

How to **MINISTER** to your **Missionaries**



A Program of Missionary Care

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How to MINISTER to your Missionaries

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"God's call on your life to serve as a sender must be just as vibrant as the call on the life of the one you send. Likewise, the commitment you make must be as sure as that of your cross-cultural worker. The responsible action you take is as important as the ministry your field worker performs. And the reward of souls for His kingdom will be equal to your missionary's and your faithfulness."

p. 22, Serving as Senders, Neal Pirola

INTRODUCTION

What Part Does the Church Play in Global Mission?

Our Lord Jesus clearly commands us to “Go make disciples of all nations ...” (Matt. 28:19), and many missionaries have responded by actually going to serve Him in another culture. But what about those who feel called to stay at home? It would be wrong for them to feel like they have no part in global mission simply because they aren’t serving cross-culturally. What part do *they* play?

Quite a large one, in fact! Someone once said, “Those who are called to stay home are called to support those who go.” It’s important to remember that missionaries have unique challenges and need regular encouragement and help from their support team at home. In his book *Serving as Senders*, author Neal Pirolo writes: “... *no cross-cultural worker should leave home without a strong, integrated, educated, knowledgeable, excited-as-he-is, active team of people who have committed themselves to the work of serving as senders*” (p. 21).

The staff of Cross-Cultural Ministries (CCM) takes seriously our responsibility to provide ongoing care for missionaries from the time they begin to sense God’s call on their lives to the time they retire, but we can’t do it all, nor would it be wise to try! The fact is, missionaries rely on a “flow of care” from friends at home as well as their sending agency. In the compilation *Doing Member Care Well*, David Pollock points out that “the flow of care is the flow of love.” It is the church’s response to Jesus’ command to “love one another” (John 13:33) as we make sure to remind missionaries they aren’t alone.

This text provides practical suggestions for how churches can care for missionaries and their families before, during, and following their service in another culture. There is much we can do! So we encourage each church to utilize these and other opportunities to bless those who serve the Lord cross-culturally. Please let us know how we can improve our ministry by sending your e-mail to missions@cggc.org or ccm@cggc.org, or writing to: CCM, P.O. Box 926, Findlay, OH 45839.

Ben Tobias

Assistant CCM Director

1. Caring for Your Missionaries Before Departure

Missionary care can begin as soon as you become aware a person or family has become a missionary candidate.

A. Joining their prayer team

- 1) Pray for them as an individual
 - a) Assure them-of your consistent daily prayer support and as the Holy Spirit calls them to mind. Then do it!
 - b) Send them a card or note as a reminder you are praying for them.
 - c) Pray with them in person.
 - d) Ask for their specific prayer concerns and needs.
- 2) Form a prayer support team of genuine pray-ers.
 - a) Meet regularly to pray specifically for the missionary's needs.
 - b) Make a list of needs, noting dates of answered prayers.



B. Assisting with financial support

- 1) Assist with contacts for support raising meetings.
- 2) Suggest to your church they become the "sending" church by providing most if not all of the missionary's support. If fewer churches provide more support, then the missionary can spend more time with each and reduce extensive deputation.
- 3) Offer to care for the missionary's children when the parents must travel to raise support.
- 4) Offer the use of your newest car for the missionary to travel to other churches.
- 5) Prepare, or assist the missionary in preparing, a thermometer or grid to gauge their financial support as it is raised.
- 6) Keep informed of the financial needs of your missionary by contacting their missions organization (e.g. CGGC Cross-Cultural Ministries, etc.)



C. Helping with the move

- 1) Provide meals for the missionary when you know they are especially busy.
- 2) Provide care for their children.
- 3) Assist in locating barrels, boxes or crating materials for packing. Watch your neighborhood for persons moving in and ask them for their packing material. They will usually be happy to unload it, especially for a worthy cause. If your missionaries are going overseas, check with large manufacturing firms for crates and barrels. Most will be happy to donate or sell for a very low price.
- 4) Offer to assist in packing. They may prefer to do their own packing but there will be other ways you can assist: by taking meals in, offering refreshments, helping to itemize items in each box or container, etc.

