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Dear Pastors, Friends, and Partners of Selah International,

Although we have had the pleasure of ministering in several churches during the last two months, the majority of this summer has been spent on the Selah property with precious missionary families from six foreign countries. It has been an honor to pour into the lives of their families! Part of these intensives have been missionary debriefings and others have been for counseling needs.

When a missionary family is going through a transition, whether leaving for the field for the first time, coming stateside for a furlough, or transitioning off the field, it is essential that the entire family go through the process of debriefing. Much like the military, our missionaries are on mission for the King of Kings as they seek to advance His kingdom and follow the Great Commission. As we serve the Lord, none of us are immune to suffering, pain, disappointment, trauma, and even wrong choices. The Lord will strengthen and sustain us, but He also remembers that we are "dust." We need to be "refreshed" as the Apostle Paul was with his friends in ministry (1 Corinthians 16:18). This is much of what we do at Selah International. Part of being refreshed for missionaries includes both debriefing and counseling.

What is the difference between a debriefing and counseling?

Debriefing is focused on reflection and storytelling. It is taking the time to assess successes and failures that occurred during the experience. It also provides closure that is needed to be able to process a wide range of emotions. They are then able to move on to the next phase of ministry. Debriefing usually takes between 3-5 days. **Our goal is for them to be refreshed and realigned in their service to the Lord.**

Counseling is focused on ongoing spiritual and emotional growth in dealing with specific areas like depression, anxiety, reverse culture shock, strained relationships and establishing healthy rhythms.

During a debrief, every member of the family is given the opportunity to express their feelings and share their perspective. Some are talkers, some are not. Even non-talkers usually open up during a debrief. We often do not share what we feel about difficult experiences and trauma because we can't imagine that others might feel the same way. This setting allows many people to realize that they are not the only ones with these thoughts and emotions.

During a debrief, every member of the family can see their experiences in the context of their entire life. A good debrief helps put our experiences into the context of our entire lives and eternity. It enables us to see how God is using the good and the bad to prepare us for the future.

As we are hearing these incredible stories, we are able to REJOICE in what God has done in and through them. We are also able to LAMENT *with them* as they process through their experiences. Then, we are able to help them REALIGN with God's purpose and plan for their lives and ministries. *We laugh with them, reflect with them, weep with them, go deep into the Scriptures with them, and give them hope.* God does not ask us to simply push through and suppress what is going on inside—just as David didn't when he was betrayed by his own son:

"LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah. But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head. I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah. I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me round about. Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God...Selah." (Psalm 3)

We truly believe that missionary debriefings are enabling men, women, and children to honestly acknowledge their suffering, wrestle with God's sovereignty, and successfully navigate the difficult transitions in the missionary journey. Prayerfully, this will help decrease preventable missionary attrition that is rising. This is why we exist! Thank you to all of you who pray and sacrificially give to Selah. We COULD NOT DO THIS WITHOUT YOU!

Please pray with us, as during the month of August, we will complete the summer with pastors and missionaries on site for counseling. We will then head to Ohio for a staff and church family conference.

In closing, I would like to share a great need. As you know, the 48-acre property that God has provided requires much upkeep. We have an older finish mower that is often breaking down and hindering our upkeep of the grounds. If any of you have access to commercial mowers or even a tractor and bush hog or would like to contribute to help us with this need, please contact Colby Whitaker at colby@selahinternational.org or call 803.456.2988. Thank you!

Ministry leaders don't forget to sign up for Selah Refresh at the Wilds in North Carolina, Monday-Wednesday, November 10-12, 2025. Scan the QR code to sign up today!



Share this opportunity with your pastors and consider covering their expenses for this time of spiritual refreshment and enrichment. Also, why not consider covering the cost for a missionary and wife or a single missionary home on furlough to attend Selah Refresh. This would be a great investment into their lives!

Only by his Grace,

Chris Phillips