



THE
CHURCH'S
RESPONSIBILITY
TO
MISSIONARIES

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Richard Ciarrocca was born in Somerset, PA, and grew up in church but did not get saved until the age of 17. It was at this age that he joined the United States Army and took basic training at Ft. Jackson, SC. After serving six years of active duty with the United States Army Security Agency, he was discharged in 1968 with the rank of Staff Sergeant E6. His active duty tours included Co A, 313th USASA Battalion, Ft. Bragg, NC; Headquarters Company, USASA Training Center, Ft. Devens, MA; 226th USASA Operations Company, Kangwha-Do Island, (DMZ) Korea; Co. A, 508th USASA Group, Yongjukol (Camp Beaumont) Korea, 7th RRFS, Udorn (Ramasun Station), Thailand; and Arlington Hall Station, Arlington, VA. Upon discharge from the Army, Richard settled in Massachusetts where he and his wife, Judy, became involved in a local church in various aspects of the church activities. At the same time, Richard joined United States Army Reserve where he continued his military career in an infantry battalion. He was promoted to Sergeant First Class E7 and later received a direct appointment as Warrant Officer by the Secretary of the Army. During this time Richard and Judy became more and more exposed to missionaries and world missions. As time went on God began to work in Richard's heart and he felt compelled to resign from the Army reserve and the civil service job that he had as a Department of the Army civilian, and go to Bible College. During Bible College, the Ciarrocca's were again exposed to more and more about missions and missionaries. The Bible College instructor for the course on missions had at one time been a missionary, along with his wife, in the Belgian Congo about the time that the rebels took over. Little did Richard realize at that time that he himself would one day be in missionary service. Following Bible College, he was engaged in prison and jail evangelism in Maine prior to moving to Elkton, MD in August 1990. After serving as Director of Printing for 3-1/3 years with a missionary organization, Richard founded Pilgrim Fundamental Baptist Press, Inc., in April, 1995 with printing facilities on the property of the Maranatha Baptist Church of Elkton, Maryland, and is the author of over 3 dozen Gospel tracts as well as other works of literature. The ministry prints in 14 languages and has grown into a worldwide outreach. In addition to his responsibilities with the printing ministry, Richard also serves as the administrator of Antioch New Testament Baptist Mission, an in-house ministry of the Maranatha Baptist Church. In his 27 years of ministry, 11 of which have been as a missionary, Richard has seen and learned a lot with respect to world missions and missionaries in particular.



INTRODUCTION

There are two ways to look at world missions and missionaries, one of which is from the “outside looking in” and the other is “from the inside looking out”. As you read this book on The Church's Responsibility To Missionaries, please do not interpret it as an attack on anyone or any church, for that is certainly not the intent. The purpose of this book is to look at world missions and missionaries from the inside and through the eyes of missionaries, and hopefully to somehow be able to help the local church understand what its real responsibility is with respect to missionaries, and to call attention to some of the things that a missionary has to contend with. When a missionary comes to a church while on deputation to present his ministry, or perhaps he is just writing a newsletter to give a report about the ministry that he is already engaged in, there is much that he could and probably would like to say, but does not have the liberty to do so. But if Brother Missionary was brave enough or had the liberty to bare his heart and tell the congregation what he has to contend with, in all likelihood it would be perceived as sour grapes. He may also be signing his financial support death warrant. The truth of the matter is that there is a lot that goes on in the life of a missionary, whether he's on the field or on deputation that people never hear about, and this writer is not really sure that they want to. On the whole, pastors and congregations only want to hear the positive reports – they do not want to hear the negative side that really does exist. In the preparation of this material the author feels in a very awkward position. First of all, he himself is a missionary but he is also the administrator of a mission and has a responsibility to other missionaries. Because of what he has seen and learned over the years, he feels compelled that somebody at some point in time must address certain issues on behalf of other missionaries. A missionary now serving in Latin America wrote and said, “Thanks for taking these matters to the stump for us.” The author is quite sure that there is much more that could be addressed than what is already contained herein, but this should be sufficient for the present. With this thought in mind, we need to first of all dispel the myth of home and foreign missions.

WORLD MISSIONS **Home vs. Foreign**

When talking about world missions, so often we hear the terms “home missions” and “foreign missions” used. Pastor A says he’ll only support “church planting missionaries,” and Pastor B says he’ll only support church planting missionaries on the “foreign” field. This creates a real dilemma for Brother Missionary for he is caught, as it were, in a catch 22 situation. Pastors A and B want to do what is right, but they, like so many others, have found themselves unwittingly caught up in this manmade philosophy of “home and foreign missions.” The concept of “home missions” and “foreign missions” cannot be supported from Scripture for it is nowhere to be found. The Scriptures teach one and only one approach to missions. Consider if you will a few basic thoughts on this subject. When our Saviour gave the “Great Commission” to the Church to evangelize the world He said, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,” (Mt. 28:19-20). It is quite obvious that the commission was, and is, to go and evangelize the entire world. In Mt. 9:37,38 we read about the need for laborers in the harvest field: “Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.” Whose harvest is spoken of? According to Scripture, it’s the Lord’s. In the Gospel of John and chapter 4 we have a similar account: “Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.” (Jn. 4:35,36) In the context of the above verses, our Lord is clearly teaching that the “harvest field” is the whole of humanity and that time is of the essence lest it be too late. He further instructs that His demand for laborers is in short supply and that we need to pray in more laborers into His harvest field. But one may well ask, “Just where is this harvest field? Is it a “home field” or a foreign field?” That’s a good question; so let’s proceed to answer it.

According to Scripture, one who has repented of his sin and by faith alone in the shed blood of Jesus Christ has trusted Him as personal Saviour, is forgiven and saved for all eternity and is now a Christian. As Christians, we are:

(1) Pilgrims in this earth. Consider Hebrews 11:9-13 where it talks of Old Testament saints as being “pilgrims on the earth.” And like they of old, the Christian of today is also a “pilgrim on the earth,” that is, just passing through.

(2) Citizens of Heaven. Though Christians are residents of a given country during this present pilgrimage, more importantly we are at this very moment citizens of Heaven. “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” (Eph. 2:19) “For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Ph. 3:20)

(3) Ambassadors for Christ. “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us;...” (2 Cor. 5:20) When the President of these United States appoints an ambassador, it is always to a foreign country to represent the home country of America. As Christians, we are pilgrims in this land that we call planet earth, our citizenship is in Heaven where our Saviour is, and He has appointed us as His ambassadors here in this **foreign land.**

From a pure, technical Biblical perspective and looking at it through the eyes of God, **ALL missions is foreign missions.** For the child of God, Heaven is our home and there is no need for missionary workers there. So what are we to do with the trap of “home and foreign” missions that we are caught in? We should discard it and return to the Biblical principle that **ALL missionary work is foreign missions.**

It would be wrong to place all of the laborers in one part of the Lord’s harvest field; therefore we need to pray the Lord of the harvest for wisdom in knowing where to send the laborers, whether it’s down the street, to the other side of town, or to another continent. No matter where it is, it’s the Lord’s entire harvest field, and **it’s ALL foreign missions!**

From the tract,
“World Missions – Home vs. Foreign” by the author ©2001

Now that we have established that all missionary activity from a pure biblical perspective and through the eyes of God is in fact foreign missions, let's move on. The fact that God gave to the local New Testament church the mandate for world missions cannot be disputed for we have it clearly revealed in His Word. Consider if you will these familiar verses from Matthew chapter 28: "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matt 28:16-20) God not only gave the great commission to the local church as a collective body, but He also intended for it to be for each individual to be taken personally. Here in Matthew 28 our Lord is speaking to His disciples following His bodily resurrection. In verse 18 He reminds them that "all power" is given unto Him, that is, literally ALL AUTHORITY that is in heaven and in earth. God the Father has given this to God the Son, and it is on THIS authority that the church of Jesus Christ functions.

In verse 19 they are told to "go ye therefore," the "therefore" being on the premise of the authority of Jesus Christ. Christ was speaking to the disciples proper, but He was also speaking to the church He would build. We need to be reminded that the church is not a building or an organization, but it is an organism made up of those who have trusted Jesus Christ as personal Saviour. Every person who has been truly born again is part of the church, the Bride of Christ, and it is to those whom the Lord is speaking. He said "go ye," or with the authority that I have given you, as you are proceeding on your way, that is, going from one place to another. TEACH people in all nations, or make disciples in all nations, and THEN baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The baptizing comes only after the salvation of the heathen. When Isaiah said, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me." (Isaiah 6:8) It became a personal matter, and he, like the disciples, went forth in the power and authority of God. His and theirs was not an emotional response, but a response in recognition of the need and The One who was sending the call for service. WE are the church to whom Christ gave what we call the Great Commission, and it is OUR responsibility. Our portion in missions then is to be personal.

So here we are, God has spoken to His people during a service and there are those who answer the call for world missions. In effect they have, like Isaiah, said "here am I Lord, send me."



