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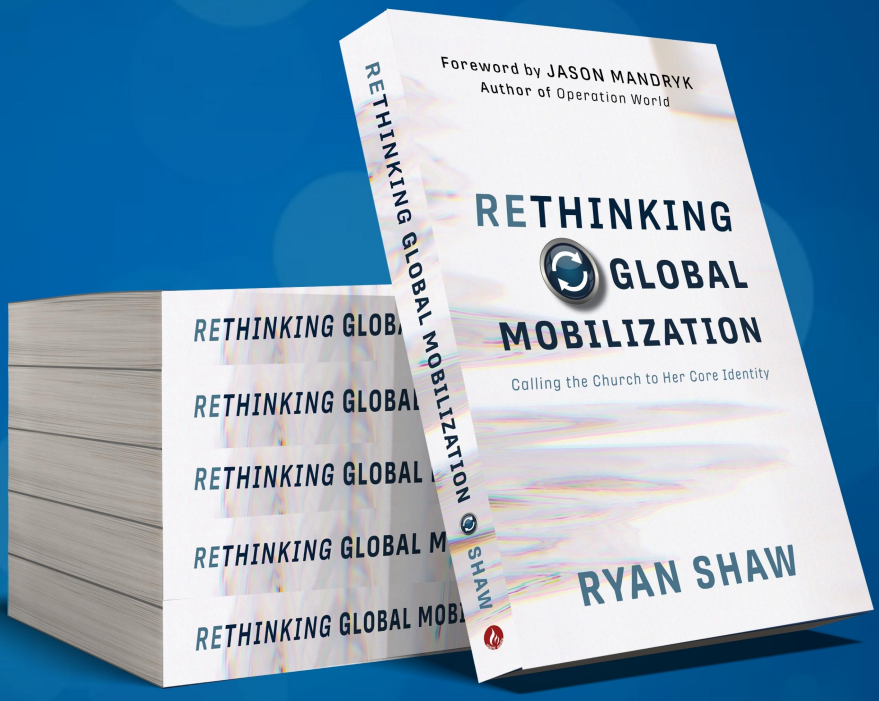

RETHINKING GLOBAL MOBILIZATION BY RYAN SHAW

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Member Care: Loving Those We've Sent

Chapter 13 of John's gospel starts with Jesus demonstrating love through a simple and humble act of care – washing his disciples' feet. Later in that same chapter he tells them, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35). *One another* passages like this appear more than 50 times in the New Testament, and with each comes an exhortation for how followers of Jesus can care for *one another*.

This issue of *EMQ* focuses on member care. The Global Member Care Network (GMCN) defines member care as "the ongoing preparation, equipping and empowering of missionaries for effective and sustainable life, ministry and work."[1] It involves missionaries, mission organizations, and churches who each participate in loving acts of *one anothering*.

In its earliest days in the mid to late twentieth century, member care heavily relied on Western mental health practices and models. But over time, it became more multidisciplinary adapting to a myriad of global contexts. It helped pioneer early efforts to integrate theology and psychology and championed innovative care approaches centered on spiritual and social support that did not require professional involvement. And this has paid off with increased wellness and resilience for missionaries.[2] And yet, more remains to be done.

We invited nearly 30 people from more than 10 nations to contribute to this issue. Their articles explore ways that member care continues to develop theologically and contextually for communities and individuals. They also look at ways member care continues to be expressed asymmetrically through professionals and mutually through supportive peers.

The first article traces the roots of member care through the whole Bible and points to Jesus as the source and model for care. The next articles look at the role of local churches in care from their partnership with missions organizations to ways they can demonstrate care not only with missionaries but also with every person in their congregations.

Then several articles investigate how nurturing organizational cultures of love, grace, inclusion, and honesty improve staff well-being. In here is a summary of the groundbreaking *Resilient Global Worker Study* which looks at current critical care needs for cross-cultural workers.

After that, a few contributors provide insights on the member care needs of missionaries from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. While several more look at practical care matters including hospitality, conflict and *spiritual miscarriage*. The final article explores the continuum of member care involvement from beginner to trainer.

Member care is demonstrating *one anothering* love. The apostle Paul reminds us in his first letter to the Corinthian church that without love, our words, insights, knowledge, faith, generosity, and endurance mean nothing (1 Corinthains 13:2–3). Love is the way of the cross. Serving the nations requires caring for one another. Without love, we proliferate the resounding gongs and clanging cymbals of which Paul speaks (1 Corinthians 13:1). Prioritizing care, then, keeps us from moving mountains on our own and preserves our partnership with God in his global mission.

Heather Pubols
Editorial Director

Notes

1. "Definitions," Global Member Care Network, accessed January 30, 2022, https://globalmembercare.com/definitions/.
2. Pamela S. Davis and Mandy Kellums-Baraka, "What Mental Health Professionals Can Learn from Missionary Member Care: Ways of Thinking, Doing, and Being," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 40, no. 1 (2021): 29–39.

Towards a Whole-Bible Theological Framework for Staff Care and Wellbeing

Rosie Button

The biblical and theological foundations for staff care and wellbeing (otherwise known as member care) exist. However, all too often, member care literature draws on only a handful of key biblical themes or passages. A more comprehensive, or systematic theological approach is needed which provides a framework for this practice of drawing on specific passages and examples of care in the Bible. Additionally, a whole-Bible approach, seeing the whole of scripture speaking into staff care, rather than just specific passages or verses would provide a further biblical context and support.

Existing Biblical Approaches

Most existing member care writing on biblical foundations tends to fall into four categories:

They look at passages or themes which give general principles for care. For example, Redcliffe MA student Janet Dallman wrote a paper on the recurring imagery of the shepherd throughout the Bible, as the basis for a member care model.[1] This image is clearly the basis of the term pastoral care and the word pastor. Her writing spoke into both the role and the characteristics required of a carer.

- They explore passages or themes which speak to particular aspects of member care. The Le Rucher booklet, *The Emmaus Rd, a Biblical Model for Debriefing*[2] does this. It uses the Emmaus road incident in Luke chapter 24 as a template for debriefing.
- They spotlight biblical characters as givers of care. Ronald Koteskey in his online book, *Missionary Member Care*,[3] discusses people who gave care to Paul, including Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus. These men, who Paul said, "refreshed my spirit" (1 Corinthians 16:17–18), acted as Paul's member care team.
- They share examples of biblical characters as receivers of care. The passage about the prophet Elijah receiving care at God's hands after the confrontation with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 19), is often used as a pattern for debriefing a burned-out worker. One instance of that is in Debbie Lovell-Hawker's chapter on debriefing in *Doing Member Care Well*.[4]

All these approaches rely on finding stories and passages in the bible to support member care rather than seeing these within a wholistic biblical framework.

Member Care, the Missional Hermeneutic, and the Missio Dei

This perspective has been reflected across mission studies. However, in the last fifteen years or so, this shifted. Mission studies started moving from looking at biblical foundations for mission, to looking for the missional foundation of the Bible. In other words, rather than seeing the Bible as the basis of mission, we look at mission as the basis of the Bible. This is known as the *missional hermeneutic*.

While he was not alone in thinking along these lines,[5] this was the seminal idea of Chris Wright's 2006 book, *The Mission of God*.[6] Instead of looking for the biblical passages which speak to mission, Wright and others talked about viewing the whole Bible through the lens of mission and seeing the whole Bible as a product of God's mission to the world (*missio Dei*). Furthermore, they considered the Bible's whole story as one of that mission and of salvation with the Bible itself being a tool or means of mission that also equips us to be part of that mission.

Could we make a similar shift in the way we think about member care? Could we look at the whole Bible through the lens of member care? Even if not, member care seems to fit naturally into the missional hermeneutic. For example, where the Bible speaks into the care of Christian workers, it appears to be a crucial part of equipping us for mission.

Towards a Theological Foundation

The Bible bursts with examples of and teaching about God being a loving God who cares for his people. The Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37–39) is that we should love God with our whole heart and love our neighbour as ourselves. Member care is clearly a manifestation of that love that we are to show one another.

In member care literature, there are a handful of sources which seek to give foundational ideas for a theology of care. One such idea is that member care lies in the crux of the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. This is David Pollock's view, in chapter 2 of *Doing Member Care Well*.[7]

Stating that the Great Commission and the Great Commandment lie at the heart of the New Testament, he posits that we can only fulfil the one by fulfilling the other: we spread the gospel and win disciples *by* demonstrating God's love. Pollock points to the early church doing just this and states that by practising member care we are doing this as well. It is not just about reducing attrition but about loving each other and thus demonstrating and furthering the gospel. This locates member care clearly within the *missio Dei* as being one of the ways in which God's mission is accomplished.

The Le Rucher booklet, *Biblical Member Care*, by Erik Spruyt and Renee Schüdel,[8] gives a bigger picture. They start by quoting 2 Timothy 3:16–17:

> "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God [member] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." What is member care if not equipping people for "every good work?"

Then the authors ask, "Who are the people we are caring for, and why?" and, "What kind of member care is specifically needed in order to fulfil who we are in God and what we are purposed to do in Christ's name?" Here they place member care in its place in God's mission, but this time as equipping people to fulfil their role in that mission. Author's

Spruyt and Schüdel go on to assert that member care providers must have a solid biblical understanding of the big picture of mission.

We also affirm this at All Nations Christian College, UK. In fact, students in our Staff Care and Wellbeing MA program are required to do core missiology modules as well as member care modules. This equips program graduates with a thorough missiological training that serves as a foundation to their other coursework.

Spruyt and Schüdel's approach asserts that the goal of member care is forming Christlike missionaries who, like Christ, are image-bearers, salt and light, and resilient in the face of suffering even to the point of death. They call this cruciform member care.

In the paper "Biblical Foundations for Member Care,"[9] Annemie Grosshauser looks to the model Jesus lived as he cared for his disciples. She says: "His primary goal was not to make them effective but to live out of fellowship with Him, and to develop a godly character and inner strength to face adversities and persecution."

Both Spruyt and Schüdel's booklet and Grosshauser's paper depict Jesus as both the model of care and the goal of care (by which I mean, Christlikeness is the goal). Furthermore, both show that our relationship with Jesus is the source of care. So we can say that Jesus is at the very centre of member care as the source, the model, and the goal. Or in the interest of being rightly trinitarian, we might prefer to place the triune God in the centre rather than specifically Jesus.

We can look further back in the Bible, to the Old Testament, to see God as the originator of all care for his people. Rhiannon Gibson, in her paper entitled *SIL Care and Wellbeing Missiological Reflection Questions*,[10] explains that the Old Testament, particularly Deuteronomy, demonstrates God's care for his people and provides the beginnings of a theology of member care.

Lina Miller also saw a model for God's care in the Old Testament. In her 2017 dissertation,[11] she argued that through the Jewish feasts, God created a rhythm of care which included times for community, celebration, commemoration, confirmation, and cessation (rest). Combined, these concepts form a potential basis for member care.

We have traced a basis for staff care throughout the Bible: rooted in the care of God for his people as shown in the Old Testament, borne out again in Jesus' care for his disciples, and continued in the lives of the early Christians as, filled with the Holy Spirit, they lived out what they had been taught. The source of all of this care is the Trinity.

In his book, E*nhancing Missionary Vitality*, Glenn Taylor explains that "a theology of care reflects the relationship between the members of the Trinity, the care of God for us, and the expectation that we will care for one another."[12] He goes on to emphasise that whereas God through his Spirit is the source of care, God normally works through *us* caring for one another – hence the importance of what we refer to as *mutual care*. He concludes saying as carers, we must first receive comfort, building up, growth, correction, and so on from the Holy Spirit in order to do the same for those in our care.

A New Framework

Now that we have explored the different theological and biblical approaches to member care, let's look at what a framework for the theology of care could look like. Underlying the framework is the understanding that Jesus Christ is the source, the goal (as in, Christlikeness being the goal), and the model of care.

Christ being the source of care indicates that member carers have to be receiving from Christ. This needs to happen in tandem with helping people receive care from Christ to enable and empower them in mission. One way this happens is by encouraging and teaching Spiritual Formation practices.

Christ as the goal of member care means that member carers support and equip Christian workers to become like Christ. They come alongside to help them live as he lived, even to the point of being willing to sacrifice everything.

Christ being the role model for care giving, implies that we must learn from how he cared for his disciples as seen in the gospels. It also means looking at how he demonstrated his self-care throughout his ministry and learning to follow his example.

With that paradigm in mind, the following diagram visualises our framework:

The diagram in figure 1.1 shows, firstly, that the missionary *and* the member carer both need to be understood in relation to the mission of God and to each other. Secondly, it illustrates how Jesus is at the centre of all three corners as source, goal, and model. As member carers looking at this diagram, we must respond by asking the following theological questions, amongst others:

- **About the *missio Dei*:** Do I have an understanding of the *missio Dei?*
- **About the member carer:** How does member/staff care fit into the *missio Dei*? Who am I specifically and what is my role in relation to it (gifts, capacity, calling)? And how do I look to Jesus as the source, goal, and role model of my care-giving?
- **About the missionary/Christian worker in my care:** Who are they in relation to the *missio Dei*? Who are they specifically as an individual or family unit (their calling, gifts, background)? How can I help them fulfil their role? How can I help them relate to Jesus as their source of care?

Figure 1.1 – Relation of Missionary, Member Care, and Mission of God

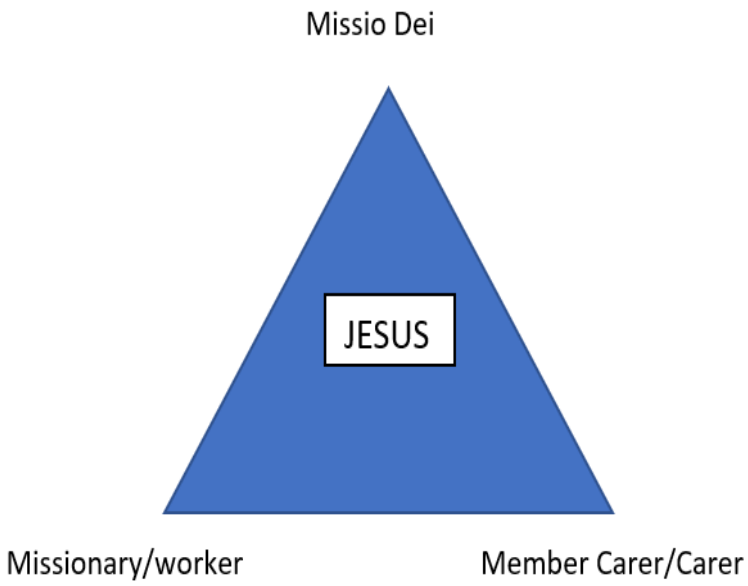
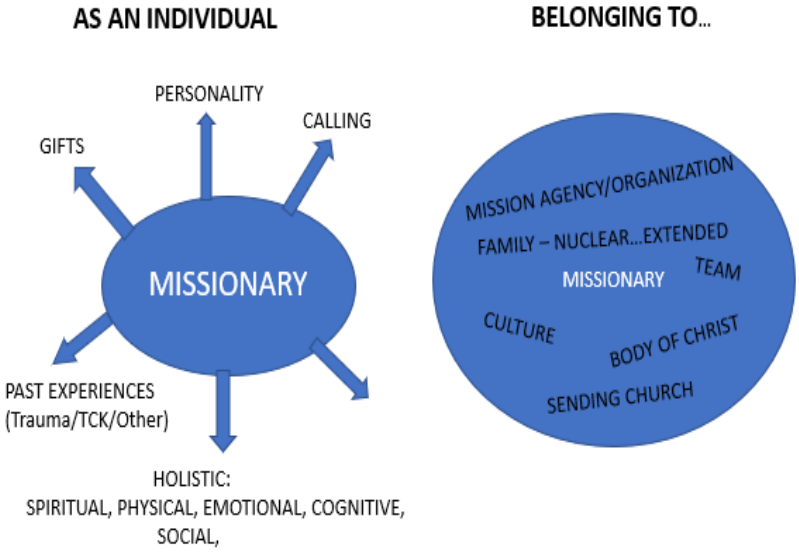


Figure 1.2 – Context Diagrams of an Individual and Communities



With the help of a member carer, a missionary or Christian worker looking at the diagram, could asking these questions (amongst other things):

- **About the *missio Dei*:** How do I relate to the *missio Dei*?
- **About member care:** How do I relate to member care, make sure I receive the member care I need? How am I receiving care from Jesus Christ?
- **About fellow missionaries or Christian workers:** How can I encourage my colleagues as one of their peers in their place in the *mission Dei*, in their role, or in their calling? How can I remind them to look to Jesus as their source of care?

Another more Trinitarian approach could be to put the Trinity at the centre of the triangle, rather than Jesus alone. That could help us think through how each member of the Trinity relates to the *missio Dei*, the missionary, and the member carer.

The final layer of the framework looks at the missionary/Christian worker (see figure 1.2). The next two diagrams illustrate the context of an individual with the various factors

suggested, as well as their place of belonging in the various communities suggested, and more.

This is where we can move from the bigger picture theological understanding of member care to applying the many and various specific biblical themes and passages referred to above.

Conclusion

Member care needs deeper theological reflection and a whole-Bible view in order to draw together the multiple strands of current biblical writing on member care. It is my hope that the framework I provided here will lead to that. I also desire that those involved in the care of Christian workers, including both member care workers and missions leaders, will have an enriched theological understanding of their work and be affirmed in viewing their role as an integral part of the *missio Dei*.

Rosie Button (r.button@allnations.ac.uk) is a lecturer for All Nations Christian College, UK's staff care and wellbeing (member care) MA. She previously helped lead the MA in member care at Redcliffe College after working many years as a missionary lecturer in Zimbabwe and then Uganda.

Notes

1. Janet Dallman, "A Study of the Implications of Biblical Shepherd Imagery for Member Care in OMF Japan" (independent study module paper, Redcliffe College, 2018).
2. Erik Spruyt, et al, *The Emmaus Rd, a Biblical Model for Debriefing*, Le Rucher Ministries.
3. Ronald L. Koteskey, "Is Missionary Member Care in the Bible?" in *Missionary Member Care* (2013), http://missionarycare.com/ebooks/Member_Care_Introduction_%20Book.pdf#page=12.
4. Debbie Lovell-Hawker, "Guidelines for Crisis and Routine Debriefing" in *Doing Member Care Well*, ed. Kelly O'Donnell (Pasadena: William Carey, 2002).
5. See, for example, Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2003), and more recently, Michael Goheen, ed., *Reading the Bible Missionally* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2016).
6. Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (London: IVP Academic, 2006).
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8. Erik Spruyt and R. F. Schüdel, *Biblical Member Care*, (Le Rucher Ministries, 2012).
9. Annemie Grosshauser, *Biblical Foundation for Member Care*, paper delivered at 7th European Member Care Consultation, Pensicola, Spain, March 23–27, 2010.
10. R. Gibson, "SIL Care and Wellbeing Missiological Reflection Questions Paper," 2019.
11. L. Miller, "Looking at Member Care through the Lens of the Biblical Feasts" (MA diss., Redcliffe College, 2017).
12. G. Taylor, "A Theological Perspective on Member Care," in *Enhancing Missionary Vitality: Mental Health Professions Serving Global Mission*, ed. John R. Powell and Joyce M. Bowers (Palmer Lake: Mission Training International, 1999).

The Local Church is the Foundation of Member Care

Jeremy and Anastasia Thomas with Mary Tindall

God broke our hearts to serve missionaries by providing member care for them. We both had mission experience with Operation Mobilisation (OM) in their ships ministry – Jeremy on the MV *Doulos* ship in 2007 and Anastasia on the MV *Logos Hope* ship from 2014 to 2017. On the ships, we met workers from more than 50 nations, all involved in global missions. We encountered people, from diverse backgrounds and cultures with amazing gifts and talents, and with the calling to serve God. But some of them were growing tired, burned out, confused, and depressed.

Through our experience with the OM ships ministry, God helped realize how important member care is for the great commission. Member care attends to missionaries' human needs for connection, encouragement, and support – akin to *spiritual nursing*. In 2015, God called us to serve those who serve – to strengthen them, uplift them when they are weary, and remind them who they are and what they're called to.

Missions agencies want to provide member care, yet often don't have the resources to do it all on their own. Through listening to the stories of several missionaries, we learned that many longed for their home churches to offer more support. They wanted their churches to ask, "How are you doing? What's really happening in your work and your life?" It's our heart's desire that the Church embraces a larger role in member care, not only for cross-cultural workers, but as an essential part of community life offered by every church to every believer.

Creating a "One Another" Culture

The concept of member care is not new. In Acts chapter 2, we learn that the believers spent time in study, fellowship, caring for one another and those outside the community, praying, worshiping, and breaking bread. As they did these things, they shined. In fact, they were glowing! People believed in Jesus because they could see the community was different.

Later in the Bible, we read about Paul's co-workers, including Tychicus, Onesimus, Barnabas, Epaphras, Fortunatus, Stephanas, and Achaicus. Paul calls them "faithful servants of the Lord." These men made the link between Paul and other communities and encouraged other believers. They connected resources to needs, ensuring nobody lacked anything – a practical form of caring we call *linking*. Paul values that Onesimus risked his life to bring Paul what he needed, and Paul also notes that the Corinthians generously shared their resources with the Jerusalem church.

In the same way, when we become children in the family of Christ, we join a global community in which we care for others. Jesus says, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35). This is just one of 59 "one another" verses in the New Testament. The best evangelism happens when we create a culture that embodies the concept of "one another." When we create this culture, we can experience maturity in Christ and the joy of being in community.

When churches commit to member care, they're sharing the real gospel from the very beginning. The gospel is not only that Jesus died for us – but that that the kingdom of heaven is here. We are called to be a holy nation of set-apart citizens of heaven. This is our identity.

We often talk about making disciples and bearing fruit, which can unintentionally create pressure to *do, do, do*. But first and foremost, the gospel is about who we are called to *be*. Churches can live out this gospel by discipling believers as soon as they give their life to Christ and become an active part of his body. Walking alongside and caring for new believers fosters a beautiful interdependency before people are even called to ministry at home or abroad.

In a survey a few years ago, we asked, "How do you feel that your community is caring for you? How do you feel cared for?" We found that Christians feel cared for when they are listened to, valued, and invested in. Just as we need a whole village to raise a child, we need a whole community to raise a Christian. Before starting in ministry, we need to learn how to care for others and receive care, within our community. We also need to be humble and open to ask for and receive care, because we can't give what we haven't received.

Churches that intentionally create space for people to be cared for and to care for others develop resilient followers of Jesus. Whether they are sent as missionaries or not, they learn to demonstrate care and can do that anywhere – locally or globally. They also have a place to turn to for additional support and care when they need it.

Bearing the Light

Like other roles and functions in a church, we should recognize and value member care. Every believer is supposed to study the word. But pastors and teachers devote their time, talent, and treasures to encourage studying and discipleship and help people go deeper in the word. While every member of the church praises the Lord, a worship team leads the community in this area.

In the same way, we should all care for one another – yet we also need people who invest their time, talent, and treasure in developing a culture of caring, encouraging, and linking together, according to our unique culture and location. We call these people *light-bearers*, a broad term we use to encompass servant leaders, helpers, member care providers, and caregivers.

We divide light-bearers into four roles or categories:

- **Champions**, who promote member care through avenues such as speaking with leaders, writing articles, advocating on social media, or leading Bible studies about member care
- **Coordinators**, who serve as a connection point for member caring and linking

requests, find external resources, and coordinate relevant resources to meet members' needs
- **Facilitators**, who develop programs for member caring and linking, prepare the necessary structure to walk alongside church members, and teach members how to provide care
- **Providers**, who deliver member caring and linking one-on-one or in small groups, and follow up with those who receive care

Each of these roles is essential to creating a "one another" culture in the church. Some people may play multiple roles as light-bearers, while others may specialize in one area. Together, they bring the spiritual and practical nourishing that missionaries and all church members need to thrive in their callings.

Resources for Churches

How can missions agencies encourage their teams' home churches to deepen and broaden their member care? We often think of the analogy that parents are their children's first educator, and when they send a child to school, they are still parents. Mission agencies are responsible for caring and supporting missionaries, but the church is still the parent. We encourage churches to develop a caring and linking ministry if they haven't yet.

We can encourage and remind the church to see missionaries as an extended part of the church in a different location. This applies to every season of missions: before missionaries leave, while they're on the mission field, and when they come back. Both churches and missionaries benefit from this ongoing relationship.

Before a missionary leaves, we encourage the church to create a dedicated member care team. The team may only be two people, but its size matters less than its intentionality. Missionaries should know that these local church members will check on them and help them meet their physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, and relational needs. While others in the church may hold missionaries accountable to their goals, this member care team focuses on supporting them and helping them become who God wants them to be.

Churches can also take steps to understand who in the community may be a strong fit for light-bearing work. Perhaps some its members are professional care providers, such as psychologists, counselors, or therapists. Other members may have gifts of active listening, mentoring, facilitating, or connecting others with resources. We should use all these gifts for the body of Christ.

