



**THE  
BLUEPRINT SERIES**  
Volume 5

# Building...

# **MISSIONS PARTNERSHIP**

*Through the Missionary Visit*



Photo illustration: Jim Whitmer Photography

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# INTRODUCTION

Just before He went away, Jesus told His followers: *“Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone”* (Mark 16:15, NLT). Some might ask, “What does that have to do with me?” His command has everything to do with you—for several reasons. First, Jesus said it! Second, this directive was among the last words He spoke, and last words are usually very important. Third, it was more than a request; it was a command!

Jesus knew that we couldn’t get the job done by ourselves, so He introduced the idea of **partnership**. Most importantly, it would be necessary to depend on the Holy Spirit as our senior **partner**. Jesus said in Acts 1:8: *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”* (NLT). The power for witnessing comes through the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Jesus underscored the fact that we won’t be properly equipped to fulfill His command until we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus added another dimension to **partnership** when He said, *“Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man’s reward”* (Matthew 10:41, NIV). We do the Scriptures no injustice when we replace the word *prophet* with the word *missionary*. A **partnership** is formed between those who go and those who send. If senders are as committed in sending as missionaries are in going, then the senders will receive the same reward as the missionaries. What a privilege!

Paul added another dimension to **partnership** when he wrote, *“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”* (Romans 10:13, NLT). He was thrilled with this revelation, but then he began to explore what this meant to a lost world. The next two verses reveal four questions that haunted him. *“But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent?”* (Romans 10:14-15, NLT). The answer to all four questions is the same: They cannot! **A partnership must exist between God who provides salvation, the goer who preaches salvation, and the sender who provides for the goer.**

The apostle John tied it all together when he wrote: *“Dear friend, you are doing a good work for God in taking care of the traveling teachers and missionaries who are passing through. They have told the church here of your friendship and your loving deeds. I am glad when you send them on their way with a generous gift. For they*

*are traveling for the Lord, and take neither food, clothing, shelter, nor money from those who are not Christians, even though they have preached to them. **So we ourselves should take care of them in order that we may become partners with them in the Lord's work***" (3 John 5-8, TLB).

There it is! John identified those who remain at home in the local church as **partners** with missionaries who go to the ends of the earth to proclaim the good news. Frequent visits between missionaries and a local congregation are critical if they are to **partner** together in missions.

This manual has been prepared to help build the **partnership** between missionaries and the local congregation and to move every believer into obedience to Christ's command!

## SECTION 1

# The Importance of the Missionary Visit

*In Jerusalem the believers were glad to see us. The next day Paul went with us to visit James, and all the elders were there. Paul greeted them and told them everything God had done among the other nations through him. When they heard this, they praised God.*

(Acts 21:17-20, NCV)

# SECTION 1

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MISSIONARY VISIT

Giving to missionaries is not charity! We give, not because we feel sorry for them, but because we want to become **partners** with them in reaching the lost world for Christ. Missionary itineration becomes the key to **partnership**.

While detractors may point out that missionary itineration is expensive, time-consuming and tiring, we have only to examine its success within our missions outreach to know that it produces results that are unparalleled by other methods.

At least seven obvious benefits are realized when missionaries visit our churches and share their burden for the lost in faraway places.

1. The individual church member is blessed. Jesus commanded every believer to go into all the world and preach the gospel. This seems impractical, if not impossible, for most people in our churches. When missionaries visit a local church, they share opportunities for reaching the lost in distant lands. By communicating their vision, they afford believers the opportunity for **partnership** by participating in the work God has given them. In this way, we are enabled to fulfill the Great Commission. We become **partners** in soul winning around the world – without ever leaving home. The better we know missionaries personally, the more effective our **partnership** becomes.

Contact with missionaries builds friendships that last a lifetime. An occasional letter, card or small gift for Christmas and birthdays—sent by a church or individual—is the added touch that is so needed and appreciated by a missionary far from home.

2. The local congregation is blessed. A recent review of data from the annual Church and Ministers' Report revealed a startling discovery. During a recent 12-month period, churches that had missionary participation in an annual missions convention reported 67 percent more converts than churches that had no conventions with missionary speakers.

This should come as no surprise. When we are burdened for the lost who live halfway around the world, we also are more aware of our lost neighbors, friends and colleagues. A missionary visit keeps the reality fresh before us that without Christ, all men are eternally lost!

3. The lost of the world have a greater opportunity to hear the liberating gospel of Christ. A survey of missionaries revealed that these two factors had an almost equal share in their missions call: a daily prayer time and the ministry of visiting missionaries.

Assemblies of God World Missions does not actively recruit missionaries, trusting instead that the Lord of the harvest will call those whom He chooses. Over the years He has provided a growing resource of

candidates. Add to this number those who respond through Ambassadors in Mission (AIM) and Missions Abroad Placement Service (MAPS), and you will see that a great army of volunteers is tearing down Satan's strongholds. Would these laborers be on the front line today if they had not heard a missionary message? Not likely.

For those desiring to go into full-time missionary service, Assemblies of God World Missions offers a variety of opportunities for credentialed ministers as well as committed laypeople. In addition, those desiring to spend a year or two working alongside missionaries will find ample opportunities as missionary associates (MAs). For more information about this program, call (417) 862-2781, extension 2088, e-mail [agwm@ag.org](mailto:agwm@ag.org), or visit [www.worldmissions.ag.org](http://www.worldmissions.ag.org).

Youth will also find opportunities to serve overseas during one- to two-week trips as part of an Ambassadors in Mission team. These teams are often sponsored by the youth department in your district. For more detailed information, contact Ambassadors in Mission (AIM) at (417) 862-2781, extension 4084, or e-mail [aim@ag.org](mailto:aim@ag.org).

4. Ministries are strengthened as a result of the intercessory prayer of believers. Missionaries share prayer needs for ministries and projects on the field. These can include Bible schools, church planting, Good News Crusades and a number of international ministries. Thousands of believers become silent **partners** with the visiting missionary. Their faithfulness in prayer makes the difference. Many missionary victories can be traced to this faithful intercession.

A personal experience will illustrate this. In a visit to a supporting church, I shared several prayer requests concerning needs in Argentina where my wife, Betty, and I were ministering at the time. I included the names of several national workers. Five years later I returned to that church. The pastor's wife showed me a Bible belonging to her daughter who was about 7 years old when I had visited previously. Written on the flyleaf in a childish scrawl were the requests I had shared with the congregation. The mother told me that her daughter had prayed faithfully each night for those needs. That young woman is now the wife of a district superintendent and still prays for our missionary family!

Intercessory prayer is absolutely essential for the missionary's success and well-being. Missionaries find immeasurable strength in knowing others are supporting them in prayer as they face challenges on the field. Prayer becomes truly effective when we are guided by the Holy Spirit in intercession for specific needs.

Here is a partial list of missionary needs for which you can intercede as guided by the Spirit:

- Special anointing and wisdom.

- Favor with the people among whom they are ministering.
- Health and well-being.
- Protection from danger and difficulties.
- Their children's well-being, both physical and emotional.
- Help in learning a new language and adapting to a new culture.
- Provision to meet financial needs.
- Response to the gospel message as people accept Christ and are disciplined
- More workers to be called and sent into the harvest.