Pastors Act Like Employers

The pastors and missionaries are respectively, servants of God, co-laborers together for the Lord Jesus Christ and their mutual goal should be to see souls saved and churches established. God has called both for His service and they are on equal ground, one is not higher than the other. There is always the distinct possibility that a pastor or church representative does not realize the manner in which they portray themselves, and this is understandable. At the same time, they would do well to put themselves in the shoes of Brother Missionary and view it from his perspective. So many times we say and/or do things without stopping to think or be considerate of others. On this subject one missionary wrote, "If I had any complaint it would be that some pastors act more like employers rather than Christian Brothers. The 'good ones' are very upfront with us about the meeting, i.e.....not a large church, tight missions budget, etc. Instead of laborers together some make a person feel like he is an intruder into the missions budget." Another missionary said that he was tired of being "treated like dirt." It is a gross injustice to make Brother Missionary feel like he is some sort of an inferior being by talking down to him. The missionary deputation trail can be quite taxing on the physical and spiritual well being of Brother Missionary, especially if he has had a "full schedule" and has been on the road a lot. Brother Missionary wants to be a blessing to the host pastor, and at the same time he needs a blessing from the pastor. Satan will do everything in his power to prevent Brother Missionary from reaching his field of service, and as a result the missionary needs all the encouragement he can get.



Return The Missionary's Telephone Calls

One of the problems a missionary has is that when contacting churches he often gets the answering machine. Typically, the message on the answering machine says that no one is available to take the call; however, if "you leave

this is that a missionary only gets to talk to the church secretary who takes the information and says that the pastor will return the call. However, many times, if not most, the call is not returned. It's not uncommon for the missionary to be told to call again at a later date. One pastor of a church has been known to tell missionaries that, yes, he would like to have them come to his church to present their ministry but that he would like for Brother Missionary to talk to a certain man in his church who is responsible for scheduling missionaries. When this individual is contacted he offers some excuse why a meeting cannot be scheduled at that time and then requests that the missionary call again in about two weeks. A missionary who is now on the field did just what this man told him to do and he called back in two weeks, and again he was put off and told to call again in a couple of weeks, and this he did. As a matter of fact, the missionary went through this routine for quite a few weeks before giving up. Well, the sad reality of this is that these people were not being honest with the missionary and they were wasting the missionary's time and money by stringing him along. In the words of another missionary "Don't waste the Lords money and give it to AT&T or some other pro-homosexual group by making missionaries call you 15 times." Pastors are encouraged to stop and think about it for a moment, how would they like it if someone did that to them?

This writer has on many occasions contacted churches about the possibility of coming to present his ministry. There have been times when he has spoken with the pastor's secretary who takes down certain information along with the telephone number and then makes a statement to the effect that, "I will give this information to the pastor and if he is interested he will get back to you." Other times, the conversation will be with the assistant pastor or even a missionary intern at the church who seems to express a sincere interest in the missionary's ministry. They even go so far as to stress that they will talk to the pastor and that the missionary can rest assured that the pastor would call him back. The only problem is, the call never comes. There are times when the voice tone of the secretary or pastor's wife makes it sound like she has just been "bothered" by a nuisance call from telemarketing at mealtime. Just for a moment please put yourself in the shoes of Brother Missionary and think about how this would make you feel if this happened to you. As a missionary we understand that churches are constantly being bombarded with requests from missionaries to come and present their work, and the churches cannot possibly extend an invitation to every missionary who calls.

What this writer is about to say will certainly not be very popular, but it must be said! What it all boils down to is that people who do things like what has just been mentioned are in reality being dishonest with Brother Missionary. Or to put it in another way, they have willfully communicated an untruth to the missionary, and such action not only hurts the missionary but also the testimony of the respective church. This writer has often wondered why pastors and churches cannot be honest enough with the missionaries to tell them right up front that they cannot have them in for a meeting. It is all too infrequent that we find a pastor who will be that up front with the missionary. Of course we have to realize there's always the possibility that the pastor is not aware of what his staff is doing, but there is still no legitimate excuse for it to happen. A church and pastor have the responsibility to be honest and up front with the missionary when he calls, and **there is absolutely no excuse not to be!**



Missionary Questions and/or Questionnaires

We understand that churches must be selective in what missionaries they do invite to come to present their ministry, and well they should. However, in the process of screening missionaries caution and restraint must be exercised. Pastors and church questionnaires are known for asking questions that cover a wide range of topics covering everything from doctrine to the nitty-gritty of the home life. Asking questions about Bible doctrine to include the biblical doctrine of separation, his position on the textual issue, divorce and remarriage, and the respective missionary's position on the ever changing religious scene and such related issues are certainly right and proper. There are other questions that would fit into this category that would also be proper, but then there are other questions that get asked that have absolutely nothing to do with missions or the missionary's ability to serve in missions. One pastor had his standard questions that he would ask a missionary when he called, such as the personal salvation testimony, which Bible he used, dress standards, etc. Then he asked about TV and whether or not a TV was owned. If the answer were yes, the pastor would not have him. The pastor said that he had seen the damage done to the home because of TV. This same pastor said he was going to take a stand against the Internet because of the damage done by Internet chat rooms. It is true that there is a negative side of having a TV, and there is a negative side to the Internet, both of which can be a source for bringing filth into the home, but neither of these should have anything to do with having the missionary for a service. The TV can be controlled as can the use of the Internet, and having either is no more wrong than owning firearms – it's a matter of personal preference and assuming personal responsibility! For the pastor to be consistent in his position, he should discard his radio if he owns one because this is also a source of putrid entertainment. The point is, it really has nothing to do with the missionary, his call, his qualifications, or his ability to serve in missions. Some of the questions and questionnaires go too far and get into the area of "this is personal and it's none of your business." Many of the questionnaires that this writer has received to fill out were multiple pages, sometimes

having as many as 6 pages. Quite often when a missionary is at a church the pastor will quiz him on where he's been and/or where he's going. The missionary will also be asked questions about this church or that church, and it places the missionary in an awkward position. He does not want to be evasive in his answers, but he does not want to be telling things that are not his place to be telling. Pastors have been known to use missionaries as a source for getting information about their competition or another pastor in town with whom he has a problem. Pastors and congregations, please leave Brother Missionary out of this and stick to the real reason he is, or wants to be, with you. This writer does not want to seem unkind in addressing this, and yet there is so much that Brother Missionary has to contend with that really is not necessary.



Arrange For Someone To Greet The Missionary

When Brother Missionary arrives at the church, will there be someone to greet him or will he be on his own? Normally a missionary will have notified the pastor of the approximate time that he plans to arrive at the church. With this thought in mind, pastors are encouraged to arrange for someone to be at the church to greet the missionary upon his arrival and to show him where he will set up his display. Stop and think with this writer just for a moment about how Brother Missionary must feel when he arrives at the church. He has driven for several hours to get to a church that he has been looking forward to being with, and when he arrives there is nobody there to greet him. He may have to wait in the church parking lot for a half-hour or more before somebody shows up to unlock the door. He may have his family with him and they're tired and the children are getting restless. It may be 10 or 15 minutes before the service is supposed to start that the pastor or some other person will finally show up and the missionary will be able to go in and set up his display. A missionary was once scheduled to be at a church in northern New England, a church with which he was acquainted and many of the people knew who he was. The missionary had written to the host pastor informing him of his approximate time of arrival, and as it was, he arrived on time. The missionary sat in his vehicle for 45 minutes before anyone began to arrive at the church. As people began to arrive, they looked at the vehicle with out-of-state plates but did not care enough to go over to it and introduce themselves. Finally, the missionary got out of his vehicle and went to the people. A few minutes before the service was scheduled to begin the pastor drove in. As the church service was beginning the missionary was hurriedly setting up his display. Is Brother Missionary so unimportant as to receive this kind of treatment? Would this same kind of greeting have been rendered to some well-known conference speaker? Who would have blamed Brother Missionary if he had left a note on the church door that said, "Pastor, I was here for my meeting, but no one seemed to care, so I left." All that this writer is trying to suggest is that the church, as a collective body, and the pastor, as the overseer of that assembly stop and think about what this does to the morale of Brother Missionary, and the statement it makes for the church. At the same time the missionary is greatly encouraged and the testimony of the church is tremendously enhanced when a situation like this is avoided.