Many resources are also available for churches seeking to develop member care programs:

- DayBreak Academy (daybreak-academy.org) offers a 1-year program for churches to develop a member caring and linking ministry.
- Our *Light-Bearers Manual* (downloadable on daybreak-academy.org/resources) offers practical guidance for churches.
- Here2There (here2there.org) provides strategies to help churches care for missionaries.
- The S.H.A.P.E. assessment, at freeshapetest.com, helps people discover their spiritual gifts and abilities, so churches can identify those best-suited for member care. We have a contextualized version of this test available in several languages on our website as well (daybreak-academy.org/shape-assessment).

As we grow in our commitment to member care, we have much to learn from one another about the importance of love, unity, and interdependency within the

global church. It's our dream that the church is widely recognized as the place where people are cared for, and the gospel is proclaimed to the nations.

To see the great commission fulfilled, we need more workers who are strong, resilient – and not alone. Mission agencies and ministries are doing amazing work for God's kingdom, and yet the church is the primary caregiver for God's people. As more churches embrace the responsibility of member care, we have a vision of seeing the global church become the radiant, united, unstoppable, and beautiful bride of Christ that it is meant to be.

Light-bearers who want to develop member caring and linking in Christian communities/churches are connecting through the Light-Bearers International Network. Participants in the network come from different organizations and churches worldwide. You can join them by registering at https://goo.gl/VgbjMN.

Jeremy and Anastasia Thomas (daybreak-academy@live.com) have led DayBreak Academy–which trains people to provide member caring and linking for missionaries, ministers, and individuals – since 2011. They wrote the Light-Bearer's Manual, a guide for member caring and linking ministry. Jeremy and Anastasia also coordinate the Africa Member Care Network email newsletter. They live on the island nation of Mauritius, east of the African mainland.

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Beyond 'Paying and Praying:' Engaging the Church in Member Care

Rene Rossouw

One of the most valuable resources in the kingdom of God is His children, faithfully following in obedience, laying down their lives to glorify Jesus among the nations. They deserve our prayers, respect, and support.

I had the privilege to be called by the Lord to serve him for 18 years with an international mission organisation, of which four years were spend on a difficult field in the Middle East. Although I personally do not think of myself as a great *extroverted relator*, the Lord had the sense of humour to direct me towards member care. During one of my seasons, I had to mobilise the sending churches of our missionaries locally to move beyond merely *paying and praying* for their missionaries.

In Acts 9:25 we find this beautiful image when the believers held on to the ropes at the wall to help Paul escape to the nations. Paul's life was in their hands holding on and letting him go. I'm deeply convinced that God first of all wants to extend the blessing of missions towards the whole church community. This means getting involved pastorally, logistically and ministry wise as partners of their missionaries, making the most of *their inheritance* among the nations (Acts 20:23; Psalm 2:8; In Christ we have an inheritance in the nations).

Currently I am serving the missionaries as a staff member in one of our larger churches in South Africa and I have the privilege to care for 51 missionaries.

We are familiar with the phrase of many churches viewing the *Great Commission* of Matthew 28:18–20 as the Great Omission that only has bearing on a few. Invariably these few *called ones* have to compete for budget resources, exposure of their ministry, awareness, the favour of their pastor and leaders, and a consistent change of familiar faces in the pews leaving many of them feeling estranged.

Why are We Struggling in Churches?

The irony is that many churches love to boast about their missionaries and their involvement in the nations, while they are actually neglecting the saints serving on their behalf. There are a couple of reasons why this happens:

- **Churches are busy organisations.** "Out of sight; out of mind," seems to be the primary reason for neglect. They get so passionately involved with local ministry that they simply forget to stay focussed and involved with their external ministries and missionaries.
- **Ignorance.** There are very few resources available to churches with a mission vision on how to take care of their missionaries. My own church seemed to be absent in my career until I understood that they simply didn't know how to handle the situation. They were completely unaware of my special needs and challenges in ministry because I always used my *exposure time* to promote the ministry and not myself. Since my pastors have never been exposed to a multi-cultural foreign lifestyle, living in faith, having to cope with extra-ordinary ministry demands, they could not really support me emotionally and spiritually. (Some elders even thought I was on an extended, all expenses paid holiday.)
- **Lack of communication.** Some missionaries really struggle with communication and when there is no dedicated person on the inside to advocate on behalf of the missionary, involvement unravels over time. Pictures of missionaries in the foyer quickly become part of the furniture and gathers dust.
- **Lack of vision.** Unless a church has evangelism and discipleship as a foundational biblical core value, their involvement and dedication to missions will fade while the missionary is driving off into the sunset.
- **Lack of commitment.** Not everyone in the pew will understand the need for world evangelism. "What about the need *right here*?" is a very familiar argument. The smart answer is that the congregation is *right here* to do the job and that is why a missionary needs to serve elsewhere. When there is no commitment on the part of a church to honour Jesus' *sending out* unto the whole world, missionaries will always have to fight for the right to be obedient to God.
- **Change of leadership.** I consoled many heart-broken missionaries who *lost* their church while they were serving on a foreign field. The new pastor had no regard for the vision and convictions of the departing pastor. Pastors pretty much rule the vision and direction of their church.

There are probably many other reasons why missionaries struggle to keep the church involved with their ministry and vice versa, but I want to focus on what CAN be done to make the best of missions in a local church.

How Can We Fix It?

Unless the leadership of a church respect and understand the Great Commission as an integral part of God's calling for HIS CHURCH, you need to skip the next few paragraphs. The Bible is the starting place and should be the judge of every argument and any discussion about the church's obligation to be involved in world evangelism.

Evangelism and discipleship are seen as the *calling* of our church. Everything we plan and do pivots on this foundation, including the budget and resources. Our church is by no means perfect, but perhaps we can offer some ideas that might just be of value to folks who really want to prioritise missions. We have a number of structures in place to help us maintain missions and evangelism as a priority in our very busy church.

- **Member care.** I work alongside a dedicated pastor providing member care in all its facets to our missionaries. We maintain solid stable trusting relationships with our missionaries on a regular basis and

offer counselling services. Social media is a great tool for ongoing conversation. We have also networked our missionaries into a close fellowship and interest group. Many times they minister to each other. Communication is always a two-way street between church and missionary. They know exactly what is happening on the home front and are actively involved in praying for us as we pray for them.

- **Prayer and exposure.** Since our church is so BUSY, we expect our missionaries to recruit their own prayer shield members. We really fall flat in providing enough exposure opportunities. It is always a major challenge, but we do make a meal out of the faith promise renewal service and evangelism services through-out the year. Our church is set up with online prayer groups, and we use it for special missionary requests.
- **A dedicated budget and faith offering.** I have yet to meet a church who said YES to evangelism and missions who are not able to honour their financial commitments. God always supplies according to our obedience against all odds. There are two paid positions allocated to evangelism and missions – a manager and a mobiliser. Although the faith offering doesn't cover the whole budget, it does involve a whole lot of ordinary church members in missions.
- **A management committee.** This needs to represent all the ministries in the church, the church council, and ordinary members from the congregation. It is in place to approve the budget, special expenditure needs, appointments of missionaries, and our annual goals setting.
- **Policies.** Approved policies guiding anything from missionary appointments to missionary projects. Policies and guidelines are great instruments to promote best practise and buffer against shifts in leadership directions.
- **Partnerships with mission organisations or like-minded non-profit organisations.** Although I am appointed as the fulltime manager of missions, we do not send missionaries to the field without a partnering organisation. It is just a practical consideration. We do not have the resources or capacity to manage and care for people who are thousands of kilometres and a different currency away from us. We need a team with our missionaries on ground zero to help with care giving and direction.
- **A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).** An MOU between the church, the missionary, and the sending organisation provides clarity in member care about everyone's responsibility and boundaries.
- **Accountability.** Once a year our missionaries need to complete an annual report that enables us to find red flags for special attention and give us leverage to be able to give account on any missionary to anyone who are asking – especially the church council.
- **Skills support.** We have established a ministry among our congregation members requesting them to tithe their professions and skills towards serving our missionaries and struggling congregation members free of charge. It is called *Helplift*. Medical, legal, computer techs, and a wide range of other professionals have offered their services which is well-managed and controlled.

Conclusion

We are sincerely grateful to the Lord for guiding and directing our church in its

missions involvement over many years. I trust that you will find these practical pointers useful to implement in part or whole at your church to more fully participate in missions and with missionaries.

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Growing Your Church's Capacity for Meaningful Member Care

Ivan Liew

Local churches are often uncertain about how to care for their missionaries beyond financial and prayer support. Pastors want their churches to be involved but wonder if they make a meaningful difference. Research conducted in Singapore shows that certain member care functions are better provided from the church family than from specialist organizations. Also, the totality of member care is best provided in a church-agency partnership. These findings assist pastors to lead their churches toward meaningful member care.

A mission agency director I had only just met shook my hand enthusiastically and said, "Thank you for your church's partnership and care for the missionary you send through us!" I had been a missions pastor for only two weeks, and I didn't know what exactly that director was thanking me for. I had only a vague idea of what a church should do to care for its missionaries.

As I met more people in missions, I realized that my local church, Woodlands Evangelical Free Church in Singapore,[1] had a reputation of providing great member care to our missionaries in partnership with missions agencies. I began learning why this was so and developed this further in my church over the next 15 years. This resulted in doctoral research that spanned multiple churches, agencies, and the book, Churches and Missions Agencies Together.

Learning from Pain and Failure

My church was not always great in member care. A painful failure a decade before I took up missions leadership reverberated in organizational memory. Leaders re-told the story with a posture of self-reflection and humble admission that the church could have done better. To learn from our failure and to move the church forward, leaders had to demonstrate a mindset of caring more about future missionaries than saving face. I watched this modelled, listened to the undercurrents beneath the stories, and built on the foundations that had been laid before me.

Building a church's ability to provide member care to future and existing missionaries involves charting both organizational culture and policy. First, a leader takes stock of what has come before, then assesses what strengths should be harnessed and what needs changing. As pastors, we preach and model these values, we propose changes to boards and committees, and we form ministry teams to execute these plans.

Your Church Culture of Missionary Sending

Singapore is a unique mix of Asian and Western values. We are highly structured and follow rules that place family and the community before individual freedoms. However, our education, business, and media are more engaged with the West. As thoughtful practitioners, we must all be mindful of both society and organizational culture as we lead our churches.

Some churches have little missions expertise but a great heart to support members. Others aren't aware of missionary needs beyond an annual missions pledge because they don't know the issues and can't personally relate to them. Every leader must know their church's strengths and resources and decide which areas of member care should be addressed first.

As a new missions pastor, I soon realized that the church board deeply valued our missionaries, so we built on this strength. My member care proposals were almost always approved if they were backed up with solid reasoning and good planning. Over the years, we provided retirement savings, study plans, sabbaticals with family, and unlimited Kindle books. Small things added up and the culture of member care solidified in our church.

Church Engagement is Church Care

I often encourage missions pastors to preach on their own missions Sundays rather than invite speakers the majority of the time. A mission pastor can use this opportunity to tell the church about their missionaries and the church's plans to work with the missionaries. Preaching from the pulpit and providing organizational leadership are powerfully synergistic in leading our churches toward God's desired future.

As a missions pastor, I preached, cast vision, and wrote proposals for projects and policies. I stood in the gap for my missionaries and bridged their ministries and needs to the congregation and the board. As a result, the church was never reluctant to care more for our missionaries.

I connected Scripture to how we care for missionaries and how we engage on the mission field. The church loved feeling more engaged, knowing more about what our church did on the field, and engaging directly with missionaries on mission trips. When we couldn't physically travel, we tried digital mission trips together with missionaries on the field. When a church is engaged in the work of their missionaries, its missionaries feel connected and cared for.

Scaffolding through Culture and Policy

In our desire to effect a behavioral change, many Singaporean churches lean first toward implementing a policy or rule. However, even the best strategies or policies in member care will not result in deep and lasting change without addressing organizational culture and values. This requires the slow and ongoing work of vision-casting, biblical teaching, modelling, and constant communication.

Then we can implement policies and strategies for missionary sending and member care that reflect the values and culture we have been building. Doing so results in a congregation that appreciates and internalizes these values as opposed to a group that merely fulfils member care tasks.

The systems we build, including policies surrounding member, become the scaffold upon which others empowered to be involved in member care. Some member care initiatives in my church are spontaneous because of our culture and permission-giving policies. Church members visit the elderly parents of missionaries, send birthday

greetings and gifts, ask about children, and sponsor university studies. I would often find out about these only later. I loved the fact that I didn't know half of the loving deeds done!

Other member care initiatives are carried out through programs and policies. It's not uncommon for Singaporean churches to fund 50% of a missionary's budget. My church takes this one step further: the missions pastor helps missionaries raise the remaining 50% from our congregation. The missions pastor speaks for their needs and the work they do in our church services. As a result, we have always fully met their needs from within our congregation.[2]

Meaningful Care from the Church Family

The research I conducted focused on optimizing missionary care in the partnership between local Singaporean churches and mission agencies. Missionaries were asked what the most valuable types of member care they received were. As they talked, certain areas were consistently mentioned as more valued from the mission agency and others were more valued from the local church.[3]

This distinction was evident even when both church and agency provided the same type of care. Certain areas of member care were more effective when given by the local church, while others were better from the mission agency. Multiple focus groups of missionaries, church, and agency leaders summarized this truth – the church is like a person's family at home, and the agency is like a family of colleagues in the workplace.[4] Member care is most valued when it's given both from church and mission agency as shown in table 4.1.

Church leaders would find it helpful to keep these areas in mind when addressing missions culture and policy. Do we have a giving, generous, and appreciative culture towards our missionaries? Is our church engaged in missions with our missionaries? Do we exhibit prayerfulness for our missionaries? What financial policies, prayer strategies and other plans can scaffold improvement in these areas after we address organizational culture?

In the past, my church had gathered all our missionaries newsletters and prayer points in a booklet which we printed monthly and distributed to the congregation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, worship patterns changed so we moved to a monthly Zoom platform, where people could hear from the missionaries themselves and pray for them in small groups. This proved more effective than previous newsletters and in-person prayer meetings. It was a great source of encouragement to the missionaries.

Table 4.1 – Types of Member Care Most Valued by Missionaries

Church	Mission Agency
fundraising structures	conflict resolution
mobilizing the church	crisis evacuation
parents/family care	field-entry
pastoral care	healthcare
prayer	ministry feedback
re-entry to home	ministry strategy

Certainly, there are times when a church or agency provides in an area in the other's column. This may be needed, but not as effective. For example, when one of our missionaries experienced a serious team conflict on the field, the agency's home-side simultaneously had a leadership crisis. With no agency person to provide care, I had to step in as the missions pastor, even though conflict resolution and ministry strategy matters on the field would have been best handled by the agency. Years later, when that same missionary talked about the care she most valued, she gushed about many things the church provided but never once mentioned the months we had spent on that conflict. Instead, she commented that she wished she had more support from the agency in that crisis.

Concluding Remarks

Local churches can provide member care that is highly meaningful for long-term missionaries on the field. Certain types of care are more effective originating from the church family, but still in partnership with a missions agency. In growing a church's capacity for member care, church leaders may focus on these highly valued areas first and do so by addressing both organizational culture and policy.

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Notes

1. Woodlands EFC has more than 1,000 worshippers in Singapore with both English and Chinese congregations. It sends multiple missionary units through several mission agencies. https://www.wefc.org.sg.

2. This method of missions pledges creates a strong relationship not only with the missionary, but also with the mission agency because the church gathers the funds, then sends 100% to the agency. Smaller churches have replicated our model and reported similar success at raising funds for their missionaries.

3. Liew Ivan, *Churches and Missions Agencies Together: A Relational Model of Church-Agency Partnerships* (Condeo Press, 2017). The full findings, described in this book, includes the aspects of effective member care provided by churches and missions agencies.

4. We may spend eight hours in the office, and only see our spouse and children for two hours in the evening but home relationships are the foundation for ourselves and our missionaries. Similarly, the church may know less about details of front-line missionary than the agency, but the care it provides is *like home* and essential. Similarly, the agency is not just *office work* as it also provides personal care but in the context of field ministry.

Oikos Care: Caring *for* Our Missionaries by Caring *Through* Our Missionaries

Pam Arlund, Mary Ho, and Peggy Spiers

Imagine this conversation with your elderly mother after a recent follow-up visit with her new doctor.

"How do you like your new doctor, Mom?"

"Oh, I really like him. He turned his chair to face me and asked how I was feeling. He asked if I was having any side effects from the new medication. He wanted to know if I had any questions or concerns. It was amazing! He remembered every thing I told him during the last appointment without checking the computer screen. He had all the time in the world for me. Then he asked how your dad's garden was doing and if you were back from your trip yet. We had a really nice conversation. He is a wonderful doctor!"

How did your mother determine the doctor's qualifications? She undoubtedly has not seen his medical school records or spoken with his other patients. She determined the care she will receive based on the time and attention he gave her. He was not reading a computer screen or typing while your mom talked. The doctor gave her his undivided time and attention. He remembered what she told him on her last visit. And he even showed interest in her family!

This care is individualized and holistic. It cares deeper than a patient's obvious symptoms. When caretakers – doctors, nurses, therapists, and counselors – consider the whole person, there is a higher probability of restoring that person to health sooner rather than later. A health professional offers far better care by focusing on seemingly secondary concerns, such as possible side effects, mental or emotional trauma, eating and sleep patterns, and family and work dynamics.

This type of care is unique to each patient. It is not a standardized cookie-cutter service that everyone receives. This type of care takes more time and often involves more people. At first glance, it appears to be an inefficient use of time and resources. But in the end, it will keep the patient in better health for a longer time.

Oikos Care: "Discipling *Through*" Versus "Discipling *At*"

We call this kind of holistic care, *oikos care*. In missions and evangelistic outreach, Jesus instructed us in Luke 10 to find a friend or contact who is *a person of peace* in a new people group. Jesus describes the person of peace as the one who opens his or her *oikos* or social network to the church planter. An effective church planter does not focus on reaching only one individual – a method we call *disciple at*, by focusing on winning one individual in isolation. Instead, we should *disciple through* them to include their neighbors, friends, families, and social network. This wider method has proven to produce more disciples who will, in turn, make even more disciples.

On the front end, this method of discipling *through* a person to reach their entire social network seems like an inefficient use of time and resources. It may appear that the church planter is not focused. However, he or she is intentionally focused on reaching the whole person and the whole community for Jesus. This is how the gospel spreads, within social networks.

Oikos Care

Let us apply these same principles to member care. What would member care look like if we, as senders and member care givers, see beyond the surface needs of our missionaries to care more holistically for them? We know they are dealing with fundraising, culture shock, and language learning. What else may be affecting their well-being? It could be that parents are not releasing them to go. Friends may be fearful for them. The stress may be damaging their health.

Holistic care also extends beyond just the individual missionary. We need to explore who is in our missionary's *oikos*, his social network. Caring for everyone in the missionary's life is to care for him as a whole person – as a husband, student, father, son, employee, neighbor, disciple maker – and not just as a missionary. His role as a missionary is only one aspect of who he is.

As we meet the missionary's *oikos*, we begin to learn about these people, pray for them, and maybe even get to know them personally. We are coming alongside our missionary, sharing his joys and burdens. We may begin with the goal of caring for our missionary, but the emotional, spiritual, and practical ways we care for the people closest to him will increase his emotional, mental, and physical capacity to focus on his ministry. He will be more fruitful in the long run.

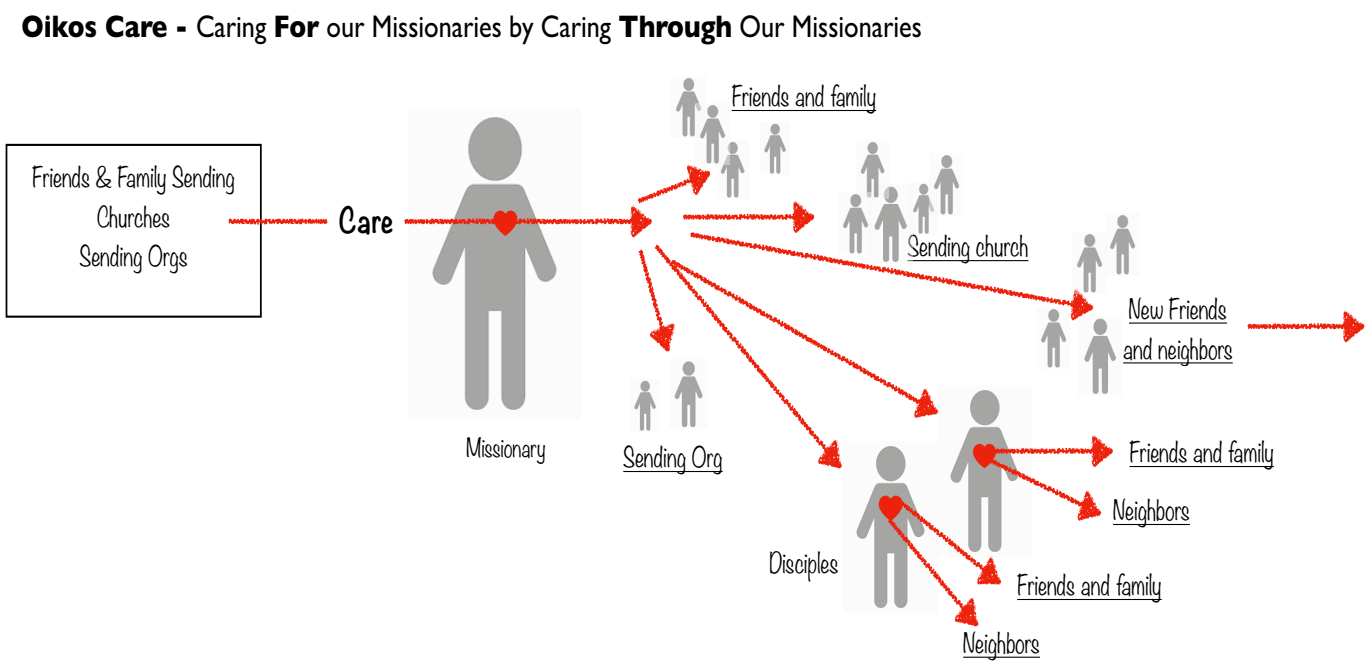
In the diagram (see figure 5.1), we see how senders and member care workers start by caring for the missionary, but don't stop there. The care continues as they care for the missionary's network of friends, family, sending church or agency, and extends to their new disciples, friends, and neighbors.

This tapestry of intentional care builds stronger connections. Not only does he and his friends and family receive thoughtful care, but it also demonstrates to pre-believers that he is living out God's intent on how we are to treat "one another." We embody Jesus' incarnational presence.

Team Care for Oikos Care

How is it possible to care for so many people? We need to learn from the medical professionals who work together and call in other specialists to provide holistic care. Yes, each of them is a specialist trained and hired to provide optimum care and expertise.

Figure 5.1 – Oikes Care: Caring For Our Missionaries by Caring Through Our Missionaries



Senders care for the missionaries and their oikos or social network. Note that the missionaries remain connected with/caring for those "back home" but also begin the process of caring for their new friends, neighbors and disciples by caring through them.

Let's put a call out for more caretakers in the Church! Make it a personal invitation, not an email. Yes, this will take more time but it's worth it. Then train for excellence. It does not have to be complicated. Anyone can do it. We can all "send them on their way in a manner that honors God" (3 John 6). *Oikos* care is multi-dimensional, *not* corporate. It is personally customized, *not* cookie-cutter.

The younger ones in your church or family can train the older ones to download and use Zoom, Marco Polo, etc. Former missionaries can share stories about what meaningful care was for them (or what they wish they had), what culture shock felt like, what they missed from home, and what furlough should look like. You can have small groups read a book together, such as *Foreign to Familiar* by Sarah Lanier or *Praying for Your Missionary* by Eddie Byun.

To equip the sending *oikos*, All Nations International developed a training for local churches, called Sender's University (Sender's U), to equip lay people to send well. Attendees learn the reality of the need for *both* the *goers* and *senders* to accomplish the Great Commission. The facilitators share stories about the realities of missionaries' lives and give practical ideas of how to get involved in new ways.

How to Start Oikos Care?

Here are a few ideas for you to get started in *oikos* care:

Caring for the Child Missionaries

- Invite your missionaries over for a casual meal. Get out (or borrow) Legos® or wooden train sets for the kids to play through dinner. What a gift for your missionaries when they know you have prepared to host their children too. The relaxed setting is in itself a gift!
- During your agency's training or church mission conference, run a parallel training/conference for children rather than just offering childcare. We are equipping *child missionaries*, not babysitting missionary children.
- Keep in touch directly with children through video chats (Marco Polo) or texts. Get your own children or Sunday school class involved. What a great way to train children in member care!
- Read and send video record stories for child missionaries to play over and over again.

Caring for the Parents of Missionaries

- Try to meet the missionaries' parents and relatives before the missionaries leave for the field.
- Find out where the parents live and go visit them. If they live a long distance from you, invest the time and money to visit them.
- If they are local, invite them to your family's events (e.g., holiday dinners, tee ball games, etc.).
- Invite parents to prayer times where their kids will be prayed for. Pray also for the parents and acknowledge their sacrifice.