5. Candidate missionaries are developed spiritually through itineration. Raising a missionary budget is a spiritual exercise that allows new missionaries to experience God's divine provision—a lesson they will need to remember daily as they go into the enemy's territory. Without God's supernatural empowerment, the missionary will soon fail.

The months of sharing during itineration gives new missionaries the opportunity to clarify their call. As they verbalize their vision to congregations across America, their resolve is strengthened and their understanding of God's will for their lives becomes more focused. If new missionaries were sent to the field without itineration, many would likely fail during their first term of service. Itineration prepares them for the next challenge.

6. Veteran missionaries find fulfillment in itineration. A veteran missionary visit could be called a "stockholders meeting." These missionaries return to report the accomplishments that have resulted from their spiritual **partners'** investments during their previous term of service.

Personally, I found that itineration represented the completion of a cycle. I had challenged churches, and they had responded. For four years my wife and I had labored on the field. This could not have happened without believers who faithfully prayed and gave. Itineration was my time to return to them and share what had been accomplished as a result of their sacrifice. In many ways, a missionary's identity is somehow tied to these visits with his or her supporting churches.

7. Itineration provides more adequate financing for the missionary. Only after examining six other benefits of itineration does money come into the picture. Ample evidence exists to provide a comparison between missionary-sending organizations with centralized budgets and others, such as the Assemblies of God, that raise funding through missionary itineration. Those with itinerating missionaries win hands down. Better information, more layperson involvement and higher motivation are just a few advantages of the itineration approach. Everyone benefits from the missionary visit to the local church.



Of course, there is room for improvement. Announcing missionary services with excitement, fewer preliminaries, singing songs with a missionary theme to create atmosphere, and giving people the opportunity to respond financially after the missionary has shared are just a few ways to make missionary services even more effective.

One part of our system, however, is backward. In Acts, Luke wrote that the Antioch church, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, sought out Barnabas and Paul and sent them forth as missionaries. Currently, missionaries must seek churches that are willing to support them. What would happen if our churches began to seek out missionaries to send as their representatives to the four corners of the earth? That would be true **partnership**.

### **THANK GOD FOR THE MISSIONARIES!**

We have all been commanded by Christ to “go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone.” In order for us to fulfill the Great Commission, we would have to sell everything we own, tell family and friends goodbye, go to a foreign country, and learn a new culture and language!

But all of us can’t go physically, because God has called certain people to go. Our responsibility in fulfilling Christ’s command is to send them. In missions, there are three types of Christians: those who go, those who send, and the disobedient!

So the next time a missionary visits your church, don’t complain or criticize. Instead, thank God that you can be obedient to Christ by sending the missionary and helping to obey the Great Commission. The missionary visit is never an interruption; it’s an opportunity!

## SECTION 2

# Missions and the Guest Speaker

*Dear friend, you are doing a good work for God in taking care of the traveling teachers and missionaries who are passing through. They have told the church here of your friendship and your loving deeds. I am glad when you send them on their way with a generous gift. For they are traveling for the Lord, and take neither food, clothing, shelter, nor money from those who are not Christians, even though they have preached to them. So we ourselves should take care of them in order that we may become partners with them in the Lord's work.*

(3 John 5-8, TLB)

## **SECTION 2**

### **MISSIONS AND THE GUEST SPEAKER**

The success of a church's missions outreach will depend largely upon the time spent planning missions activities and securing the best possible missionary speakers for each occasion to assist in inspiring, informing and motivating the congregation. Adequate planning is also needed for the provision and comfort of those who come to assist in building missions vision.

#### **PART 1**

##### **HOW OFTEN SHOULD A CHURCH HAVE A MISSIONARY SPEAKER?**

Every church is different and, consequently, has different needs. But great churches are missionary churches, and a church cannot be truly missions-minded without scheduling frequent missionary speakers to come and inspire the people. Fewer than one missionary service each quarter is insufficient to create and maintain vision for a lost world. Planning for a missionary speaker, when possible, at least every other month is far more effective. Many churches have at least one missionary speaker each month.

A problem can arise if missionary traffic is so heavy that the pastor does not have time to minister to his own congregation. However, giving every guest missionary a full service is not always necessary. If the pastor feels the need to minister to the congregation, most missionaries would be happy for a 10-minute window followed by a generous offering. Having these "missionary windows" makes it possible to include more missionary speakers throughout the year.

Once the pastor has determined, in consultation with the missions team, how frequently and on what dates to have missionary speakers, a foundation is in place to proceed with future plans. Flexibility is the key. Sometimes a missionary might not be available on the specific date you planned, but flexibility will allow for shifting one date to another, depending on the activities on the church calendar.

#### **PART 2**

##### **SELECTING MISSIONARY SPEAKERS**

Normally, a missionary service brings to mind veteran missionaries who recently returned from the field. For the next several months they will travel and share their successes in ministry with their supporting churches and seek renewed and increased monthly support for their next term.

A second group of missionaries—new missionaries—are also available for services. For the most part, these new missionaries have limited or no missionary

experience. Their purpose in traveling among churches is to share their burden and vision so that churches will join them as **partners** through prayer and monthly support.

In addition to these approved missionaries from Assemblies of God World Missions are a growing group of approved missionaries from U.S. Missions. Some districts of the United States have a number of U.S. missionaries living and ministering in them. Other districts rarely have contact with U.S. missionaries unless they are itinerating to raise additional support.

While veteran and new missionaries are important in sparking enthusiasm for missions in a congregation, leaders of U.S. and World Missions also provide a wealth of experience that can be drawn upon for a missions service. Most members of the World Missions Executive Committee have served as missionaries for many years. Because of their frequent travel to the countries within their regions, they can share the latest information on what God is doing and can bring updates on urgent needs and victorious revivals.

Other possible speakers for missionary activities include district personnel. District superintendents and district missions directors often have served as missionaries. They have a burden for missions, both at home and abroad, and should not be overlooked in an annual schedule of missionary speakers.

Some districts lack an abundance of missionary speakers in close proximity. If this is true in your area, please don't despair. Call Frank Vice, itineration manager for AGWM, at (417) 862-2781, extension 2057, or your district missions secretary for assistance in finding available missionaries within your district or in neighboring districts.

### **PART 3**

#### **WHAT ABOUT SPEAKERS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES?**

People from other countries are visiting the United States more than ever before. This is due to greater availability of transportation and the upward economic mobility in many areas of the world.

Whether to schedule a national speaker for a missions service requires considerable thought and care. Often a pastor will schedule one or more national speakers, only to learn that they were not who they said they were and did not represent what they said they did. Sometimes these speakers are received and assisted by U.S. churches, yet they have actually created problems for the Assemblies of God within their own country. Of course, no pastor wants to be in a position of contributing to someone who is, at best, nonproductive and, at worst, counterproductive within his own nation and fellowship.

So, how can a pastor or missions committee know what to do? The answer is not to refuse all nationals who come to the United States for ministry. On the contrary, an

experienced and proven national church leader can add a new dimension to your missions activities and increase a church's understanding of how national believers feel about missions and missionaries.