Scheduling The Missionary

The missionary on deputation will be going to churches to raise prayer support and financial support for his ministry. Many, if not most, churches do little or nothing at all about missions unless the pastor himself promotes it first. It would be a rare church indeed where the people are motivated for world missions without having to be prodded by the pastor. Some missionaries report that they have been told by pastors to call again when they are closer to leaving for the field, which really makes no sense. How would Brother Missionary ever get close to leaving for the field if every pastor took that position? When a missionary is scheduled for a service at a church, it is strongly recommended that it be only for a time when the pastor will be present. If a pastor schedules the missionary to be at the church when he is going to be away, then it is, for the most part, a waste of time for the missionary to come. A missionary now on the field wrote to this writer and said, "I have in the past scheduled meetings during the summer or for that matter any time of year and when arriving at the meeting the pastor is on vacation or out-of-town. I don't mind going if I'm scheduled to be pulpit supply but having scheduled a meeting for the purpose of support we all know that if the pastor is not there, there is no consideration for support!!!" Even if the pastor is there at the church but is not present to hear the missionary, it has the same effect as though he was away. This same missionary went on to say, "I know we are there to be used of the Lord, but I have been used by some pastors. Summer meetings are useless in general, I am leery of scheduling them." The missionary who made that statement has a valid point! Yes, it is true that somebody in the congregation could tell the pastor about the missionary and the presentation that he made, but

the pastor himself was not there to see and hear it, and this is very important! After all, it will be the pastor who recommends whether or not to support Brother Missionary. And when a missionary is scheduled to be at the church, whatever the pastor does he should not cancel the missionary at the last minute if this at all can be avoided. It is not uncommon for a church to have two missionaries scheduled for the same day, and then shortly before the appointed time the pastor realizes what he has done and has to cancel one of them. There is also the situation where Brother Missionary has been scheduled to be at a church many months in advance, and then with just a couple weeks before he is supposed to be there the pastor calls him and says that he must cancel the meeting. A church had a missionary scheduled for a Sunday service, but then the pastor had the opportunity to have an itinerant minister in for a week of meetings. This particular pastor called the missionary and told him that he wanted to have the itinerant minister come and that the only time he could do that would be for the same time that the missionary was scheduled, and so he would have to cancel the missionary in deference to the itinerant minister. The pastor then told the missionary that he would still like him to come and that he wanted the missionary to call him a few weeks later to reschedule the meeting for a later time. The missionary took the pastor at his word and tried to contact him several weeks later, but all to no avail. The missionary tried to contact this pastor by e-mail to which there was no reply. He eventually left a message on the pastor's answering machine reminding the pastor of who he was and that the pastor had urged him to call to reschedule the meeting, but the pastor never got back to him. It has since been learned that this same pastor has done the same thing to other missionaries, and this is totally disgraceful on the part of the pastor. Is it any wonder that our fundamental Baptist Churches are in the condition that they are when pastors treat other servants of God like this? This kind of treatment is, at best, unethical! Well, one of the problems this creates for the missionary is that he could have had another deputation meeting with another church but all of his meetings were scheduled around this one particular church. Many times a missionary has meetings scheduled almost one year in advance and he tries to group his meetings in a particular area when possible. Let's say for example the missionary has a meeting scheduled at a church in Raleigh, NC and this meeting has been scheduled for six months in advance. But a church in Greenville, SC calls and says that they are really interested in having the missionary come on that same date, but Brother Missionary is already scheduled to be in Raleigh. At the last minute the church in Raleigh cancels Brother Missionary but it's too late for him to make plans to go to Greenville because they have already filled the spot with somebody else. The net result is the missionary lost out on possible support that he has been working so hard to raise. This writer has had a number of meetings canceled at the last-minute, some of which had been scheduled for many months in advance. Several times the pastor who cancelled the meetings told this writer to call back again in a few weeks or perhaps a couple of months, but when this writer tried to follow through with the pastor's suggestion he only met with a dead end, and he has learned the hard way that such attempts are futile at best.

Well, another problem this creates for the missionary is that he is now in between meetings with no place to go, and he may be a considerable distance away from home. Brother Missionary was depending on the church for this meeting that would carry him through until the next meeting, but now he's in a quandary as to what to do. He may have his family with him and this is going to create an additional burden and compounds the problem.

In missionary candidate school we encourage missionaries not to drag church problems from one church to another. At the same time we all know that missionaries do talk among themselves and often they compare notes, so you do not have to be a Philadelphia lawyer to figure out that word does get around about different churches and the reputation that they have with respect to missionaries. Now someone may suggest that missionaries should not compare notes about different churches that they have been in, especially if they're going to use the real names of the church and its respective pastor, but in the real world this does happen. This writer does not believe for one moment that when missionaries talk among themselves about the churches that they have been in and some of the situations that they have encountered, that they are trying to be mean-spirited or malicious in anyway, nor do they want to harm the testimony of the church. As it is, churches do enough damage to themselves just by the way they treat missionaries! If someone were to object to missionaries talking among themselves and comparing notes, how is that any different than pastors getting together and talking among themselves? As a matter of fact, this writer has often wondered if some of the biggest gossips could not be found among independent, fundamental Baptist preachers. Yes, we understand that pastors have their reasons or excuses for why they compare notes and pass around names, but if it is all right for them to do it then it must also be all right for the missionary to do it. As the saying goes, what is good for the goose is also good for the gander!



Do Not Over Schedule The Missionary

Often a church has a missionary conference that is crowded with too much to do in too short a period of time. One of the problems that the missionary encounters while on deputation, especially when he has his family with him, is that of fatigue. It is not unusual for the missionary to be on the road for an extended period of time, sometimes being away from home for two months at a time and often on a dead-run going from one church to another. During all of

this time they are living in the guest chamber of a church, a motel room, or the home of a church family, but no matter how you look at it, they are living out of suitcase and wherever they are it's not the same as being in their own home. If it is just the missionary and his wife and they have no children, that is one thing, but when they have children with them, especially the very young, there is much more responsibility to be dealt with. The family travels from church to church and sometimes they may have a long drive to get from one church to another, and when they arrive they are just plain road weary and they need time to rest and relax, but most of the time that does not happen. They arrive at a church and are expected to be involved in everything, and the children are tired and perhaps getting a little bit cranky, and poor Sister Missionary is worn out. Because of this, and all things being equal, Sister Missionary and the children may not be up to performance in the expected traditional manner. The pastor and the people of the church need to stop and think what this missionary family has been going through as they have been traveling around on deputation. This writer has had missionaries tell him about pastors who chastised them and told them that they needed to get their children under control or they would not make it on the mission field, but the pastor failed to understand what the missionary had been through and was going through while on deputation. Missionary kids (MK's) are just like other children, they're not perfect in any sense and sometimes it becomes really difficult for them when they are constantly on the go from one place to another and meeting strange people. They never know what to expect from one church to another, or the treatment they'll receive from other children. And yet it is expected of them that they perform like little super saints rather than the normal children they are. Perhaps it would do well for some of these pastors to resign their pastorate and take their family on the deputation trail for about one year just to see some of what it's like, and then they would be able to see it through the eyes of a missionary, and then maybe, just maybe they'd be a little more understanding. The deputation trail is not as glamorous as some people think it might be; there's a lot of hard work that goes into it and the missionary is constantly being bombarded with advice from those who think they know what's best. We understand that most people really mean well and want to be helpful, and they may have valid points. All that this writer is suggesting is that they be sensitive and understanding of the missionary. When Brother Missionary and his family are at a church for a meeting, whether it's a one-day meeting or a weeklong missionary conference, Sister Missionary should not be expected to participate in all of the activities that are taking place. Sister Missionary is the helpmeet of Brother Missionary and her **first responsibility** is to him and the family and not being involved in every aspect of the missionary conference.

When the missionary family arrives on the field, the same thought still applies to Sister Missionary. Many times it is expected that Sister Missionary will be involved in every aspect of her husband's ministry, but that is not necessarily so. Sister Missionary will have plenty to do by taking care of the children; home schooling them if they are of age, and the everyday chores associated with being a housewife, and all of this in itself is a full-time job. If Sister Missionary has any extra time to be involved in her husband's ministry that is fine, but **her primary function is to minister to her husband and their family**. Many times churches misunderstand the role that Sister Missionary has to play.

Before moving on to the next topic, here's one final thought on the missionary and the missionary conference. The flip side to a conference being over scheduled with too much to do is a conference that is so dead that the missionary feels like he's at the wake of a loved one. This may seem humorous to some readers, but this is serious! This writer has been to churches and missionary conferences that were so dead, and with so little interest that he asked himself, "What in the world am I doing here?" Missionary service is exciting, and some churches need to exhibit a little more enthusiasm for it! The missionary conference program needs to be balanced. This writer had the privilege of being in a missionary conference at a church in October, 2001. The conference was not over-crowded and there was an air of excitement about it, and the host pastor and people were very gracious to the visiting missionaries. The missionaries were provided with a packet of information about the conference and each missionary and their respective field of service, as well as other information. The church members had a "passport" that they would bring to the missionary to be signed and this made for improved church attendee/missionary interaction. Obviously, this church went to great lengths in its preparation for the annual missionary conference, and it is to be commended! Another church, though small numerically, exhibits a real heart for missions and missionaries. The pastor is a good friend of this writer, and he has been heard saying, numerous times, that the church supports more missionaries than it has members. No matter how large or small a church may be, there should be some life exhibited in a missionary conference – avoid the dull, dead, mundane atmosphere that so often emanates in a conference – missions and missionary service is exciting!



Announce Ahead Of Time The Missionary's Coming

It has already been mentioned that the missionary arrives at a church but nobody knows he's coming, and that is a shame. As a matter of fact, some churches completely forget to put the missionary on the church calendar and when he calls about a week in advance to confirm everything, the pastor informs him that he was forgotten about. This is

not something that is being made up – it really does happen! But do you suppose this would have ever happened if it were some well-known itinerant minister who had been scheduled to be at the church? The obvious answer is of course, no way! And so we have to once again ask the question, “Why has this happened to the missionary?” Pastors are encouraged to announce the missionary coming well in advance and encouraging his people to be there, and even to invite other people to attend. In many churches when a church activity is planned, such as the annual church picnic or some sports event, the respective billing is hyped from the pulpit, but when it comes to announcing the coming of a missionary, the tone sounds more like another burden to bear.



