

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**.