To prevent a lot of heartache and misunderstanding, take care to learn more about potential guests and whether they are trustworthy. When approached about scheduling a service, consider contacting David Lee, AGWM director for U.S. Relations at (417) 862-2781, extension 2075, for an endorsement. One of his responsibilities is to monitor national church leaders who are in the United States for ministry. He will verify their good standing within their national fellowship and whether they represent approved projects.

Another nuance to consider is about funds given directly to an international guest. Offerings given to a national who is not approved by AGWM must be reported to the Internal Revenue Service. According to the law, 30 percent of the offering must be retained for income tax and verified with a form 1099. AGWM will not issue a receipt or give missions credit. On the other hand, offerings given to national church leaders who have official AGWM approval are designated and accountable. These offerings are receipted by AGWM and donor churches receive missions credit for their giving.

Personally, I have several concerns about our responsibility toward those who come from other countries for ministry. Having lived on the mission field for many years, I have seen several problems arise from a lack of understanding on the part of some pastors within our Fellowship.

Many nationals who come to the United States find it very difficult to settle into a productive ministry after they return home. They have found that life in the United States is much more comfortable and that one offering from a church can be as much as two or three months' income at home. The temptation is strong for a national guest to return to the United States repeatedly to pick up additional income.

This pattern produces several problems. First, if nationals return to the United States frequently, they lose productivity in their own country where they can be the most effective. Second, once they start receiving help directly from churches – and this is quite common – they maintain a higher standard of living than their peers. Consequently, they are resented by other nationals with whom they work. Third, every offering given to a national increases the risk of competition between him or her and the growing number of missionaries who are raising their support.

I have known of national believers who came to the United States every year or so and stayed for several weeks or months. The funds they received from offerings were used for personal expenses. Others came on three-month visas and were still making a preaching circuit two years later. Going from place to place, they continued this extended stay because churches, with all sincerity, responded to their appeals

without inquiring as to their legitimacy. This, of course, is not the best use of the missions dollars given sacrificially by our congregations.

In the final analysis, we should not close our doors to all national speakers, but we should become well-informed about those who work among us. Many godly and trustworthy men and women come to the United States to represent approved projects. They can be a great blessing to a congregation, and believers can help meet legitimate needs in other countries. We, as good stewards, are responsible to ascertain that the funds we give are invested as they were designated.

## SECTION 3

# How to Maximize a Missionary's Ministry to Your Congregation

*I planned to stop and see you on my way to Macedonia, as well as afterwards when I returned, so that I could be a double blessing to you and so that you could send me on my way to Judea.*

(2 Corinthians 1:16, TLB)

## **SECTION 3**

### **HOW TO MAXIMIZE A MISSIONARY'S MINISTRY TO YOUR CONGREGATION**

In times past, a missionary could schedule a service for just about every night of the week. Today this is no longer possible in most districts. Finding time for a missionary speaker has become a challenge for many churches. Wednesday evenings are departmentalized, which limits the missionary's contact to a small group of adults in the sanctuary. Scheduling on Sunday evenings is becoming more difficult as the number of churches dismissing services or moving to a cell group format increases. More than 30 percent of our churches no longer have regular Sunday evening services. On Sunday mornings many pastors feel they need to minister to their congregations.

So what is the best approach? Should churches decrease the number of missionary visits because scheduling has become more problematic?

A lost world still remains in darkness and deserves to hear the liberating message of the gospel. The Great Commission is still in effect for every believer, and spiritual leaders still have the responsibility of giving every member of their congregation the opportunity to obey through giving, praying and going.

Missions must be a priority in our churches. We must find ways to teach congregations regarding not only their responsibilities, but also the opportunities to participate. Finding time for missionary speakers on the church calendar will not be difficult if we believe that reaching the world is a priority!

Scheduling a missionary for Sunday morning is always the ideal, because this service usually has the largest attendance. Since this option is not always possible, consider these alternatives that will still build missions vision within your congregation:

#### **PART 1**

#### **SUNDAY MORNING OPTIONS**

##### **Morning Worship Service**

Sunday morning is still the ideal time for scheduling a missionary service, since it reaches the largest number possible with the challenge of missions. Giving a missionary 25 to 30 minutes to minister is the best arrangement for most missionaries.

##### **Window on the World**

When it is not possible to give the missionary the entire service, a 10-minute Window on the World should always be a possibility. Many missionaries are quite comfortable with this arrangement. Discuss this option at the time the visit is scheduled so that the missionary will know what is expected of him or her.



## **Sunday School Classes**

If a missionary is participating in a Sunday morning service, consider scheduling him or her for ministry during the Sunday School hour as well. By going from class to class, a missionary can briefly share a missions challenge in each setting. Another option is to let the missionary focus on one class for the entire hour. The purpose is not to teach the current lesson but to share missions and get acquainted with the people.

If the missionary is traveling with his or her family, the spouse and older children could be assigned to different classes to share about their experiences in another country. This will give your church members a fresh look into missionary life and ministry.

## **PART 2**

### **OTHER OPTIONS**

#### **Sunday Evening**

The Sunday evening service, though usually fewer in attendance, is a great setting for a missionary service. It is often more casual and allows for spending more time at the altar. Without the time pressures of the morning service, the missionary has an opportunity to become better acquainted with the people.

Many churches have substituted a traditional service with cell group ministry on Sunday evenings. Cell groups give missionaries an important opportunity to build relationships with the attendees, as well as share the challenge of missions in a more personal setting.

If the church has neither a Sunday evening service nor cell group ministry, a small gathering with coffee and cake can be held in the fellowship hall. Both churches and missionaries have found these to be very enjoyable and spiritually rewarding.

#### **Saturday Activities**

If scheduled for Sunday morning, most guest speakers will arrive on Saturday afternoon. With a little forethought, the missionary's contact with the congregation can be increased substantially. If the Women's Ministries group is planning a Saturday meeting, invite the missionary to participate.

In many churches the Men's Fellowship meets monthly for a Saturday breakfast. Why not include the missionary in the program and fellowship?

Many churches have youth activities on Saturday afternoon or evening. Why not include the missionary? Hearing from the missionary will make clear the demands of Jesus Christ on young people's lives, both present and future. The missionary can also encourage the youth in their Speed the Light project.

### **Wednesday Evening**

The Wednesday evening service is often very similar to Sunday School, since activities are departmentalized. In most churches, specific age groups meet together. If a missionary speaker is scheduled to minister to the adults, plan a time for him or her to spend a few minutes with the youth group during the sanctuary preliminaries.

### **Off-night Activities**

Although scheduling a missionary for a service on off nights might not be feasible, it is often possible to schedule a fellowship time with a smaller group. Desserts could be served at a "Get Acquainted With the Missionary Night." Many churches have held these events with great success. The attendance is fewer but the motivation is high, and those who attend are inspired and encouraged after spending quality time with "their missionaries."

### **Missions Team Meeting**

Regardless of when the missionary is scheduled for a service, setting aside time for the missions team to meet with him or her is always beneficial. The team will be better informed about missions in general and about the missionary's ministry in particular. They will be better prepared to make decisions concerning the missionary's financial needs and better informed and more effective in their prayers for missions.