Caring for the Sending Agency and Church

- Get to know each other. Take the initiative to meet the missions pastor, missions committee, sending team, and agency staff. Invite yourself for a visit. Invest the time to communicate and establish trust. This will help the missionary know that his people are all on the same page.
- Host trainings together.
- Invite the agency and church to prayer times where the mutual missionary will be featured.

Caring for New Friends, Neighbors, and Unreached Peoples

- Ask your missionary about their new friends so you can get to know them.
- Pray for specific people by name. Ask about them regularly.
- Visit. Do prayer walks. Meet your missionary's new neighbors, friends or disciples, and colleagues.
- Send people from the sending church, sending team, or agency to help in times of natural disasters to care for the community (rather than just evacuating the missionaries).

Conclusion

We often say that it takes a community to raise a child, which includes a lifetime of welcoming a child's friends and family. It also takes a community to care for a missionary. But we gain the most in the process. By caring for the missionary's *oikos* back home and in the new host country, we gain new friends and communities of friends. As we care for entire *oikos*, our reach extends from home through the missionary to discipling the nations!

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Best Practices for Church-Based Missionary Care

Lori Rogers and David Wilson

Lauri M's parents began their first overseas missionary assignment 70 years ago. Communication was limited back then, and Lauri remembers that it took months for their family to receive an encouragement letter from their church. When she was born, her church received the news via telegram:

> Dear church family STOP Healthy baby girl STOP Pray for the Quichua to know Jesus FULL STOP

Even with limited communication, Lauri recounts that her family had a deep connection to their church family for her parents' entire career.

Today, missionaries have unprecedented access to numerous communications tools like video conferencing, social media, live chat, email, voicemail, etc. And yet, missionaries experience more *disconnect* from their sending churches than ever before.

Church-based missionary care provides an opportunity for people in church congregations to *connect* with God's vision for the nations through their missionaries on the frontline of the spiritual battlefield. Paul was deeply connected to his supporting churches, so what can we do in our churches, today, to model a proactive and intentional ministry of missionary care?

Consider these verses through a lens of missionary care: Acts 13:1–2; 2 Corinthians 1:10–11; 7:6–7; Philippians 1:3–7; 2:19–30; and Acts 14:26–28. These are a few examples of verses where we can find *best practices* for church-based missionary care. They allow churches of any size to invest in frontline missionary work by sending, sustaining, and receiving missionaries with excellence.

These best practices will help shape your partnership and provide milestones for care, so that together, your church and your missionaries can be discovered, developed, and deployed for active service on the mission field.

Discover

Some are called to go. Some are called to send. We are all given the responsibility for being witnesses, "in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Discovery includes creating an environment in our churches to identify both missionary candidates and lay people to serve on their support teams. As these teams become equipped with skills, knowledge, and resources to fortify missionaries for service, those candidates are knit together with church members who participate in aspects of training together with them.

Discovery includes the congregation, so that when missionaries return for any length of time, they come back to people who know them. Many churches are experimenting with support teams that focus on mobilizing people into missions, preparing people for missions service, caring for missionaries, encouraging missionaries, praying for missionaries, and more. These facilitate full congregational involvement with missionaries from before they begin their service until it ends.

Receiving missionaries who return home for any reason is an area where churches can invest particular attention. When churches participate in training for re-entry and debriefing, they prepare to walk alongside missionaries through what is often a difficult and lonely period. Some missionaries re-enter for retirement and need to be celebrated for a job well done. For others, their return is premature, and their need may be help in finding what the Lord has next for them.

Include all ages in caring for missionaries. Children and youth carefully watch how churches treat missionaries. They naturally migrate toward what a church honors, and away from what is ignored. That is why we say, "Missionary care is mobilization!" Re-entry is an excellent time to honor missionaries so that the next generation will see the church's heart for reaching the nations for Christ.

Develop

Being gospel partners with missionaries rarely comes naturally to everyday believers in local churches. *Out-of-sight-out-of-mind* kicks in with most churches. However, with training and perseverance, church members can excel as active participants in advancing the gospel globally.

For decades, Neal Pirolo's books (*Serving as Senders* and *The Reentry Team*) have laid a strong scriptural foundation for developing a team approach for missionary care. I (Lori) have often heard Neal say that those who go and those who send are equal partners in the Great Commission. Being equal partners requires training for both – those who go and those who send.

Developing a strategy for missionary mobilization and on-the-field care is only part of the solution. Does a congregation understand the many challenges a missionary experiences when returning from their field assignment? Challenges like this need to be addressed at the highest levels of local church leadership. The pastors must be champions for missions because they are the ones who hold both the key and the padlock for a church engaged in the Great Commission.

This is as true now as it was in 1904 when John R. Mott wrote: "The secret of enabling the home Church to press her advantage in the non-Christian world is one of leadership. The people do not go beyond their leaders in knowledge and zeal, nor surpass them in consecration and sacrifice. The Christian pastor … holds the divinely appointed office for inspiring and guiding the thought and activities of the Church. By virtue of his position, he can be a mighty force in the world's evangelization."[1]

Deploy

The word *deploy* helps us visualize an active and deliberate engagement for both the sent ones and their senders. In the arena of missionary care, it includes a commissioning of

missionaries along with their support teams. We see this demonstrated in Acts 13:1–3, "Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers . . .. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' So after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off."

This scriptural example of the first sending church commissioning service has four important components for deploying missionaries well. The first is fasting. Church leaders engaged their bodies in a solemn demonstration of devotion to the Lord and his work. Second is prayer. Verbally communicating with our creator is a spiritual discipline and exercise that should set our minds "on things that are above, not on things that are on earth" (Colossians 3:2).

The third component of this commissioning service is the *laying on of hands*. It's a practice that has been literally handed down for two millennia and is still an impactful way to corporately demonstrate support by the body of Christ to her sent ones. Fourthly, consider that little phrase "and sent them off." Don't overlook it. This little church in Antioch took the Lord's final instructions seriously. They knew that Paul and Barnabas would experience hardships on their journey. We can reason that people gave money, shared their expertise, and helped care for loved ones who were being left behind by these early missionaries.

Most missionaries are sent out with an agency to provide on-the-field oversight and accountability, but the services provided often differ from agency to agency. That is why I (David) wrote the book *Mind the Gaps: Engaging the Church in Missionary Care*. In it, I wrote, "As a church, one of the most caring things you can do for prospective missionary candidates is to help guide them to agencies with a reputation for care and a willingness to work alongside the church to make the missionary's career successful."[2]

The Church is the bride of Christ, and the agency is like a bridesmaid, a supportive helper for this joint venture. Therefore, the church should not just outsource the Great Commission to an agency. It needs to take the lead and mind the gaps of care for their beloved global disciples.

Brian Gibson of TRAIN International says that missionary care should not be seen as a generous luxury, but instead as a crucial component for effectiveness. Using a military analogy, he describes care as forging and protecting the supply line for global workers.

He explains, "In any battle, if one side can disrupt their opponent's supply line, they demolish their ability to function as an effective fighting force. In that way, missionary care is less about sending our workers sweets and treats and more about ensuring they have the necessary meals, munitions and medicines for them to engage in their critical frontline work."[3]

Taking the analogy further, he defines meals as ensuring global workers have sustaining nourishment. Munitions are the tools, strategies, and tactics they need to effectively engage in their work. And medicines are about having access to resources that will replenish their physical, emotional, and spiritual health. [4]

Conclusion

Missionaries who are sent and their support teams who send must be discovered, developed, and deployed with intentionality and purpose. Churches who send well together with missionaries who go well prepared become an extraordinary team that is prepared to offensively engage in the unseen battle. Together with their sending agency partner, they can effectively and actively engage areas of global darkness so that the light of Jesus can shine.

These best practices have been developed over the last four years by Missionary Care Catalysts (MCC), a collaborative group of church leaders, agency leaders, consultants, clinicians, authors, pastors, and former missionaries. Together, they are committed to see the full church committed to accomplishing the Great Commission. To learn more about best practices for church-based missionary care, subscribe at: https://missionarycc.mailchimpsites.com.

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Notes

1. John R. Mott, "The Pastor and Modern Missions: A Plea for Leadership in World Evangelization," in *Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions* (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1904), vii.
2. David J. Wilson, ed., "Connecting with the Sending Agency," in *Mind the Gaps: Engaging the Church in Missionary Care* (Colorado Springs: Believers Press, 2015), 91.
3. Brian Gibson, interview by author, December 2021.
4. Gibson, interview

Building Team Love

Michel Hendricks

Conflict among team members is often cited as the primary cause of missionaries leaving the field and returning home. Most solutions include improving communication, conflict resolution training and personality tests to understand each other. These can be helpful but often they are not sufficient. Might there be something more foundational?

The simple answer is love. We would all agree that if missionaries loved each other well, many problems would either disappear or be resolved in healthy ways. The real question becomes: How? How do we learn to love like Jesus loves? More specifically, how do I love people who drive me crazy or treat me harshly? How can they love me when I'm selfish and perfectionistic? It may surprise you to hear that a little neuroscience will help with our understanding of love. Afterall, God who inspired scripture also designed our brains. We would expect the Bible and the design of the human brain to fit well together.

The human brain was designed with love in mind. From the Bible and brain science, there are three important elements of love that will keep our relationships healthy. A Jesus-like love builds joy, gives others rest and space, and motivates people in a healthy way. These are all learnable, so let's take a look at each of these key skills.

Joy

Our right brain scans our surroundings six times a second, faster than we are aware, looking for one thing above all others. That thing is relational joy. Interestingly, the neurological definition of joy agrees with the biblical definition. Joy is *what you feel when someone's face and eyes show you that they are glad to be with you, that you are special to them.* Joy is largely non-verbal. Our brains scan our surroundings for *glad-to-be-with-me-faces* wherever we are, and these joyful encounters act like fuel to our brains.

We see this definition of joy in the priestly blessing of Numbers 6:24–26:

> The LORD bless you
> and keep you;
> the LORD make his face shine on you
> and be gracious to you;
> the LORD turn his face toward you
> and give you peace.

God's face shining on us agrees with the neurological definition of joy. God designed our brains for joy, and he wants us to live in the glow of his delight. This blessing expresses a joy that can be paraphrased, "May you feel the joy of God's face shining on you because he is happy to be with you!"

We not only experience joy from God but with one another too. Building joy with God and others is an essential part of loving our teammates. Being intentional to let our faces and eyes shine on our team members fills everyone's joy tank with an emotional fuel that give us energy for relational resilience. When joy is low, almost nothing in life works well – even good things. The first skill to build emotionally resilient teams is joy.

Rest and Space

I mentioned above that our brains are designed with love in mind. I'm referring specifically what is called *secure love*. A secure love bond between people has two primary features: we build joy together and we let each other rest. We do not overwhelm others. The joy/rest cycle is established in the first months of a baby's life, and we thrive with people who are excited to be with us and who also know how to read the non-verbal signals that we need some space and rest.

This delicate balance between joy and peace keeps relationships in a healthy zone. This balance is essential for healthy marriages, families, communities, and teams. Too much joy without rest and people get worn out. Too much rest and our love runs cold. We can only build joy to the level that we let people rest.

Jesus was very careful to let his disciples rest. God gave us a day of rest and even teaches us to let our land rest. One of the greatest curses that God can put on a person is to not let them rest. To people who hardened their hearts against God's loving entreaties, he declares, "So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest'" (Psalm 95:11). Despite this warning, many ministries are designed to wear people out. We use guilt and manipulation, often citing our vision and mission statements, to motivate our people to ignore their need for rest. We create a frenetic team culture that will eventually cause relationships to fracture. When we miss the signals that another person is needing a break, we cause them discomfort and our trust is damaged.

Fear – Short Term Motivation

Often the inability to let ourselves and others rest is an indicator of a bigger problem: toxic motivation. Our brains have two motivation systems. Fear is designed to be a short-term motivation for danger avoidance that is meant to last no more than 90 seconds. Often we hijack this short-term motivation system to use as our long-term fuel. I was counseling a pastor who complained about how many tasks he had to juggle. I asked him how he managed, and he replied, "Adrenalin is a hell of a drug." Without realizing it, he was telling me that he was a fear motivated pastor.

Long-term exposure to fear hormones is bad for our bodies and health. It puts our brains in a place where creativity and the relational aspect of problem solving are absent. We get stuck into the back of our brains, like lizards. We are reactive and rigid. We end up acting less than human.

Here are some indicators that your team might have toxic motivation at work:

- Threats (stated or implied) are used to motivate people.
- We focus on negative outcomes.
- Control becomes more important than understanding.
- We hide our weaknesses instead of sharing them to get help.

I was on a mission team with an organization that received financial support directly proportional to the number of evangelistic encounters our team had. Each month we had to fill out an evangelism tally form and

put a number down which was sent to the leadership team. We had to keep track of every opportunity we had to share the gospel and had a target number we were expected to achieve each month.

What do you think this did to our motivation system? From my perspective, it tilted our team towards fear motivation, and we spent a significant amount of time and energy combatting a fear driven team culture. Joy and rest were often neglected, and the burnout rate of missionaries in this organization was high. The good news is that there is a better motivation system that is suited for long-term use.

Long-Term Motivation

Our brains were designed with a higher motivation system that sets us humans apart from other animals. Our identity is central to motivation, including both our individual and group identities. When we have a culture of healthy motivation, we often ask the following questions: How has God created me to bring his light to our people. What unique characteristics of my heart will be valuable to our team? What are the desires of my true heart?

When each member brings their unique heart characteristics to the team, and we affirm them in each other, we start the long slow burn of healthy motivation. Fear motivation burns quick and hot, but it runs out quickly, like lighting a piece of newspaper on fire. Healthy motivation starts up slowly and keeps on going, like a large oak log.

We not only find motivation from our unique identities, we also need a well-developed group identity. Our brains calculate six times a second who we are and how we act in each situation in which we find ourselves. The calculations include the following questions: Who are we as a people and how do we act in this situation? What does it look like for us to act here? What is it like for our people to handle this problem?

Group identity is one of the lost skills of discipleship, and it is crucial in forming our character. Here are some examples of group identity affirmations:

- We are a people who clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, and when we lose our clothing, we ask our community to help clothe us again.
- We are a people who are always curious what God is building in others.
- We are a people who are slow to speak and quick to listen.
- We are a people who love our enemies and bless those who curse us.

As we create teams that operate in secure attachments of love, our joy and rest allow us to live in the hearts Jesus gave us. As we operate from our unique identities and build our group identity, we are on the way to forming a team that will not easily lose heart.

For more information on joy, rest, character formation, and group identity, read *The Other Half of Church: Christian Community, Brain Science, and Overcoming Spiritual Stagnation*, by Jim Wilder and Michel Hendricks. Life Model Works has developed many exercises to help build healthy teams. See lifemodelworks.org/consulting-services/ for more information on how we can help you.

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Supporting Today's Global Workers Toward Missional Resilience

Geoff and Kristina Whiteman

As the global COVID-19 pandemic enters its third year, it is not surprising that so many people are experiencing genuine distress that is impacting vocation. Recent statistics show widespread restlessness: Gallup's *State of the Global Workplace 2021* found that 48% of workers are actively looking for new work.[1] Barna found among American pastors, 38% seriously considered quitting full-time ministry within the last year.[2]

Global workers at mission organizations feel the strain, too. Although no statistics are yet available for 2020/21, anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that global workers are also questioning their calling and leaving the field or switching organizations.

Now is the time to intentionally foster resilience for ourselves, for one another, and for our communities. But *how* can we, within our mission organizations, help (and not hinder) the resilience of our global workers?

About the Study

The Resilient Global Worker Study (RGWS)[3] looks at what it means to be resilient in missions, how global workers become resilient, and who helps them. The 892 participants represented a variety of global workers of different genders, ages, marital status, experience, denomination or church affiliations, and passport nations who serve in 148 countries with organizations of every size.[4] While the RGWS did not focus directly on organizations, 692 people commented in the write-in portions of the questionnaire; these were analyzed for this article.[5]

Global Workers Desire More Training

The most prevalent concern global workers shared in write-in comments was insufficient training. The 270 people who mentioned training needs identified both content needs (what global workers are asking to be trained in) and process needs (how global workers are asking to be trained).

Content needs were organized into four main categories. In the first, *relational skills*, global workers asked for training in personal relationships, such as *communication*, healthy conflict, and establishing and maintaining supportive relationships. They also expressed needs related to professional relationships, such as skills in leadership, coaching, or mentoring skills, and team dynamics.

The next, *cultural skills*, included culture/ethnography education and language learning, and applying these skills to difficult cultural differences and contextual theology/evangelism/discipleship. Comments on the desire for training in *practical living and ministry skills* category mentioned hard skills (IT, finances, support raising, security) and soft skills (stress and time management, avoiding dependency), as well as personal skills related to family life and needs of children, reentry/retirement.

In the *soul and self-care skills* category, participants expressed the desire to be trained in spiritual formation, spiritual warfare, and theology/missiology. In addition to general self-care, many workers mentioned mental health as a need – particularly in dealing with grief and loss, trauma, or anxiety.

Global workers recognized that the training *process* needs to be more than just knowledge; they want whole-person discipleship that forms their heads, hands, hearts, and health. They are asking for training to be offered by experienced teachers, both within and outside their organizations, in both formal and informal settings, in ways that are both nodal and ongoing, with a focus on application to cross-cultural life.

Furthermore, global workers know that what it takes for them to get to, start up, stay in, lead, and leave the field is radically different – their needs change across the career span. In summary, global workers want training designed for the whole person, delivered across the career span, for sustainable and impactful life and ministry.

Global Workers Need Competent Leadership

While the RGWS did not study organization leadership directly, it is noteworthy that within the write-in comments, just six people recalled positive things about their leadership, compared with 96 who gave negative comments about leadership. These complaints were sorted into three main categories: *negligent* leadership that misses the good, incompetent leadership that passively harms, and corrupt leadership that actively harms.

The study reveals a clear prevalence of dissatisfaction with the low level of support received from leadership: one out of every four comments on leadership expressed this unmet need. Participants describing negligent leadership mention inadequate support (especially a lack of preemptive care) or insufficient support during moments of crisis or struggle. This category also includes those who feel disempowered in various ways; they lack input into their own professional and personal lives.

Incompetent leadership moves beyond absent good to an experience of harm. Comments in this category describe actions, attitudes, and organizational culture or structures that do not serve global worker interests. For example, poorly defined roles, unrealistic or unclear expectations, organizational *politics*, and inadequate oversight are all mentioned. *Incompetent* leaders also practiced poor financial or change management, or misapplied corporate business strategies to ministry. Without the intention to hurt workers, inadequate leaders nonetheless damage those they supervise.

Finally, *corrupt* leadership comprised the second most common group of complaints which includes being treated unfairly or badly, and *toxic* leadership. Additionally, *corrupt* leaders may exhibit unrepentant sin (e.g., sexual harassment or spiritual abuse) or unacknowledged woundedness (e.g., mental illness or burnout).

In summary, corrupt or incompetent leadership poses a danger to organizational

well-being and to workers' experience of resilience. It is important to note, however, that the most prevalent complaint of these participants was not the present negative but the absent positive. Beyond mitigating bad, global workers desire enhanced good – they need competent, caring, and collaborative leadership.

Global Workers Want Member Care

Of the comments about *receiving supportive care*, 92.5% mentioned care from outside formal organizational structures. This happened through *turning toward God*, for example, through dependence on a relationship with God, spiritual practices, or a sense of calling. Care also came from *turning toward others*, through friendships with fellow global workers and other expats, support from home/church, or supportive local friends, spouses, or other caring relationships.

Finally, participants said that they received supportive care by *turning toward themselves*, by being their own support, and especially by framing adverse experiences as positive preparation for growth and learning.[6] This picture of received support shows that while organizations are essential, they are not sufficient in and of themselves to facilitate the actual support global workers depend upon.

When it comes to care, global workers express specific ways *they would like to be cared for by their organizations*. These participants want their organizations to facilitate preemptive care that connects with them personally, outside of crisis situations. They also want help connecting with trustworthy mentors/coaches, counselors, mental health support, and spiritual direction.

Workers are highly interested in care events such as retreats, vacations, and debriefing. Participants ask to receive care in person,[7] and they particularly want extra support during seasons of transition, burnout, or crisis.

Furthermore, many global workers long for missional discipleship – for help wrestling with the hard questions cross-cultural ministry invites – such as the paradox of personal abundance in the midst of poverty and the burden of resource scarcity in the midst of overwhelming need.

Finally, many cite conflict with the administration, within the team, or with local churches as a fundamental concern. Additionally, far too often they experience demanding, confusing, or overwhelming expectations. They want help navigating these contentious situations.

In summary, global workers request member care that is individualized for their seasons and circumstances, and that connects them to resources. They want care that is preemptive, responsive, and networked.

Conclusion

If mission organizations can help to support the growth in missional resilience of their global workers, what might that stewardship make possible? However, if mission organizations miss this moment, and fail to recognize and adapt to the changing times, what can they reasonably expect to happen next? How about in a few decades when their current workforce has all retired?

Those of us who have been entrusted to

steward our organizations through this season would be wise to listen well to the perspective and the needs of our global workers. We are invited to meet this moment with a spirit of meekness and repentance for the ways we have fallen short and with resolve to listen and respond well in the confidence that it is Jesus Christ whose mission we join, and he has promised he will be with us till the end.

Download the appendix, including reflection and discussion questions and a 4-step implementation plan, from the authors at: bit.ly/EMQ-resilience.

Geoff Whiteman, ThM, LMFT (linktr.ee/geoffwhiteman), and **Kristina Whiteman, PhD (ABD)** (linktr.ee/krisswhiteman), are passionate about supporting people and communities to connect their life's purpose with God's mission in the world. They have been engaged in vocational ministry since 2000, married since 2003, and supporting global workers since 2007. Connect with their research and resources at ResilientGlobalWorker.org.

Notes

1. Vipula Gandhi and and Jennifer Robison, "The 'Great Resignation' Is Really the 'Great Discontent'," Gallup, July 22, 2021, accessed January 9, 2022, https://www.gallup.com/workplace/351545/great-resignation-really-great-discontent.aspx.
2. "38% of U.S. Pastors Have Thought About Quitting Full-Time Ministry in the Past Year," Barna, accessed January 9, 2022, https://www.barna.com/research/pastors-well-being/.
3. Although COVID-19 has delayed the publication of full results, preliminary results are available: Geoff Whiteman, Emily Edwards, Anna Sevelle, and Kristina Whiteman. "How Do Missionaries Become Resilient?: Preliminary Findings from the Resilient Missionary Study," in Relentless Love: Living Out Integral Mission to Combat Poverty, Injustice, and Conflict, ed. Graham Joseph Hill (Carlisle, UK: Micah Global, 2020), 65-76. Also available for download at: ResilientGlobalWorker.org.
4. Data was collected through a questionnaire and written interviews from September 2017 through March 2018.
5. This latest analysis was presented at MissioNexus 2021 Mission Leader Conference Innovate and sponsored by VALEO.global which offers a breadth of clinical services via telehealth to global workers in 75 countries working with 85 sending agencies annually.
6. It is interesting to note that these are the same patterns found in the preliminary analysis of the written interviews.
7. Note: this data was gathered pre-pandemic. Future research is needed to determine whether this holds true, and whether workers get as much benefit out of technology-based face-to-face interactions such as video chatting on a regular basis.

Article

How to Make a Successful Missionary

Curtis McGown

What makes a missionary successful? That is the $100 million question. Literally. Many missionaries, or global workers, have left the field unnecessarily because either they, their leaders, their sending organization, or their sending church did not know the answer to this question.

One sending organization has quantified the loss as $750,000 for every family unit that does not return to the mission field for their second term (based on 4-year terms). They calculated that is the approximate amount invested to recruit, train, and mobilize a family of four to the field. Most organizations do not expect much *productivity* of missionaries in their first term as they are adapting culturally and learning the language and their job roles. What happens to that investment if we don't also set them up for success in staying long-term?

If you are a stakeholder in global workers being *successful*, then you have to identify what it takes to make that happen. After years of practice and observation, serving hundreds of sending organizations and thousands of missionaries, and collaborating with dozens of other member care providers and ministries, our team at Valeo (www.valeo.global) has had the privilege of gaining a unique perspective on this question. I want to share with you what we have found to help you succeed whether you are the global worker, sending organization, sending church, or partner.

We distilled the answer down to four *outcomes*. We define outcomes as fruit we want to see developed, grown, or nurtured in missionaries so they can be faithful, effective, and content in their ministry and life callings. These outcomes are aligning, equipping, healing, and struggling well.

You will notice that these are present progressive verbs. These outcomes are fruit, but they are also trajectories of ongoing processes. We acknowledge that all of these are organic and fluid rather than static realities. We also believe that because they are organic, they can typically be nurtured and grown in individuals.

Let's take a closer look at each of them.

1. Aligning

"The deck of life is always shifting," a former professor of mine used to say to his students. If you stand still, or static, you will fall off one side or the other. The application is that we must continually adjust, shift, and lean in different directions to remain faithful. We call this *aligning*. Aligning is making adjustments throughout life to stay focused and resolute in our calling.

Generally, there are two contexts for aligning:

1. External change: unexpected events occur, or circumstances change, that require a particular response to what is happening.

2. Internal change: maturing occurs, a new season in life begins, desires or focus is refined, or thinking or skills shift.