Take Time With The Missionary

Many times when a missionary goes to a church to present his work while on deputation, the pastor does not have or take time to spend with him, so is it then any wonder why the church members themselves do not have time for the missionary? It may not be intentional, but sometimes one is left to wonder if the only reason the missionary was there is because, for the sake of appearance, it was the expected thing to do. Now you may ask the question “Does this really happen?” and the answer to this question is yes, it really does happen and all too often. A number of years ago this writer traveled at least six hours to be a church to present his ministry in a Wednesday night service. Upon arriving at the church there was no one there to greet him, and when he did introduce himself no one seemed to know that he was supposed to be there. But they made the best of the situation and a table was located for the missionary display and eventually the pastor showed up for the service. During the entire time that the missionary was at the church to present his work, the pastor displayed very little, if any, interest in the work of the missionary. As a matter of fact, it is highly questionable whether or not the missionary even had a total of 10 minutes of the pastor’s time that evening. The pastor had had a physical problem that day that required his going to the hospital for some tests, and so it is quite understandable that he would be late in arriving at the church for the service, but the lack of total interest in the missionary’s work is without excuse. While taking the time to become acquainted with the missionary, the pastor should make it a point to introduce his wife. One of the biggest oversights that a missionary encounters at a church is not being introduced to the pastor’s wife. This writer has on several occasions been engaged in a conversation with a woman when she stops and says, “Oh, by the way, I’m the pastor’s wife.” There have also been times when this writer has left a church without ever knowing who the pastor’s wife was, or if he even had one. This writer is not being picky, but pointing out a common courtesy that appears to be fading from the scene in our fundamental Baptist churches. As pastors take time with Brother Missionary and they get to know each other, there is a friendship bonding that takes place to the glory of God.



Provide Adequate Display Space

When the missionary comes to your church, try to make sure that he has adequate space for his display. Hopefully the missionary will have contacted the pastor in advance advising him of what he would need for setting up his display. Typically, a banquet size table will meet the need. It’s better if the table is a little bit larger than what is actually needed rather than too small. It’s not always possible to have the exact size table needed; the church should at least try to do its best to help the missionary. It is not uncommon for a church to be limited for space, and yet because of its keen interest in world missions it puts its best foot forward and does the best it can. Many times the missionary goes to a church and the display table is not in place and the missionary and the pastor end up running around looking for table at the very last minute. The ideal situation is for the missionary to arrive at the church early enough to set up his display table and be ready to greet the people as they come in for the service. Many times the missionary is setting up the display at the very last minute as people are beginning to arrive, and some of them will want to talk to the missionary and start asking questions but the missionary is very busy getting his display set up, and he just does not have the time to be talking to people at that moment. This then gives the appearance of being rude, but that is not the case; he just has so much to do in a short period of time.



Visit The Missionary's Display

The missionary will spend a great deal of time preparing his slide presentation and the display board that he'll set up in the respective church. The Lord has called the missionary to a particular part of the vineyard and the missionary wants to make his display as attractive and interesting as possible with the hopes that people will come by and look at it, and perhaps have a burden for his mission field. The visitor to the missionary display tables will see everything from a map and pictures of the country to various objects from the country as well as other information. Some of the items on the table might have been given to the missionary by another missionary or he might have obtained them while on a missionary survey trip to that particular part of the vineyard. But whatever is in the display is there for a purpose, and that is to help people to become more educated with that part of the vineyard to which the missionary has been called. But did you know that so many times the missionary display table is completely ignored by people? Remember folks, this missionary is a representative of **your church** whether you realize it or not. The great commission was given to the local church of which **you** are a part, and this missionary is just one individual, but he's **going on your behalf**. The local church has the responsibility to understand the call of the missionary and where he is going and what he's going to do. They should also have enough interest in the work so that they will take time to go by the display table, look at it and ask the missionary questions. All too often people come into the church and walk past the missionary as he is standing by his display table. Occasionally somebody will come over to the missionary and shake his hand, but for most part they simply go on their way to their favorite pew and sit down. They listen to the missionary during the service and perhaps an invitation is given afterwards. There may even be a time where people have an opportunity to ask a few questions from the floor, but how many really have enough interest to do that? And then they get up and leave and don't take time to stop by the display table even after the missionary and/or pastor have encouraged them to. Yes, a few people will stop by and look at the table and there may be a few who do ask some questions, but on the whole people just don't take time to stop by the display table. And this is not just in one church, but it happens in so many churches. The missionary has worked hard in preparing his display and it would really encourage him if people would take time to stop by and look at. A missionary display will vary according to different missionaries and the field that they're going to, but every one of these displays will be very interesting and informative. It can be disparaging, perhaps even disheartening for a missionary to put his heart into the preparation of the display only to have it ignored by people. Perhaps the saddest commentary on this subject would be that pastors themselves do not take time to visit the missionary display. It would be a legitimate question to ask, "Why should the people be expected to have an interest in the missionary display when the pastor himself does not have an interest?" After all, should not the pastor be the one to set the tone for missions in his church?



Allow The Missionary Adequate Time To Present The Work

Well, the missionary finally arrives at the church after having been able to get a meeting scheduled with the pastor. He arrives in plenty of time to set up his display and begins to greet the people and then a few minutes before the service begins, or even after the service has begun and is in the preliminary portion of it, the pastor turns to Brother Missionary and informs him that he has only eight or ten minutes to present his work. We were taught in Bible College and we've heard it said many times, that any minister should be prepared to preach or pray on a moment's notice, and many times we have had to do just that. Most missionaries have a set routine that they use in presenting their work, which involves a slide show as well as an oral presentation. This writer once had the experience of having traveled approximately 10 hours to get to a church to present his ministry in a Wednesday night service. During his time there he had a maximum of about 10 minutes of the pastor's time before the service. After the service started and during the congregational singing and the announcements, the pastor leaned over and informed this writer that he had 10 minutes to present a work that normally takes at least 30 minutes to present. The reason given for the small amount of time was that the church was broadcasting its Wednesday night service on the church radio station. Well, needless to say, this writer had to do a lot of mental reorganization on a very short notice. Another situation involves other missionaries who were scheduled to be in a missionary conference, and one missionary told this writer about the situation in the respective church where several missionaries were scheduled at the same time for each service during the conference, and each missionary was allotted approximately 8 minutes to present his respective ministry. For many of the missionaries this was their first time at this particular church and it was important to them that they be able to have sufficient time to properly convey to the people the ministry to which they

had been called. The rationale of the host pastor was that he wanted to give the keynote speaker as much time as possible to preach. We might add that the keynote speaker was a frequent speaker of missionary conferences at this particular church and the people had heard him many times already. There are several things that the pastor could have done to help each missionary in the service:

[1] The host pastor could have scheduled fewer missionaries for the conference thus allowing each missionary on any given night to have more time to present his ministry. On this subject of how many missionaries to schedule for a conference one missionary wrote, "Don't invite ten missionaries to your conference if you cannot take care of them. If they come for a day that is fine, but if you have them for a week, you should be able to provide for a week's salary so that their needs are met and their bills are paid." We will talk more about missionary finances a little later.

[2] The host pastor could have shortened the amount of time that the keynote speaker was allotted for preaching since the people had already heard him numerous times.

[3] The host pastor could also have drastically reduced the preliminaries and unnecessary incidentals of the service to allow each missionary to have more time.

In making these suggestions no one is trying to tell any pastor how to conduct his services, but rather to offer suggestions for ways to improve the service and get more out of the missionary. Please understand that no one would question the missionary heart of the host pastor just mentioned.



Teach The People Not To Monopolize The Missionary

It seems as though we go from one extreme to another in a church. On the one hand we have those who come to the church service and sit through it and then get up and leave without even visiting the missionary display or saying hello to the missionary. On the other hand, frequently there is somebody who wants to monopolize the missionary during the entire time and making it almost impossible for anybody else to be able to greet or approach the missionary. Pastors can help to keep this from happening by teaching their people and encouraging them not to do this. They may also encourage their people not to ramble on and on about their personal problems. Brother Missionary already has enough of his own problems but still, he will try to do everything possible to be polite and courteous to the one with whom he is speaking, while at the same time he does not want to ignore those who are around him and wish to speak with him.