### **Breakfast or Lunch Meetings**

If no other alternative is available on the church calendar, invite the missionary to meet with the pastor for breakfast or lunch. This does not give the missionary an opportunity to meet the congregation, but it does communicate that the pastor is committed to missions and will do everything possible to get to know and assist every missionary. During the visit, the pastor becomes more knowledgeable concerning the missionary's ministry. Afterward, the pastor may decide that this is a ministry the church should support on a monthly basis or at least with a one-time offering.

### **Missions Conventions**

As scheduling missionaries for regular services becomes more problematic, the missions convention takes on greater importance. The most important part about a missions convention is not the number of missionaries invited to participate, but rather the faith promises raised for missionaries, including those who have not yet ministered to the congregation.

If a church will effectively plan and conduct annual missions conventions that include a successful faith promise service, its missions income will grow and the congregation will touch the world with their giving. The church will never reach its potential in missions without an annual missions convention!

## SECTION 4

# How to Make the Missionary Visit More Effective

*Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives.*

(Titus 3:13-14, TNIV)

## **SECTION 4**

### **HOW TO MAKE THE MISSIONARY VISIT MORE EFFECTIVE**

An old adage says that planning is everything. This is certainly true when it comes to missionary visits to the local church. Considering how little time the missionary will have with a congregation, it is essential that pastors do everything possible to maximize the effectiveness of this special time of ministry.

#### **PART 1**

##### **SCHEDULING MISSIONARY SERVICES**

Frequency and timing of missionary speakers are critical to the overall success of a missions outreach. Frequent missionary speakers, as often as one each month, is far more effective in building missions vision than having an occasional missionary visit. Pastors should become proactive and seek out missionary speakers rather than passively wait for missionaries to contact them for services. This gives intentionality to the overall plan to create a passion for missions in the hearts of believers.

In districts that lack a lot of missionary traffic, it will be necessary to contact missionaries from neighboring districts to maintain a healthy schedule of mission's speakers. The district missions director can provide helpful guidance on available missionaries. For additional information, contact Frank Vice's office at (417) 862-2781, extension 2057.

Many churches schedule all of their missionary speakers for the same time and day of the week, such as the Sunday evening service. This plan has two major problems. First, at least half of the congregation is missing in the evening service. If missionaries always come during one particular time slot, much of the congregation will never hear a missionary challenge. Second, many people who attend church during this time are working elsewhere in ministry. They too will miss hearing the missionary's message. By rotating the days and times of your missions services, everyone should hear a missions message at least three or four times each year.

#### **PART 2**

##### **PRE-SERVICE PLANNING**

For years I worked with missionaries, both new and veteran, concerning itineration and ministry in local churches. I repeatedly stressed the importance of scheduling time with the pastor prior to the service so that clearly defined plans could be established and mutually understood.

Personal experience has shown that meeting with the pastor prior to the service is often difficult. With the responsibilities involved in preparing for a service, pastors often have little quality time to devote to their guest speakers. Some pastors find it easier to meet with the missionary at an earlier hour when there is less pressure. While no set rules exist for what time or place is more effective for meeting, the key is to find what works and develop a clear vision for the upcoming service.

Before the pastor can fully understand the burden of the missionary, he or she must know something of that missionary's ministry, responsibilities and financial need. A preservice meeting brings all of this into focus.

After this has been done, make sure the missionary understands any specific time constraints. Please be generous with the missionary on the time allotted. Sometimes a church invites a missionary to minister on a Sunday morning and pays all of his or her airfare and other expenses. However, the missionary is not given the opportunity to speak at the service until 11:45 a.m.—and is expected to dismiss at noon! In these cases, the missionary's frustration is not a matter of ego, but rather a missed opportunity to share his knowledge and expertise. Please make every effort to give the missionary ample time. He or she will probably not be back with you for at least five years!

Because of time pressures, not every missionary can be given a full service. It may come as a surprise to know that not all missionaries want a full service. Many are quite comfortable with a 10- or 15-minute window. Pastors must determine which missionaries should be allowed to minister the Word and which will be given a window.

Pastors must clearly share what is expected of missionaries when they visit. Should they preach, share about their call and ministry on the field, or both?

Most missionaries need certain equipment for their presentation. Will they need a table for a display in the lobby? Will they be using video or PowerPoint while they speak? Will they use the church's equipment or do they want to set up their own?

During preservice planning, decide whether the missionary's presentation will be a complete package or if a break in the middle of the presentation is the best time to receive the offering. Some missionaries prefer to give a full presentation and receive the missionary offering at the end. Others prefer to give a brief overview of their ministry and financial needs and then turn the service back to the pastor to receive the offering. The missionary then returns to the pulpit to minister, leaving the end of the service for a challenge and time at the altar.

To achieve the most effective results, plan the whole service around the theme of missions rather than making the missionary speaker a postscript or afterthought. Plan to incorporate choruses, hymns and special music that focus on missions. Everything that is done in the service should point toward reaching a lost world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Make every missionary service a success by helping the missionary plan the service. Give the missionary your church's full cooperation. In return, they will give you their very best in ministry.

### **PART 3**

#### **MISSIONARY OFFERINGS**

As mentioned earlier, preplanning is essential to establish when the offering will be received. Equally important is a clear understanding of who will receive it and for what purpose. It should be underscored that the missionary offering should never be received before the missionary has the opportunity to share the financial need. Most congregations are quite generous when fully informed and challenged.

Unfortunately, many churches do not receive an offering for missionary speakers, choosing instead to give them an honorarium at the close of the service. Honorariums are given to speakers for services rendered, and missionaries should never be paid for services rendered. Instead, they should be given a generous offering according to the needs of a dying world and the challenges of their ministry. Give the missionary opportunity to share his or her burden. Then, as the people are challenged, see what God will do toward meeting the need through their enthusiastic response.

The person receiving the offering, usually the pastor, should clearly state the purpose of the offering and set the example by his or her own giving. It should never be referred to as "a little offering" or "a little something to help the missionaries buy a pizza before they get home." The people are investing in soul-winning and should be encouraged in their giving, knowing that their offering will reap eternal benefits.

Consider setting a minimum offering for missionary speakers, but never set a maximum amount. Whether the weather is bad, attendance is low or a number of other reasons, remember that missionaries are giving their best and deserve our best. When faith promises are received during a missions convention, part of the income from those promises can be designated for missionary speakers. That way, if the offering for a missionary does not meet the established minimum, the balance can be taken from the missions fund. Using this method, you will never have to apologize for the size of the offering. You have done your best, and that is what God requires.

Always plan on giving the missionary a check that covers the offering received. If the church treasurer or missions treasurer is present, plan ahead and prepare a signed check so the amount can be inserted after the service.

A missionary should never be told, "We will have to send your check." Many times a missionary will need funds in order to travel to his or her next destination.

I remember a time when I was scheduled to speak in a certain church. I was traveling with my wife and three children. No hotel or motel was provided, which meant we would need to drive some distance after the service before arriving home. The main problem was that our car's gas tank was as empty as my wallet. The pastor told me that they would send a check for the missionary offering later.

I asked the pastor if I could cash a check for a small amount. He said that I should speak to the church treasurer. The treasurer was in a side room counting the offering. When I asked if he would cash a check for me, he refused, saying, "No, we don't do business on the Lord's Day." I left there wondering how we would get home when we ran out of gas.

