

# Missionary Care

## Ministering to the Life Behind the Letter

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### Introduction:

#### II Cor. 4:7

“earthen vessel”- a clay pot

The “Elephant in the Room” in mission work is missionary attrition. Some missionary attrition is understandable and expected. One missiologist says that 70% of missionary attrition is preventable.

Missionaries are not more fragile than any other Christian. However, they face unique challenges and unique obstacles to getting help with those challenges.

#### First, What is Missionary Care?

Missionary Care is the **proactive** rather than **reactive** ministry of being **by** and **on** the side of missionaries.

Missionary Care is “**preventative maintenance**” for missionaries.

Missionary Care is focusing on the “life **behind** the letter.”

#### Second, What types of care are involved?

##### Some Examples of Issues that Missionaries Deal With:

- Post-Traumatic Stress
- MK Issues
- TCK Issues
- Coworker Issues
- Marriage and Family Issues
- Reentry and Debriefing
- Education and Training Issues
- A “non-emergency lift”

**Third, Doesn't every missionary receive missionary care?**

In **some** form, they **do**. To the **extent** that it is needed, many do not.

**Fourth, Why isn't proper missionary care available to many missionaries?**

- A. Modern missions philosophy is driven by “success stories,” “ancient history”, and unrealistic expectations.
- B. There is a lack of knowledge of the issues that missionaries face among pastors and churches.
- C. Administration is mistaken for Missionary Care.
- D. The majority of missionary care is done reactively rather than proactively.
- E. It isn't clear to many whose responsibility missionary care is.

*“If you want to **starve** a **horse**, ask **two** people to **feed** it.”* an old Chinese proverb.

- F. Many pastors and churches think that missionary care is something that somebody else's missionary might need.
- G. Missionaries are very reluctant to admit a need, to reach out for help, or to know who to reach out to.

**Conclusion:**

A 2017 survey of 745 former missionaries cited a lack of missionary care as the primary cause of missionary attrition.

A **sending** pastor/church is responsible for a **missionary**.

A **supporting** pastor/church is **responsible** to a **church** for the **stewardship** of missionary **dollars**.

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revised 1/3/24