Discreetly Inquire About Needs

There are several schools of thought about a missionary publicly making known the needs he might have. On the one hand there are those who feel that a missionary should not say anything, and then there are those who believe that a missionary should broadcast all of his needs. This writer is not going to try and argue with people about what they should do with regards to this, for that is not the purpose of this booklet. This writer would like to point out that George Mueller in England never once made known the need that he had in the children's orphanage and every time, without fail, God met his need and all that Mueller did was to pray. Many missionary prayer letters read like a Christmas wish list while others are quite reserved in making the needs known. Sometimes in a deputation meeting people will ask a missionary about what needs he might have either while he is on deputation or in preparation to leave for the field. At times when people ask about these needs they are genuinely interested in what the needs are so that they can intelligently pray for the missionary, while others are just being nosy. Often a missionary is publicly asked about the needs that he might have and tries to be tactful about how he responds to the question as he tries to politely tell the people that, yes, there are needs and that the Lord knows all about them, and that he really does not want to discuss them. If this is the approach that the missionary believes that the Lord would have for him to use, then pastors should teach their people to respect the wishes of the missionary. Some of the needs that the missionary has might be of such a nature that he just does not feel comfortable in discussing them in an open meeting or in a crowd, especially if it is a health related matter — people would do well to use a little bit of discernment when asking the missionary about his needs.



The Missionary Closet

Many churches have what is called the missionary closet, and this can be a source of real blessing to the missionary and his family. There's probably a lot to be said about the missionary closet but this writer will try to share just a few simple thoughts here. There should be somebody in charge of the missionary closet, someone who has a genuine interest in the purpose of it. One of the things that the person in charge of the missionary closet can do is to make sure that the items that are donated to the closet are in a serviceable condition and that they are clean; damaged but usable items should be avoided as much as possible. There was a time many years ago that it was an acceptable practice to save used tea bags to be sent to the missionary on the field. Often the mentality is that the used and/or damaged item is "not good enough for me, so I'll give it to the missionary to use, and then I'll buy a new one for me." Would it not be more noble to keep the used and/or damaged item for yourself and provide the missionary with something new? It's just a thought! Many times when missionaries have been on the road for an extended period of time, they run out of certain supplies. Perhaps it might be something as simple as toothpaste or deodorant or some other item of necessity, and these may be available in the missionary closet. Also it may be that in the missionary closet there will be something that the missionary could really use when he gets to the field, and this once again can be a tremendous blessing. One occurrence that this missionary has observed over the years is that often when the missionary is invited to go to missionary closet, there are those who have to tag along to see what, if anything, the missionary will take. Occasionally there are those who feel that they are being helpful by pointing out to the missionary certain items that they feel the missionary could use. We will give these people the benefit of the doubt and assume that they are just trying to be helpful. Some people are more self-conscious than others and really feel awkward when there are people standing around watching what they're doing, even if they're not doing anything wrong, but rather something at the request of others, and a missionary is no different. This writer would strongly encourage pastors to teach their people that when the missionary goes to the missionary closet, no one other than the missionary and his family needs to go along with the exception of the one in charge of the closet. Once they have arrived at the missionary closet, the one in charge could leave the missionary alone and allow him the privacy and liberty of perusing the available selection and then choosing those items that he feels he could wisely use. It would also be helpful if the missionary could take the items to his vehicle through an exit that would protect his privacy. Now you may well ask what would be the problem of other people seeing what the missionary has taken. Well, as this writer has already tried to point out, some missionaries are just more sensitive and self-conscience than others and may feel just a little bit awkward, perhaps even funny about taking something that has been freely offered. By allowing them the privacy of going to the missionary closet and then leaving by a private exit they would feel more comfortable.



Providing For The Missionary

This is a very important subject and we cannot possibly place enough emphasis upon it. Many times a pastor will have a well-known preacher scheduled to be at his church perhaps for all the services on the Lord's Day, or for several days. The guest speaker may not only be well known but he may also be regarded as someone of importance. In anticipation of his arrival at the church for the services, careful consideration has been given to meet the speaker's every need, every thing from his meals to his transportation to his lodging. The pastor might even go so far as to make sure that the guest speaker has extra spending money just in case there is something that he needs or wants. His lodging is perhaps in the finest motel in the area and after each service the pastor takes him out to a local restaurant for a meal. If the pastor does not do this personally, he will have arranged for someone else in the church to take care of the guest speaker. But when it comes to Brother Missionary this same courtesy is woefully lacking, and it almost seems as though the missionary somehow has been relegated to a position on the level of the janitor. Most missionaries that this writer is acquainted with do not regard themselves as being somebody of importance. However, they are important. These missionaries are representatives of a local church, their ambassador if you will, and to treat them as anything less is not right. Also, it's a slap in the face of the missionary to "wine and dine" the well-known, important guest speaker while at the same time taking no consideration or thought to Brother Missionary. Please allow this writer to share with you some experiences that have actually happened to missionaries.

[1] A missionary went to a church to present his ministry during the Sunday morning service. The missionary arrived on Saturday evening, after spending a considerable time in trying to locate the church. While trying to locate the church he made several attempts to contact the pastor on his cell phone but there was no answer. Eventually he was able to get a hold of the pastor who came to the church and unlocked the doors and the missionary was able to set up his display. By the time all of this was accomplished it was past 8:30 in the evening. The church did have a

prophet's chamber for the missionary to use on Saturday evening. After everything had been set up in the church the pastor returned to his home, but before leaving he did not have the courtesy to ask the missionary if he'd had his supper or if he had enough money to buy supper with. On Sunday no arrangements had been made for the missionary's breakfast. During the morning service he presented his ministry and following the service he, the missionary, was in the rear of the church auditorium greeting the people and answering as many questions as possible until everybody had left. The host pastor and the missionary continued their conversation while the missionary took down his display, loaded it in his vehicle and prepared to leave for a church to be in a service that evening. At no time during the conversation did the pastor invite the missionary home for Sunday dinner, nor did the pastor offer to take the missionary out somewhere to one of the local restaurants for lunch, and once again he did not ask the missionary if he had sufficient money for a meal. As it was the missionary went on his way on an empty stomach. Had this missionary been some well-known Baptist preacher, does anyone seriously think that the host pastor would have sent him on his way on an empty stomach? This writer will let the reader answer that question.

[2] A missionary now serving in Central America wrote to this writer and said, "In Florida, we went to present our work. The pastor put us in a room with spider webs and the linen had a bad odor. We presented our work that morning to the adult Sunday School class. After the service, he shook our hands and we were on our way. We left with no offering nor dinner for the road. He was supposed to have set us up with another church, for the evening service, but told me that he forgot." Shame on that pastor for doing that to this good brother!

[3] The missionary went on to say, "In North Carolina we had a meeting. They shook our hands and thanked us for coming. There was no offering and no meal." When the missionary talked about "us" and "we" he was not referring to just himself and his wife, but also their children of which they have several. For a pastor to treat a missionary like this is not only wrong, but it is also shameful and the pastor needs to be made aware of this. This writer has heard other stories from missionaries about churches where they went to present their work, often for a Wednesday evening service. They presented their ministry and were sent on their way with no consideration for lodging for that night or for a meal, and to return home the missionary had close to an eight-hour drive. Once again this writer feels compelled to ask the question, if this had been some well-known Baptist preacher do you really think the host pastor would have treated him like that? One is left to wonder if the pastor and church do not think about these things, or if it's a matter of just not caring. Either way it exhibits a poor treatment of one of God's choice servants.

A missionary now serving in a so-called former communist country wrote and said, "A church had a prophet chamber (PC) and did not offer it or offer to pay for my hotel. After the meeting went well and the pastor liked me, he said that if I ever needed a place that the PC would always be available to me." This same missionary went on to offer a suggestion that, "in addition to making sure that the missionary is taken care of concerning meals during his stay with you, also make sure that you do not take him to a place that could be uncomfortable or a violation of his conscience. I had a pastor take me to 'Applebee's BAR & Grill'. I don't go to places that have the name BAR or have a bar-like atmosphere. Other men have convictions 'to not go to any restaurant that serves alcohol. Be sensitive to the missionary.'" He also suggested that, "if you put your missionary up with one of the families in your church, be selective. If the place is dirtier than a nice hotel, then don't put them there. If the hosts have pets, BEWARE! Remember, missionaries sometimes have allergies, too! If they are going to feed the missionary, make sure that you know what the menu is so that you know it is ok. Also, remember that some missionaries have dietary restrictions. (Not just Diabetes!)" I am quite sure that there is much more that could be said, and perhaps should be said about this, but this writer believes the point has been well made.