As we were leaving town, I remembered that someone had handed me a bill after the morning service in another church. I had slipped it in my side pocket and forgotten about it until that moment. What a delight when I pulled it out of my pocket and discovered that it was a \$10 bill! The Lord knew that others might fail us, but He is always faithful!

Another kind of offerings is special offerings. These are given to missionaries for personal use rather than for specific ministry needs. Sometimes churches and individuals choose to give missionaries something extra for their personal use. This is not discouraged, because many times God uses this means to supply urgent needs that missionaries have.

This doesn't mean that missionaries do not receive an adequate monthly allowance, but as with every family, financial challenges occur. Churches are also encouraged to remember missionaries on their birthdays and at Christmastime.

These kinds of special offerings are greatly appreciated—especially by missionary kids (MKs). Special offerings are receipted in the same manner as ministry offerings, and churches receive missions credit for this giving as well. The World Missions Executive Committee has established an annual maximum that missionaries can receive in personal offerings, and any special offerings beyond that amount are placed in the missionary's work account. On numerous occasions my wife and I have placed personal offerings in our work account, because that represented the most urgent need for us at that particular moment.

Sometimes a pastor will hand a missionary a check and say, "Now, this is just for you. We don't want a receipt or missions credit. Don't report this to AGWM. This is yours to spend as you please." This places the missionary in a dilemma. On one hand, he wants to honor your wishes. On the other hand, he knows he needs to be accountable and receipt the offering, although he is free to keep it for his own use up to the yearly maximum.

Be generous with missionaries, but please don't ask them not to report an offering. Each missionary must maintain financial integrity and comply with missionary policy.

## **PART 4**

### **ACCOMODATIONS**

When we invite someone into our home as a guest, we want them to feel welcome and at ease. This is equally true when inviting someone as a guest to speak at your church. Although this should go without saying, the experiences of many missionaries indicate otherwise.

When a church invites a missionary—or any guest speaker—for a service, accommodations should be provided prior to or following the service, depending on whether the speaker is scheduled for a morning or evening service. If the missionary stays for both Sunday morning and evening, accommodations should be provided for Saturday and Sunday nights. The only exception is when the speaker prefers to make other arrangements.

Contact the missionary by e-mail several days prior to the date, listing details concerning lodging and reservations. Be sure to include directions on how to arrive at the hotel, as well as directions from the hotel to the church. Be sure to include a telephone number other than the church office for any emergency that might arise. Inform the missionary of when they need to arrive at the church to prepare for the service.

When making the reservation, keep in mind that location and comfort are important. Be sure that the hotel is located in a relatively secure part of the city. Especially in the case of single women, make a reservation in a hotel that has inside hallways rather than rooms with doors leading directly to the outside. This provides a much greater degree of security.

Don't assume that the room is comfortable and attractive. See for yourself or send another responsible individual. Does the room have a good bed? Does it provide a restful and appealing atmosphere? Does the hotel serve a complimentary breakfast? If not, arrangements must be made to cover the cost of breakfast at the hotel or elsewhere. Would you be happy to stay there? If not, please don't expect guests to stay there.

Reservations should be made in the name of the visiting missionary, not in the name of the church, pastor or church secretary. Make certain that hotel personnel understand that the church will be responsible for the cost of the room. This will avoid awkward misunderstandings later.

If no adequate hotel facility is available in your community or nearby, it may be necessary to host the missionary in a private home. Remember that, although the missionary's visit may be a one- or two-night experience for the host, many times it represents daily life for the missionary. After 12 to 15 months of itineration, the process can become exhausting as the missionary adapts to different families, schedules and routines several times each week.



If your church is small and cannot afford a hotel, or if nothing adequate is available in your community, please do not let this hinder you from inviting missionary speakers. Remember that most missionaries are quite flexible and have spent some delightful times of fellowship in the homes of both pastors and laypeople.

A word of caution is advisable when thinking of placing a missionary in a home other than the pastor's. I have stayed in the homes of church members on many occasions, and we have enjoyed delightful times of fellowship. But the awkwardness presents itself on Monday morning when the man of the house goes to work, the children go to school and the missionary is left alone with the hostess. Such a situation can be quite uncomfortable for everyone involved. More than likely, the missionary will probably make a point to leave the home as quickly as possible in order to prevent any appearance of impropriety, even when he has nowhere else to go.

Another point to consider is the missionary's lack of knowledge of the area. If he or she is to be housed in a private home, the pastor or a staff member should accompany the missionary and make personal introductions to the hosts, rather than giving the missionary an address and expecting him or her to take care of locating and approaching the hosts alone.

When housing the missionary in a home, ask the following questions: Is the room clean and does it have a good bed? Does the room offer some privacy? Will the temperature be adequate? Is a writing table or desk available? Make sure there are plenty of fresh towels. Remember that the missionary may need to do laundry or take clothes to the cleaners. If the wife is along, she might appreciate a trip to a hair salon. Could that be your small token of appreciation to her?

If missionaries are traveling with small children, will the children's needs be met? Remember that families with small children may need a baby bed, potty chair, bottle warming facilities, etc.

Let the missionaries know the host's schedule and whether they are expected to be a part of these activities. The hostess might say, "I will be in the kitchen if you need me," or "We will be in the backyard, but we understand if you need time to rest or pray or study."

On a few occasions I have not received enough to eat while hosted in a private home, but the opposite is usually the problem. Hosts normally want to prepare a large meal for their guests. This means that many missionaries fight the "battle of the bulge." Large meals should not be served immediately before service time. Keep desserts light and don't insist that the missionary take a second helping. Remember to ask the missionary if he or she has any dietary restrictions and what meal schedule they prefer.

Even when the missionary is staying with a family other than the pastor, remember that the purpose of the visit is ministry. Ample time should be set

aside for the missionary and pastor to spend together, both before and after the service.

## **PART 5**

### **AFTER-SERVICE FELLOWSHIP**

If a missionary is invited to speak on a Sunday morning, it is assumed that lunch will be provided afterward. Following an evening service, most missionaries are not interested in eating a full meal, but they generally eat something light before going to bed. Why not take this opportunity to invite the missionary for a snack or dessert and enjoy a choice time of fellowship? It will give you an opportunity to learn more about the missionary and his or her ministry.

Itinerating missionaries look forward to a time of fellowship with the pastor's family. Friendships are cultivated that will last a lifetime. The bond that is formed makes us family, not just business associates.

This time of sharing can benefit both pastors and missionaries. Many times a pastor is going through a difficult moment. He or she does not feel comfortable talking with a neighboring pastor and may not wish to confide in district leaders at the moment. The missionary represents a nonthreatening listener with wisdom and experience. This combination can be a unique blessing to the host pastor.

Speaking from personal experience, I remember many occasions when I have sat with a struggling pastor until well after midnight, listening to and praying with him about a burden heavy on his heart. Those occasions are rarely planned, but when they occur, hearts are melded together as one. You can't buy that kind of kinship!

## **PART 6**

### **A MONTHLY COMMITMENT**

Missionaries itinerate within our churches for three important reasons: To challenge every believer to *pray and give so that others can go*. It should come as no surprise that finances become a major issue in itineration. Since missionaries seek financial support, the subject cannot and should not be ignored when they visit.

