

Preparation for Mission Today

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If we assert that mission has evolved in recent times, then we may have to look into how contemporary missionaries prepare to face today's missionary challenges. The growing number of lay people involved in our missions abroad and the origin of the missionaries, mostly from the global South, challenge us to ensure they receive an adequate preparation for mission. My experience in the immediate preparation for missionaries ready to move, involve two realities. These experiences were similar, but also quite different. The first involved preparing **lay volunteers/lay missionaries** leaving Europe for Asia and Africa. The second focused on **priests and religious from Africa**, who were going to be sent on mission abroad for the first time.

For the Lay Missionary

My first experience was in London, with the *Lay Missionary and Volunteer Network* where I was doing part-time work as a 'network administrator'. The network for lay volunteers was formed by female and male religious Orders, Congregations and Societies of Apostolic Life in the United Kingdom. The office was in Kensington with the Assumption Sisters. This network brings together lay missionaries and volunteers from various Institutes, now being given the opportunity to work and take part in mission abroad. During the summer months, a two week formation programme was organized as a joint effort for the missionaries and volunteers. Usually, each institute provides already the concrete formation on their charism, spirituality and methods of mission during the year. The two weeks summer programme is just to give them immediate and practical preparation for mission. **The curriculum** included:

- Basic understanding of mission
- Cultures – Culture Shock, inculturation,
- Process of Transition
- Intercultural living
- Sexuality, relationships
- Prayer, keeping a journal
- Introduction to Catholic Social Teaching
- Justice, Peace and integrity of Creation using pastoral cycle method
- Inter-religious Dialogue
- We also treated practical issues, like travel (visa/s, luggage), health insurances, basic language skills (depending on where they were going), food, security, etc.

For the Priests and Religious:

The second experience was with the *Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria* where I worked as the mission secretary. Part of my duties was to prepare priests and religious who were being sent on mission from Nigeria for the first time.

- Fundamentals of Mission: Biblical and Theological
- Conciliar, Post Conciliar and Contemporary Church Documents on Mission
- Anthropological Fundamentals, Culture Shock, Inculturation
- Process of Transition
- Spirituality, Prayer, Keeping a journal
- Intercultural Living
- Sexuality and Relationship
- Child Safe-Guarding* (New content)
- Introduction to Catholic Social Teaching
- Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation
- Leadership, The use of Power, Small input on Financial Management
- Non-Violent Communication
- Inter-religious Dialogue – Ecumenism
- Practical Issues: Travel, Visa/s, Luggage, Food, Health, Security, Insurance, Climate, etc.