Ongoing aligning is necessary for enduring faithfulness and for maximum contentment and effectiveness. Although many people experience feelings of conflict, accusation, blame, or guilt, we believe that aligning can be a healthy process and does not have to conclude in hurt feelings or unreconciled relationships. One analogy that can be helpful is that we are on the same team and sometimes players need to change positions to help the team win.

Many global workers do not recognize their stress as an opportunity for aligning. It is only after deeper reflection they begin to see that their discontentment, stress, and conflicts are indicators that a change is needed. We have met many missionaries who struggle mightily in one setting, job, or structure, but thrive personally and professionally in another position or environment.

If we collectively take the approach that ongoing aligning is a natural, healthy, and faithful process in our lives, we will be less likely to treat misalignment as a sin, character deficiency, or systemic deficiency. What if we proactively anticipated and initiated aligning processes for missionaries? That may lead to new opportunities, personal growth, and professional development.

We have identified six points of consideration when going through a process of aligning. To learn more about each of these six points of consideration, you can download our free *Global Worker Field Guide* here: www.valeo.global/field-guide.

2. Equipping

Most global workers raise financial support, get some orientation about living cross-culturally, pack a few suitcases and boxes, and attempt to be as equipped as possible to move to another culture. The most important factor in longevity, effectiveness, and contentment living and working cross-culturally is resilience: the ability to bounce back from adversity. How do we go about *equipping* people for that?

Geoff Whiteman conducted research on resiliency among global workers.[1] He found that resilience is less of a character trait and more of a skill, meaning that it can be grown, built, or acquired. Highly resilient global workers and low-resilience global workers had three areas in common, but in a converse way. Highly resilient workers had adequate skills in their relationship with God, others, and self. Low-resilience workers had inadequate skills in their relationship with God, others, or self.

The implication is that if a global worker acquires adequate skills in these three relationships, they are much more likely to enjoy longevity, effectiveness, and contentment in their life and service cross-culturally. Conversely, if a global worker does not acquire adequate skills in these relationships, they are likely to find it challenging to stay.

We usually find that global workers are most equipped in their relationship with God and have the most resources in this area of development. Some are equipped in relationships with others through personality tests, team building tools, or pre-field training. Although we find that many missionaries still struggle in relationships with other people.

The area of least development tends to be in relationship with self. Global workers

often come from communities that do not talk about or train Christians in how to understand, steward, and enjoy themselves. Most workers that we serve struggle with their self-concept and self-talk, especially in the area of shame.

Many feel a great deal of shame for having the struggles that they have. They have an expectation that they should be fundamentally different than they are, or not be vulnerable in the ways that they are. Equipping missionaries to have a healthy relationship with themselves may be the most important current task in the missions world.

3. Healing

We define *healing* as moving toward redemptive processes both in the places we have been wounded and in our patterns of wounding others. To be human is to be wounded and to have wounded others. Left to themselves, our wounds lead us to develop unhealthy coping mechanisms and perpetuate hurting others. This is particularly true for those in helping roles.

Our presupposition is that all global cross-cultural workers carry wounds, sometimes even subconsciously, that impact the way that they serve others. Harm often occurs to oneself and those being served when those serving others are not healthy. A trajectory of healing can lead to increased blessing to others and self.

Many times, workers don't feel the need to heal wounds for their own benefit. However, when they realize that their unhealed wounds are harming those they care about most, they become motivated to seek healing.

4. Struggling Well

We see two themes of *calling* in Scripture. One is to shalom: abundance, blessing, peace, joy, fullness, well-being. This is the hope of the healing outcome. The other is to suffering. Since this is a calling, we don't want to interpret all suffering as a sign of unfaithfulness or assign undue meaning to the suffering. We also don't presume that we must resolve or eradicate all suffering in this life. So, we have identified the outcome of *struggling well* as a hope for all global workers.

Struggling well is in tension with healing. Some areas of life can and will be healed. In other areas, faithfulness means struggling well while not being completely healed or unfettered by the suffering. In these situations, we see faithfulness as accepting and stewarding these struggles.

The story of Jacob wrestling with the Angel of the Lord illustrates a pivotal picture. Jacob relentlessly pursues a blessing and won't let go despite admonishments to do so. His struggling well leads to a blessing, which is a new name, Israel, meaning "to wrestle with God." God was pleased to identify his chosen people as those who wrestle or struggle with him. The other reality of struggling well is that after this Jacob walked with a limp for the remainder of his life.

Our observation is that global workers who struggle well tend to be gracious to themselves and others, no longer allowing shame to constrain the fruit of their work.

Conclusion

What makes a missionary successful? Movement toward aligning, equipping, healing, and struggling well is a significant part. If

all sending organizations, sending churches, and global workers themselves focused their development energies in these four areas, we believe that we would see a globally scaled increase of contentment, faithfulness, resiliency, and effectiveness in the gospel ministry.

If you would like a free resource that will help your missionaries grow in these areas, share the Global Worker Field Guide with them. You can download it for free at www.valeo.global/field-guide. We just ask that each person who receives it, downloads it directly from our website and does not distribute the Field Guide to others. This helps us know who received the Field Guide.

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Notes

1. See the *Resilient Global Worker Study*, https://resilient-global-worker.ck.page/af0cd3c53f.

Do Your Members Really Want to Work for You?

Wendi Dykes McGehee

In his bestselling book, *Start With Why*, Simon Sinek suggests that most organizations are clear on *what* they do, some know *how* they do it, but very few understand *why* they do it.[1] He compares the Apple Technology Company (Apple) to another popular technology company. He says that both organizations know what they do (create quality technology products such as personal computers, flat screen monitors, cell phones, and more), and both seem to be confident on how to do that well. However, the distinguishing factor that sets Apple apart is knowledge of why they do what they do (to be first).

Because both companies make similar products and comparable quality, Sinek suggests that the attraction to their brand is not about quality. Instead, it's about an intrinsic desire that exists in many people to be the *first* among friends and family to have a new product or device. They want to be seen as innovative or ahead of the crowd. This impression that Apple creates makes individuals wait in line for hours to get the newest iPhone the day it is launched or upgrade a device well before its life cycle has expired.

A Christian worldview approaches this differently because God's economy is inverted. Applying the concept in the example above to a mission organization yields a different problem. Although *what* is accomplished (the specific ministry focus) may differ, mission organizations generally hold a deep connection and conviction about *why* they do the work they do (Matthew 28:19). However, they often experience pain around *how* they do what they do.

Models of Organizational Commitment

From an organizational psychology perspective, the *how* turns the focus toward the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors the members (employees) have toward an organization they work for. Members of an organization may be accomplishing the goal and expressing commitment to the goal because of the higher purpose involved. Yet are they working with the organization because they want to, because they need to, or because they feel obligated to? The intrinsic connection, commitment, or lack thereof to an organization is influenced not only by a person's calling but also by how an organization causes their staff to feel while working with them (e.g., valued, supported, informed, burnt out, unengaged, etc.).

In academic literature, this idea is called organizational commitment. It is the psychological attachment a person has for their organization.[2] *Affective commitment*, *continuance commitment*, and *normative commitment* is a three-component model of organizational commitment commonly used to help illustrate the various levels of commitment that a member may feel.[3]

The first type, *affective commitment*, refers to an emotional attachment or the loyalty one has for an organization. This type of commitment is what organizations strive for as it signals a personal desire to be with the organization. Members who experience *affective organizational commitment* are more likely to have higher levels of job satisfaction, elevated work motivation, and increased job performance[4] because they work for an organization because they *want* to.

The second type of commitment, *continuance commitment*, is the perceived costs one associates with leaving the organization. Simply put, if the cost risk benefit is too high to leave a ministry, a member may stay because they *need* to. The third commitment type, *normative commitment*, references a moral need or obligation to stay with an organization. These individuals stay because they *ought* to.

Mission leaders can work to set a tone that creates a working culture that inspires *affective commitment* to their organization. To begin, leaders need to understand the type of organizational culture their members experience in their organization. Similar to a demographic culture, an organizational culture is complex and includes the assumptions, expectations, traditions, and norms that are experienced by those in its space.[5] The organizational culture can involve how work gets done and encompass the feeling staff members have while completing the work.

Organizational Culture Types

Most organizational culture types bring value, and the healthy characteristics of one type do not make it superior to other types. What is significant is how well an organization's culture aligns with those working in an organization.

In their book, *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture: Based on the Competing Values Framework*, Kim Cameron and Robert Quinn offer one tool, called an *Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument* (OCAI),[6] to identify and evaluate an organization's existing culture. The leadership and management of staff play an important role in defining an organization's culture.[7]

In the OCAI assessment, leadership is identified by the nature of an organization's measuring preferences for being efficient, innovative, nurturing or results-oriented. In addition, the organization's dominant cultural characteristics, elements that make up the organizational glue (like preferences for mutual trust, being cutting edge, or having clear policies), the strategic emphasis, and the criteria for success contribute to the explanation.

Furthermore, the assessment considers how effectiveness is viewed by the organization meaning, does the organization value stability, predictability, and mechanistic behaviors or, rather, change, adaptability, and organic decision making. It also considers an organization's preference toward an external focus that values differentiation and productive rivalry or an internal focus that looks for unity and integration.

When these elements are combined, a primary culture type is presented. Those types are *hierarchy*, *clan*, *adhocracy*, and *market*. Some organizations have a blend of culture types, but for many, a dominant style is most frequently operationalized. A brief description

of each culture type follows which may provide insight into how work is currently accomplished in a mission organization.

Hierarchy
The *hierarchy* culture is described by its high level of accountability, bureaucracy, and smooth-flowing predictable outputs. Highly formalized in process, these types of organizations value stability, control, and clear lines of decision making. These organizations tend to be well organized. Leaders value an efficiency mindset and keep track of performance.[8]

Clan
A *clan* culture is named for its highly relational, family-like environment. Semi-autonomous work teams are formed and rewarded accordingly. Leaders are often viewed as mentors and sometimes *parent-like* figures.[9] Consensus and full participation by all employees in decision-making are key themes in this culture type.[10]

Adhocracy
The *adhocracy culture* is described as a dynamic, creative, risk-taking environment. Leaders tend to be innovative and encourage employees to experiment with new ideas.[11] They promote development and growth for employees.

Market
Results, productivity, and ambitious goals define the *market culture*. Hard work and external transactions are often rewarded. The working environment tends to feel competitive, and leaders tend to drive the demanding tone.[12]

With understanding of the culture of your organization comes an opportunity to assess and align. To assess is to create an awareness of *how* work gets accomplished in your organization. Knowing that leadership style coupled with the process of how the work gets done connects to create a more complete picture of the culture you are setting.

Alignment

Alignment occurs when the personal and environmental characteristics of how the organization operates connects to that of the member.[13] This state is called person-organization fit, also referred to as person-culture fit.[14] A recent study by McKinsey[15] reminds us that employees want to feel a sense of shared identity with their organization and leaders in relation to what they expect from their work.

Alignment is illuminated by positioning your perspectives alongside those who work in your organization. As a leader, it involves asking yourself if the view you hold of the organizational culture is similar to those in your span of care? Find out how they experience the work by fostering honest and open dialogue around this topic.

Together, identify and celebrate areas of congruence and then clearly articulate your motivation and intention behind the areas of misalignment. This open and direct conversation can lead to a renewed and revised sense of purpose for all involved.

The experience of alignment is more about deep-rooted understanding than agreement. Members must have a profound understanding of how what they do contributes to the purpose and overall goals of the ministry.

As a leader, acknowledge where change may be needed and provide clarity and cause to how work is accomplished. This transparent and collaborative process can create feelings of loyalty and the emotional attachment needed for strong affective commitment to you and the organization.

Finally, remember that being a light to the world as we accomplish our greater *why* begins with *how* the work is completed from the inside out. Let our reflection outside the organization mirror the unity from within.

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Fostering Sexual Wholeness: Breaking Silence to Defeat Shame

Dennis Martin

People in ministry can struggle with sexual brokenness like anyone else. However, fear and shame can be even bigger obstacles for them. Consider the following examples which occur to both men and women serving as missionaries:

- A missionary struggles with pornography as disillusion about ministry strategy and lack of fruitfulness sets in. She desperately desires to resist pornography's pull but is ashamed to ask anyone to walk with her.
- A missionary experiences same-sex attraction and is committed to celibacy. However, he feels unable to confide this to any of his colleagues.
- A missionary parent has a child confused about gender identity. She resists turning to anyone for advice and support.
- A missionary wrestles with lifelong trauma resulting from being sexually abused as a child. His solitary suffering remains hidden.

In each of these examples, shame is lived in *silence*, and each person walks *alone* in their brokenness. As missionaries, the fear of consequences for sexual brokenness, often labeled as *moral failure*, makes it unthinkable to ask for help. What would happen to my reputation? Would the cause of Christ be damaged? Would my family be obligated to leave our adopted country, the first home for my children? Would I be fired?

Living overseas brings with it unique and significant challenges. Tony Bordenkircher, a licensed marriage and family therapist, puts it this way:

> Those of us living and working overseas in a cross-cultural context are not immune . . .. Separated from important community and relationship resources, plunged night and day into a new and taxing world, and working for the good news against seen and unseen forces bring up all sorts of stressors and fears.[1]

Most mission organizations wonder how to effectively come alongside their missionaries in the arena of sexual brokenness. Is it possible to break the silence and start the conversation? Could you actually transform your organization?

Isolating Burdens

Culture is extremely powerful. Church culture over the years has disqualified people from ministry for *moral failure*, a term usually used to describe sexual sin. The Church has not known how to walk with ministers and laypeople alike toward sexual health. Parents have few examples to draw upon and end up giving little guidance to their children. This is an all too familiar cycle for many of us that has continued for generations. It has resulted in creating a powerful culture of shame in relation to sexual brokenness.

This is not what Jesus would intend for us, his bride, when we are encouraged to bear one another's burdens, to confess sin one to another, and to restore one another when caught in sin's grasp in a gentle manner. The Church has before it the unique opportunity to change its culture, to learn how to come alongside the isolating burdens of all forms of sexual brokenness.

Although sexual brokenness encompasses much more than pornography, the conversation often begins there. Josh McDowell made this appeal to the Church a few years ago:

> Pornography is causing a lot of people to fail, to drop out on their faith . . .. I think this is one of the greatest threats to the cause of Christ today, because it undermines a believer's walk with Christ and his or her beliefs . . .. Somehow, we've got to get the leadership in the body of Christ addressing this.[2] (emphasis mine)

Yes, We Must Do Something Different!

A few years ago, we at One Challenge learned of another mission organization that had been addressing this need for the past decade. We were amazed and compelled to ask if they would be willing to help us do the same. They very eagerly did so, and thanks to their incredible generosity, three years ago we launched a Sexual Wholeness Initiative (SWI) to change our organizational culture. We started the conversation.

- **SWI Vision:** Generations of laborers living and ministering out of sexual wholeness and relational health in Christ.
- **SWI Mission:** Create a climate of openness, safety, and redemption. Equip our staff to integrate sexual wholeness into our ministry efforts.

SWI's two main components:

- **COMBAT** a culture of shame so that no member walks alone
- **ESTABLISH** a common language of grace that is restorative rather than punitive

Combatting a Culture of Shame

The term accountability has been around for a long time, but it has become encumbered with negative baggage. Michael Cusick in his book, *Surfing for God*[3] thoughtfully interacts with this challenge and compares what he calls cop vs. coach vs. cardiologist accountability. He describes cop accountability as turning oneself in for sin and is focused on sin management.

Coach accountability is a *try harder* approach and produces a gospel of inspiration. Cardiologist accountability is about the transformation that takes place when we allow God and a few others to walk into the messiness of our lives, focusing not only on behavior but also on the condition of our hearts.

We spend a significant amount of time upfront communicating this to our existing and new members as a critical foundation. To combat some of the negative baggage, we've

also dropped the word accountability and renamed it *allies*. It is a fresh expression of what makes accountability relationships both effective and healthy. We focus not on sin management, nor a gospel of inspiration, but on practicing the one another's that Jesus gives his bride so that we are not alone, our stories are heard, and we walk with one another.

An ally relationship(s) is encouraged for every one of our members. It is not only for those encountering a current struggle. Our president and executive leadership team took the lead in initiating *ally* relationships. They encourage all One Challenge members to do the same. Honesty about sexual brokenness can be part of these relationships, but they by no means end there.
One colleague shares this:

> The SWI program has really opened my eyes to the benefits and needs for an Ally, not just for sexual issues. Like most of us, I struggle in other areas that bring guilt and shame. In discussing the allies concept with an SWI team member, I mentioned that I could not think of anyone with whom I would feel comfortable sharing my struggles.
>
> Later that week, as a colleague and I were talking, the need to confide in someone came up, and they ended up asking me if we could journey together as allies.
>
> This relationship has been a gift from God! My colleague (friend) and I have found a safe place to share. We have broken our silence, and we are no longer walking through our struggles alone.

Establishing a Common Language of Grace

We have adapted a *Standard of Conduct Policy* so that it clearly describes what opportunities are available for help, support, and restoration. We also developed two important organization-wide resources: our *Guide in Coming Alongside Sexual Conduct Issues* and a *Guide for Caregivers*.

Dean Carlson, One Challenge president, communicates it this way, "As an organization, we want to be a safe place where people can be real with sexual brokenness and receive loving, practical support in their journey toward wholeness in Jesus."[4]

Because culture is powerful, changing culture is challenging and takes time. In the experience of our mission organization and the organization from which we learned, years of small steps must come first. We began by communicating the SWI principles. These were heard, then trusted, and then acted upon. This resulted in a safe environment for us to share our stories. Grace and redemption became more commonplace. The safe places and the safe conversations multiplied.

As our missionaries overcome their shame and break their silence, they begin to journey with one another rather than alone. In this healing culture, individuals journey together in overcoming pornography. Parents talk more readily with one another, receive resources to raise their families, and their children's emotional health improves. Broken marriages receive help. Issues are

often brought into the open before more serious problems develop. And when more significant challenges arise, the restoration process could potentially take place in the country of service, determined on a case-by-case basis. We are seeing definite progress. I see our Shepherd working through SWI to lead us in paths of righteousness for his name's sake (Psalm 23:3). Amen.

We Want to Help You

As One Challenge has received from others, we now seek to come alongside the greater mission community to help foster culture shifts that create safety to start shame-breaking conversations. Yes, organizational cultures are hard to change, but Jesus is calling us to turn this tide. Let's do this together! We'd love to journey with you as you pursue this for your organization. Learn more on our website: www.onechallenge.org/2019/08/27/the-sexual-wholeness-initiative-combating-a-culture-of-shame.

Dennis Martin (swi@oci.org) is the director of sexual wholeness initiative, a ministry of One Challenge. He is grateful to experience a freedom in Christ which he had previously lost hope of attaining this side of heaven. His life's passion is to walk with Jesus' bride toward sexual wholeness. He and his wife, Jeannie, raised three daughters in France during 20 years of missionary service with Encompass World Partners. They now reside in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

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Building and Leading Culturally Diverse Teams

Galen Burkholder and Tefera Bekere

Is it possible to build and lead a dynamic, healthy, and culturally diverse team to accomplish the Great Commission? We believe it is.

Our experience in working on international, cross-cultural teams has emerged naturally out of who we are and what we do. As Global Disciples, we equip people to reach those least-reached with the gospel in their own nations. We work with clusters of churches in collaboration with a denomination, association, or an existing network of churches – now over 1,400 different affiliations in 62 countries. In partnership with these local churches, we now serve 2,064 locally sustainable mission training-sending programs around the world.

Working as a cross-cultural, international team has been in our DNA since we began 26 years ago, with five discipleship-mission training programs in three countries. Today, only 19% of our 155 team members are in North America – the rest live and work from their homelands.

We have six people and four nationalities represented on our executive team, and our training Alliance is led by a team of eight from six countries. We travel together, train together, pray and plan and equip each other, across a wide range of cultures and perspectives. And we enjoy sharing what we are learning and hearing from others about what their experiences have taught them.

Out of this, we see four keys to building and leading a strong culturally diverse team.

Deal Openly with Cultural Differences

It may seem obvious but talking openly about cultural differences and expectations right up front – and along the way – is essential for building and leading healthy cross-cultural teams. It's not enough to think, "Well, I'll have to get used to that …" as we are often inclined to do.

Identifying differences of perspectives, patterns, or expectations is honoring to everyone involved. Make note of those things – mentally or written down – so you don't rehash things every time they come up. Decide together about how your team will deal with differences and agree to revisit it later if necessary. This can allow you to move on quickly in a mutually agreed upon way. Be careful to not automatically defer to the dominant culture or the leader's preference. North Americans often tend to be the first to speak or make statements strongly. Allowing others to speak first is empowering, even if they need to be personally invited to comment. On issues like scheduling, it is often wise to go with or adapt from the culture of the setting especially for a meeting or training people.

Developing Friendship and Building Trust

"There is one thing that is common to every individual, relationship, team, family, organization, nation, economy, and civilization throughout the world – one thing which, if removed, will destroy the most powerful government, the most successful business, the most thriving economy, the most influential leadership, the greatest friendship, the strongest character, the deepest love."[1] That one thing, according to Stephen M.R. Covey, is trust. We agree.

By being authentic, building friendships, enjoying life together, and addressing differences or concerns promptly, we build trust. In most cultures, trust is built on credibility. And credibility is generally established and maintained through at least four things:

1. **Integrity:** honesty, walking your talk, being consistent inside and out
2. **Positive Intent:** our motives, our agenda, and our resulting behavior
3. **Capabilities:** our attitudes, appreciated skills, knowledge, and style
4. **Results:** our track record, getting the right things done in a good way

In our cross-cultural teams, we talk often about leading by example or "modeling the way." Sharing this common desire and discipline provides a healthy level of mutual accountability. It gives opportunities to practice "speaking the truth in love" as we seek together to "live a life worthy of the calling we have received" (Ephesians 4:1–15), in which we are humble, gentle, patient, bearing with one another in love, and making efforts to preserve the unity of the Spirit. All this nurtures friendship and trust.

Some of our best interactions come over tea times and mealtimes, sharing about our lives and being disciples as we travel, sharing a room at night, or sipping coffee. As we understand where people come from, their joys and challenges, our appreciation grows.

Determine Clear Focus and Priorities

Connectedness and unity on cross-cultural teams grows as we embrace a common focus and reach agreement on what is most important now and in the future. On our teams, we try to keep three things up front: Why are we together (our vision)? What will we do to pursue this vision or accomplish our purpose (our mission and central focus)? And how will we approach this task or responsibility (our core values and guiding principles)?

To answer those questions as Global Disciples we have developed what we call our arena, using the image of a soccer or football field to define where we work and interact as we pursue our mission and vision.

Our mission statement and our central focus (our *what*) define the goal lines of our playing field. The sidelines are defined by our Core Values, describing *how* we behave and interact with others, and our Guiding Principles clarify *what* we do. This *Global Disciples Arena* has been hugely helpful in defining focus and overall priorities on our culturally diverse teams.

When delegating specific tasks cross-culturally, we broaden this to **six questions**: *Who* is to do it? *What* is it we want done? *When* do we want it completed? *Where* will it be done (if that matters)? *How* it is to be done if we have a preference? And *why* are you asking your team/team member to do this?

Delegating effectively in any culture is

challenging but it is multiplied across cultures and can easily become prescriptive or feel paternalistic. Clarity and attention to ensuring common understanding allows us to avoid many of pitfalls in leading across cultures – if we develop a level of trust and friendship that fosters open conversation about our differences.

Our different views of time and deadlines has led to many interesting discussions on differing expectations. When we built a cushion into deadlines to assure things were submitted in time for printing and preparation, one leader began asking, "Is the line really dead now?"

Define Accountability and Selection of Leaders

Clear expectations matter, especially across cultures. Who should set those expectations on cross-cultural teams? The common assumption may be the team leader, but it's not that simple on healthy multi-cultural teams. A leader's role is to guide the team through discerning mutually accepted expectations, patterns of accountability, and how future leaders or team members are selected.

This doesn't have to be laborious, when you go back to the first principles of building and leading culturally diverse teams. Establishing trust and friendship so that differing views can be expressed freely is essential and when paired with a mutual commitment to listen well, to pause and pray – listening for the Holy Spirit's counsel when differences persist – it makes a huge difference.

We also face cultural assumptions about how leaders are chosen. Within Global Disciples we say, "select well, serve well." When hiring or promoting staff, we explore their buy-in with our vision, mission, and core values. Without that, there's no need to go further.

Then we consider with our Four Cs: Character, Competency, Chemistry, and Calling (anointing for the job). In recent years, we have also used Patrick Lencioni's three virtues of *The Ideal Team Player*:[2] Humble, Hungry, and Smart (i.e., relationally sensitive and appropriate). Considering these factors together provides a balanced and healthy framework for discernment in hiring and promotions across cultures.

However, it requires time with the candidate or team member to apply these considerations. We have also had a near-culture colleague spend time with the candidate in their home with their spouse and family. In these settings, we have learned much that has averted potentially bad decisions and have never regretted time together while interviewing.

