

# Missionary *Care*

*an essential part of your church's mission*

**“Serving the Lord** in cross-cultural missions is the joy of our lives,” a 20-year veteran IMB missionary in Sub-Saharan Africa said. “But hand in hand with the joy can be deep discouragement and loneliness.”

Isolation, loneliness, hardship, persecution, and family trials—they’re all a major part of life for international missionaries. Far too often, these pressure points leave missionaries not knowing who to turn to or who to trust. The IMB member care team does a great job of shoring up the spiritual and emotional needs of missionaries and teams, but when the darkness seems to close in and the questions of “do we stay or do we go” start to enter the conversation, who will missionaries turn to?

Far too many missionaries are now orphaned from their sending churches on the mission field. This happens for many reasons—from pastoral turnover, the passage of time, or “out of sight, out of mind.” Missionaries are faithfully carrying out their task to reach the lost, but often feel forgotten. Pastoral care and church care for our “sent ones” are essential parts every church can and should play in the missionary task.

One first-term missionary, working among the unreached of North Africa said, “When we first arrived to the field, one of the experienced workers told us that going overseas is signing up for a life of loneliness. Sometimes, deep relationships that are close and vulnerable are hard to form with teammates. The thought of going home might look good, or at least easy, especially if there is pressure from grandparents or parents or those who question your decisions. But, having a pastor who cares as much about the sheep sent overseas as the ones he sees every Sunday is game-changing. The pastor is the one who reminds us that we are not alone.”

Jeff Ginn, IMB vice president for mobilization, said, “Life on the field among unreached people groups can be hard. There’s typically not yet a church among that people group. The life of a missionary can be lonely, and encouragement from home would go a long way to help them endure. We have many





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## **SIMPLE WAYS** your church can care for missionaries

1

Connect through the SBCV with a missionary and **build a relationship** of care and prayer. It may turn into a great partnership.

2

Pastors can sign up for **pastoral care training** for missionaries by contacting: [missions@sbcv.org](mailto:missions@sbcv.org).

3

Support missionaries in training near Richmond with **meals and desserts**. For information, contact: [missions@sbcv.org](mailto:missions@sbcv.org).

4

**Encourage** a college student missionary with a meal, gift card, or an encouraging note.



For more information  
contact [missions@sbcv.org](mailto:missions@sbcv.org).

missionaries who can benefit from that type of ministry."

Your church and pastor can help us hold the rope for missionaries around the globe. One long-time missionary said it simply. "Having the support of a pastor in the US has been a blessing and encouragement. Having the personal support of someone we can come to when walking through a difficult time has kept my family on the field and added to our longevity."

Every missionary needs a church. Every missionary needs a pastor. Every missionary needs the care and discipleship that your church can provide. Every church and pastor can be involved in keeping missionaries spiritually and emotionally healthy in the field, reaching the nations. You and your church can encourage, disciple, and care for a missionary.

Pastors can sign up for training on counseling and caring for those sent out and those orphaned in the field. Churches can pray and give and even support ministries like the SBCV in caring for every missionary in training while they are in Virginia and by caring for every Virginia-sent missionary as they go to the nations. The SBC of Virginia is the convention that houses the IMB. The churches of the SBCV are poised to impact the lives of missionaries.

As the missionary in Sub-Saharan Africa said, "A true, consistent, heart connection with the local church in the US breathes life into our ministry and restores peace and joy to our hearts. Thank you for caring. Thank you for connecting. Thank you for walking beside us." ■