is a 1-2 semester-long opportunity for college age young adults who desire to serve for a longer term and/or work toward academic credit within a qualifying degree. Southern Baptists can receive partial support from the IMB to help support the cost to go.

Study abroad

Many universities and degree programs highly encourage students to study abroad and may have an entire office devoted to offering opportunities and assistance. Study abroad options will help you:

1. Visit a new culture in a safe environment and program focused on helping you understand the people, history and culture.
2. Meet international medical professionals and learn about job opportunities.
3. Receive academic credit while preparing to live cross-culturally.
4. Explore a culture to see if you are a good match.

Another place to explore study abroad is with the Consortium for Global Education (cgedu.org). CGE is a network of universities committed to assisting students and faculty in impacting the world through education. CGE's Global Study Abroad programs provide strong academic and service-learning opportunities in key locations around the world.

A NOTE OF CAUTION: *Not all study abroad experiences are the same. Prior to applying, research online for student reviews of their experience. Also, check with your academic institution and ask for references from students who have previously studied abroad. Finally, make sure to inquire about financial aid assistance and whether your existing scholarships and financial aid can apply.*

Find a natural connection

Wherever you live, it's likely that the world has come to your doorstep. Consider the international students on your campus, refugees and immigrants in your community and ethnic churches and church plants. Missions does not start "over there" but right where you live. Many missionaries began to develop a heart for a specific people group through relationships they made and ministry opportunities they encountered at home.

Many churches have established partnerships with missionary teams and church planters or have adopted unreached people groups. They can provide opportunities that would give you a "paved road" for a connection. A professional network, mentorship or internship could also introduce you to people, places and needs through which God stirs your heart and directs your attention.

During graduate school

Depending on your discipline, a graduate degree may be required for licensure and practice. Consider an international rotation before completion of your training.

- The IMB may have professionals who are already serving internationally in your chosen field. You can gain valuable experience through short-term trips to shadow them or to help in the work.
- Your school may also offer some global opportunities with elective credit toward your degree.

IMB can assist you in exploring opportunities and pathways of service as well as preparing for a mission trip. Contact info@imb.org.

Explore licensure in other countries

Recognize that there is no such thing as an international license. To work as a professional overseas, you first must research the requirements of a specific country and fulfill its requirements. Consult your academic advisor for further information.

STEP 7: Determine a Pathway

Journeyman
IMB offers a unique, fully funded, 2-year missions opportunity for singles and married couples under age 30. Journeymen are sent by their church through IMB to join an international missionary team to share the gospel, make disciples and help plant churches.

Medical Macedonia
Macedonia is for individuals who have a long-term call but no seminary training yet. While on the field, they are working on a church planting team and taking seminary classes. The IMB pays half the cost, while one of the Southern Baptist seminaries covers the other half. Macedonia missionaries (no age limit) can satisfy career missionary seminary requirements while serving 3–4 years and are funded through the IMB.

Field Support
The field support role includes professionals who work in logistics, finance, healthcare or another role that directly supports church planters and other IMB personnel on the field. While they work overseas and still focus on sharing the gospel, the majority of their time is spent in their professional role. This is a fully funded IMB role.

Career Missionary
A career missionary serves as a church planter using their skills in the service of their team strategy. They begin their first 4-year term as an apprentice missionary, working alongside an established church planting team. The next term they return as a church planter. A church planter's full-time job is the core missionary task. They are fully funded, and this is a long-term pathway.

Team Associate
A team associate is not funded through the IMB but serves on an IMB team during their term. Healthcare providers use their training to earn an income while on the field. Sometimes they are self-funded. Avenues for support include your church, personal fund raising or employment overseas. To find employment overseas start with your own network of contacts, check job boards, etc.



STEP 8: Connect with Believers Serving Cross-Culturally

Connection and support are keys to long-term success as a person living and working in another culture for the sake of the gospel. These connections will take time and intentionality to build and maintain over the long haul. Here are a few recommendations as you begin your journey:

Seek to partner with a missionary team

Missionaries work best as part of a team; this follows a biblical model. As a medical professional with many opportunities to build relationships with unbelievers, you could become a key partner and valuable ally to other missionaries. They also could be of great support to you and offer good counsel. The possibility of teaming up with vocational missionaries should not be taken lightly, however. Most of them must function with security protocols and in a trusted network.

Healthcare professionals can contribute to a team's strategy. They get to know the specific needs and understand strategy through connection with a team over time. This can be done through short-term visits or mid-term service leading to long-term service.

Join an international church

Many communities overseas have expat or international churches. These churches are gathering spots for believers who live and work in a country outside their own. Even countries with the most restrictive laws about Christianity often allow international churches. International churches can be excellent places to unite in fellowship and help you find friends and support as you adjust to the community. In addition, the people in international churches can help you learn methods of evangelism and disciple-making that work best in the community.

Visit internationalchurches.net, an online resource for finding international churches, or inquire at info@imb.org for recommendations and connection ideas.



Summary Checklist

Pre-College/Freshman and Sophomore Years

- [ ] Explore the concepts of calling and missions.
- [ ] Dialogue with trusted friends and leaders.
- [ ] Choose a major.
- [ ] Join a small group engaging in Bible study and discipleship together.
- [ ] Read *Every Good Endeavor* by Timothy Keller.
- [ ] Read *Is God Calling Me?* by Jeff Iorg.
- [ ] Begin language learning.
- [ ] Start looking for spiritual and academic mentors.
- [ ] Take a discipleship assessment and plan your next steps in spiritual preparation.
- [ ] Read *Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health* by Donald Whitney
- [ ] Read *The Call* by Os Guinness.
- [ ] Learn to make disciples; complete the Who's Your One? 40-day devotional.
- [ ] Serve internationally in the summer following your sophomore year.



Junior and Senior Years

- [ ] Read *The Prodigal God* by Timothy Keller.
- [ ] Read *Preach and Heal* by Charles Fielding.
- [ ] Further explore possibilities and needs through a trip overseas.
- [ ] Continue volunteering or shadowing with appropriate allied health professionals.
- [ ] Complete training and licensure requirements.
- [ ] Build, complete and send out your resume.
- [ ] Seek employment in the U.S. or internationally.
- [ ] Explore the team associate and team member roles at IMB.
- [ ] Complete seminary courses online during this time if called to full-time mission service.

Graduate School

- [ ] Look for opportunities to shadow an allied health professional.
- [ ] Concentrate on building your portfolio of healthcare experience through volunteer projects.
- [ ] Build your relational networks in the healthcare professional world.
- [ ] Read *An Infinite Journey: Growing toward Christlikness* by Dr. Andrew M. Davis.
- [ ] Continue to make disciples.
- [ ] Build your resume.
- [ ] Read *What Are You Going to Do With Your Life* by J. D. Greear.
- [ ] Pursue a volunteer opportunity in a different culture or international context.

Suggested Additional Reading

Biographies

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