D. Meeting physical needs in preparing to go

- 1) Have a "bon voyage" shower for the missionaries. Present it early so items may be properly packed and itemized. Do not keep this a secret!
- 2) Make a list of the items the family will need for a term on the field. Be sure to check their preferred brands. (Suggested items to bring: toothpaste/brushes, deodorants, shampoos, conditioners, soaps, shaving gel/cream, razor blades, Christmas cards, birthday cards, stationery, stamps, computer paper and ink cartridges, etc. All liquids should be packed in zip-lock bags. Make your list as complete as possible by having the missionary assist with the items they will need.)
- 3) Enlist Sunday School classes, organizations or even townspeople to get involved in these projects.
- 4) Write to a missionary on that field for suggestions of other items that should be on the list.

E. Meeting emotional needs as they leave

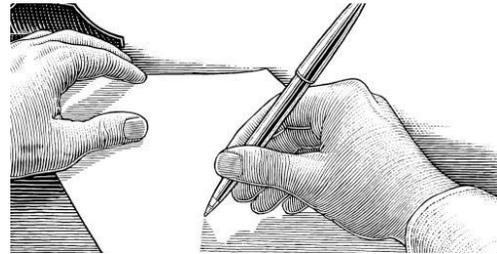
- 1) Have a "bon voyage" sending party at the church prior to departure.
- 2) Accompany the missionary to the airport for their sendoff. Encourage people to bring banners, balloons, flowers, leis, letters, etc. Be sure to form a circle of prayer for them before leave. Make it a celebration.

2. Caring for Your Missionaries on the Field

A. Pray for your missionary

Refer to the missionary's prayer card and prayer letter for specific requests. Utilize the mission agency's prayer calendar (e.g. the bi-monthly "Missionary Prayer Calendar" available through the CCM office).

- 1) Pray daily for their physical and spiritual strength
- 2) Pray for strength to fight loneliness
- 3) Pray for strength to maintain difficult scheduling in daily life
- 4) Pray for transitions in daily life
- 5) Pray for ease in learning a new language and overcoming language barriers
- 6) Pray for wisdom in handling cultural challenges
- 7) Pray for discernment and wisdom in difficult situations
- 8) Pray for personal family challenges
- 9) Pray for vision and focus for church leadership
- 10) Pray for the health and understanding of family members "back home"
- 11) Pray for needed prayer and financial support
- 12) Pray for needed time to communicate with support partners
- 13) Pray for time to do office work
- 14) Pray for quality family time
- 15) Pray for continuing education and study time
- 16) Pray for a gentle spirit in difficult times
- 17) Pray for souls to be saved and discipled
- 18) Pray for persons to be good "listening ears" to the missionaries
- 19) Pray for their physical safety
- 20) Pray their example may inspire others to answer the call to mission careers



B. Keep those cards and letters coming

- 1) Mail from home is essential!
- 2) Assign different Sunday School classes and other groups to write each month. But don't expect a reply before writing again.
- 3) Now that most missionaries have e-mail addresses, letters can be electronic and FREE! However, avoid attachments and meaningless forwarding addresses that may be costly to the missionary who pays for internet memory usage. Send e-mails that don't require a response from the missionary.
- 4) What to write to a missionary
 - a) Note: if the missionary serves in a "sensitive" part of the world (e.g. a Muslim nation), do not mention the "church," "converts," etc. Remember that correspondence might be seen by hostile eyes.
 - b) Otherwise, provide good news about what's happening in your local church (avoid gossip about problems), including sermon thoughts or devotional ideas.
 - c) Information about you and your family

- d) News from your community
 - e) Prayer concerns
 - f) Jokes, cartoons, etc.
 - g) Know the interests of your missionary and provide information you know they will appreciate hearing
 - h) Refer to items mentioned in their prayer letters
 - 5) Have card showers for their birthdays and anniversaries. Allow plenty of time for overseas airmail. You may want to send a greeting card without signing it. Instead, place a sticky note on the inside with your signature and a message. Then your missionary will have a card to send when needed.
- 6) How about "un-birthday card showers?" or "thinking of you" card showers, "Christmas in July" card showers, etc. Special thoughts go a long way in making missionaries feel special.
 - 7) An occasional 5-minute phone call (where available) may not be as expensive as you think and lets the missionary know you are thinking of them. But check the time difference—don't get them out of bed for a chat at 3 a.m.!

C. Sending special gifts:

PLEASE contact the CCM office prior to sending packages!

(We don't want missionaries to have to pay customs in excess of what the packages are worth. Furthermore, some countries are notorious for "losing" packages in the mail.)