In many cultures, promoting a younger or less experienced person over someone older or with more history is a challenge. It takes time, patience, open communication, and authentic affirmation when working with the older, more seasoned person who is not promoted. By God's grace we've made that transition several times without losing the more senior leader or seeing their passion for our common mission decline.

Finally, frequent, clear communication and well-defined patterns of accountability are essential for building and leading healthy multi-cultural teams.

A lack of clarity in roles, especially cross-culturally, can result in leaders holding

back and underperforming because they don't want to cross the line of their defined responsibility – or they fear stepping beyond defined responsibilities and creating confusion. Most of our mid-level leaders provide brief weekly reports on key metrics in their jobs.

In senior level roles, a monthly report and call, with other conversations as needed, is our pattern. Most of our cross-cultural team members are self-starters, passionate about what they do – so they don't need constant communication to stay focused. But we all find it important to clearly know what we are accountable for and by what metrics our performance will be measured.

There's a deep joy and sense of satisfaction in working with multi-cultural teams as we are compelled by the love of Christ, energized by authentic friendships, and propelled by the common cause–making God's glory known among the nations!

Galen Burkholder (galenb@crispmail.com), Global Disciples President/CEO, is passionate to see the Body of Christ working together so every person has an opportunity to hear and respond to the Good News of Jesus. Galen founded Global Disciples in 1996 after twelve years directing a thriving international discipleship and mission training program. Galen and his wife, Marie, live in Landisville, Pennsylvania.

Tefera Bekere (teferab@crispmail.com), Vice President for the Alliance, was born and raised in a Coptic Orthodox background in Ethiopia. At age 18, he committed his life to Jesus and was discipled in University Christian Fellowship. While teaching school for eleven years, he planted 10 local churches, and was imprisoned three times for his faith. Tefera joined Global Disciples in 2007. He and his wife, Wolela, live in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

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Towards Contextualization of Member Care

Sampson Dorkunor

Care for the Lord's workers is a challenge for missionary leaders around the world including for those in the Global South. However, while all of God's workers are subject to burnouts, stress and exhaustion from legitimate hard work, needs are different depending on the cultural context of each missionary. Issues of care for missionaries from older sending countries (OSCs) – like the United States, Canada, and Germany – and newer sending countries (NSCs) – like Ghana, Argentina, and the Philippines – are not the same.

For example, for African missionaries a lack of financial resources to provide even a minimum salary is frequently a stress that drives many off the field. Matters like this that present great challenges to Global South missionaries often don't fit into member care processes and principles developed by the Global North agencies. We need to develop care models that are strategic and relevant to the forms of relationships, partnerships, fundraising, and collaborations not only for the Global North, but also for the various Global South contexts.

What Really is Care?

From the biblical perspective, care involves showing love to all people – especially the members of God's family (Galatians 6:2, 9). Compassion, encouragement, respect, and sincerity are adequately demonstrated by Jesus Christ and apostle Paul. Jesus cared for his disciples. He called them aside to rest from their labour, refreshed them, and debriefed them occasionally after ministry work (Mark 6:30–32; cf. Luke 10:17–19; John 15:12). The apostle Paul salvaged a drowning crew and then encouraged and inspired hope for the future (Acts 27:33–38). He also taught his followers how to live as a family and team (1 Thessalonians 3:1–10; Colossians 3:12–14; cf. Hebrews 3:13).

Kelly O'Donnell defines member care as, "ongoing investment of resources by mission agencies, churches and other missions organizations for the nurture and development of personnel. It focuses on everyone in missions (missionaries, support staff, children and families) and does so over the course of the missionary life cycle, from recruitment to retirement."[1] Beyond this institutional perspective, it is becoming important to look at the personalized dimension of member care. The expectation is that all members of the missions team (home office staff and field staff alike) will be equipped and empowered to offer help to one another in critical times of need (Ecclesiastes 4:9–12, emphasis mine).[2]

Laura Mae Gardner mentions that effective care will reduce attrition, increase missionary retention, boost morale, enhance productivity, improve recruitment and generally provide protection and prevention of certain avoidable problems in the field.[3] In the Ghana Missions Handbook, Ruby Adaobi Nartey, commenting on the limited number of workers for the harvest, suggests we "ensure that these few missionaries are well enough to do their work equally well and last long on the mission field."[4]

Avoiding Pre-packaged Member Care

In a globalized world, one might assume that care is uniform and produces the same results across board. On the contrary, missionary work is complex and demands different approaches. Likewise, member care defies strict packaging and cannot be mechanical or prefabricated. Whilst K. Rajendran warns on issues of blindly copying, David Maranz cautions against hurrying to help people without considering their cultural and contextual environment.

Krishnasamy Rajendran says, "We have seen too many 'faithful missions' copying everything of the past ideas, methods and means even if they were outdated … many of these were controlled by the funding origins from both within India and overseas from both Indians inside India and Indians in exile/Diaspora![5] He contends that Indian churches and mission organizations must find solutions to bring the gospel to India with relevance, independent thinking and funds generated from within.

Craig Ott maintains that uncritically receiving any form of *help* can become a problem that brings unintended consequences.[6] In like manner, David Maranz maintains that good-hearted outsiders and idealists who truly want to help Africa often find themselves being impeded and sometimes come across as rude or domineering.[7] He warned against being in a rush to help. It's always necessary to consider contextual and cross-cultural factors in our attempts to administer member care.

Contextualization of Member Care

Member care has long been a concern of OSCs. However, many NSCs haven't yet fully developed member care structures. Local churches and mission agencies in NSCs frequently put little emphasis on financial support, health/psychological assessment, and a candidate's ability to cope with stress. Nor do they often require cross-cultural experience before releasing missionaries to the field. The needs of children are frequently overlooked as well.

The number of missionaries from the majority world countries is gradually growing. Such missionaries need personal and team care. While NSCs can learn principles from OSCs, member care must be customized to the home contexts of NSCs and made applicable to their missionaries that are serving others cross-culturally in their respective fields. To be relevant, member care needs to be assessed and shaped through the cross-cultural lens.

Take for example, Adwoa, an indigenous African single missionary. She served for 20 years, and when it was time for her to retire, she had no insurance, pension, or current family support. After years of faithful service, how will she now take care of herself? Adwoa needs care to overcome the financial stress and embarrassment, but how will this be resolved? Most indigenous mission agencies don't have any support systems in place to plan for retirement in ways that work in local contexts.

Peaceful Healing Church in Bowiri Amanfrom, Ghana. Photo by Rodney Ballard. Courtesy of WGA.

In Africa, extended family members want to know what provision the mission organization has for the retirement or death of its staff. Let's consider the case of Esinam. Her missionary husband died on the field. Whilst mourning his irreplaceable loss, the Church provided Esinam emotional support, but she was soon summoned by her husband's family for enquiries. She was informed of rituals to exonerate her, pacify her husband's family, and fortify her and the children against future calamities.

She was overwhelmed by these *customary* demands on her. Could plans have been made for this that would have reduced Esinam's plight? In this case, families also expected the missionary agency to be responsible for funeral expenses because he died in service. How can the organization help Esinam through such stressful, emotional, and doctrinal mess?

These situations reveal deep spiritual issues which must be prepared for and tackled biblically. Each example shows how comprehensive and contextualized approaches to member care – including localized provisions for retirement, and life and health insurance – are essential and needed. We cannot continue to look on whilst precious missionaries endure preventable hardships.

The Call for Contextualized Debriefing

In Jesus's work with the twelve disciples, he instructed them on where to go, what to do, and how to deal with conflict. He was not kidding when he went on to tell them to be on their guard because he was sending them out like sheep among wolves (Matthew 10).[8]

The wolves we face include persecutions – spiritual, physical, and emotional. Self-inflicted wounds and lack of personal care contribute to the dangers of the field. All these demand clearly defined and contextualized debriefing sessions to answer the needs.

Debriefing involves pre-field, on-field, and continuous ministry life (Luke 10:1–19). Areas to address include health, finance, spiritual realities, and interpersonal relationships. Being conversant as a cross-cultural missionary with how the local culture handles each of these situations enhances resilience, health, coping strategies, and much more. Debriefing is additionally relevant for annual leave sessions, home assignments, announcement of deaths, and even transitions towards retirement or resignations.

Timothy Olonade recommends that debriefing is prioritized to enable missionaries understand, interpret, and integrate their own experiences in the field – becoming conversant with the field realities.[9] If early warning signs of attrition are addressed in the debriefing process, it facilitates contextualization of the needs. Debriefing and care will also help missionaries in the long run to accept and prepare for the unpreventable causes of attrition such as normal retirement, political crisis, death in service, and other forms of losses.

Critical Areas for Future Considerations

Other areas worth mentioning for critical contextualization include cross-cultural and inter-cultural marriages, reporting systems for financial management between expatriates, donors, and local managers of such funds. How to handle demonic challenges, spiritual warfare, and syncretism are also critical. For a successful member care, contextualization is necessary on both the individual and organizational levels.

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Member Care from an Asian Perspective

Belinda Ng

I am privileged to be part of a pastoral care team to missionaries in East Asia constituent countries serving globally. We represent a spectrum of seasons of ministry and cross-cultural experiences. As one colleague shared: "The best care has been that the team have been listening with attentive ears, helping us to process our emotions (which have been hidden most of the time) triggering thinking from various perspectives. Practical assistance, thoughts, praying together as well as sharing tears and laughter then become a shared journey and experience."

I would like to highlight several member care areas unique to Asian workers, though workers in other areas may also identify with them. Thanks to many champions from the West who have laid the member care foundation for us to build on and contextualise. The specific needs in the Asian context continue to be challenging in the changing landscape of missions. We are constantly evaluating how these are addressed or need to be addressed by sending entities from Asia.

Pre-field

Cross-cultural missions is still young in new sending countries. However, it is still important to have a member care structure in place, with intentional mentoring programmes by experienced missionaries. Developing policies involving sending and receiving entities both at home and on the field need to be prioritized.

People exploring missions need mentors who will to patiently listen to their stories and help discern the call of God. "Asking the appropriate questions of these potential missionaries is key for starting well… Senders must realistically communicate that there will be many unknowns and much of the journey is one of faith, not sight."[1]

Confirmation of calling anchors future workers during hard times. It helps them remember why they came to serve on the missions field and perseveres their commitment. Sending agencies and churches need early conversations on the applicant. Creating a partnership agreement between church and agency significantly defines the roles each will be responsible for in caring for a missionary.

Families with Children

Raising children outside of their passport culture has significant impact on the child. Awareness of this phenomenon will help parents to be sensitive to their needs especially in transitions. Coaching on parenting and family life is needed because many Asians are first generation Christians and may not have Christian role models to emulate. This is a unique need for most Asians without Christian heritage.

Parents need to be assigned a seasoned missionary as mentor to journey with them early in the application process. Parenting is challenging enough, so raising a family cross-culturally needs even more preparation. Investing time and resources ensures that this aspect of pre-field training is provided adequately and not side-stepped.

Parents need preparation to know how to journey with their children through life stages while on the field. They need resources to assist them in living outside their passport cultures and to re-enter when the time is due. Issues like maintaining their mother tongue are particularly significant, so that missionary kids (MKs) can continue to communicate and relate to non-English speaking relatives, like grandparents, and friends in their passport country.

MK Education

MKs from Asian countries and their parents experience a number of challenges with education. Many parents express significant concern about the academic aspect of educating their children. However, parents and sending entities need to pay more attention to children's psychological and emotional well-being. Children are resilient, and thrive in nurturing environments. But the pressure from society at home can make it difficult.

Parents on the field often need to choose between home schooling their children or enrolling them in an international school. Home schooling can be formidable for parents without role models from their home countries who have done it, or few or no curriculum resources from their home countries. Challenges remain for those choosing to send their children to international schools because these schools typically use American or British-based curriculum.

Education curriculum is without uniformity across Asian countries, so when MKs from Asian countries return to their passport countries, they often struggle to integrate back into the education system. Their parent's may try to find resources to assist their children with additional study to help them to better participate in a local school or they may choose to continue their children's education with a Western-based curriculum. However, without adequate help with this transition, children risk falling behind.

Theology of Work and Rest

Engaging in self-care is essential for missionaries to thrive. Each missionary must own this, discover what works well for them, and establish care rhythms that keep them emotionally, spiritually and physically healthy. Establishing these routines increases resilience in times of stress and crisis. Exploring how Jesus did this by going away to a place of rest to be with His Father in the midst of a busy ministry gives an important model to follow.

Hard work is deeply ingrained in Asian cultural virtues. Global workers from this cultural context may dive into the ministry to the neglect of personal care, well-being, and family needs. For example, Singaporeans often put in long hours. When newcomers from Singapore do this on the field while also trying to deal with so many unfamiliar field stresses, it can take a substantial toll. Hence a wise team leader should monitor the situation and encourage missionaries to take allotted vacation days and establish self-care routines. Missionaries testify to how refreshing a break can be and how it energises

them to serve with renewed vigour.

Cultural Sensitivity

Cultural sensitivity is much needed in multicultural teams, especially for leaders. This is particularly important in understanding the dynamics between those who come from collectivist and high-power distance cultures and those who do not. Most Asians come from these kinds of cultures and because of this shy away from expressing opinions unless they are asked. At important events where the community sharing takes place, Asian team members can feel lonely and left out. A wise leader will ask Asian team members to share so that they have a way that feels natural to participate.

Singles

Asian singles may never have lived alone in their entire lives because it is still a cultural norm for singles to live with their parents even as adults. When they go to the field, Asian singles may discover that most provided housing is set up for single occupancy. So, arrangements need to be made with them sensitively and with consultation. Each person faces different challenges and needs must be identified to ensure none feel isolated and undervalued. For example, a Filipino sister preferred living by herself because she was afraid that her housemate may not understand that she eats rice three times a day. Living alone reduced the her stress.

When Asian singles adapt to living alone, returning on home assignment can be a huge adjustment depending expectations from their family. Their room may have been rented out or used for other purposes in their absence. But they may still be expected to return to live together with their parents as they did before. Some traditional parents may want to have a continued say in their affairs. Finding privacy, therefore, will not be easy in such a household. Moving out can be a sensitive issue and can cause misunderstanding.

Elderly Parents

In Asian contexts, care for elderly parents is deemed filial piety. Providing some form of parental support is a strong cultural obligation. Children who are working are expected to contribute a monthly allowance to their parents. The amount varies according to their financial status. Many parents lose this assistance when their children become missionaries. Hence parents, believers and non-believers, can struggle letting their children become missionaries. However, the sense of duty can create an unease.

Missionaries in our agency have factored in a token monthly allowance for parents. Some churches have arranged for regular visits to parents on special occasions on behalf of missionaries. Church members may also help with practical care such as accompanying a missionary's parents to medical appointments or treating them to a meal. One Singapore agency organises an annual Chinese New Year party for parents of their missionaries during which each receives

mandarin oranges and a 'Ang Pao' (red packet with cash). The event helps a build a network among parents. It is also a shared experience of mutual encouragement for them.

Conclusion

As more people from everywhere go out to serve everywhere, we need to increase our understanding of the different cultures within our teams. This reduces unnecessary stresses on the field. Agencies and churches must work to build trust relationships with their missionaries, so that they will find it safe to open up about their struggles including cultural ones. As agencies and churches stay aware of what is going on, they can more quickly respond to problems.

Missionaries are human with needs like everyone else. Culturally sensitive member care extended to His shepherds goes a long way to encourage them when they are weary and may even lengthen their missions service. Exercising flexibility with policies allows room for genuine cultural differences to be accommodated. Focusing on continual development and cultivating engaging partnerships with stakeholders provides a path for organizations, churches and missionaries to grow together as they participate with one another in God's mission.

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Missionary Care from a Latin American Perspective

Paulo Feniman

In a world where our spiritual and emotional lives are constantly under attack, creating processes of mutual care that involve different players (sending churches, sending organization, field leaders, etc.) is fundamental to the care of our most valuable asset – people. However, we also must keep in mind that people react to situations and difficulties in different ways, and culture plays a very significant part in that. So many problems can be avoided when we remember this! As a Brazilian who has served in missions for more than 20 years, I've seen this play out many times.

For example, Latinos, like me, come from cultures where sharing our needs and problems is an expression of relationship. In fact, we are so relationally open that we share our difficulties with many people including those who may not be equipped to help with what we've shared! In our cultures, burdens are carried together in community. But as I've talked with Western colleagues, I've learned that their response to problems and ways to seek support are often not the same. What can feel like hiding behind a wall to me, they explain as *privacy*. Needs and problems are expressed within more defined structures, typically to fewer people, and in some cases not to anyone except maybe a spouse.

Culture Affects Care

This is just one example of the multitude of cultural issues we must consider in how we care for missionary staff. Missionary care (or member care) is frequently viewed in western cultures in the context of *supervision*. Whereas in Latin cultures, care is focused on the *pastoral*. Latin Americans serving within organizational cultures that see member care more as a logistical/administrative issue than pastoral care can experience relational challenges. I've seen this grow difficulties to point that they become extremely difficult to resolve, because leaders focus only on measuring ministry results and are not open to discuss relational problems. Rudy Girón wrote the following about this:

> Pastoral care is one thing and supervision is another. It is typical that the work done by a field leader or supervisor focuses on administrative or functional issues, and not on pastoral care. A supervisor's visit to the field is usually used to check how things have been done. Very rarely does a supervisor take time to inquire about the well-being of the missionary's family or the problems that the couple of missionaries may be facing to educate their children. Of course, supervision is necessary to ensure that the work assigned to each missionary is successfully completed, but in the long-term pastoral work is even more important than supervision.
>
> Pastoral work requires field leaders aimed at people and not only at targets. In a society where targets and programs take precedence over people, we need to be careful not to be caught up by models of the world when we do our job. We need to pray that Jesus' attitude towards Peter (John 21) dominates our hearts when pastoring missionaries in the countryside. What a challenge, to follow the example given by Jesus when Peter and his companions returned to their networks. They felt discouraged, but Jesus searched for them and restored them to his kingdom.[1]

Mentoring is one way that organizations can provide relational mechanisms for care and monitoring to their members in the field. This is often done separately from the supervisory and logistical/administrative aspects. Implementing mentoring can remove some of the barriers to care that staff coming from relational cultures identify.

Caring for Latin American Missionaries

Missionaries sent from Latin America face a series of physical, emotional, spiritual, and logistical challenges before, during, and after their time on the field. Let's look at a few:

Raising Support

Most Latinos live in uncertain economic contexts. The value of their nations' currencies is weaker than the dollar, euro, and pound; and their currencies' value may frequently fluctuate. This makes it very hard for Latin American missionaries to raise funds for costs like airfare, health insurance, etc., which are often based on currencies like the dollar, euro, and pound. Then even after Latin American missionaries arrive on the field, they must live with the *ghost* of currency depreciation. The funds they raised could at any time lose their original value. This can leave them without enough for essential expenses, or even funds for a flight home.

I know Brazilian missionaries who had to mobilize more than 50 church and family financial partners in order to serve in a part of the world that many would consider inexpensive. Mobilizing so many partners took a long time. They raised more funds than their organization required to try to stay ahead of currency depreciation, but will it be enough? They live with constant uncertainty.

Language

Some missions organizations require their missionaries, no matter where they will serve, to learn English because it is the organization's *official* language. For Latino missionaries, this may mean the added pre-field step of going to an intermediate field to learn or improve English. When they arrive at their final field destination, they must then learn the local language. But they are already mentally exhausted and physically worn out.

I am not against Latin American missionaries learning English. In fact, I have encouraged several of our missionaries to learn English so that they can actively participate in discussions and even be able to lead multicultural teams. However, I question whether this always needs to be a pre-field requirement. If we want our organizations to encourage and sustain the engagement of

Youth Congress in El Salvador. Photo courtesy of Luis David Marti

Latin Americans in missions, we must find ways to relax this. Perhaps certain roles or fields could be exempt so that Latin American missionaries can have more success in their first assignments. Then one step in prefield training can be eliminated.

Children's Education

The children of many Latin American missionaries have to study at international schools near to where their parents serve. These schools usually teach in English and use American or British curriculum. When a Latin American family leaves the field or a child returns to their home country for university, integrating into local education systems is not simple. A child may find themselves behind and need to do extra studies.

Let's consider what happens when a Brazilian missionary kid (MK) returns to Brazil for university. In Brazil's current system, one way to enter university is to take a national exam that includes questions about Brazil's history and geography. Brazilian MK's do not study these subjects at most international schools. So, to pass the exam, they have to search for supplementary support, and this is often difficult to find.

Organizations that send Latino missionaries need to equip families to successfully fill these education gaps. That may include providing resources, access to tutors, or even developing programs for parents and students. And these options must be discussed with families ahead of time, so they can prepare.

Home Assignment

Many organizations require their missionaries to return to their home countries every three or four years to rest, attend to health needs, and visit their sending church and financial partners. For Latin American missionaries, visiting every financial partner requires significant time because they often need so many partners to maintain their financial goals.

These visits can quickly squeeze out opportunities for rest. Home assignment can be very depleting. More flexibility in home assignment requirements as well as people who can help plan this time, can help Latin American missionaries keep space for critical periods of rest.

End of Ministry

When missions service ends, many Latin American missionaries lack adequate resources for their transition home. Retirement or settling into a new career as well as a wide variety of other repatriation issues are difficult to navigate.

Most Latino missionaries don't have a good retirement plan. When their service ends before retirement, few resources are available to help them move in a new direction. And sending churches are often unequipped to come alongside them on any of these issues.

When missions organizations partner with sending churches in planning for the end of a missionary's service, these beloved missionaries are protected from feeling

abandoned or useless. Care at this moment makes it easier for these missionaries to be channeled into new or continued service.

Conclusion

Challenges and care needs exist in all cultures, but some factors that need our attention are specific to certain groups of missionaries. When care is provided in more personal and organic ways, no one gets overlooked.

While policies and procedures are important, from a Latin American perspective, relationships must come first. Open dialogue, conversations, and a willingness to adjust requirements give missionaries from Latin America, as well as other cultural contexts, the support they need to be successful.

The new generation of missionaries are increasingly from the Global South. This includes people eager to participate in global missions from nations across Latin America. If organizations are not proactive in understanding and dealing with the unique challenges of this community, they will become a barrier to greater involvement in the Great Commission.

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From Ministry Call to Home Call: The State of Member Care in India

Isac Soundararaja

When our son or daughter goes through difficulties, how do we handle that situation? We admonish, but we don't destroy. When the children of our ministry partner in the mission face a tough situation, what is our reaction? We love, but we do not allow them to go astray. Missionaries need this same kind of compassionate support. Missionary care, also known as member care, is not pampering. It does not make people lazy. It is simply loving one another.

In India, over 60,000 Christian workers are involved in cross-cultural mission with unreached people groups. Thousands of missionary kids and third-culture kids are a part of these missionary families. The challenges and the unmet needs of these Christian workers and their children are unique and need to be addressed wholistically.

Why Does Member Care Matter?

Many words can be used to describe member care: friendship, encouragement, affirmation, help, fellowship, as well as sharing, communicating, visiting, guiding, comforting, counselling, and debriefing. Christian workers are on the frontline of a spiritual war between the powers of good and evil and their battles are fierce. They need support staff engaged in member care to share their inner battles with because they are literally in a war with the forces of hell.

Kelly O'Donnell says, "Missionary member care is important. It is not because Christian workers have more stress than others, but rather because they are strategically important in God's Kingdom."[1]

Our God is concerned about caring for missionary families. Qualified member care makes missionary families healthy and competent. It is the foundation of a God-pleasing strategy in missions. Christian workers who do not have a solid caring network in their mission organization and church can lose balance, and this can affect their efficiency.

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). Missionaries alone cannot do the ministry God has sent him to do. There must be others who come alongside to care for them, and ensure their needs are met. Only then can our part in God's work be accomplished. Togetherness increases strength and reduces vulnerability when the enemy attacks.

Member Care Challenges and Unmet Needs in India

Based on my experience in the last 10 years with the member care organization Missionary Upholders Trust (MUT) and observations from various studies, the following are a few of the challenges and unmet personal and family needs of cross-cultural missionaries in India:

Physical Challenges:

- Health: We have missionaries who are affected by major illnesses such as cardiac arrest, cancer, etc. Others experience prolonged health issues such as diabetes, hypertension, cholesterol, or renal failure.
- Bereavement: Some missionaries face deaths in their family and others lose their dear ones early in their life.
- Unexpected crises: Sudden deaths in extended family, loss of properties due to natural calamity, persecution, etc.

Emotional and Spiritual Needs:

- Spiritual and emotional maturity is at different levels among the team members of the same organisation.
- The temptations placed before each Christian worker are different. But because the devil knows who is weak in what area, they succumb to temptations easily and quickly.
- Many struggle with fears, others feel lonely, and still others cannot bear pain or suffering.
- Some are highly sensitive while others are living with past hurts.
- Some do not have clarity in their life purpose; others are stuck because of faulty teaching before they joined the mission.
- The fruits of the spirit are few or not very evident in some people's lives.
- Denominational differences can bring disunity; some are proud and arrogant because of such differences.
- Unlearning bad habits can be difficult for some members.