An expression from another era says, "Every tub must sit on its own bottom." This certainly applies to missionaries in the Assemblies of God who must raise every dollar of their budget, both for personal support and ministry expenses. Missionaries are seeking **partners** for the "end-time harvest," and they are hoping that pastors will lead their congregations to join them as financial **partners**.

When possible, present the missionary with a signed monthly commitment form before he or she leaves following a service. It is a great encouragement to the missionary and it hastens their departure for the field. If the church board or missions team must be consulted before making a commitment, tell the missionary when a decision will be made. Ask the missionary to give you a call at a set time, and be prepared to give a response.

If your church is not in a position to join the missionary with monthly support, please don't tell the missionary "maybe." As painful as it may be for both you and the missionary, it is better to simply tell the missionary that the church cannot make a monthly commitment. This will give the missionary time to seek support elsewhere.

Sometimes churches opt to wait until the missionary is ready to leave for the field before making a monthly commitment. However, if every church did this, the missionary would never leave! These monthly commitments by churches and individuals provide missionaries with personal support and/or accumulate toward their cash budget while they itinerate.

Many churches only respond to emergencies. This is commendable, but it would be much more helpful if we all responded before emergencies happen. Prompt response with a monthly commitment can prevent many crises from occurring in the first place.

A missionary's dream is to receive a signed monthly commitment form from a congregation before he or she leaves a church. Why not make this your goal as well?

### **LITTLE THINGS THAT MEAN A LOT**

Through the years Betty and I have enjoyed many acts of kindness. These deeds have shown how much the congregation and pastor appreciated what we were doing and how happy they were to have us as their guests. Here are a few examples to file away for use in the future:

When my children were young, I always appreciated it when pastors took an interest in them—even when they weren't with me. On occasion, the church gave me a small cash gift for them. Some also made it a point to give me a gift to take to Betty.

Sometimes when I check into a hotel room that the church reserved for me, I find a basket of fruit and other goodies placed there by the missions team. This is not only extremely thoughtful, but also practical. Many times a missionary might like a snack, but he or she doesn't want to take the time or expense to go to a restaurant.

I always get a warm feeling inside when I arrive at an airport and the pastor is there to meet me personally, take me to a hotel and accompany me to dinner. The kindness of these gracious hosts is certainly not wasted. Missionaries are sure to give you their best when you treat them with courtesy and kindness.

## SECTION 5

# How Are Assemblies of God Missionaries Supported?

*I have received my full pay, and even more than that. I have everything I need. That's because Epaphroditus brought me the gifts you sent. They are a sweet-smelling offering. They are a gift that God accepts. He is pleased with it.*

(Philippians 4:18, NIV)

## **SECTION 5**

### **HOW ARE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD MISSIONARIES SUPPORTED?**

#### **PART 1**

##### **WHAT SYSTEM DO WE USE?**

*“It seems such a shame for missionaries to spend four years overseas and then be forced, upon their return to the United States, to spend a full year visiting scores of churches to raise support for their next term. There must be a better way.”*

This objection is voiced frequently by pastors and laity alike. As a reasonable observation, it deserves a reasonable answer.

Three methods are commonly employed to raise missionary support.

- First, *the independent faith system* assumes every missionary will raise what he or she can with no guarantees. Donors send their support directly to the missionary. It leaves the missionary with no assurance of a stable income.
- The second is *the budgeted system* in which churches send undesignated offerings to their denomination’s national office. These funds are then divided among missionaries and projects according to the budget established by the missions organization. This system is impersonal and relieves the average church member from any sense of individual responsibility.
- The third method of raising missionary support is *the itineration system*. A combination of faith and budget, it is used by Assemblies of God World Missions. Under this system, missionaries travel among U.S. Assemblies of God churches to raise their financial and prayer support. Monthly offerings are designated by the donor for the missionaries and their projects and then sent to the national office for disbursement and record keeping.

Assemblies of God World Missions requires that all its missionaries raise their own support. No one is supported through subsidies, since such funds are nonexistent.

#### **PART 2**

##### **WHY DO WE USE THE ITINERATION SYSTEM?**

Over the years, some missions-sending organizations changed from the faith system to the budgeted system. Without exception, they saw erosion in missions giving, while giving for Assemblies of God World Missions increased. As a result, they have encouraged AGWM not to make the same mistake. As the old adage states: “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

Itineration has biblical precedents. In 1 Corinthians 16:6 Paul wrote this to the church in Macedonia: *“Perhaps I will stay with you awhile, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey (propempe\*) wherever I go”* (NIV). Paul intended to return to Corinth and receive help from them in order to return to Judea (2 Corinthians 1:15-16).

Paul also wrote to Titus, instructing him to do everything he could *“to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way (propempe\*) and see that they have everything they need”* (Titus 3:13).

(NOTE: *“Propempe”* is a Greek word that often implies providing a traveler with material provision for a journey.)

### **PART 3**

#### **MISSIONARY ITINERATION**

Effective missionaries do not work independently. Rather, they are sent by churches that share in the burden, the work and the rewards. The sent and the senders must answer to the call of the same Master, even though their direction of ministry may be different.

Itinerating missionaries travel from church to church on a regular schedule to promote missions and to raise their prayer and financial support. Itineration is vital for a successful four-year term of world missionary service. It requires about one out of every five years of a missionary's ministry.

All Assemblies of God world missionaries and their ministries are financially dependent on monthly commitments from churches and individual donors. Each itinerating missionary is given a supply of monthly commitment forms by the U.S. Relations Department. Each donor or church is asked to complete a form and send it to Assemblies of God World Missions.

Each missionary is given a budget determined largely by the cost of living in his or her assigned country. This budget is divided into two categories: a personal budget for support and a work budget to cover the expenses of ministry overseas. In addition to raising monthly support for each category, the missionary is required to raise a cash budget for initial expenses of fare, freight, duty, equipment and language study if applicable. A project budget may also be included. The cash budget is raised by missions offerings from churches, contributions from individual donors, and accumulated support from incoming monthly commitments made during itineration.

Missionaries are not cleared to leave for the field until they have raised their required budget. When missionaries leave without raising their full amount their budget is not underwritten. This means that if money does not come in to meet their monthly allowance, they will suffer a shortfall.

World evangelization requires teamwork between sending churches, Assemblies of God World Missions and missionaries. We must make certain that missionaries are not limited in their ministry because of insufficient prayer and financial support at home.

## **PART 4**

### **WHY DO MISSIONARIES ITINERATE?**

Itineration is about much more than raising money. It is a spiritual exercise for both the missionary and the congregation.

- The missionary ministers the Word as directed by the Holy Spirit, adding a spiritual dimension that many congregations would miss without such ministry.
- Missionary itineration is informational. People respond to the needs of a lost world when they are informed.
- Missionary itineration is motivational. It challenges people to pray, give and even go as missionaries themselves.
- The missionary's ministry will bless the missions-minded congregation. Studies have shown that a church that becomes missions-minded will win more people to the Lord in its own city. Oftentimes it also experiences an increase of up to 15 percent in its general fund revenue.
- Itineration ministry blesses the pastor. Many times a missionary has the unique opportunity to encourage the pastor during his or her visit.
- Missionary itineration gives a congregation a clearer vision of man's lostness and the value of a soul.