- 1) Send a small gift/s in padded envelopes. Keep the weight under 5 pounds. Items can include candy (all edibles in original container or ziplock bags), gum, books, newspaper, cartoons, puzzle books, pens, paper, stamps (if in the States), magazines, camera film, devotional materials, etc. (Think: what would YOU want if you were away from home?)
- 2) CGGC Women's Ministries sponsor a "Love Gift" ministry. Money sent to their Coordinator is used to provide missionaries with a book, CD, cassette, video or other item they desire.
- 3) Food boxes are also provided through Women's Ministries. When sending packaged mixes such as cake, pudding and gelatin, remove the outside box. Slip the paper-covered mix into a plastic zipper bag along with the instructions. This cuts down on mailing costs and gives the missionary a reusable bag. (Contact their address in the CGGC directory or through the CGGC office.) Always clearly label your package "GIFT," as this generally guarantees the missionary will not have to pay duty on it.

D. Keeping the church informed

- 1) Design a missions bulletin board for a prominent location in the facility
 - a) Maintain the board with up-to-date information and attractive pictures
 - b) To insure variety, assign more than one person to the project.
 - c) Utilize information from missions periodicals (e.g. "The Missionary Signal", etc.), missionary letters, emails, etc.
- 2) Have children's Sunday School classes "adopt" missionary children their age. Take their pictures, send cards and letters to the child. Post the missionary's picture in their classroom with a map of the mission area and information about the missionary and the target culture.
- 3) Make copies of current prayer letters and prayer calendars and give to each attender. Keep the church informed about what is happening on the field. The more the people know, the more specifically they can pray!
- 4) Send a small group of persons to visit the missionary on the field. You can get first-hand information about the ministry as well as encourage the missionary as long as you don't impose on his/her hospitality or time. Be sure sufficient finances are left to cover the cost of your stay.

E. Keep the Missionary Current

- 1) All CCM missionaries are "online," so utilize the Internet
- 2) New and updated software for the missionary's computer may be appreciated. Contact the missionary about needs.
- 3) Teaching and entertainment videos are always appreciated by the missionary and family. You can even send a video of your church activities.
- 4) New games for children and adults can provide enjoyable entertainment, especially on those fields where television access is limited or unavailable.
- 5) Digital gifts (e.g. iTunes) of Christian music and books are wonderful tools to assist personal worship. Consider purchasing an e-reader for missionaries.

3. Caring for Your Missionaries on their Return Home

A. Welcome home

- 1) Meet the missionary at the airport. Celebrate their arrival!
- 2) Allow your missionary family to recover from jetlag and relax for a few days after returning from their field of service before trying to get together with them.
- 3) Plan a welcome home celebration. Serve their favorite American foods.
- 4) If a missionary is terminated or otherwise must return home early, love them, accept them and don't pressure them. Allow them to tell their story when they are ready.

WELCOME HOME



B. Helping them readjust to the culture

- 1) Offer your services to show them changes in the area, such as good places to shop and eat. If needed, be prepared to recommend a good doctor, dentist, auto mechanic, accountant, lawyer, etc.
- 2) Be sensitive to the missionary family at all times. Think: "What would I want? What would I feel like if I were in this situation?"

C. Helping on furlough

- 1) Loan a reliable car
- 2) Loan your house while on vacation. Ask them to house sit.
- 3) Loan your vacation home
- 4) Loan your RV or travel trailer
- 5) Invite them to dinner
- 6) Take them clothes shopping... and pick up the tab!
- 7) Provide childcare
- 8) Take them to a theme park (if they have young children)
- 9) Provide a "get away retreat" for them

D. Hosting a missionary

- 1) When scheduling a missionary, please inform them of...
 - a) the occasion at which they are expected to speak: worship service, Sunday School class, banquet, etc.
 - b) the theme, if you have one

- c) the expectations you have: sermon, reporting how God is at work in their field, challenging the church to opportunities for missionary service, slides, artifacts, etc.
- d) the amount of time allotted to them for speaking

When asked to host a missionary, it may not be possible to have them for a Sunday worship service, although most of us think this is ideal. Be creative. Missionaries like variety in their lives. All they need is some time to tell their story and share their needs. They love to answer questions.