The Missionary Love Offering

Perhaps one of the touchiest subjects in any Baptist Church is that of finances, but it is one that must be dealt with. Earlier we touched on the matter of the missionary being sent on his way not only without having been provided a meal, but also no offering. When a missionary goes to a church to present his ministry he's not going under some illusion that the church is going to automatically take him on for financial support. The church may have some valid reasons for why they cannot financially support another missionary, and that is understandable, but no church can offer a valid excuse for not at least praying for a missionary. It seems as though many times a missionary is in a popularity contest when it comes to money rather than the people having prayed about the matter before hand. This writer will talk more about financial support a little bit later, but for right now he would like for you to think about one segment of missionary finances, and that is the love offering. Missionaries on deputation are in various stages. For example, one missionary might be on full-time deputation, and by this it is meant that he does not have a secular job that he goes to when he's not in a meeting. Another missionary may be on part-time deputation, meaning that when he is not on the road in deputation meetings he does have that secular job that he goes to and from which he receives a paycheck. The missionary who is on full time deputation is totally dependent upon the love offerings of the churches that he goes to. Aside from the love offerings and the missionary support that he has already raised, he has no other source of income. Many times the missionary who has started full-time deputation does not have adequate

monthly support and so this makes the love offerings all the more important to him. There does not seem to be any rhyme or reason for the amount a missionary receives in a love offering at any given church. For example, he can go to one church that is quite large and receive a small love offering but on the other hand he can go to a small church and receive a large offering. Whatever the amount of the offering, the missionary really does appreciate what people have given to him. It is not unusual for a missionary to go to a church from which he receives a love offering that is insufficient to meet his needs. With the exception of a few rare occasions, the missionary will pay his own way to get to any given church to present his ministry, the cost of which will vary according to the distance that he has to travel but may well exceed the amount received in the love offering. Many times when the missionary goes on the road he does not have very much "extra" money, but from what he does have he will have to pay for his gas, highway tolls, and any meals that are needed for he, his wife and family. Depending on how long the missionary has been traveling and whether or not he has had vehicle problems, by the time he gets to a church he may be very close to being broke. This writer realizes that we live in the age of the credit card, but not every missionary has a credit card to use, and this for whatever reason. Personally, this writer believes every missionary should have a credit card for use in case of emergency while on the road, but each individual missionary must decide this issue for himself. The point is that the missionary is depending on the love offering of the church that he is going to. A missionary may go to one church and they give him a very generous love offering of \$500 while he goes to another church and the love offering may only be \$100, and still another church may only give him only what is in the offering plate and that may not be very much. When Brother Missionary is traveling north to New England, highway tolls abound everywhere and the price of gasoline is usually more expensive, especially in NY, CT, and MA, and so the missionary's cost of getting to the church can add up to quite a bit. It is not uncommon for many New England churches to have a set amount that they will give to a missionary when he comes there on deputation. That set amount might be anywhere from \$35 to \$50. Well, if a missionary family of 5 is traveling to northern New England to be in three different churches over a period of 1½ weeks, and when all of the expenses of the round-trip are calculated it could have cost the missionary \$75 or more to make the trip, all depending on where he started from and will return to. While the missionary family is in northern New England and the total amount of their love offerings comes to anywhere from \$200 to \$300 and then you deduct the cost of the trip, this does not leave very much extra for the missionary to live on. Does this really happen? Yes, it really does! It has already been mentioned that many times the missionary goes behind financially when he goes to deputation meetings, especially if he is working a part-time job that he had to take time off from in order to go to a meeting in the first place. We also need to point out that when the missionary is leaving one church and going to another he's going to incur additional expenses, and if the first church does not give him a good love offering, he may not have enough money to get to the next church. Many times a missionary will have to stay in a motel somewhere in between meetings for one or more days because, for whatever reason, a church had to cancel him and this was a church that he was depending on. Sometimes a church may have a prophet's chamber that the missionary is allowed to use while he is in between meetings, but these are not always available. One missionary told this writer about being in the Southwest part of the United States for about a month and a half and was in several different churches and that the love offerings were so small that it was only by the grace of God that he and his wife were able to survive. How many times have we heard it preached that the laborer is worthy of his hire? In the Gospel of Luke chapter 10 and verse 7 we have the admonition of hospitality, and the clear statement that the laborer is worthy of his hire. Depending on where a person lives geographically and the job they do, it is not uncommon for an individual to be paid over \$20 an hour. Brother Missionary is not in the ministry for the money, but it does take money to live and he is certainly entitled to receive a respectable compensation for his services, and as far as this writer is concerned anything less than \$150 is not respectable. Several times already it has been mentioned the considerable distance a missionary may have to travel to get to a particular church and the amount of time it takes to make the trip. The people of the church may feel that the missionary only needs to be compensated for his actual time at the church without taking into consideration the preparation involved in getting there to minister to them. Once again, this writer would like to bring to the forefront the question, "If a well-known itinerant minister or the pastor of a large well known church traveled a similar distance and ministered for the same amount of time as the missionary, would his financial remuneration be equal to that of the missionary, or would it be more, and if so, why?" By asking this question all that this writer wants to do is to show that Brother Missionary is just as worthy as any other minister to receive a respectable love gift.

It almost seems that when it comes time for the love offering to be received for the missionary, some of the thoughts that are going through the minds of the congregation is how well the missionary performed, or how poorly he performed, or how well he is dressed, or that he's driving a really nice vehicle, but none of this should really matter. This writer has seen missionaries that were a complete and total nervous wreck when it came time to get up in front of the congregation to present the work, but that in no way negates his ability to serve the Lord on the mission field that he's been called to, nor does it make him any less worthy to receive a good love offering. In another situation church members might look at how well the missionary and his family are dressed in their clothes and jewelry. Many times before going into missionary service Mr. and Mrs. Missionary may have had good paying jobs or perhaps they had their own business and had a good income, and because of this they could be attired a little nicer than some others. And what about that vehicle the missionary is driving, since when was it wrong for a missionary to drive a

decent vehicle? The missionary is going to be traveling many thousands of miles on the highways and he needs a dependable and comfortable vehicle to ride in, one that will meet the needs of he and his family. This becomes all the more important when he has his family with him, along with his missionary display. In 1994 this writer was at a church around the time period of August or September. The previous year he had undergone back surgery in the month of September and there was a Christian who felt that because of his many miles of traveling for deputation meanings, he should have a vehicle that was more comfortable than the old Nissan that he had. The Christian told him to pick out a vehicle that he would like and one that would be comfortable for the long road trips, and so he looked around and eventually chose a 1993 Chevrolet Lumina. This was in October of 1993. As this writer said, he went to a church in late summer of 1994 and the host pastor made a comment about the nice vehicle that this writer was driving at that time, and the pastor's comments were to the effect that he wished that he could afford a nice vehicle like that. This writer pointed out that he could not afford to buy a car like that, but that it had been given to him as a gift. Now these are not the exact words of the conversation that took place but rather the essence of the conversation. The point is that often when it comes to giving a love offering to the missionary, the thinking of the people is prejudiced by how well or how poorly the missionary performs, how well attired he may be, or the vehicle that he is driving. As a matter of fact, that nice vehicle may be on loan from someone for the missionary to use. None of this is in any way valid and should have absolutely nothing to do with the love offering. Every local New Testament Baptist church needs to understand its responsibility for providing for God's man and, in this case Brother Missionary. Here's one last thought about the love offering before we leave the subject. Pastor, please do not be presumptuous and assume that the missionary does not need the offering before he leaves your church, because there may be a very real possibility that he does need it to help him to get to the next meeting. This writer suggests that the pastor or his designated representative talk with the missionary about the love offering and ask:

[1] Would you like your love offering before you leave or do you want us to mail it to you?

[2] Would you like your love offering in cash or in a check?

[3] If a check is used, should it be made out to you or the missionary agency that you are with?

Different missionaries have different ways of how they account for their love offerings, while at the same time it may be the policy of the missionary agency under which the missionary is serving that all love offerings go through the respective missionary agency for financial accountability. The main point here is to not be presumptuous but to take an extra moment and talk to missionary about his preference.



Be Faithful With Monthly Support

As long as we are talking about financial matters, let's move on now to the matter of the monthly support for the missionary. This writer is really not quite sure that he knows how to adequately convey **the importance of being faithful with monthly missionary support**. Different churches have different ways how they go about supporting a missionary once the decision has been made and the church takes him on for support, but it is of the **utmost importance that they be faithful each month with that support**. Before we go any further, a very important point needs to be mentioned – when sending a missionary support check to the respective missionary agency, *THE CHECK MUST BE MADE PAYABLE TO THE RESPECTIVE MISSION* and should have a **clear statement** of which missionary(ies) the support is for. Because of banking regulations by law, and to prevent fraud, support checks made payable to the missionary cannot be deposited in the account of the mission agency and will have to be returned to the sender. This action protects the one who issued the check, as well as the mission agency.

For tax accounting purposes, a clear distinction needs to be made for personal gifts and contributions for work projects. Personal gifts for birthdays, anniversaries, or “just because” are not taxable – they are personal and separate from monthly support, which is taxable. Contributions for the missionary's work fund are not taxable either. As an example, the Missionary Minded Baptist Church sends a check for \$500 to the missionary agency for Brother Missionary. Of the \$500, \$100 is regular support, \$200 is an anniversary gift for Brother and Mrs. Missionary (non-taxable), and \$200 is for chairs and hymnbooks for the new church (non-taxable). Of the \$500, only the regular support of \$100 is taxable to the missionary. If the check was from an individual and was sent to the missionary agency for Brother Missionary, a tax-deductible receipt may be issued for the regular support and the work fund, but not for the personal gift. When a check is received by the missionary agency for a missionary but there is no breakdown of the amount, there is the distinct possibility that the check will be posted as regular support and the entire amount made taxable. The personnel of the respective missionary agency tries to do what is right, but please understand, they are not mind readers. Now then, let's continue on with the subject of being faithful with monthly support.