## SECTION 6

# What Missionaries Wish Pastors Knew . . .

*Would you do me a favor, friends, and give special recognition to the family of Stephanas? You know, they were among the first converts in Greece, and they've put themselves out, serving Christians ever since then. I want you to honor and look up to people like that: companions and workers who show us how to do it, giving us something to aspire to.*

1 Corinthians 16:15-16 (*The Message*)



## **SECTION 6**

### **WHAT MISSIONARIES WISH PASTORS KNEW ...**

Some have said that it is impossible to understand another man until you have walked in his shoes. In an effort to help missionaries and pastors understand the challenges that each face in their ministry, Frank Vice, itineration specialist for Assemblies of God World Missions, conducted a survey among the two groups.

The missionaries were given one question: What do you wish pastors knew about missionaries? Pastors were then asked the question: What do you wish missionaries knew about pastors? Following both questions were several categories for specific responses.

The surveys were collected from each group and the responses edited to express the most salient concerns. The completed project filled 58 pages. The results given by pastors were then communicated to missionaries to help them better understand pastors' challenges relating to missions. The results from missionaries were communicated to hundreds of pastors to help them understand issues from the missionaries' point of view.

A sampling of some of the missionaries' responses is included here. These comments are not intended as criticism, but rather as an attempt to help pastors understand several challenges that our missionaries face. All Assemblies of God missionaries and missions personnel are deeply grateful for the loyalty and faithfulness of the thousands of pastors who support and maintain a missionary vision. Perhaps after reading these concerns they will be able to assist missionaries even more effectively in some areas. At least they will be able to pray more knowledgeably for missionaries as they face the inevitable challenges that come because of their ministry and calling.

#### **ABOUT BUDGETS**

- Budgets are not set by the individual missionary, but rather according to guidelines established by Assemblies of God World Missions.
- Budgets are not "personal funds." They are comparable to a "church budget"—not the pastor's personal income.
- Except for the missionary's personal salary, funds given by churches are controlled by AGWM in accordance with budget, policy and need.
- A missionary has to raise his or her work support in addition to personal support. We often hear pastors say, "What? You mean Springfield (or World Missions) doesn't pay for that?"

- Missionaries are grateful to pastors who take time to ask, “What is your financial need? How can our church help you?”

### **ABOUT COMMUNICATION**

- Concerning possible support, scheduling of a service, etc., missionaries would rather be told “no” than to have no communication at all and be left wondering.
- Communication between pastors and missionaries is critical. Pastors want to hear from missionaries. Missionaries also appreciate an occasional letter from a pastor, especially when they are going through ‘tough stuff’ on the field. Even one letter from a pastor during a missionary’s four-year term is encouraging.
- Pastors, please return phone calls and answer letters—even if done by a secretary or a handwritten reply on the missionary’s original letter.
- Missionaries love to hear from churches, either through church newsletters or personal correspondence.
- If a pastor/church cannot have a missionary for a service or pick up a new missionary for monthly commitment, he/she will understand. However, communicating this ASAP would help cut down on the missionary’s phone charges and time.
- Pastors should demonstrate preparedness when inviting a missionary for a service. A missionary should not be left to guess whether he has lodging for the night or a hot meal after the service. The pastor and missionary need to communicate these things prior to the service.
- The first three months on the field are the hardest. Regular correspondence and encouragement through this time is a great help.
- Missionaries need to know about pastoral changes, congregational changes, financial difficulties and victories so that they can pray and feel a part of the church family.
- Let the missionary know if you must drop or lessen your financial support. They don’t necessarily need to know the reason, but they do need to know so they can plan accordingly.
- The missionary’s “lifeline” depends on keeping up with pastoral and address changes.
- Missionaries appreciate knowing how correspondence should be addressed. Should newsletters and other items be sent to the pastor, missions committee chairman or someone else?

### **ABOUT CULTURAL DIFFERENCES**

- Missionaries returning after a four- or five-year term are not always aware of changes in society and culture. Prepare the speaker about topics that might be offensive.

- So-called “tourist destination countries” have great needs, both spiritually and socially. Tourists only see beaches or other popular sites, not real life, when they come on vacation.
- Missionaries wish pastors knew how difficult it is to return to America after several years of ministry. While missionaries are on the field, they are constantly invited to speak and are graciously welcomed by national pastors wherever they go. It is most humbling and discouraging to call some U.S. pastors repeatedly, just to hear their secretaries say, “I’m sorry, the pastor is in a staff meeting,” or “I’m sorry, he isn’t available right now. Can you call back?” After calling many times and getting the same response—and even asking the secretaries to have the pastor call them collect—the missionary’s call is rarely returned.

### **ABOUT ITINERATION**

- Within an 11- to 12-month period, the missionary family tries to enjoy a time of vacation by traveling to places in the United States together. They have only one chance in every five years to do so.
- Itineration is like an 18-month job interview for the new missionary.
- Itineration is not the same as a furlough. Rather, itineration is a difficult year of intense fundraising. Please return calls and be up front, even if you have to say “no.”
- Itineration is a required part of field service. Please don’t view it as a vacation with a full salary from the Assemblies of God. Missionaries usually maintain support of their ongoing ministries on the field, even while they are itinerating.
- Missionaries don’t enjoy a year of vacation during itineration. Trying to keep a full schedule and prepare for services (just as pastors do) is hard work. Missionaries spend long hours on the road away from their families and often have little time to spend with elderly parents, grown children and grandchildren.

### **ABOUT EXPECTATIONS**

- Please advise the missionary what you expect of him or her. Do you want a sermon with illustrations from the field, a report from the field, video or other visual presentation? Give sufficient time for his or her participation.
- Be clear about time. Communicate your expectations about arrival time, the amount of time allowed for the missionary’s presentation, etc.
- When the missionary arrives, please ask someone to greet him and show him where to go and what to expect.
- Missionaries travel so much and are in so many diverse congregations that they cannot automatically know what a church wants from their ministry. Talk about plans for the service, such as expectations, dismissal time, etc.

### **ABOUT THE FAMILY**

- Families cannot always travel together. The missionary's children attend school just as all children do.
- If the missionary's wife and family are in the service, ask someone to help them feel at home.
- If a missionary's teenagers don't travel during itineration, it's often because they need to be connected to an English-speaking youth group in a local church.
- Don't assume all missionary wives are proficient at or like to speak before a crowd. Have the courtesy to ask rather than assume and assign.

### **ABOUT FELLOWSHIP**

- The time after the service is often as important to the missionary as the service itself. A meal with the pastor is not just another restaurant meal; it is a final opportunity for the missionary to communicate his or her call, the needs of the field and the need of continual support. Topics can be addressed here that cannot be said during the service.
- Missionaries need friends, even though they are home for only a year.
- Missionary wives appreciate being introduced to the pastor's wife before the service. That way they won't wonder whether she is the pianist or worship leader or if she is even present. It is not necessary that they sit together.
- Missionaries want to know pastors as individuals. A chance to talk and share for a while before the service is very helpful. If a missionary is scheduled for a Sunday morning service, he or she would enjoy going out for dinner with the pastor's family on Saturday night. The time invested will pay real dividends in the service.
- Missionaries are people too. They get lonely as they constantly travel to new places. Fellowship with people is very welcome and refreshing after a service.
- Missionaries need a church and a pastor to "adopt" them and their family when they come home for itineration.
- Don't avoid missionaries, especially at district functions.