2) Here are suggestions for smaller gatherings:

- a) a "Mug and Muffin" gathering in your home. Invite persons who are interested in missions or whose interest could be cultivated. Ask them to bring their favorite coffee/tea mug and muffins to share. Have an informal gathering around your table.
- b) a garden party
- c) a cook-out
- d) an ice cream social
- e) a pool party. Serve Up a
- f) children's or youth classes during Sunday School or "World of Ideas!" midweek service
- g) men's prayer breakfast: tell about life for the men in their mission field
- h) women's tea or brunch: tell about for the women in their mission field
- i) a potato bake for a Sunday School class party, interested friends or the entire church. Each family can bring different toppings.
- j) a salad supper: each household brings favorite ingredients and dressings. Try adding homemade breads or soups in cooler weather.



The more people you get involved in planning and preparing the event, the larger the turnout. Invite neighboring churches to share in your event if held at times other than Sunday morning.

3) The host church is responsible for meals and lodging while the missionary is visiting.

- a) It is not necessary to house the missionary in a motel. However, if lodging is provided in a home, sufficient time must be permitted for rest and relaxation due to the extensive travel schedules missionaries often have.
 - b) Hosts should not feel obligated to "entertain" the missionary during their entire stay.
 - c) Keep in mind that it is not ideal for missionaries (or anyone) to consume large, heavy meals day after day. Lighter, healthier meals are often appreciated.
- 4) Churches are expected to provide an honorarium or offering to assist with travel expenses. Checks should be payable to "CGGC" (to avoid tax liability for the missionary) and should be earmarked for the specific missionary's account. Your church will be properly credited for the support and a receipt will be issued.
- 5) Reinforce your missionaries by showing confidence in them. Publicly affirm them and express your enthusiasm for their ministries.

APPENDIX

Missionary Stress

The following is a list of common stresses often faced by missionaries at different stages of their ministry.

Pre-Departure

- Doubting the call
- Facing the unknown Raising support
- Developing supportive relationships.
- Speaking engagements
Uncertainty of departure.
Cross-cultural. training
Knowing what to take and
- to leave behind
- Packing
- Leaving behind family & friends
- Anticipated living conditions

On the Field

- Adapting to strange culture
- Orientation to the people
- Learning a new language
- Being separated from older children
- Being separated from elderly parents
- Concerns about safe food & water
- The pace of life
- Decision-making customs of nationals
- Spiritual warfare
- Lack of familiar worship patterns
- Loneliness
- Physical safety when traveling
- Lack of control
- Lack of order
- Living conditions consume time & energy
- Writing newsletters
- Slow progress of ministry compared to others
- Political stability
- Conflict with other missionaries
- Conflict with national staff
- Conflict with spouse/children
- Misunderstanding with sending agency
- Education of children
Continued financial support

Returning from the Field

- Leaving behind friends
- Progress of ministry during absence
- Leaving behind household items
- Anticipating deputation again
- (Reverse) Culture shock
- Education of children
- Expectations of relatives
- Reporting to churches
- Extensive travel
- Meeting with sending agency reps
- Continuing education needs
- Where to retire
- Health concerns

Areas of Support Needed by Each Missionary:

*What is YOUR church currently doing in each area?
How can you improve your support?*

- **Encouragement/Moral support (Acts 21:12-13)**

Just being there

Pre-departure:

On the field:

Back home:

- **Logistics support (2 Timothy 4:13)**

Helping to handle the details

Pre-departure:

On the field:

Back home:

- **Financial support (Philippians 4:10-12)**

Money, money, money

Pre-departure:

On the field:

Back home:

- **Prayer support (Ephesians 6:18-19)**

Spiritual warfare at its best

Pre-departure:

On the field:

Back home:

- **Re-entry support (Acts 14:26-28)**

Pre-departure:

On the field:

Back home: (More than applauding a safe landing)

Adapted from Serving as Senders, Neal Pirolo

Missionary Care Plan

Consistent, quality care is best provided by planning ahead and then working your plan. Establish goals for each month and then record how you have ministered. This helps to provide accountability. Be sure to note birthdays, anniversaries and other special days on which you want to encourage your missionary.