The missionary faith promise plan is perhaps the most popular method that churches use for supporting missionaries, while other churches take a percentage of the general fund and apply it to missions, or they may use a combination of the two plans just mentioned. Whatever method they do use, it's important that they understand that that support must be there every month and on time for the missionary. This writer has observed a trend in missions

over the years where churches vote to take on a missionary for support for a set amount each month, but then over the years that amount remains unchanged in stark contrast to the ever-changing prices on the market – the missionary does not receive an increase in the support the church sends him. As the cost of living increases it is necessary that the support level of Brother Missionary also increase in order for him to keep pace, otherwise he will be under supported more than he already is, and he will be forced to try and schedule additional meetings to bring his support up. Churches can help the missionary by increasing his support periodically. Here is a real life scenario of what takes place with regards as to what happens with a missionary and his support.

Brother Missionary has answered God's call for world missions and through the leading of God's Holy Spirit he is settled on what part of the vineyard he is to go to. In the many facets of his preparation to go to the field he calculates how much monthly financial support he will need to raise in order to support himself and his family. Also, he will probably figure into that support the cost of getting a ministry started and its initial operation. The eventual goal is for the ministry to become self-sufficient under the leadership of the nationals. When many missionaries eventually leave for their respective part of the vineyard, they do so without their full support. Depending on which mission field Brother Missionary is going to, the amount of monthly support will vary because one country may be more expensive than another. A missionary in Japan will need considerably more support and then a missionary in India for example. Having determined the amount of monthly missionary support that needs to be raised, the missionary begins to contact churches about the possibility of coming to present his ministry. The missionary goes to the respective church to present his ministry and sometimes a church will vote right then and there to take him on for support, while other churches will wait until the quarterly or annual church business meeting. For some churches, the only time they take new missionaries on for support is during the annual missionary conference during which time the missionary faith promised plan is promoted, and the members are encouraged to pray and ask the Lord what He would have them to give in the coming year for world missions. Usually, the church will have a goal of a certain figure that they would like to reach that would allow them to continue supporting the existing missionaries, and also allow the possibility of taking on one or two new ones. Some churches will vote to take on a missionary but will not start that support until just before the missionary is due to leave for the field. In the meantime, Brother Missionary needs that support and love offering to live on while he completes his deputation. So here we are with Brother Missionary and his family on the missionary deputation trail seeking to raise their support. Over a period of several months and perhaps a couple of years the missionary is able to raise his monthly financial support in the various churches and through individuals who have become burdened for the missionary's ministry. For some churches, they send their missionary support once a month; another church sends support every two months, while other churches only send their support quarterly. It is the strong recommendation of this writer that each church and individual who supports a missionary **send this support every month and at the beginning of each month.** For churches that send their support every two months or once a quarter, this may require a slight change in the bookkeeping method, but in the long run it will benefit the missionary. Many churches wait until the last few days of the month to send their missionary support and because of problems in the mail delivery system, that support may not arrive at the respective missionary agency in time for Brother Missionary to receive it that month. At Antioch New Testament Baptist Mission, the financial books are closed the last two business days of each month for the preparation of the monthly missionary support checks. This means that any missionary support that is received at the mission office the last two business days of the month will not be posted until the following month, and this means if the missionary support was intended for the missionary in the month for which the check was written, the missionary may not receive that support because of the timing of its arrival. Had that same support been sent at the beginning of the month, the missionary would be assured of receiving it. These next several thoughts will, undoubtedly, be unpopular with some people, nevertheless they are true.

Every country has a different visa renewal process that a missionary must go through. Some countries require the missionary to physically leave the country to renew his visa, while others may renew their visa from within the respective country. Even here the process differs. A certain Eastern Europe country requires the respective missionary to have a large sum of money in a bank in that country as a part of the visa renewal process. A Central America country previously required a notarized statement from the respective bank of Brother Missionary in which his average monthly deposits for a 4 – 6 month period were listed. In August, 2002 this was replaced with a notarized letter on mission stationery stating that, "...is a missionary in good standing with This organization guarantees a minimum income of xxxdollars (US\$xxx.00) for Mr. xxx." The income of a missionary can play a crucial role in the visa renewal process, which in turn adds emphasis to the need to be faithful with missionary support.

It is understood that within any given church there will be those who are on what is called a "fixed income," meaning that the recipient will receive a set amount of money each month, such as a retiree who is on social security. With a fixed or guaranteed income it is easier to plan a budget for monthly expenses, and to make it work. This is a luxury that Brother Missionary does not have! All too frequently a church will miss sending in their promised support for a missionary. Sometimes this is an oversight on the part of the individual responsible for sending the checks, and other times it's because the church did not have the money, but whatever the reason it is totally unacceptable. Let's say for example that a missionary needed to raise \$3000 per month in support. This support he figures will cover his living costs for each month but in many cases it does not allow for anything extra such as health insurance or for what would be considered other necessities of life. Not all missionaries go without health insurance, but many do. As

a matter of fact, many missionaries do without a lot because they are under supported and simply cannot afford it. So here we are with a missionary **needing** \$3000 per month in support but was not able to raise it before leaving for the field, and now one of the churches that supports him at \$100 a month did not send that support. They might make it up next month but right now it's missing. Another church supports Brother Missionary at \$50 a month and they also missed sending in that support—now the missionary is \$150 short. And then there are other churches or individuals who support in various amounts and perhaps some of them have also missed sending their support, and by the time the gross amount of Brother Missionary's support check is figured, he may very well be short as much as \$500 or \$600. As this writer said just a moment ago, the support that is missing this month may be made up next month, but then it may not be. So what is Brother Missionary supposed to do about this month when he is missing all of that support? Somebody may say that he just needs to trust the Lord and have more faith. But this is what Brother Missionary has been doing all along; and this is exactly what he did when he went to the churches to present his ministry and they told him that they would support him with so much money each month, and he took them at their word and by faith went to the mission field where God had called him. Here he is on the mission field and **his supporting churches have let him down**. A missionary serving outside of the continental United States is normally **prohibited** by the laws of the respective country that he is serving in to have a job where he can earn extra money. There are some exceptions to this in a situation where the missionary might be teaching English or some other course in a school in that country, but this is the exception. A missionary serving in Mexico, for example, cannot get a job at the gas station pumping gas, nor can he sell tuna (a cactus fruit) on the street, nor can he engage in any other form of business where he can earn money because to do so would be to take work away from the nationals, and that is against the law. The missionary, no matter what country he is serving in, still has his monthly financial obligations that he must meet, and when that promised monthly support does not come in, it places more stress on the missionary. There have often been times when supporting churches have missed several months in a row in sending their support to their missionaries, and that is just not God honoring. One pastor made a comment that his church supported missionaries using the missionary faith promise plan and that if the money did not come in through the faith promise, then it would be taken from the general fund. The pastor also said that sometimes the financial situation in the church was such that he himself did not take his weekly paycheck from the church. But it needs to be pointed out that the situation of any pastor is different than that of the missionary. The pastor receives a paycheck each week while the missionary only receives one paycheck per month. So it's different for the pastor if he does go one week without a paycheck because he only has to wait another week, whereas the missionary has to wait an entire month. Also, most of the time the church will provide the pastor with a place to live either as the church parsonage or by providing the monthly rent for him to have his own house. The church will also help with, or pay all of, the utilities for the pastor such as his telephone, his gas, his electric, etc. etc. So even if the pastor does miss one or two paychecks, he still has a roof over his head that the church has provided and he still has his utilities that are taken care of, but the missionary does not have this luxury. The missionary is in another country and he still has his financial obligations, and in the eyes of the people of that country, the missionary is still the rich American, even if by our standards he has very little income.

Another problem that this writer has observed with churches missing sending in their monthly missionary support is not so much that they did not have the money, but rather how they used what they did have. Here's an example: the pastor of Dolittle Baptist Church wants to have evangelist Dr. Orator in his church for a week of special meetings, and he has encouraged his people to attend the services nightly, and every time the offering plate is passed they are encouraged to give a very generous offering. Because evangelist Dr. Orator is a popular speaker the people are generous in their financial giving, even to the point of perhaps being sacrificial and at the end of the week the evangelist receives a very generous love offering. But now we come to the time of month when missionary support checks are supposed to be sent, but the missionary faith promise did not come in for that month, and so the missionary support checks cannot go out. Why didn't the faith promise come in? Money that should have been given for missions in the faith promise may have ended up in the offering plate for the visiting evangelist. There is nothing wrong with a church having a week of special meetings with a special guest speaker, but it is a gross injustice to provide for the guest speaker and then not be able to support the missionaries who were depending on that monthly support, and this results in a very poor testimony. How would you, the reader, feel if you went to another country as the representative of your company and that company had promised you that they would help you with your expenses? While you are in that country representing your company the expense money that you anticipated receiving does not arrive. Wondering what happened to that expense money you begin to do a little research only to find out that the company did a little remodeling and used the expense money you should have received. Or perhaps the company president wanted to entertain the CEO of another company, but in order to do this he needed to use the expense money designated for you. Fortunately you had a credit card you were able to use even though it meant going deeper into debt, but that was okay because your company would include the expense money the following month, or perhaps the month after. Would this be acceptable to you, or would you have a problem with it? Just for a moment place your self in the shoes of Brother Missionary. There's a lot more that could be said on this matter and perhaps this writer has already said too much and struck too many nerves, but this is the truth and it needs to be told even if it is unpopular.