### **ABOUT ADDITIONAL MINISTRY**

- Please pray with the missionary before a service. Include members of the missions committee and other staff members in a short meeting so the missionary can answer any questions of interest they may have.
- Adult Sunday School classes are a wonderful time for questions and answers. Some people have lingering doubts about missions; give them a chance to get an answer.

- Tell the missionary how he or she can help elevate the church's missions vision and budget.
- Help the missionary know how to pray for you and your congregation.
- Even though a church cannot make an additional monthly commitment, invite a missionary to come and help keep the missions vision alive.
- Missionaries who are part of AGWM's stateside ministries live in the United States because of the communication, logistical and financial requirements of their work. While most of them would prefer to reside overseas, the nature of their ministry demands a stateside office. Often these missionaries are out of the country more than they are in the United States.
- Missionaries want to minister! Let them preach and have an altar call. They want to bless, encourage and challenge people.
- Please don't refuse missionaries for Wednesday evening services. They don't mind a small attendance and must have a minimum of 10 services a month, according to AGWM policy.
- Missionaries do what they do for one reason only: The Harvest Master has called them, and they are committed to obey—whatever the cost.

#### **ABOUT HOUSING/FOOD ARRANGEMENTS**

- If a missionary will be staying in a motel, advise him or her in advance of its name and location.
- Missionaries don't need to eat a big meal before a service. They usually feel better if they don't. A snack after the service is appreciated.
- Missionaries want pastors to understand that Sunday afternoons away from home and between churches can present a problem. It would be helpful to have a place to stay and rest.
- Quite a few churches have missionary quarters. Missionaries appreciate pastors who offer these accommodations while they are in the area.
- Missionaries are grateful when pastors offer meals and lodging without being asked.

#### **ABOUT OFFERINGS**

- Please refer to the offering as a "cash offering for the missionary's work budget" as opposed to a "love offering for the missionary." Most people think of a "love offering" as an honorarium for the missionary's personal needs.
- Missionaries would rather receive a \$125 offering than a \$200 honorarium. Giving people a chance to respond is very important.
- Take a cash offering for the missionary. Don't mix it with other offerings and don't mention other needs. Giving only an honorarium chains God's hands.

- Pastors should know the expenses missionaries incur by coming to their church. For example, if a pastor invites a missionary to a church, knowing that he or she must drive hundreds of miles to get there, and the check does not cover the mileage, the missionary actually paid money to minister in that church.
- Missionaries would rather trust God for a good offering than receive an honorarium.
- Missionaries find themselves in a difficult position when they have to wait for an offering in the mail. A check should be given at the time of the service. Missionaries must receive the offering before they can issue a receipt.

#### **ABOUT PARTNERSHIP**

- Cooperation is a **partnership**. Missionaries cannot serve on the front lines without the ‘support troops’ back home. They help churches fulfill the Great Commission.
- Missionaries want to be **partners**. The more involved the church is in their work, the stronger their relationship will be.
- Missionaries need **partners** at home and they know it. Churches need missionaries in order to obey the Great Commission!

#### **ABOUT PHONE CALLS**

- As many as 10 phone calls are needed to contact a pastor. A large part of itineration time is spent calling pastors multiple times. Missionaries would get to the field quicker if pastors would return their calls.
- Please return phone calls, even you must tell a missionary that he or she can’t come for a service. Answering machines say you will return the call, but you seldom do.
- It’s frustrating to try repeatedly to reach a pastor whose secretary constantly shields him from all callers.
- Please return a missionary’s phone calls! If you cannot have a missionary, tell him up front. This will save missions money.

#### **ABOUT MONTHLY COMMITMENTS**

- A simple “no” for a service or a monthly commitment is more loving and cost effective than a “maybe” or a “check with me later,” knowing that the church cannot or has no plans to give to the missionary’s support.
- If support for missions decreases, don’t drop a missionary completely. Instead, write and inform the missionary of the situation. The missionary can certainly pray for the need. Perhaps he or she might also write a letter to encourage the people to become involved.

- Missionaries struggle when they are taken from a church's support list each time a new pastor comes on staff.
- Missionaries need faithful, dependable support even more than large amounts of money given sporadically.
- Missionaries still need monthly support while they are itinerating!
- Trust area directors to evaluate the missionaries under their care. Individual churches cannot possibly make this call. Instead, churches should pray and ask God whom they should support and then do it.
- Some churches have a policy of increasing a missionary's monthly commitment every year or at least every term before they take on new candidates. This covers inflation, which often skyrockets, and the inevitable drop in support from other sources. Since the missionary's budget goes up every term, this policy and practice is greatly appreciated.
- Be up front about telling a missionary that your church can't take on any new commitments. That's a much better approach than making a missionary believe that you will send in a monthly commitment when you have no intention of doing so.

#### **ABOUT PRESENTATIONS**

- Please don't feel that you have to invite all missionaries for an entire service. They would prefer a 10-minute window to a closed door.
- Missionaries wish pastors understood that their role in a service is not only to preach, but also to inform and report on the church's missions investment.
- Many missionaries who come for ministry have traveled thousands of miles and invested years of their lives in missionary service. Please adjust the time spent on music and preliminaries and let them share their heart.
- Missionaries appreciate pastors who give them plenty of time and freedom to make their presentation.
- Please be present at the service when the missionary speaks.

#### **ABOUT SCHEDULING**

- Pastors should avoid making tentative bookings. This often prevents missionaries from scheduling services in an organized manner.
- Inviting a missionary for a service when the pastor knows he will not be there is sometimes awkward. Often, no one is left in charge, and the missionary ends up being a "fill-in" speaker.
- Please don't use missionaries as "pulpit fill-ins" without prior consultation. The missionary deserves to know, and they feel cheated when they show up and discover you are not there.
- Missionaries love preaching missions services but feel stressed when scheduling them.

## **ABOUT CANCELLATIONS**

- Missionaries realize that canceling a service is sometimes necessary. However, they wish pastors knew the effect that this has on their itinerary, especially when the cancellation occurs less than two weeks prior to the service and plans are already set. Scheduling a replacement service less than four weeks ahead of time is next to impossible. Some missionaries do not find out about the cancellation until they call to confirm the service. This causes stress and frustration for everyone involved.
- If you tell a missionary you will reschedule a service, be sure to do so.

## **VIEWS FROM A MISSIONS SECRETARY**

A missions secretary wrote:

“We just finished my first attempt at a missions convention in our small church (around 100). What a wonderfully blessed weekend of activities!

“Since January, we have hosted missionaries in our home for dinner and fellowship with a few couples and the pastor and his wife. This has had a tremendous effect on the missionaries as well as each of us present. One missionary couple told us that this was their first time to be in a home for food and fellowship.

“As a missions secretary, I have the privilege to be in contact with missionaries by e-mail. This contact has further developed our church’s friendship and concern for them in their struggles. They send prayer requests to us and we pray for them on Sunday as a congregation. What powerful stuff!”