

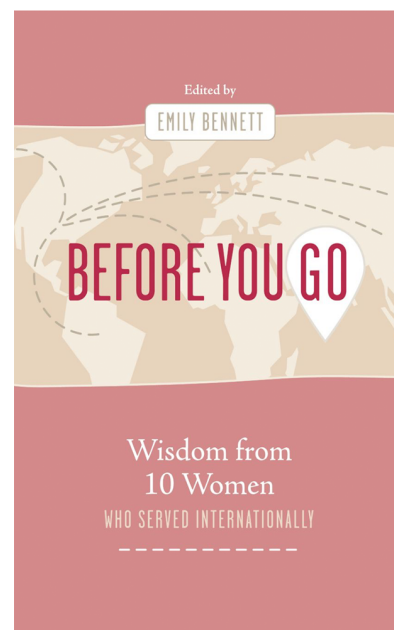
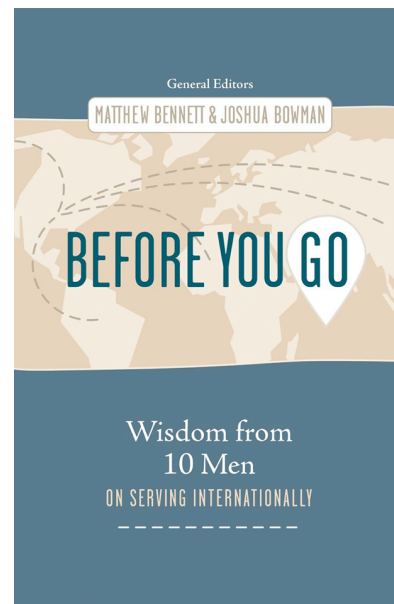
Bennett, Emily, ed. *Before You Go: Wisdom from Ten Women who Served Internationally*. Nashville: B&H Books, 2023.

Bennett, Matthew and Joshua Bowman, eds. *Before You Go: Wisdom from Ten Men on Serving Internationally*. Nashville: B&H Books, 2024.

Reviewed by Mark and Megan Street,
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Before You Go: Wisdom from 10 Men Who Served Internationally edited by Matthew Bennett and Joshua Bowman and *Before You Go: Wisdom from 10 Women Who Served Internationally* edited by Emily Bennet are collections of essays that capture decades of experience in a personal and practical book. These works provide a succinct foundation for beginning and enduring in the missionary life. These books will help missionaries consider what needs to be surrendered before they go overseas and wrestle through the realities and challenges of life on the field. These books are also great resources for the local church, to understand how to better support and encourage the ones they send.

While there is no distinction in Scripture between men and women in obeying our Lord's command to make disciples of all nations, men and women experience missionary life differently. We share many of the same struggles but also face different kinds of challenges in our roles as wives,



husbands, singles, fathers, or mothers. It is refreshing to see this fleshed out in the books by intentionally giving opportunity for our sisters' perspectives and wisdom to benefit us all. Together the books provide a more accurate picture of mission-ary life and a more helpful resource for the body of Christ. The well-thought-out questions at the end of each chapter challenge the reader to process and interact with the content rather than just passively consume it. The editors and contributors have served in an international context, but most are now serving in other settings such as local U.S. churches, academic institutions, or leadership positions in mission organizations. Although these books ad-dresses longevity in various ways, a chapter that offers some insight into the decision to stay on the field or to leave for another field of ministry would have been a welcome addition.

In reading through the *Before You Go* books, we found ourselves relating to much of their content and wishing that we would have had access to them when we began our journey more than 20 years ago. These brothers and sisters spoke truth into the fears and struggles that we still battle. They chal-lenged us to once again lay down the assumptions and demands that we make of God on this journey. We like the honesty and transparency the authors show in how they dealt with struggles and suffering. The books normalize suffering from a Biblical perspective. Given that the Great Commission is not for a chosen few, we feel like there are certain chapters for every follower of Christ to read and understand. These include discerning one's calling, identity in Christ, suffering, prayer and evangelism, and the spiritual life. Taking the gospel across geographical, cultural, and linguistic barriers to spiritually dark and resistant peoples and places shapes the one carrying the gospel. While these topics may sound familiar to the local church, they are written from the mission field perspective.

The church continues to obediently pursue the vision of every nation, tribe, people and language. For the gospel to go to every people and place,

missionaries and those that send them will need to be prepared for the growing challenges and uncertainty that await. We believe that the *Before You Go* books are resources God has given the church for such a time as this. We strongly recommend *Before You Go* to those who may be considering serving internationally, those early in their time of service, sending churches, or anyone interested in deepening their understanding of the task given to the church to make disciples of all nations.