Challenges of Missionary Children:

Most Indian cross-cultural Christian workers put their children in boarding schools. This presents challenges:

- Missionary children in boarding schools are separated from parents. Parents only get three times in a year to spend a few days with their children: September holidays, December holidays (last week of December) and summer holidays (end of April to June). Some parents who serve in far off mission places do not come to visit or take their children with them in September or even during December holidays because of ministry commitments!
- Many children talk infrequently to their parents because their parents did not get the phonelines going or just failed to contact! Those children feel neglected by their parents.
- Sometimes children find boarding school discipline unbearable, or they may not feel love from school staff. They miss and long for love from their parents.
- Parents who greatly miss their children may be tempted, in their anxiety and desire to show their love, to do anything to please their children at every reunion. They pamper them to the extent that the children get spoilt.
- Some Christian workers negligently disregard relationships with their children. The children come to believe that their parents do not love them and that their parents have abdicated their responsibility to the school.
- Missionary children can feel deprived when they compare their lives to those

Devarakonda, India

Christian children whose parents have secular jobs. These children may benefit from a good education, comfortable life, consistent parental care, and love and care from extended family that missionary children may lack.

- Most of them openly say that they would never become Christian workers. Some may start to hate God and also their parents.
- Some children become rebellious and even go astray. Parents may feel helpless and depressed, and unable to do ministry work properly.

Challenges in Missionary Married Life

Hundreds of missionary couples are in deep trouble. From our experience, it is noted that these marriages are on the verge of breaking due to various factors including physical, emotional, and longing for the love of their children.

Challenges Posed by Retirement

Retirement is another significant challenge. As long as workers are healthy and energetic, they can continue to serve. Their faith journey and recollections of how God led them inspires juniors. But many are not at all prepared to retire when service is no longer possible. Take for example the Christian worker who had terminal cancer. While his wife was staying at the missionary rest house, their mission suddenly served them a retirement notice! They were devastated because they had not planned for this eventuality. Mission and churches must take the problems around retirement seriously.

Member Care in India

It was in this context that God enabled the India Missions Association (IMA) to make efforts to address the unmet needs and the challenges of Christian workers and their families in India. The seed for IMA's involvement in member care ministry began in the '80s. In the '90s IMA developed a partnership with MUT. In the year 2000, a consultation was done with the member missions of IMA, including MUT, particularly to address the health challenges of Christian workers in India. MUT came forward to facilitate meeting these needs. As a result of this partnership with MUT, member care has been facilitated to over 15,000 Christian workers in India.

However, as many as 45,000 Indian cross-cultural Christian workers still need care. It is discouraging to hear, "God will help you; he will be there for you!" It is true that God will take care, but Christian workers also need to know and experience the visible care and support of their own mission organization. We also often hear, "the Christian workers are our heroes," but in reality, the attitude of the mission organization and the church towards them is hardly that.

"Many organizations do not have a care department to focus on their leaders and staff," explains Pramila Rajendre.[2] We need to see mission organizations build teams to facilitate member care.

However, an organization that develops a God-honoring and caring culture is more valuable than the care system itself. As Darell Davis indicates, "Member care is not a department added on to the administration, but a characteristic feature that determines the overall operations: a shepherd's heart."[3]

Brenda Bosch adds, "It is crucial that mission agencies and their leaders and members create a work and family environment for Christian workers where they are valued above their manpower, contributions toward work objectives, and achievements."[4]

Local supporting-churches also need to participate because holistic care for Christian workers and their children is the mutual calling of churches and mission organizations. There are fewer chances of burnout or Christian workers leaving the field when mission organizations and supporting churches stand together with missionaries in all areas of support. Missionaries live in the context of sacrifice, stressful work, and prudent risk. In order to be the salt and light for God's glory in places where Jesus is not known, Christian workers must have a community that cares for them.

Finally, we must heed the prophetic voice of Krishnasamy Rajendren, lest his words reverberate into our future, "If the Christian workers are not looked after, missionary endeavors in India will diminish. Missionary welfare is only one issue of a bigger missionary package or challenge."[5] Prioritizing member care issues affecting the Church and mission community ensures that work among unreached peoples will not suffer and perish.

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Safe Harbor: The Role of Hospitality in Member Care

Celeste Allen

Missionary couple Bill and Jane Smith have just suffered a major trauma. Bill* was abducted at gunpoint. He was eventually released, and their sending agency provided a debriefing to help them cope with the most immediate effects of their ordeal. However, they are still deeply shaken. They want to move forward but need time to consider next steps.

Returning to the field right away isn't even an option. Returning to their passport country is not only expensive but will leave them vulnerable to a storm of unhelpful questions and advice from concerned friends and family. What they really need is time and space to continue their spiritual and emotional recovery, a place where they can think, rest, pray, talk, or just be silent.

Aid worker Jill Jones* has been laboring in a developing country for eight years. She returns to her sending country every two years for partner development but hasn't had a real break since she went to the field. She feels overwhelmed and so tired she's concerned about making mistakes. She doesn't need counseling or crisis care. She just needs someplace to get away and catch her breath.

What these workers need is hospitality.

Myriad counseling centers exist which specifically cater to Christian workers in crisis. There are significantly fewer places offering hospitality as a means of care. Yet isn't that exactly what many missionaries need most: a safe place to rest and be refreshed?

The Genesis 18 account of Abraham hosting the three visitors may be the first biblical example of hospitality as member care. Abraham offers to these messengers of God: "Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way" (Genesis 18:4–5a). This is a classic example of hospitality.

But what exactly is hospitality? Is it only the offer of food and accommodation, or is there something deeper? And how does hospitality fit in the wider context of member care?

What Hospitality Is and Is Not

Dictionary.com defines hospitality as "the friendly reception and treatment of guests or strangers" or "the quality or disposition of receiving and treating guests and strangers in a warm, friendly, generous way."[1] So, an elaborate dinner with haute cuisine, pristine tableware, and ornate decoration may make for a *hostess with the mostest*, but mac 'n' cheese on a trestle table may more closely reflect the spirit of hospitality.

Hospitality is not a matter of putting on an impressive display. Rather, it's about welcoming people into a space where they feel at ease. In the framework of Christian hospitality, that means a place where people can experience God's love and welcome. Nathan LaGrange, executive director of Life Impact (a ministry whose focus is providing hospitality for Christian workers), says, "The driving factor of biblical hospitality is love for Christ. It's out of love for Christ that I serve you."[2]

One of the most important aspects of hospitality as member care is an environment in which people feel safe to be vulnerable. Jack T. and his wife provide debriefing for an international mission agency. A major facet of their care is hosting those they debrief in their home, often for a few days but at least for a meal. Jack says, "We try to create a space that will bless them and help them to relax and receive from God."[3]

It is within this context of safety that God can begin to work in the heart and life of the guest. In his book, *Reaching Out*, Henri Nouwen says, "Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place."[4]

Yet hospitality is not exclusively about inviting people for a meal or a room. It's an attitude of generosity, an open heart. In the parable of the good Samaritan, the Samaritan's hospitality includes tending the wounded man's injuries, giving him a lift, and then funding his recovery (Luke 10:30–37).

Hospitality encompasses all kinds of relational, life-on-life care. It might be expressed by meeting a missionary on home assignment at a cafe and listening with warmth and real attention to his stories, his concerns, his joys and griefs. Hospitality can be demonstrated by graciously helping visiting or returned missionaries to deal with the practicalities of life in their passport country – not just giving them a list of where to go and what to do but walking with them through the processes. It is in these aspects that hospitality meets member care. It's the heart of welcome that allows the worker to feel cared for. True hospitality echoes God's welcome for each of us.

Hospitality as Prevention

On a most basic level, resilience is what keeps missionaries on the field. Resilience allows missionaries to persevere and even thrive in the face of disappointments, ministry setbacks, disconnection from friends and family, and all manner of loss. A key to resilience is self-care. A missionary who cares for herself, body and soul, is a missionary who can stay the course.

Receiving hospitality is one aspect of that self-care. Missionaries notoriously work long, hard hours and live sacrificially. A place where they can go to be refreshed and gain a new perspective on their situation can make the difference between long-lasting, productive ministry and an early departure from the field or grim, exhausted labor.

Hospitality as Cure

While a common role of hospitality in member care is in the prevention of stress-related attrition, hospitality also plays a big part in allowing missionaries to face and deal with much larger issues.

Birgit Kranjc, of *Vereinigte Deutsche Missionshilfe*, is the host and counselor of the Fermata guest house in Italy. She finds that missionaries who come to stay for counseling need an atmosphere of warmth and welcome where, she says, "They know 'I'm safe at this place. I can open up my heart.'"[5] It is in this place of safety that people can

*Name changed for security.

Porto di Palermo, Palermo, Italy

relax enough to hear from God and find His healing and wholeness.

Jack T. says, "Sometimes you spend a whole day with workers, talking about their journey and praying and thinking. Then you relax over a meal in the evening. You're not trying, and the defenses are down. That's when they say, 'You know, I was just thinking about today …' and something really deep – a hurt or a significant event or something they're carrying – just comes out in that more relaxed context. You'd miss that in a meeting."

Experiencing the spaciousness and grace of hospitality is healing for the battered soul. Sue H., along with her husband, serves in a hospitality ministry in Asia. Sue says, "For those who are recovering from trauma, a stable place where they can be a family, get practical support and a listening ear, are important."[6]

LaGrange puts it differently: "It opens up my entire being to be loved by the person who has served me food, given me space, acted like they knew I was coming and were excited about it. Now my heart is open to receive the real nourishment that I need, even beyond the food and drink. Counselors are great at giving clinical therapy. But there's a difference when, as they say in the Benedictine tradition, you've welcomed me 'as Christ.' Now all of a sudden, I'm wide open to you. The conversation is going to flow differently. 'You're thinking of me? You care for me that much? Okay, I'll tell you everything.' As we open the door in hospitality, others open their hearts to us."

What Can Senders Do?

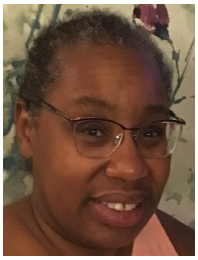
Unfortunately, without encouragement and assistance from their sending bodies, missionaries will rarely take advantage of opportunities to experience hospitality. Mission agencies and sending churches must intentionally create cultures that value their workers and thus promote self-care, including rest and refreshment. They must recognize hospitality as a legitimate aspect of member care. Most mission agencies do not have dedicated hospitality houses, but those that do must encourage their workers to avail themselves of their services.

Agencies that aren't equipped to offer this type of ministry internally can research hospitality options both on and off the field and make the information available to their members. Churches can identify parishioners with the desire and gifting to offer hospitality to missionaries and then train and encourage them to open their homes and lives to visiting Christian workers.

Churches can also commit to funding their missionaries to receive regular care in hospitality venues. Mission agencies can create care funds to help underfunded missionaries take breaks at hospitality houses. Sue H. says, "With more of the global south joining the mission force, offering affordable member care, time to be away from their home without a huge hit to their pocketbook, is so valuable."

Most importantly, mission agencies and

churches must encourage missionaries to utilize hospitality centers, guest houses, and retreat centers as a means of remaining resilient in order to complete their part of God's work.



Celeste Allen (celeste.allen@lifeimpact.care) is a writer, retreat leader, and the host of The Oaks Oasis, a hospitality house in Italy for people in Christian ministry. A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Celeste has been involved in international Christian work for more than thirty years, serving first in Asia, then in the United Kingdom, and now with Life Impact Ministries in Italy. Celeste's passion is to help people connect with God.

Notes

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2. Nathan LaGrange (Executive Director, Life Impact Ministries), interview with author, November 2021.
3. Jack T., interview with author, November 2021.
4. Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Image Books, 1986).
5. Birgit Kranjc (Fermata guest house), interview with author, November 2021.
6. Sue H. Correspondent, email message to author, November 17, 2021.

Missionary Conflict: Destructive or Constructive?

David R. Dunaetz

Andrew and Brandon recently started a pioneer church planting work in a new field with their mission. Andrew thinks a coffee shop would be the most effective way to meet new people and develop relationships, while also providing a place for future meetings. Brandon believes a focus on hospitality and visiting people in their homes is more culturally appropriate because sharing meals is the normal context for developing relationships; such an approach also involves less financial risk. Their disagreement begins to intensify. Will this become a destructive conflict that will hinder their ministries, or could it be constructive and enable greater effectiveness?

Such a situation is very common in missionary contexts where missionaries work closely with each other and are highly dependent on one another. It is especially common if they expect their team to be an important source of emotional support and encouragement. The initial tension can escalate and become destructive and may eventually contribute to one or both missionaries leaving the field.[1]

However, if managed correctly, their conflict can be constructive, leading to a solution that is better than either Andrew or Brandon's original ideas. If missionaries are aware of each other's concerns, their differences of perspective, and any power imbalances that exist within their team, a constructive conflict becomes much more likely. That will enable them to work better as a team making continued ministry more fruitful.

Missionary conflict is inevitable and potentially dangerous if mismanaged. However, when missionaries in conflict seek to cooperate by understanding each other's perspectives and interests, creative solutions can be found. This requires time and effort, and sometimes outside help. However, cooperation with a desire to love and serve the other is a Christ-like response that is well worth the cost.

The Dual Concern Model of Interpersonal Relationships

To understand a conflict, it is useful to understand the concerns and interests of each. The dual concern model of conflict management (model simply means a simplification of a complex reality focusing on only a few key aspects) describes four different ways people respond in conflicts based on the focus of their interests.[2]

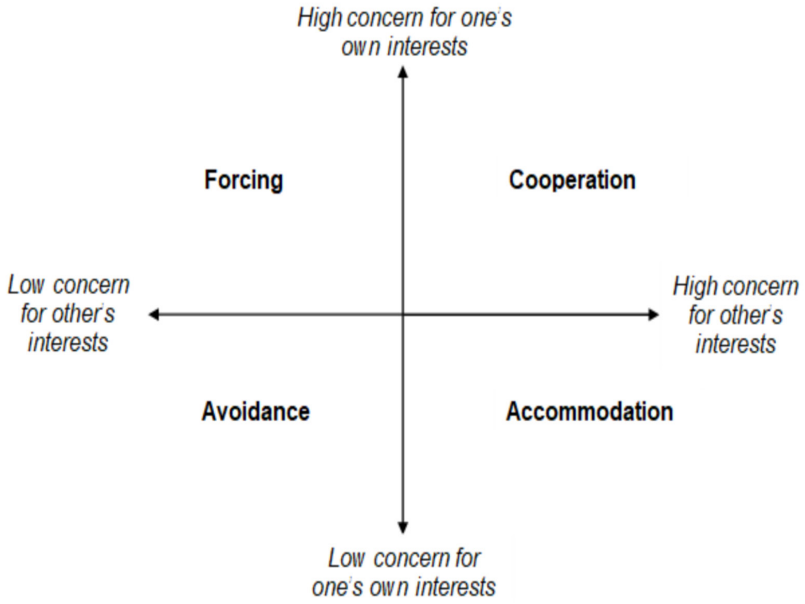
When Andrew and Brandon have a conflict, their interests can be divided into two sets: the interests of Andrew and the interests of Brandon. Andrew has four ways to approach the conflict (see figure 18.1). First, he can be concerned about his interests, but not those of Brandon (high concern for self, low concern for other). In this case, his approach might be characterized by *forcing*, using his power to get Andrew to accept what he wants. A second option is *accommodation* (low concern for self, high concern for other), deciding to only be concerned about Andrew's interests and denying his own.

A third approach is to simply decide that the disagreement is not worth discussing, which leads to *avoidance* (low concern for self, low concern for other). A fourth approach, *cooperation*, describes a situation with both high concern for one's own interests and high concerns for the other's interests. If Andrew and Brandon want to cooperate, they will first strive to understand what each other is concerned about and then will consider various solutions that will maximize addressing all these concerns.

This fourth approach (cooperation) has been empirically demonstrated to lead to the best outcomes in organizations,[4] including mission organizations.[5]

Not surprisingly, this is the exact approach

Figure 18.1 – The Dual Concern Model of Conflict[3]



that Paul recommended to the church in Philippi, "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also the interest of others" (Philippians 2:4, ESV). When missionaries disagree with each other, often both have legitimate concerns. Solutions that address all of these concerns are the best, but finding them often demands time, effort, and creativity.

Missionary Conflict Should Be Expected

Although mission organizations each have their own clear purpose, how this plays out in a specific context is less precise. Missionaries working in teams must coordinate their efforts to accomplish anything. They need to share a common vision, a common set of values, and a common strategy. However, missionaries often come from vastly different backgrounds.

Andrew and Brandon may both love God and his Word, but they also have distinct personalities, perspectives, and knowledge. Andrew is more extroverted and previously worked in the restaurant industry. He can't imagine a better form of outreach than a coffee shop. Brandon is quieter and has led several of his close, long-term friends to Christ in their homes. He can't picture himself in a coffee shop ministry. Because their different backgrounds prevent them from understanding each other, the tension in their relationship escalates.

Our different backgrounds shape the lenses through which we view the world. Andrew and Brandon both see opportunities for ministry through their own uniquely shaped lens. This creates the foundation for conflicts. To cooperate, Andrew and Brandon need to understand one another's lens so that they see the situation from the other's point of view. This enables them to consider each other's interests and concerns. However, understanding another's perspective requires hard work.

Cooperation is Difficult

From a scriptural point of view, cooperation seems like a natural first choice since this approach aligns nicely with the concepts of love, service, and humility. But it can take significant time and effort which may be more than what Andrew or Brandon are ready to give. This is especially true when there is a power imbalance – one missionary has more power than the other.

For example, if Brandon is Andrew's supervisor, he would have the authority to tell Andrew what they are going to do. This requires far less effort than coming up with a solution that addresses both his and Andrew's concerns. Such an approach is an example of *forcing*, or "lording it over" (Matthew 20:25–26), which is the opposite of serving the other.

Forcing one's will on the other is fast, efficient, and, perhaps in some rare cases, could be considered an appropriate last resort. However, it will damage the relationship, maybe permanently, and prevent a potentially better solution from emerging.[6] Ministry leaders who use such tactics are not likely to be very fruitful, at least from God's perspective (1 Peter 5:2–3; cf. Demetrius in 3 John 9–11).

An imbalance of power may also occur if one missionary is more verbally fluent and can process information more quickly than

the other. If Andrew presents many reasons for his ideas faster than Brandon can understand them, Andrew may come across as trying to deceive or trick Brandon. In this case, Andrew needs to be careful not to force more information on Brandon quicker than Brandon can handle it. This makes cooperation even more difficult and time demanding.

If Brandon has positional power but Andrew has fluency power, it is quite possible that Brandon will use his power to avoid addressing the issues that concern Andrew or, in the worst-case scenario, use his power to remove Andrew from ministry. Andrew needs to learn how to slow down and work on persuading Brandon of the validity of his concerns in a way that does not threaten Brandon. Nevertheless, in some cases, an outside mediator will be necessary. Wise mission organization leaders will provide such a structure and encourage missionaries to use it.[7]

Conclusion

Although cooperation ought to be the default approach to managing conflict on a missionary team, finding possible solutions that take into consideration each missionary's perspective, values, interests, and concerns is time-consuming, hard work. Philippians 2:4 describes cooperation perfectly, "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others" (ESV). The preceding verse explains how we can do it: "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3, ESV). The verses which follow underscore that such cooperation is a manifestation of the Christlikeness to which we as Christians and as missionaries are called, "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who . . . emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant" (Philippians 2:5–7a, ESV).

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Spiritual Miscarriage: The Death of a Vision

Brenda Bosch

Spiritual miscarriage is not a term that is widely known. It occurs when a vision in your spirit that leads to much preparation and passion, does not materialize. It leaves you feeling like a withered and dead plant, without it ever flowering.[1]

This experience has similarities to a physical miscarriage.[2] When parents expect a child, they spin colourful dreams about their child's future and ready themselves for the changes that a baby brings about. In the same way, much time, money, and energy go into the preparation of a cross-cultural worker or missionary. All their dreams, plans and routines start revolving around their upcoming missionary experience. Then at last, they excitedly begin their work, often moving abroad to do so.

Spiritual miscarriage occurs when a missionary's vision has grown and may even be partially materialized but is suddenly aborted by an unforeseen circumstance. Its cause could be due to visa problems, war, natural disasters, illness or a pandemic, accidents, or financial lack. It could be relational trauma from slander or wrongful accusations. It could be caused by the needs of the missionary's family or elderly parents, or a personal failure.

This inevitably leads to feelings of shock, confusion, emptiness, and grief. Like with a physical miscarriage, the painful void cannot merely be filled with another child or by other activities. Recovery takes time. A missionary and their family that is involuntarily sent *home* or even placed in a new location or in new roles are torn away from *their world* and may feel crushed.

Emotional Symptoms of Miscarriage

The feelings following a *spiritual* miscarriage are similar to a *physical* miscarriage:

- **Loss:** You have lost part of yourself – your hopes and dreams. Few people understand this.
- **Grief:** You may not feel you have the right to mourn, so this grief is often repressed. Sacrifices and pain are not acknowledged. Anticipated fruit cannot be celebrated. Some may even ask why you are still crying.[3]
- **Anger and frustration:** You could feel victimised because colleagues can succeed, but not you. You may even feel like screaming at God – offended by the loss he allowed.
- **Guilt and shame:** Like a bereaved mother, you may feel like you caused the loss.
- **Asking "Why?":** This is firstly asking *about our identity*: "Where do I fit? Who am I? Did I contribute to this mess, and how?" We are secondly asking *about God*: "Does God care? Why is He angry with me?" Beware of getting stuck here.
- **Helplessness and failure:** A paralyzing and decreased self-worth ("I am not a good enough missionary") can lead to depriving ourselves of connection and intimacy with God, and thus the possibility to conceive a new vision.
- **Depression:** This reduces motivation, causes sadness, difficulty concentrating or sleeping, lack of appetite, and a feeling of being directionless.
- **Numbness or emptiness:** Like a bereaved mother, you may not allow yourself to feel excitement; instead, your emotions stay on an even keel[4] in case another miscarriage takes place.
- **Fear:** You may be fearful of another missionary vision or *pregnancy*, thus fearing intimacy, fearful for the well-being of subsequent projects or *babies*.[5]
- **Distrust or rebellion:** "I trusted leaders, pastors and friends. Look at what they did! I will build a wall to protect myself." Perhaps you cannot even trust God.
- **Loneliness:** Grief is lonely in any situation. In spiritual miscarriage, you may feel isolated from God.

Healing After Spiritual Miscarriage

"Dead circumstances cannot hold down … someone who has been chosen!" says Rev. T. D. Jakes.[6] With focused recovery time, it is possible to heal from spiritual miscarriage.

Helping Yourself:

- **Accept the loss:** Instead of rationalizing or hammering down a closed door, have a *funeral* for your spiritual miscarriage – accept it and grieve. At the right time, bring closure and draw a definite line so that you can move on.
- **Acknowledge the pain:** Losing something significant hurts. Do not be ashamed of the pain. Talk to a trusted friend, write, or draw.
- **Forgive:** Stop blaming people, God, or yourself. Forgive your offenders for their injustices and healing will eventually come.
- **Ask God to heal:** Over time the open wounds may become scars – reminders of past pain and evidence of healing.
- **Feed yourself:** Avoid starving yourself spiritually. Feed from the Word of God and allow the Lord Jesus to love you even if you do not know what to say to Him.
- **Work with your shadows and fears:** Face your insecurity and fears regarding your identity and worth. Instead of drowning in despair, look at the inward growth[7] that took place in President Nelson Mandela during 27 years in prison.
- **Risk to love/trust again:** Hurt and suffering could return. However, risk allowing yourself to be loved by God and others. Let your healing be tested to prepare for the next level of influence God has planned for you.
- **Revisit the field for closure:** If you suddenly left your location, consider returning later for a short visit to say your goodbyes and bring proper closure.
- **Dream again; hope again:** The enemy wants to kill God's dreams in us, but God brings restoration. Risking dreaming again creates desire, and this produces passion. Instead of merely being interested, you will become excited![8]
- **Wait for His perfect timing:** Do not create Ishmaels (Galatians 4:22–31) by trying to *help* God bring things to fruition

or to birth pre-maturely.

- **Trust His Word to you:** The Lord is faithful to do whatever He promised you.
- **Help your children:** The loss and grief your children experience are real. Debrief them – allow honest expression of emotions without correction, preaching or ridicule. Compassionately prepare them for the next step.
- **Learn vital dependence and brokenness:** J. Robert Clinton says our work is often not executed in vital dependence upon God. As we walk through our miscarriage of vision, God accomplishes his work in our lives and ministries through our brokenness.[9]
- **Find help:** Friends, prayer partners, a pastor, a counsellor, or a psychologist can help you process what happened. Look for other tools that also aid your healing.
- **Keep communicating:** Silence enhances isolation. Be transparent and accountable to your support network and loved ones.
- **Give up control:** Do not attack, slander, or belittle those who were instrumental in your miscarriage. Attempting to protect your reputation or control the outcomes when you've been falsely accused evades peace and continues craziness.
- **It is darkest just before dawn:** When things seem to go totally opposite of what God has told you, hold on to him. He has a good and hopeful future in mind for you (Jeremiah 29:11) and can be trusted. Cultivate your relationship with him.