Don't Disparage God's Man

It has already been mentioned that pastors and churches need to be careful about discouraging or disparaging God's man. A missionary who had been on deputation for several years went to a church for a deputation meeting, and while he was there the pastor said to the missionary, "I don't like the sound of your voice." So what if that pastor did not like the sound of the missionary's voice, what does that have to do with anything? And what right does any pastor have to make such a statement to the missionary? That comment by the pastor was totally uncalled for and whether or not a pastor likes the sound of the missionary's voice has absolutely nothing to do with God's call upon his life. Had the missionary made a comment like that to the host pastor, you can be sure that that missionary's home pastor would have heard about it! Another situation happened when a missionary was scheduled to be at a church for a deputation meeting. The missionary arrived at the church at the appointed hour and he waited for at least one hour in the church parking lot before the pastor arrived. When the pastor did arrive, he had his excuses for being late. The pastor took the missionary inside the church to set up his display and then to the guest chamber where he would be staying for the next several days, and then they went out for supper and the pastor explained the service schedule for the Lords Day. The missionary was supposed to be in the adult Sunday school class and then he would have the morning service and again the evening service. The missionary made several mistakes that day, some of which could be classified as real blunders. In each situation the pastor had ample opportunity to privately talk to the missionary about this, but he did not do so. The missionary was taken out to dinner on Sunday afternoon and everything seemed to go quite well. Sunday evening the missionary again made some mistakes, which, in any other church would not have been considered a problem. Before the missionary left that area the pastor took him out to breakfast and they had a good time of fellowship and conversation, but not once did the pastor say anything to the missionary about any of the mistakes that he made. The missionary in turn was careful to thank the pastor for his gracious hospitality and the love offering that had been given to him. It was not until a couple weeks after the missionary had returned home that he was given a copy of a blistering letter from that pastor to the president of the mission that the missionary was serving with. One of the complaints of that pastor was that the missionary had not written back for almost 2 ½ weeks to thank the pastor and the church for having him, but the missionary had already thanked the pastor before leaving, but for some reason the pastor thought that was not sufficient. The missionary was devastated and that almost destroyed him and his ministry. It also placed in the mind of the missionary that that pastor was just looking for something to fault the missionary for. Missionaries, like anybody else, are far from being perfect and they are certainly not super spiritual like some people think they should be. The missionary is just an ordinary person who has answered God's call for world missions, and he has a lot to learn, especially when first starting out in missions. The seasoned pastor has the privilege and golden opportunity to be a blessing and an encouragement to the missionary. Just as a missionary sees something different in a church from the perspective of the missionary, so to the pastor sees things in the missionary through the eyes of a pastor. When a pastor observes room for improvement in the ministry of the missionary, he should talk to him about it, but he should do it in private and with a gracious and loving spirit, and all of this after he has prayed about it.

Another situation involved a missionary who had gone to Texas on deputation. In one of the churches there the missionary told about the field that God had called him to and indicated the amount of monthly support that needed to be raised. Afterwards, the pastor told the missionary that he would never support a missionary that needed to raise that much money for support. It appears that the pastor had a lack of knowledge about the cost of living for a missionary in that particular country. Whether the pastor did or did not understand about the cost of living in that country, it was totally uncalled for, for him to make such a comment to the missionary. Who could blame that missionary if he would have turned to the pastor and asked, "Well then pastor, may I ask you what you and your church are going to do to reach those people for Christ if I can't raise my support to go?" On the one hand it seems to be all right for a pastor to make an uncalled for comment to Brother Missionary, but it's not permitted for Brother Missionary to respond in like manner.



Communicate With The Missionary

Boy, is this ever a problem for the missionary! Brother Missionary is on deputation and he has a meeting scheduled with a particular church. Between the time the missionary has scheduled a meeting with the church and the time that he is to be there the pastor leaves for whatever reason, but the missionary is not informed about the change. All too often a pastor has scheduled a missionary to be at the church but this appointment is only on the pastor's calendar and other people are not informed about this. The Pastor submits his resignation and then leaves the church. A

missionary serving outside of the continental United States had this to say, "If conditions change... For example, if a pastor has taken another church and will be leaving it would be courteous to call all missionaries scheduled for meetings and advise them as soon as possible. Once a pastor, that was leaving his church, had scheduled me had forgotten about my coming and needless to say it was a embarrassing situation. Fortunately it was a church close to home and there were no logistics problems, however, it was a wasted trip all the way around." Another missionary had a meeting scheduled with a church in western Pennsylvania. A couple of weeks before he was scheduled to be there, the missionary tried to call the pastor just to make sure that everything was still scheduled as originally planned. Well, the missionary was not able to contact the pastor although he made numerous attempts to do so. Finally one day, a lady at the Church answered the phone and when the missionary told the lady who he was and why he was calling, the lady was clueless. As it turned out, the pastor had left several months before but failed to tell anybody in the church about the meetings that he had scheduled with missionaries. The missionary was put in contact with a trustee of the church who told him to go-ahead and come for the meeting, which the missionary did. The people were all very polite to the missionary but the net result was a wasted trip.

Another problem the missionary has is when he has left for the field and he is sending his newsletters to all of his supporting churches. Many missionaries address their newsletter to the pastor of the church rather than to the church itself. When the pastor leaves the church the post office will usually forward the pastor's mail for at least one year, which means that the church as a corporate body does not receive the missionary newsletter. It becomes very frustrating for the missionary on the field to send back to the states his newsletter addressed to a particular pastor only to find out later on that pastor has left the church and that a new pastor has been installed. This happened to missionary serving in a former communist country. The missionary is supported by a church in West Virginia and at some point after the missionary went to his part of the vineyard, the pastor of this particular supporting church resigned and moved elsewhere. The church called a new pastor but for at least another two years the missionary continued to address his letters to the former pastor. Well, after a period of time the missionary found out that the "old" pastor was no longer there and that the church had a new pastor. The missionary got the name of this new pastor and wrote him a gracious letter, but pointed out his disappointment in not being informed that the former pastor had left. In the new pastor's reply he was very apologetic for the oversight in communicating with the missionary. The two situations just mentioned are not isolated cases for this happens all the time, pastors and churches fail to communicate with the missionaries they support. If the missionary stopped communicating with a supporting church, when they, the church, realized that there was no communication from the supported missionary, they would be very upset with him, but for some reason it seems to be all right for the pastors and supporting churches to not communicate with the missionary, and this is a sad commentary on the local church.

Many churches have a church newsletter that they publish for members of the church family and these are distributed freely within the local assembly. Some churches mail the church newsletter to the missionaries that they support, and that is really a good idea. But what about the home church of the missionary, how do they communicate with the missionary? When a missionary leaves for the field often times it becomes a matter of "out of sight and out of mind." The missionary is thousands of miles away from home and often times the only news that he gets from home comes in bits and pieces from someone who just happens to think that perhaps it would be nice to write a letter to the missionary, but that is only a hit and miss at best. The home church of the respective missionary should make an extra effort to keep that missionary informed about what is happening at his home church, and one way to do this is to appoint someone to take charge of this. At least once a quarter this individual could write a letter to the missionary or missionaries who are members of the church and bring them up to date about what has been happening. Or, for that matter, they could call the missionary. There is no church so poor that it cannot afford a couple phone calls to its own missionary(ies). Stop and think about it just for a moment, how would you feel if you were that missionary, thousands of miles away from home and nobody cared enough about you to communicate with you?

When a church or individual does write to a missionary, the letter or card should be mailed **directly** to the missionary and not his sending agency. Correspondence for a missionary that is sent to the home office must be forwarded to the respective missionary, and this causes a delay in his receiving it. This also creates an additional burden and expense for the home office. Some missionary agencies require that the missionary cover the cost of mail that the office has to send on while other agencies will absorb the cost. It is not fair for the home office to have to do this. The same principle applies to packages that arrive at the home office for a missionary.

Another way communication lines can be improved is to notify supported missionaries of any changes in regular or e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers. In an effort to provide better service, telephone companies are constantly adding to and changing telephone area codes, and business and residential addresses have been affected by the emergency 911 system. An efficient but not totally reliable method of communicating is via e-mail. For some unknown reason, it's a fact that some e-mail does get lost in cyberspace, but this still an excellent way to communicate with the missionary and he with the church. It is important that when the e-mail address is changed that the missionary be informed as soon as possible.

A COMMENDATION TO CHURCHES

Sometimes when we address a matter of concern it tends to become all-inclusive without giving consideration to the fact that there are exceptions as we all know there are. In this book the writer has tried to address areas of concern with regards to the church's responsibility to missionaries as a means to help them, the churches, to capitalize on their strong points and strengthen the weak ones. This writer is fully aware that there are churches that do exceedingly above that which would be expected of them in their quest to assist missionaries, and these churches are to be commended. There are other churches that, for whatever reason, are limited in what they can do and out of their meager resources they are really trying to do the best they can, and these too are to be commended. These pastors and churches know who they are and what they are capable of doing for the missionary, and they are encouraged to keep on doing it. Thank you very much!