January *What? Why? How? Who? When?*

Goal 1:
Evaluation:
Goal 2:
Evaluation:

July *What? Why? How? Who? When?*

Goal 1:
Evaluation:
Goal 2:
Evaluation:

February *What? Why? How? Who? When?*

Goal 1:
Evaluation:
Goal 2:
Evaluation:

August *What? Why? How? Who? When?*

Goal 1:
Evaluation:
Goal 2:
Evaluation:

March *What? Why? How? Who? When?*

Goal 1:
Evaluation:
Goal 2:
Evaluation:

September *What? Why? How? Who? When?*

Goal 1:
Evaluation:
Goal 2:
Evaluation:

April *What? Why? How? Who? When?*

Goal 1:
Evaluation:
Goal 2:
Evaluation:

October *What? Why? How? Who? When?*

Goal 1:
Evaluation:
Goal 2:
Evaluation:

May *What? Why? How? Who? When?*

Goal 1:
Evaluation:
Goal 2:
Evaluation:

November *What? Why? How? Who? When?*

Goal 1:
Evaluation:
Goal 2:
Evaluation:

June *What? Why? How? Who? When?*

Goal 1:
Evaluation:
Goal 2:
Evaluation:

December *What? Why? How? Who? When?*

Goal 1:
Evaluation:
Goal 2:
Evaluation:

(Adapted from Adopt-a-Missionary, Armstrong)

7 Ways to Pray for your Missionary

by Bill Wilson

Day 1 Relationship with God (2 Peter 3:18)

- Loving and studying God's Word
- Strong Prayer Life
- Be filled with the Holy Spirit
- Maturing Spiritually
- Progress over personal sin

Day 2 Physical and Emotional Needs (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17)

- Adaptation to climate
- Health in the midst of disease
- Safety in danger
- Victory over loneliness, depression

Day 3 Family Relationships (Ephesians 5:2 1)

- Husband/wife
- Children/parents
- Family life as a model to nationals
- Coping with singleness

Day 4 Ability to communicate (2 Timothy 4:2)

- Language study
- Continual improvement in fluency
- Cultural adaptation and understanding

Day 5 Effective Ministry (Colossians 4:2)

- Teaching, preaching, witnessing
- Boldness, open doors
- Prepared hearts, fruitfulness

Day 6 Team Relationships (John 17:2 1)

- Other missionaries
- National evangelists, pastors, teachers

Day 7 Country of Service (Romans 13:1-7)

- Government: national and local
- Political situation
- Visas, continued open door
- Outreach to cities, village, tribes

Source: Overseas Missions Fellowship Used with Permission.

A Healthy Missions-Active Church

The following 20 questions for evaluating a healthy missions-active church were adapted from a list by John Rathbun, a missionary with TEAM. Mark each question accurately as follows:

0 = No program

1 = Nonfunctioning program

2 = Poor

3 = Fair

4 = Good

5 = Excellent

- _____ a) Are our people unquestionably sure that every man, woman and child in the world will spend eternity apart from God unless they personally receive Jesus Christ by faith as their only Savior from sin?
- _____ b) Is our church family instructed clearly and regularly with regard to the Biblical basis of missions and Christ's mandate to take the gospel message to the whole world?
- _____ c) Does our church have a functioning, clearly-written missions policy?
- _____ d) Does our church have an organized and functioning missions leadership team?
- _____ e) Is our congregation regularly informed about the needs and achievements of our own church-supported missionaries?
- _____ f) Do we regularly and collectively pray for specific needs of our missionaries?
- _____ g) Are we in touch with our missionaries on a regular and personal basis? h) Do we make our missionaries feel welcome and special when they visit our church?
- _____ i) Do we keep our missionaries informed about the happenings in our local church?
- _____ j) Are we regularly informed about current missions opportunities?
- _____ k) Does missions have a high visibility in our church life through such things as a missions bulletin board that is frequently updated?
- _____ l) Do we have an annual missions conference or event with church-wide participation?
- _____ m) Do we have a regular plan and budgeted program for giving to missions?
- _____ n) Do we have a planned program for teaching missions in Sunday School and other small groups?
- _____ o) Are we making available to our congregation up-to-date missions resources such as books, magazines and videos?
- _____ p) Do we regularly provide opportunities for our youth and adults to be involved in cross-cultural experiences?
- _____ q) Do we have a program designed to develop the interests and gifts of those from our church who desire to enter missionary service?
- _____ r) Do we actively encourage and "pray out" from among our church members those who will volunteer for short-term and career missionary service?
- _____ s) Do our pastoral staff and lay leaders make regular trips to a mission field?
- _____ t) Are persons from our church returning from cross-cultural trips given the opportunity to report in Sunday worship?

Total the points from the 20 questions and rate your church's missions emphasis accordingly:

81-100 Excellent
68-80 Healthy
55-67 Good
40-54 Weak
26-39 Sick
11-25 Dying
0-10 Dead

How did your church do?

For another evaluation tool, "How missions-minded is your church?" is available from the CCM office in Findlay.

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