Helping Others:

- **Avoid asking about what's next:** After years of preparation and sacrifice, a sudden disruption can leave missionaries in shock. Your well-meaning question, "What is next?" will seem unfeeling, even cruel, and increase pressure.
- **Help them practically:** If they have returned from abroad, help them with housing, transport, education, finances, and meals. Mind the children so the parents can get time for themselves. Encourage their financial partners to continue supporting them for at least another three to six months.
- **Give perspective:** This season of loss is only temporary; gently remind that it will pass.
- **Debriefing and counselling:** Provide opportunities for workers to talk about what happened. If they are too wounded to presently continue ministry due to trauma,[10] help them find specialised care.
- **Help their children:** Missionary parents' losses affect their children. Debrief their children using storytelling, skits, clay, stick figures or drawings. Help parents find other age-appropriate tools for their children's recovery.
- **Educate them:** Connect them with resources on topics such as grief, loss, transition, forgiveness, trauma, suffering, etc., to help them deal with their circumstances in godly ways.
- **Involve their supporters:** Write to the workers' support network and let them know how they can help – for example, send them this article.

- **An interim role:** After a miscarriage, a worker cannot suddenly pursue another vision. However, an interim role may provide helpful structure.
- **Maintain contingency plans and policies:** Workers need to know that their organization and church leaders have workable contingency plans in place that include caring for them when things go wrong.

Conclusion

You are not alone. Scripture records the impact of spiritual miscarriage in the lives of people like Joseph and Paul. Their stories also give glimpses of how God works through that pain to bring new hope and new visions. When we focus on healing after a spiritual miscarriage, we participate with God in opening the door for new possibilities. We can testify that we survived, but we are not a product of what happened.

Learn more about spiritual miscarriage in *Thriving in Difficult Places: Member Care for Yourself and Others, Volume 3*, pp. 35–76.

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A Guide for Member Care Engagement

Harry Hoffman

Member care is a vast topic with many aspects. I fit all of these into four different member care roles: the member care beginner, member care provider, member care facilitator and member care trainer. These roles provide a continuum for involvement that is almost like a career path towards becoming professionally involved in member care internationally.

Member Care Beginner

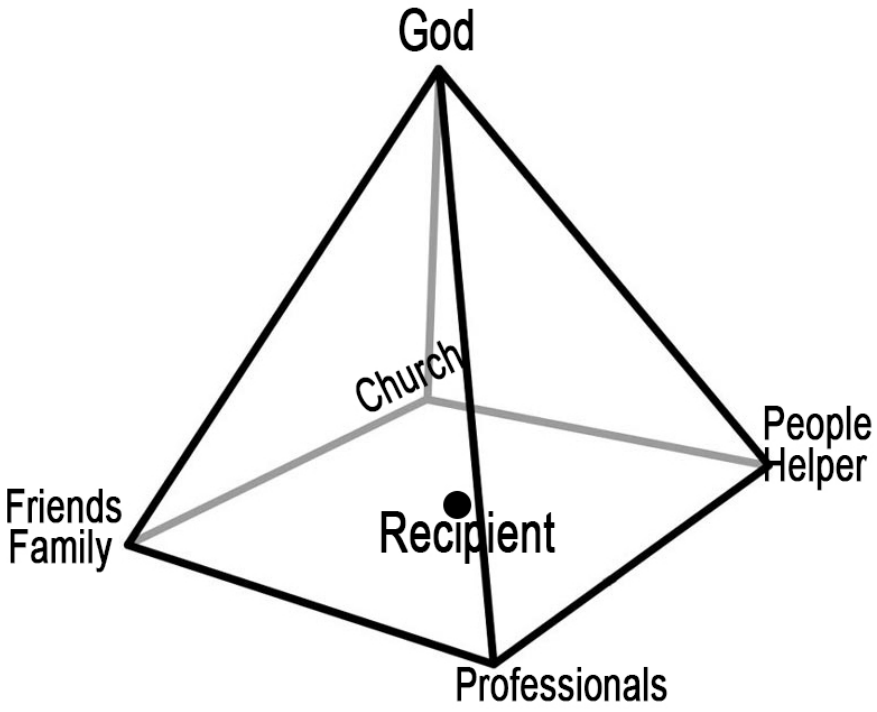
People in this beginner category are just *dipping their toes* into the world of member care. They typically come from one of two backgrounds. The first group are people with a professional care background such as pastoral care providers, social workers, counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, or educators who felt God's urge and encouragement to use their skills to serve missionaries.

The second and larger group are missionaries who have experienced struggles while serving overseas. It was either the lack of care or a positive experience from member care providers that caused their interest and motivation to learn more about member care.

In my early days in the '90s, I was involved in an orphanage ministry in Asia. The high stress environment really hit us hard as a family with two young children. We had cross-cultural training and anticipated stress. However, we expected and counted on a higher personal resilience than we actually had.

High stress in a cross-cultural context over long period of time required an extra level of care, support, and cross-cultural understanding that we only found years later while talking to member care providers. What a positive difference this made! This experience started my journey as a member care beginner. Thankfully, many more member care resources are available, today, than existed in the '90s.

Figure 20.1 – Pyramid of Care



The Pyramid of Care

I use the *pyramid of care* (see figure 20.1) as a model to describe member care especially for beginners who want to grow to become providers. Located at the base of the pyramid is the recipient of care. God is at the top of the pyramid, connected to each of the corners and directly covering the *recipient of care*. The corners represent various types of member care providers:

- The *friends & family corner* is immensely vital for missionaries, easily accessible, and free of charge. Relationships with friends and family, where love, trust, and vulnerability are already established, can be greatly valuable for personal wellbeing and spiritual health.
- The *church corner* is just as critical. Included here is the sending church back home as well as possibly the receiving church where a missionary serves. Church members can pray, write, care, visit, and serve in many capacities to support missionaries.
- The *people helper corner* represents lay counselors, mentors, peer support groups, seminars, workshops, and other training. Included here are also *spiritual mothers* and *fathers* who offer spiritual care in a familial way. People helpers can be found in most churches and often in the mission community worldwide as well. They are often not considered member care providers.
- The final corner is the *professional corner*. Compared to the other corners, member care professionals are fewer in numbers but are usually explicitly and formally recognized as care providers. Located in this corner are trained and licensed professionals such as mental health providers, coaches, educators, and others.

The Global Member Care Network (GMCN) website and Facebook group offer a

variety of resources to help member care beginners to explore the world of member care and discover how they can best contribute. Find information about training opportunities, conferences, member care vacancies, specialized topics, editorials, new books and more from around the world on one of these sites.

Member Care Provider

Many member care beginners look for a specialization or niche from which they can offer care to missionaries as providers. Providers can fit into the people helper, church, or the professional corner.

Providers operating from the people helper corner offer a variety of formal and informal services. They may join the teaching team of an established training course, such as the popular *Sharpening Your Interpersonal Skills Workshop* (SYIS). This is taught worldwide in several languages (itpartners.org). Others offer self-created training such as conflict mediation workshops, spiritual formation retreats, or transition or stress management seminars.

Routine and crisis debriefing for individuals and families is a growing field in member care, too. This is offered by mental health professionals as well as by people helpers. Le Rucher in France (lerucher.org) offers training for people who want to become certified debriefers.

Informal member care can be provided through pastoral care visits. This can be done by elders, mentors, and spiritual mothers and fathers. Many of these are connected to sending churches or mission agencies. Pastoral carers have good listening skills, loving attitudes, and big hearts. Their visits may incorporate pastoral care, spiritual encouragement, prayer, or marriage or parenting advice. They may even baby-sit or connect missionaries to more resources.

Member care providers operating out of the *church corner* are summarized well by Neal Pirolo. In his book *Serving as Senders* (eri.org), he points out different support roles a sending church can offer. Those can include moral, logistical, financial, prayer, communication, and reentry support. Members of a sending church can share these responsibilities to provide essential member care to their missionaries.

Finally, some member care providers decide to pursue further education or accreditation to become a part of the *professional corner* of the pyramid of care. Among many options for careers are accredited coaches and licensed counselors. Being in a professional network, like the missions coaching network (coachingmission.com) or the third culture kid (TCK) counseling network (tckcounseling.com), enhances credibility. Some offer services online, while others travel to visit missionaries in-person on the field. A few relocate to be available full-time on-site to workers.

Member Care Facilitator

This role is increasingly important within mission agencies. Member care facilitators are often not member care providers, but they make sure that sufficient providers and resources are available to the agencies' staff.

Member care needs look different for each agency depending on the number of single people, couples, and families as well as the age and schooling needs of missionary children, field locations, and on-field risk levels. Member care facilitators assess needs and then locate member care resources and providers to meet those needs.

Member care networks play an important part in this category because quite unique needs can emerge. Facilitators may need help to find the right resources to help meet that need. The Global Member Care Network (GMCN) offers this kind of help. Through its Facebook community (facebook.com/groups/globalmembercare) thousands of member care people share resources and support each other.

Interagency member care centers are another form of facilitated member care. Member care centers are usually geographically located at missionary hubs and have providers on staff from various missionary agencies, nationalities, and backgrounds. Member care providers at these centers can work as a team. They benefit from mutual support, case consultation, and referrals.

The advantage for the mission community is the accessibility of a variety of specialized services in one location, available to missionaries from all nations, agencies, and denominations. I started several member care centers, including THE WELL in Chiang Mai, Thailand (thewellintl.org), and I continue to consult with similar startups.

Member Care Trainer

Academic degrees taught by member care trainers are currently available in at least three locations. Columbia International University in South Carolina, USA (ciu.edu), and All Nations Christian College in England (allnations.ac.uk) both offer master's degrees in member care. Fundación Universitaria Seminario Bíblico de Colombia (unisbc.edu.co) together with Fundación Vinculo (fundacionvinculo.org) – a member care center in Medellín, Colombia – offers a diploma in member care called *Diplomado de Cuidado Integral*.

I predict more and more such member care training programs emerge all around the world, with and without academic degrees or diplomas, because of the considerable need for contextualized member care. Mission movements on all continents have benefitted from North American and European member care resources, but usefulness is limited because some western concepts of member care are not applicable to other cultural contexts. Even the term *member care* is considered difficult to translate into other languages, which caused Latin America for example to use "*Cuidado Integral del Misionero*" (comprehensive missionary care) instead.

The need for contextualized and culturally appropriate expressions of care is evident. Member care trainers from various nations are stepping into this gap to write and teach about additional and alternative forms of care. A current example would be a Chinese member care book that will be published in 2022 which was authored solely by ethnic Chinese member care colleagues.

Generally, in contextualized training, we see little emphasis on the professional corner. Most of the focus is on the friends and family, people helper, and church corners. The roles of leaders, elders and communities are particularly important aspects in these corners of member care in the mission movements from the Global South.

Conclusion

Whether you are already involved in member care or not, everyone wanting to learn more is welcome to view resources on the GMCN website (globalmembercare.com). It includes links to the GMCN monthly newsletter, YouTube channel, and online training. Or join the GMCN Facebook group (facebook.com/groups/globalmembercare). Email me with specific questions.

Harry Hoffmann (harry@globalmembercare.com) is the founder of several counseling and member care centers in Asia and is the current coordinator of the Global Member Care Network. He has degrees in Chinese studies, theology and leadership and is a licensed mediator. His life's passion is investing in member care and business as mission start-up ministries.

Diaspora in Detroit

April 2022

di • as • po • ra : the dispersion of any people from their original homeland.

People of many nations have landed on the shores of North America looking for refuge, community, a new home, and hope. This missiographic is part of a series that highlights these diaspora people groups.

We want to thank our friends at **Global Gates** and **Global Gates Canada** for their partnership in making these Missiographics possible. Visit globalgates.info and globalgates.ca.

DIASPORA IN DETROIT

253,000+ UNREACHED PEOPLE IN METRO DETROIT

72,000 JEWS IN METRO DETROIT

240,000 MUSLIMS IN METRO DETROIT

10,000 SIKHS IN METRO DETROIT

47,000 ETHNIC CHINESE IN METRO DETROIT

56,000 HINDUS IN METRO DETROIT

52,000 BUDDHISTS IN METRO DETROIT

11 SIGNIFICANTLY UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUP COMMUNITIES

0	8	1	2	0
JEWISH GROUPS	MUSLIM GROUPS	SIKH GROUPS	HINDU GROUPS	BUDDHIST GROUPS

5% OF THE TOP 100 MOST UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS IN NORTH AMERICA ARE LOCATED IN DETROIT

4.9% OF PEOPLE LIVING IN METRO DETROIT ARE UNREACHED

300,000
ARABS MAKES DETROIT THE SECOND LARGEST POPULATION OUSIDE THE MIDDLE EAST.

69,000
IRAQI ARABS MAKES THEM THE LARGEST UPG IN DETROIT AND THE LARGEST IN US POPULATION.

GOSPEL NEEDS IN DETROIT

PRAY
FOR UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS

SEND
CROSS-CULTURAL MISSIONARIES

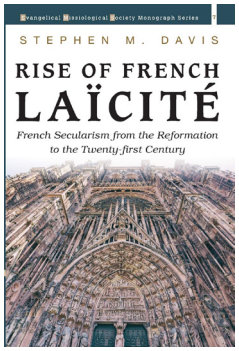
PLANT
PEOPLES-SPECIFIC CHURCHES

MISSIO NEXUS × GLOBAL GATES

Book Review

Rise of French Laïcité: French Secularism from the Reformation to the Twenty-first Century.

By Stephen M. Davis



Pickwick, 2020
250 pages
US$30.00

Reviewed by **Jonathan P. Case**, professor of theology, Houghton College.

Stephen Davis has written a detailed analysis of the rise of the phenomenon known as *laïcité* in France. Almost impossible to translate, *laïcité* includes the idea of secularization as a gradual change in society that doesn't require any political implementation – a phenomenon observable in many western countries – but also the idea of "a political choice which defines the place of religion in society in an authoritative manner" (119). The latter idea is, unsurprisingly, the controversial part: What exactly is the State doing (or what should it be doing) concerning the place of religion?

Davis carries out careful historical work in tracing out the rise of a sovereign French state to the exclusion of the Church from the realm of politics. In terms of broad historical brushstrokes, one might naturally think of the reformation movements in the sixteenth century, political revolutions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the scientific revolution as factors contributing to the rise of *laïcité* in France, but Davis takes the reader deep into the details of important controversies and documents in this story, from the Edict of Nantes (1598) through the Law of Separation (1905).

Davis does a fine job of bringing the discussion into the twenty-first century. Of special interest is his treatment of how Islam and Muslims are viewed within a *laïque* Republic, especially since several highly publicized Islamic headscarf incidents. Davis also introduces us to the tricky relationship between France's policy of *laïcité* and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which rightly recognizes that churches play an important ongoing role in civil society and do not simply operate in the private sphere.

A concluding chapter includes implications for gospel ministry, and Davis effectively throws cold water on unrealistic expectations held by anyone who seeks to minister in secular France with all its cultural particularities and its view of religion. This is not an easy field. Church planting and Muslim evangelization remain top priorities. As an evangelical, in this area, I wish the author had carried out more sustained theological reflection: What might God be up to in a public space putatively scrubbed clean of religious and theological vestiges? The reader is tantalized by the French Catholic historian Delumeau's comment that "the God of Christians was in times past much less alive than one might have believed and today much less dead than one might think" (131). Davis is not writing principally as a theologian, but I had hoped there would be a bit more follow-up to this insight in his treatment.

Davis' command of French sources is impressive, and this book will deepen the reader's grasp of French *laïcité*, even though the ongoing controversy around the very meaning of the word remains bewildering. On account of its specialized and detailed character, I suspect this book would not work well in lower-division undergraduate courses, but it could be used profitably in a more advanced study of the rise of modern secularism in the West, and (of course) in a missiology class on ministry in western Europe.

For Further Reading

Kuru, Ahmet T. *Secularism and State Policies Towards Religion: The United States, France, and Turkey.* Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Laxer, Emily. *Unveiling the Nation: The Politics of Secularism in France and Quebec.* Montreal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019.

Peoples on the Move: Community Research for Ministry and Missions

By Anthony F. Casey

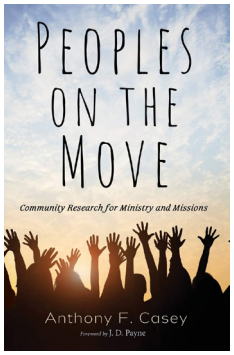
North America is becoming increasingly diverse due to an unprecedented global diaspora. How is the church to understand and respond to a changing community context? In his compact, readable book Anthony Casey gives valuable insight into how community research can help answer this question. Casey, associate professor of Intercultural Studies at William Cary University, brings a wealth of experience in conducting community research, ranging from Malaysia to the Hmong of Wisconsin, and from London to Louisville, Kentucky.

Casey describes the purpose of the book as "an effort to equip the church with the skills necessary to step out of their door and into their neighborhood with eyes to see and ears to hear what God is doing" (5). The book is divided into twelve chapters covering the why of community research in chapter 1, the biblical basis in chapter 2, and the how in chapters 4–10. The final chapters describe special considerations and a short-term team-based approach.

Preparing an ethnography (the broader category of study in which community research is situated) can be a daunting task. Casey does a good job of breaking down the task in an understandable and non-academic approach. The book is peppered with useful thoughts, resources, and tools for conducting community research. One particular tool I found helpful and will use in the future is the five Fs of worldview identification: Family, Friends, Food, Festivals, and Future. Casey includes the five Fs in the appendix (147) along with corresponding questions for researchers to better understand what they are seeing.

A suggestion to improve the book is to include a single community research project that the reader could follow from beginning to end with concrete examples of each of the steps. A sample study would give researchers a helpful tool for starting the process. Casey gives many various solid examples, but it was still difficult to discern the process of community research in its entirety.

This book is recommended for church planters and workers in North America who seek to have a better understanding of their community of interest and how to reach it. The text could also serve as an introduction to field research in preparation for cross-cultural service or as part of a class or training. Few books break down the process of community research for Christian workers and Casey has helped with his practical and approachable work on the subject.



Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2020
150 pages
US$21.00

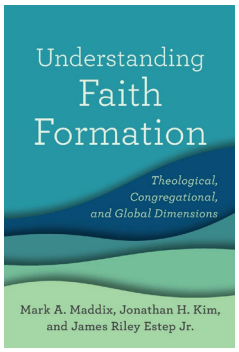
Reviewed by **Mark D. Wood**, Christian & Missionary Alliance, Darhan, Mongolia.

For Further Reading

Elliston, Edgar J. *Introduction to Missiological Research Design*. William Carey Library, 2016.
Kutsche, Paul. *Field Ethnography: A Manual for Doing Cultural Anthropology*. Prentice-Hall, 1998.

Understanding Faith Formation: Theological, Congregational, and Global Dimensions

By Mark A. Maddix, Jonathan H. Kim, and James Riley Estep Jr.



Baker Academic, 2020
192 pages
US$24.99

Reviewed by **Ryan Gimple**, who served 19 years in East Asia before becoming a professor of mission and church planting at Charleston Southern University, South Carolina.

Moving to Asia and sharing the good news of Jesus cross-culturally stretched my faith and pushed me to desperate dependence on God. Studying the Scripture with Asian believers opened my eyes to understand and apply God's Word in transformed ways. *Understanding Faith Formation* is the first book I have encountered that recognizes that serving cross-culturally in missions and in multi-ethnic contexts plays a significant role in faith formation.

The authors begin theologically by defining the concept of faith within Scripture. The second chapter examines several theological questions regarding faith formation and provides brief synopses of positions held throughout history in a variety of traditions. Is faith a gift of God or a work of humanity? How does faith relate to reason, and to good works? What is the relation between the Word and Spirit in faith formation? The authors present a strong critique of James Fowler's human-centered model of faith development and also interact with James Loder. The book proposes a new model of faith formation that resulted from a qualitative study. The new model is congruent with evangelical theology, in contrast to Fowler's model of faith development.

The second section of the book acknowledges that faith formation occurs in a community and social context. Faith formation is discussed within the context of post-Christian secularizing culture and the decline of biblical literacy. The *nones* of western culture reject faith and religion but embrace *spirituality*. Even as our culture is hyper-individualizing, the role of community is essential in faith formation. The authors summarize and interact with a variety of books from the mid-nineteenth century to the present that emphasize the community in faith formation. Worship, fellowship, preaching, mission, and justice shape faith within community. Scripture is honored as essential for faith formation. Scripture is formational for our faith, not only informational. A highlight of the book is the prominence given to Scripture for faith formation.

In the third section of the book, the authors show that crossing cultures and service in missions contribute to faith formation. Short-term mission trips create cognitive dissonance, which leads to transformation and faith formation. The authors apply their proposed model of faith formation to multiethnic contexts. Globalization and diaspora communities throughout the world push the faith of Christians out of a monocultural understanding and into a global Christian consciousness.

A model of faith formation for our globalized era is needed. Unfortunately, the proposed model of faith formation in the book is somewhat difficult to follow. As much as I want to accept the authors' model of faith formation, the model needs more clarity. I certainly welcome a new model of faith development that maintains a high view of Scripture and acknowledges God's active presence in the process. I hope that more work is done to develop this evangelical, theologically faithful model of faith formation. The book initiates a discussion of the global dimension in faith formation and is suited for anyone interested in crossing cultures and faith formation.

For Further Reading

Wilhoit, James C. *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered*. Baker Academic, 2008.
Kane, Nancy. *Stages of the Soul: God's Invitation to Greater Love*. Moody Publishers, 2019.

Knowing God to Make Him Known: Living Out the Attributes of God Cross-culturally.

By Ed Scheuerman

What is at the very core of the missionary life? What keeps workers on the field, enduring at times insurmountable obstacles in taking the gospel to the unreached? Scheuerman peels back the layers and argues that before we can *do* mission, before we can *be* missionaries, we must *know* the God of the Bible (1). He advocates that before we can do the work of mission in making God known, we must return to the baseline of a profound pursuit of knowing God.

Scheuerman's book is a unique and creative portrayal of the attributes of God as experienced throughout the life of a cross-cultural worker. He focuses on twenty different attributes of God which workers can experience throughout the four different phases of cross-cultural ministry: pre-field preparation, departure and entry, field ministry, and return (8–9).

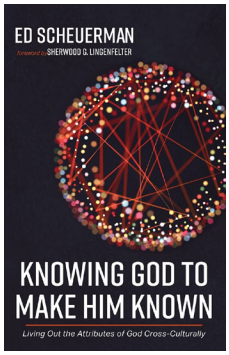
For one example, during the entry stage, when a cross-cultural worker is first entering into a new culture, Scheuerman focuses on God's immutability. Workers on the field frequently say that the only thing that is constant is change. Cross-cultural stress is off the charts. New workers feel useless and confused. Feelings of disorientation and unmet expectations mark these initial days. The entry stage is when attrition is high (29). Knowing God as the rock and tower of refuge becomes the cry of the heart. "I the LORD do not change" (Malachi 3:6). Scheuerman argues that a person who knows and clings to the God who does not change is the person who will make it through the entry stage. Why? Because of experiencing this attribute of the never-changing God (54). God becomes the cross-cultural worker's "home" (52).

Scheuerman walks through the other stages of the cross-cultural journey by highlighting different attributes of God that can and will meet the worker's need. God's faithfulness strengthens the worker during the difficult departure to the field. God's grace paves the way for adjusting to the field and team. God's wisdom gives the necessary insights for connecting with the people.

Scheuerman does not avoid the difficult topics that need to be addressed. He deals with God's holiness in the face of many temptations towards impurity (31). He addresses God's sovereignty and the worker's life of surrender (21). He deals with God's grace and dying to self in showing grace to others (57). His book is applicable to today's challenges in missions.

Scheuerman's book is a unique combination of missiology, theology, and philosophy. He is extremely practical, avoiding a merely theoretical approach to the topic. Each chapter ends with thought-provoking questions that are crafted to challenge the reader to engage personally and to think towards real application to life and ministry.

This would be an excellent resource for training new workers as they leave for the field. It could be used in either a formal setting, such as a Bible College, or with informal mentoring of new workers. Workers wanting to grow in their understanding of God would find this to be an instructive and encouraging book to read.



Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2021
146 pages
US$20.00

Reviewed by **Elliot Stephens**, trainer, speaker, and researcher on the retention of church planters overseas, having served for 40 years in church planting and leadership development with Pioneers.

For Further Reading

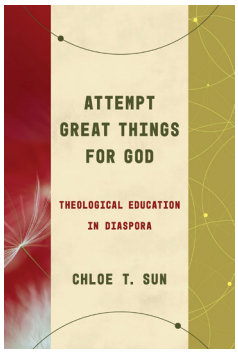
Packer, J. I. *Knowing God*. IVP Books, 1973.

Tozer, A. W. *The Knowledge of the Holy: The Attributes of God: Their Meaning in the Christian Life*. Harper Collins, 1961.

Book Review

Attempt Great Things for God: Theological Education in Diaspora

By Chloe T. Sun



Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2020.
176 pages
US$19.99

Reviewed by **Bob Bagley**, associate executive director of Global Partners. From 1982–2020 Bob served Global Partners with a focus on theological education and leadership development.

Using a case study approach, Chloe T. Sun explores the challenges of providing effective theological education for churches in diaspora communities. As a professor of Old Testament at Logos Evangelical Seminary, a Mandarin-language theological school in California, Dr. Sun provides a firsthand perspective on an institution specifically established to serve the Chinese diaspora church.

The book begins with the story of Felix Liu, a Taiwanese immigrant to the United States, who became the founder of a denomination (the Evangelical Formosan Church) and subsequently the founder of Logos Evangelical Seminary. Liu's theology of ministry, outlined in the first chapter, became foundational to the educational philosophy of the seminary.

Sun then moves on to explore distinctives of the seminary, including a focus on developing servants rather than developing leaders, the use of Mandarin as its instructional language, the centrality of the MDiv degree for pastoral ministry, support of women in ministry, and a commitment to enable students to graduate with minimal debt.

With diversity valued so highly in education, including theological institutions, Sun devotes the next section of the book to discussing how an institution that limits itself to serving the Mandarin-speaking community can at the same time embrace diversity. She argues that diversity should not be "defined solely by having students and faculty of many different races and ethnicities" (103), but that it "can be achieved through gender, age, generations, economic status, denominational background, physical and mental ability, and cultural contexts." (102)

The book concludes with reflections on the unique contributions Logos makes to the broader community of theological schools in North America, in some respects making a plea for "diasporic theological schools and ethnic programs [to] have a place under the sun." (121)

The book is not merely a defense of distinct theological education institutions and programs for diaspora communities. Sun does not shy away from the challenges. Instead, she closes with a series of questions that Logos and other similar programs will need to answer, including (a) Should they stick to using Mandarin since it limits them to first generation immigrants and separates them from the wider community?, (b) How should they balance between supporting a specific cultural identity and embracing a global perspective?, and (c) What is the impact of limited racial and ethnic diversity on students and ultimately on the churches they will serve?

Two specific audiences will find Sun's work a rich source of reflection – individuals ministering among diaspora communities as well as those engaged in mainstream theological education. She has much to say to both. Her volume is a welcome addition to the growing collection of writing on diaspora missiology.

For Further Reading

Tira, Sadiri Joy and Juliet Lee Uytanlet, eds. *A Hybrid World: Diaspora, Hybridity, and Missio Dei*. William Carey Library, 2020.

Wu, Jeanne. *Mission Through Diaspora: The case of the Chinese Church in the USA*. Langham Monographs. 2016.

The Innovative Church: How Leaders and Their Congregations Can Adapt in an Ever-Changing World

By Scott Cormode

Global pandemics require innovative responses. Although Scott Cormode did not know about the massive changes that would occur when he was doing the foundational research for The Innovative Church, its publication could not have come at a more appropriate time. In this book, Cormode addresses the central problem for the church today: Most churches are "calibrated for a world that no longer exists" (1).

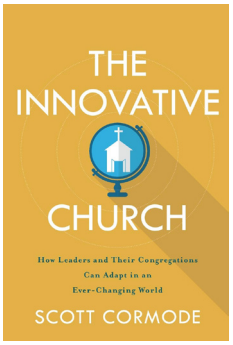
The world and its many cultures are constantly changing, but churches are often slow to adapt. The author's objective is to answer this key question: "How do we maintain a rock-solid commitment to the unchanging Christian faith while at the same time finding innovative ways to express that faith in an ever-changing culture?" (3). Cross-cultural workers ask the same question, using slightly different terminology: how do we contextualize the gospel for those within a particular culture without compromising the gospel?

Cormode offers an answer through his explanation of the steps necessary for innovative ministry. The first half of the book focuses on understanding the needs and problems of those within a particular cultural context by listening empathetically to them. Then leaders must work to reinvent Christian practices that enable the gospel to address those needs and challenges. The reinvented practices lead to stories of hope which in turn help congregations gain the momentum they need to break free from the old patterns which are no longer working.

The second half of the book describes the process for innovation and how to help congregations organize for innovation. Readers learn to incorporate innovation as an ongoing work to help the church continually adapt the gospel to an ever-changing world. The process consists of empathetic listening, divergent ideation (gathering ideas), convergent deciding (determining which ideas to pursue), and experimental prototyping. To foster this process, leaders must create an environment where they welcome ideas, view failure as a learning process, and test prototypes in subdued settings. Cormode also provides helpful strategies to lead a group through these challenging adaptations.

In addition to his years of experience consulting with churches, Cormode bases his well-researched work on findings derived through participant groups in over 100 congregations. The resulting book provides a proven process for facilitating innovation and agility within a church context. The book is highly readable with excellent use of repetition and illustrations to clarify the concepts. He simultaneously offers an abundance of concrete ideas to facilitate each step of the innovation process.

While missions is not the central focus of the book, Cormode's principles and strategies for innovation apply equally well to cross-cultural ministry. Building relationships and ministering across cultures requires innovation to be effective, especially during a pandemic. Those hoping to contextualize the gospel without compromising the gospel will find this book to be a valuable resource.



Baker Academic, 2020
288 pages
US$26.99

Reviewed by **Dennis J. Horton**, associate professor of religion and director of ministry guidance, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

For Further Reading

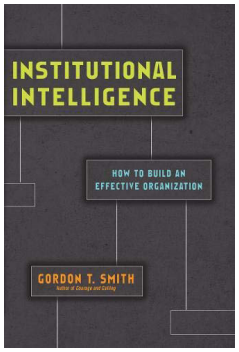
Bolsinger, Tod. *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territories*. IVP Books, 2015.

Bolsinger, Tod. *Tempered Resilience: How Leaders Are Formed in the Crucible of Change*. IVP Books, 2020.

Rainer, Thom. *The Post-Quarantine Church: Six Urgent Challenges and Opportunities That Will Determine the Future of Your Congregation*. Tyndale Momentum, 2020.

Institutional Intelligence: How to Build an Effective Organization

By Gordon T. Smith



InterVarsity Press, 2017
225 Pages
US$25.00

Reviewed by **Tim Pewett** who has been serving for almost a decade in theological education and mission agency leadership with Avant Ministries in Spain. Tim is also a doctoral student in intercultural studies at Columbia International University (CIU).

What kind of *intelligence* is required to build a healthy institution? According to Gordon T. Smith, many practitioners focus on the *what*. In other words, intelligence focused on the essential building blocks of an organization (e.g., mission, vision, values, HR, and finance). However, Smith's argument and thesis are rooted in the who. That is, effective and healthy institutions are constructed by members who think and act with *institutional intelligence*, "the wisdom of working effectively within an organization" (3). Smith is eminently qualified to write on this topic. He has served as a Pastor, but the bulk of his experience has been at the senior administrative and executive level within religious-academic institutions. He has served in institutions across North America, the Global South, and Asia.

The opening chapter serves as an introduction to institutions, addressing traditional questions and frequent resistance directed towards them. Over the next nine chapters, he unpacks what members with institutional intelligence "will have," "will understand," "will recognize," "will appreciate," and "will contribute" in seven key organizational areas (15). While members will possess institutional intelligence in all the areas, Smith particularly emphasizes two, *Mission Clarity* and *[Policy] Governance*, respectively (together occupying around 40% of his work).

In regards to mission clarity, a member with institutional intelligence will not only understand the uniqueness of their institution (its business or industry, its multiple beneficiaries/customers/stakeholders, its niche in a particular time and situation) but also how his or her specific role contributes to mission fulfillment. With regards to [Policy] Governance, members will not only understand the structures and systems present within an organization, but they will also understand how power and decisions are exercised and what contributions can be made in ways appropriate to their specific role. The remaining five elements include people, organizational culture, finances, space (buildings), and partnerships/affiliations. The ability for members to act with institutional intelligence in these remaining five areas is repeatedly tied back to a presumptive recognition, appreciation, and possession of mission clarity and effective governance.

Many of the chapters have practical questions and exercises listed at the end that the reader can do. Moreover, I appreciated the section, "Institutions are Good for the Soul" (Appendix B)–a helpful and important perspective to keep in mind after many chapters which can feel weighty at times. If there is any quibble with the book (from a missions point of view), it would have to be with the fact that the author (though possessing experience living outside of North America) seems to have written largely for a Western-minded practitioner. Those interested in intercultural studies are likely familiar with the related concept of *Cultural Intelligence* and will find cultural dimensions (orientations, differences, and values) in Smith's work that often seem to align with a more North American viewpoint.

Organizational leaders (from the Board to Directors) will benefit from Smith's broad, yet carefully laid out, treatment of institutionally intelligent members/employees. In particular, leadership teams would be aided by reading and discussing the book together. Smith's work could also be included as part of an organization's internal leadership development program or curriculum.

For Further Reading

Trebesch, Shelley. *Made to Flourish: Beyond Quick Fixes to a Thriving Organization*. InterVarsity Press, 2015.

Livermore, David A. *Cultural Intelligence: Improving Your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World*. Baker Academic, 2009.

Empower: The 4 Keys to Leading a Volunteer Movement

By Jeff Martin

Empower is a collection of wisdom gleaned from experiences in starting and leading volunteer movements. Author Jeff Martin is an Executive Director with Fellowship of Christian Athletes and founder of the Christian youth movement Fields of Faith.

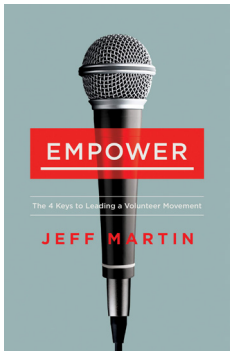
By reflecting on his life, ministry, and career, Martin's book is an attempt to uncover key principles that motivate organizational movement. Simply put, the goal of the book is to humbly show that starting and growing a movement in an organization or business involves *value*, *simplicity*, *commonality*, and *ownership*. If leaders can embrace and take risks in these four areas, a movement of empowered volunteers has a chance to succeed.

Empower is framed on these four principles and Martin weaves Bible stories, personal life lessons, and wisdom from others to illustrate his points. The balance is well done as he is not redundant in his claims and his stories are not overbearing. The book is straightforward and enjoyable to read. A nice touch at the end of each chapter includes a brief recap section with key ideas.

At the beginning of the book, the author subtly brings awareness to the mission of God and that people have the desire to be a part of something bigger than themselves. Martin sees this particularly in students, many of whom have the passion and interest in pursuing a *mission*. He goes on to recognize and assert that ordinary students, volunteers, and untrained people are a significant source of influence. Trained leaders and *hired guns*, so to speak, have their place, but as this book suggests, ordinary people are an important and effective resource.

Those involved in missional engagement and contextual theology will particularly find the author's discussion on simplicity interesting. Drawing from basic military tactical principles, he addresses the concept of *critical nodes*. A critical node is a *center of gravity*; an important feature in a particular context. If a critical node is taken out, the whole system fails. This idea works both ways, as a tactic to advance the gospel and as a defense. For example, for Martin, the Bible is a critical node. If the Bible is removed out of the hands of volunteers, there will be spiritual stagnation or collapse. Or conversely, if the Bible as a critical node is accessible and available and placed into the hands of volunteers, spiritual movements become possible. Other threads of insight like this are woven throughout the entire book.

As popular literature, the recommended audience for this book is rather broad – any person in a leadership role will agreeably absorb the information. With that said, this book is recommended for any leader who specifically works with limited to no staff and mostly volunteers, such as a small local church pastor or even those who lead short-term mission trips. *Empower* will spur ideas in one's own context and the stories will indeed bring encouragement. Clear ideas that inspire will be delivered, especially to those who are ambitious to see the genesis of the next new movement comprised of everyday people.

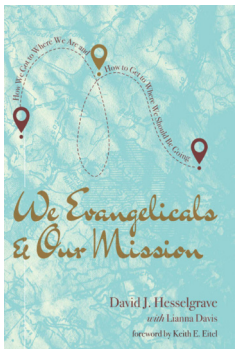


B&H Publishing Group, 2021
179 pages
US$18.00

Reviewed by **Cameron L. Smith**, pastor, and a doctoral candidate at Evangelical Seminary, Myerstown, Pennsylvania.

We Evangelicals and Our Mission

By David J. Hesselgrave, with Lianna Davis



Cascade Books, 2020.
158 pages
US$21.00

Reviewed by **Richard Cook**, associate professor of Church history and missions at Logos Evangelical Seminary in El Monte, California. Richard served as a missionary in Taiwan for over ten years and has a PhD in modern Chinese history from the University of Iowa.

David J. Hesselgrave (1924–2018), for many years a Professor of Mission at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, was intimately involved in the resurgence of Evangelicalism beginning in the 1950s. He maintained an abiding passion for the health of the movement until his death. This book, published posthumously, is a concise treatise on the inestimable value of the historic Evangelical movement and a call for its preservation. Hesselgrave fearlessly confronts issues evangelicalism faces today that might destroy both the movement and the powerful missionary enterprise that has flowed from it.

The book contains nine chapters, divided into four parts. Part 1 presents the rich heritage of Evangelicalism, with chapters on classic Christian orthodoxy from the early centuries of church history, the Protestant Reformation, and the Great Awakening. Hesselgrave contends this is a legacy worth safeguarding. In part 2, Hesselgrave introduces the traumatic trial that split evangelicalism in the early twentieth century, a battle pitting Fundamentalism against Conciliarism and Ecumenism. He then traces the birth of neo-Evangelicalism in the 1940s, and he concludes this section by looking in detail at several evangelical organizations: the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE), the Evangelical Missiological Society (EMS), and Missio Nexus.

Part 3 addresses controversies facing evangelicalism, centering around the trustworthiness of the Bible, the necessity of orthodox creeds/confessions, and the meaning of mission. In chapter 7, he provides his personal insight on the debates over biblical inerrancy at, for instance, Fuller Seminary and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Concerning how mission should be understood, in chapter 8, he presents "three divisive proposals" from evangelical heavyweights George Eldon Ladd, Kevin Vanhoozer, and Ralph Winter. In each case, Hesselgrave expresses concern that the proposals might undermine evangelicalism by disconnecting the movement today from its historic connection to the early church, the Reformers, and the Evangelical Revivals.

Part 4 concludes with thoughts about the future. Hesselgrave expresses concern that rather than strengthening its historic roots, such as the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy did (which dissolved after a brief life in the 1970s and 1980s), evangelicals instead have promoted these three movements: praise and worship, small group Bible study, and short-term missions. Again, his concern is that Evangelicalism is losing its historic moorings.

David Hesselgrave effectively defends the integrity and continued relevance of Protestant evangelicalism. By rooting evangelicalism within the New Testament, early Christianity, and the Reformation, he demonstrates that it is a precious tradition worth preserving. I found the ideas familiar, as Hesselgrave deeply engraved these themes into my mind when I was a young seminarian at Trinity. His voice, I am convinced, needs to be heard by a new generation of seminarians and missionaries. His concerns are not only valid for North America, but his plea should be heard in the global church. Further, as new clouds and challenges are emerging in the 2020s, evangelicalism, when properly rooted in historic Christianity, encompasses all the qualities necessary to offer the gospel of Jesus Christ to this generation.

2020s Foresight: Three Vital Practices for Thriving in a Decade of Accelerating Change

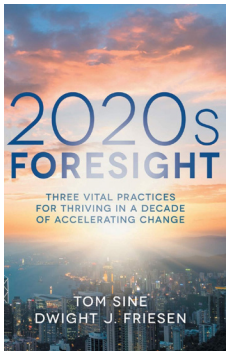
By Tom Sine and Dwight J. Friesen

The decade of the 2020s has begun with accelerating change that leaves many leaders and Christian communities feeling overwhelmed. Futurist consultant, Tom Sine, and pastor and professor of practical theology, Dwight Friesen, offer a resource for Christian leaders seeking to help their communities navigate these turbulent waters of rapid change. Sine and Friesen focus on fostering three key practices as part of strategic planning: anticipation, reflection, and innovation.

They encourage leaders to *anticipate* the likely impact of new issues before they occur, *reflect* on their core aspirations and values to foster a biblically-informed response and to identify *innovative* responses based on research and study of best practices (40). In the second half of the book, Sine and Friesen further delineate innovation, reflecting on four contexts of engagement: an individual's personal life, the community (particularly around challenges related to housing), the neighborhood, and the church. Throughout the text, Sine and Friesen offer multiple stories and examples to illustrate the three key principles, to offer inspiration, and to prompt the reader's ideas for innovation.

Both overtly and through the nature of their stories, Sine and Friesen model a perspective of leaders as the identifiers of change and those who deliver the strategies to answer the community's challenges. The focus in chapter 6, "Innovating in Place," offers the best examples of listening to the community and to history, expanding research to the community experts often overlooked. One might desire for the authors to give greater attention to the impact of power as further guarding against the ways that well-intentioned Christian leaders cause harm through lack of listening to the community. Nevertheless, Sine and Friesen's work invites Christian leaders into strategies for leading their communities into engaging change rather than simply reacting to change.

This book offers an excellent starting point for a community of church leaders in the United States seeking to respond proactively to the challenges of their community. Sine and Friesen provide a resource for Bible college or seminary courses exploring practical ways of addressing the changing realities of Christendom and the implications for ministry. The authors include questions for group discussion and resources for further reading.



Fortress Press, 2020
246 pages
US$19.99

Reviewed by **Susan L. Maros**, affiliate assistant professor of Christian leadership, Fuller Theological Seminary.

For Further Reading

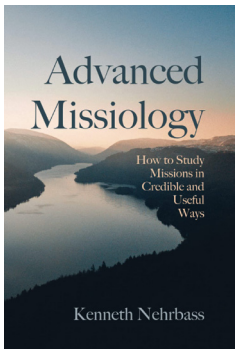
Bolsinger, Tod E. *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory*. IVP Books, 2016.

Branson, Mark Lau, and Alan J Roxburgh. *Leadership, God's Agency, and Disruptions: Confronting Modernity's Wager*. Cascade Books, 2021.

Book Review

Advanced Missiology: How to Study Missions in Credible and Useful Ways

By Kenneth Nehrbass



Cascade, 2021
332 pages
US$39.00

Reviewed by **Cameron D. Armstrong**, International Mission Board, Bucharest, Romania.

The study of missions can be an elusive task since there are thousands of directions from which the student may begin or end up. Kenneth Nehrbass funnels the conversation in *Advanced Missiology*, reminding readers that the core of missiology involves the use of academic disciplines to make disciples across cultures. Nehrbass charts a course forward by describing missiology's multi-layered past, present, and future.

Nehrbass' first chapter presents the mental image of missiology as a river with multiple tributary-disciplines flowing in and out of the river, which contrasts with the concept of missiology as a three-legged stool built on theology, history, and the social sciences. Part 1 of the book addresses these and other potential *tributaries*, namely anthropology, intercultural studies, development theories, and education. Missiology is at its best, Nehrbass argues, when the study of these various disciplines uses actual data to generate theories for how the world's cultures work. Part 2 of *Advanced Missiology* explores the "distributaries", meaning key areas where the missiology river winds. Prominent theories and models are evaluated for long-term effectiveness. A final chapter considers future directions in missiology.

Advanced Missiology offers two strengths worth noting. First, it helpfully reorients missiology back to the Great Commission task of making disciples across cultural boundaries. Such a corrective provides much-needed grounding for a discipline with such diversity and possibility. Second, the vast array of theories, models, and pioneer missiologists discussed makes the book nearly exhaustive in scope. Readers will find Nehrbass a steady guide as he traverses missiology's multiple tributaries.

One weakness, related to the book's vast scope, is that at times theories and models are underdeveloped. For example, Nehrbass claims throughout the book that orality is becoming a major distributary, going so far as to propose it as a "theoretical sphere" that future missiologists ought to explore (295). However, orality is only cursorily addressed as a narrative, storytelling model for "pre-literate" peoples (247–249). Interestingly, the chapter on education's impact on missiology (penned by Rebeca Burnett and Leanne Dzubinski) notes oral strategies are much broader than those involving storytelling and not only for low literate groups.

Still, this weakness does not negate the potential *Advanced Missiology* possesses as an upper-level inquiry. Nehrbass succeeds in demonstrating that missiology is a river with a multitude of theoretical and methodological tributaries and distributaries, whose waters coalesce around the commandment to make disciples across cultures. I expect this book will become a hallmark among evangelical graduate programs in missiology and intercultural studies.

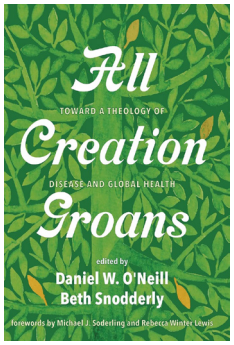
For Further Reading

Nehrbass, Kenneth. *God's Image in Global Cultures: Integrating Faith and Culture in the Twenty-First Century*. Cascade, 2017.

Terry, John Mark, ed. *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*. Revised edition. B&H Academic, 2015.

All Creation Groans: Toward a Theology of Disease and Global Health

Edited by Daniel O'Neil and Beth Snodderly



Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2021
300 pages
US$36.00

Reviewed by **Mark A. Strand**, professor, North Dakota State University, Fargo, North Dakota.

Until the late 1800s, medical work was seen by global mission organization leaders as inferior to preaching. They considered medical work to be a support service to keep the expatriate missionaries healthy. By the turn of the century, it was recognized that medical missions was a key component in building goodwill in communities and establishing credibility for evangelistic and church planting endeavors. So, treating disease became a key part of cross-cultural missions.

Fast forward to the fundamentalist-liberal controversies of the 1920s, and once again, medical missions was mischaracterized along with other social service ministries as being a component of the social gospel, and treated as inferior to evangelism. That is until the Lausanne Covenant was drafted in 1974, which contained a distinct section titled "Christian Social Responsibility," reestablishing the legitimacy of service ministries, including healthcare.

So, the conversation about the role of healthcare in ministry, and the theological justification for treating disease as a gospel-focused activity, has gone on for a long time. The book being reviewed here, *All Creation Groans: Toward a Theology of Disease and Global Health*, attempts to strengthen the theological justification for healthcare ministries in the cause of global missions. The editors set out to develop a contemporary biblical theology of disease in order to understand what God would have believers do in the world to partner with him in the battle between good and evil, health, and disease. It is a welcomed addition to the literature.

The editors and several contributing authors acknowledge their debt to two twentieth century missions legends, Ralph Winter, founder of the former U.S. Center for World Missions (now Frontier Ventures), and Daniel Fountain, author of the seminal work *Health, the Bible and the Church*. I had the privilege of meeting both individuals and can attest to their intellectual prowess and spiritual humility. Both of them increased my passion for developing a theological approach to healthcare ministries, which went beyond the opportunism which characterized some medical missions efforts. This volume attempts to build upon the prior work of these two giants. With 19 chapters and an epilogue, this book will be appealing to persons serving in healthcare-related ministries. It is heavily footnoted and includes both a general index and a scripture index, allowing for the reader to dig deeper into any topic of personal interest. For an edited compilation of essays, the focus and depth of treatment are relatively consistent throughout.

The thesis of *All Creation Groans* is that "nature as we now find it has been corrupted by rebel spirit-agents, … which produces a multitude of organisms that afflict both humans and animals with disease." (214) This is called the Corruption of Nature (CON) hypothesis, by contributing author Gregory Boyd (chapter 19). To his credit, Boyd addresses the most common objections to the CON hypothesis, in an even-handed manner, providing a summary that is humble and fair. However, that all disease is the work of the enemy is not the only way to interpret biblical teaching on this issue, nor it is the only justification for serving in healthcare ministry globally. I would like to address two issues of concern.

First, theologically, is every sickness from Satan? And is every malady an enemy of God's goodness? Certainly, God's attitude toward Job was that he was worthy of being afflicted with disease because he was righteous; his perseverance in the face of it was a sign of his trust in God. So, while disease and suffering are contrary to the design in God's kingdom, it is also possible to see them as a necessary element in a contingent world, and which God ultimately redeems in the eschaton, and we as his ambassadors, strive to ameliorate in the way we serve people in need while on earth.

Second, biologically, while inconvenient, and responsible for suffering and death, neither organ damage (leading to chronic disease), nor an invasion of the body by infectious agents (leading to infectious disease), must be seen as the direct action of the evil one. It could also be seen as a way in which the biological world is designed, such that God's glory can still be revealed despite it. As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 12:9–10, "'My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong." Furthermore, the line between pathogens that are necessary for human life, such as bacteria in

the microbiome that helps digest food, and those that are disease-causing, such as *E. coli*, is very fine. So, I am still wrestling with this question, and thank the editors for stimulating my thinking.

Despite my misgivings about the preceding points, that disease is the work of the enemy is not necessary to justify healthcare ministries, because pain, suffering, and death are all things that Christians are called to work against as they serve their fellow humans. I commend the editors for advancing our understanding of a theology of disease and global health. And to be fair, in their subtitle they acknowledge that this effort is toward a theology of disease, not the theology of disease. The editors and contributing authors are to be commended for addressing important issues in theological justification for global health ministries and provoking needed conversation about it. I highly recommend this book and encourage readers to read it in groups where discussion can occur.

For Further Reading

Long, W. Meredith. *Health, Healing and God's Kingdom: New Pathways to Christian Health Ministry in Africa*. Regnum Books, 2000.

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Strand, Mark A., and Andrew M. Cole. "Framing the Role of the Faith Community in Global Health." *Christian Journal for Global Health* 1, no. 2 (2014): 7–15. https://journal.cjgh.org/index.php/cjgh/article/view/19/93.

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