

...they sent them

By James G. Smith • BBFI Associate Mission Director

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."

Every church should aspire to send out missionaries, following the example of the church at Antioch in Acts 13. It doesn't happen coincidentally. A church must be actively teaching God's plan for the nations. When fulfilling the Great Commission is understood as the ultimate goal, sending "one of our own" will come as a natural result.

Once missionaries have confirmed their call to serve the Lord, and have completed their preparation academically, practically, and financially, the sending church has the joyful responsibility of commissioning them to the country and people to whom God is leading them.

A sending church generally supports their own missionary at a substantially higher rate than other supported missionaries. The church keeps their names and faces before the congregation on a regular basis and encourages them with frequent communication. The church honors them when they return on furlough. People from the church visit them in their country of ministry.

We asked the pastors of the sending churches of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International to tell us how sending a missionary had impacted the church and to identify areas of possible improvement in the relationship.

At the same time, we asked missionaries sent by churches affiliated with the BBFI about their relationships with those churches. Thinking it would only be fair, we asked them what they thought could be improved as well.

The response from both pastors and missionaries was great. We have done far more editing than usual, trying to get everything to fit into this issue. However, not everything could be included in these pages, so readers can check out participating pastors' and missionaries' replies in their entirety on our website.

It is exciting to be involved in doing missionary work, following the example of the church at Antioch. It is comforting to know the system works.

We at the BBFI World Mission Service Center stand ready to help in any way we can so that our churches can send our missionaries with the gospel to the whole world.

KEVIN KOLB GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH, SAINT CHARLES, MO

For most churches, sending missionaries is too frequently the neglected aspect of the Great Commission. We do many innovative community programs with the intention of reaching people and building our churches. However, while we should reach our "Jerusalem," it is just as important for local churches to strive to reach the "uttermost part" as well. Our experience has taught us that serving as a sending church is a biblical, and thus rewarding, endeavor. Let me share some benefits a local church may experience when they send out a missionary.

BIBLICALLY – A sending church will be encouraged by the fact that they obeyed the Lord and acted in faith. Churches sacrifice quality people, a great deal of money, key workers, and close friendships when they

SENDING CHURCH Q&A

JEFF MCCASKILL MILLINGTON STREET BAPTIST CHURCH WINFIELD, KS

Positive results of being a sending church:

- A heightened awareness of the missionaries' personal needs.
- A personal connection with the ministry.
- Our prayer life is enhanced and more directed towards missions.
- God has enriched our church spiritually, physically, and monetarily.

2,594 NUMBER OF BBFI AFFILIATED CHURCHES

464 NUMBER OF BBFI MISSIONARY UNITS (MARRIED COUPLES COUNT AS ONE)

272 NUMBER OF CHURCHES THAT SERVE AS SENDING CHURCH TO AT LEAST ONE BBFI MISSIONARY

send their members to the nations. That kind of sacrifice is never easy, but true joy always accompanies obedience to God and His Word.

FINANCIALLY – Does it pay to send missionaries? Well there is nothing in the Scriptures that says God is going to increase your mission budget if you send a missionary. He does say he will supply all your needs. But an increase was one of the pleasant surprises we experienced. When we sent out our first homegrown missionary our people became burdened for missions like never before. Members who had never given to missions before started giving. Our mission giving that year went up 30 percent (almost \$30,000) and has never gone back down. Most recently we stepped out in faith to take on an intern who spiritually grew up at our church. Our men understood that it wasn't in the budget, yet most all of them encouraged me to trust God and start the internship. We moved forward

and God has blessed. He provided funds in a number of ways; the result is that our church is financially better off today than we were two years ago when the decision was made.

RELATIONALLY - Sending your own church members puts a face on global missions. The task can seem so big. I mean, how are we really supposed to pray for missionaries? But when you send a young family or single person from your own church, you are praying for real people — people who were saved and baptized in your own church, people you prayed for in your accountability group or Bible study. You are praying for missionary children who once sat in your Sunday school class or AWANA club. You know their quirks, personalities, fears, needs, and desires. You realize that missionaries are “normal” people who have simply made themselves available to the Lord. The task can still seem overwhelming, but when you realize that God uses “normal” people, it strengthens

your conviction that God can use you.

PASTORALLY – Fathers take real joy in their sons' successes; the same is true for a pastor (3 John 4). When he pours himself into a man and then sends him to the field to train others, we see 2 Timothy 2:2 lived out. This simple blueprint has given me a biblical passion for training people for ministry. It encourages me to stay faithful in my church. I pray God allows me to lay hands on a person in a missionary-sending service on which I previously laid hands in a baby dedication service.

METHODOLOGY – Most missionaries utilize very creative means to arrive on the field and begin making connections with specific people groups. This example has challenged our church to consider the diverse groups in our own community. Since working through this process with our missionaries, we are now more comfortable using creative ways of making those first connections with minorities we are trying to reach in our own town.

Even if there were no tangible positive rewards, we should still serve as senders (Romans 10:15). Serving as a missionary's sending church may be one of those things for which the true reward is most visible when we gather in heaven, assembled from every nation, tribe, and tongue.

WE ASKED SENDING PASTORS TO GIVE US SOME INSIGHT AS TO HOW BEING A SENDING CHURCH HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR MINISTRIES

BILLY HAMM MOUNTAIN STATES BAPTIST CHURCH EASTLAKE, CO **WE PRAY BETTER...**

Having missionaries from our church on foreign fields produces a personal interest when our members give to missions. Knowing they are sitting where our missionaries once sat to worship gives our folks an identity of responsibility to prayerfully support the work our missionaries are doing.

WE SERVE BETTER...

Though we lend to the support of many others, our members and leaders consider our role as a sending church to be one of honor and godly responsibility. Currently, we have two

missionary families out of our church: Larry and Dawn Nelson in Australia as well as David and Regina Etter in Asia. In the past we have served as the home church to six other missionary families in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. It became our identity years ago.

WE GIVE BETTER...

The privilege God has given us as a local church to be so involved in missions has produced a Great Commission atmosphere in our services and activities. We realize that missionaries need our financial participation in their ministries and they count on us. In fact, faith promise mission giving allows us to depend on God to multiply our offerings and stay involved in our role as a mission funding local church.

MARK CARTER CAPITOL CITY BAPTIST CHURCH DES MOINES, IA

A local church's passion for lost souls around the world explodes when missions becomes personal! Missions can't just be a list of names and countries in a bulletin or year-old letters in a hallway. Missions needs to be seen, felt, and hopefully experienced. Becoming a sending church has been a wonderful and effective way to help make missions touchable and real for people. The church family grew to truly love Dwayne and Tammy Wright (missionaries to Ethiopia) and their heart and vision for God. When it came time for them to leave for deputation, the church was fully behind them prayerfully and financially. We look forward to a long-term partnership with them in building a great church in Ethiopia!

DAVID KLASS FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH MONTANA CITY, MT

Our church has always regarded missionaries as the choicest of God's servants as they are involved in one of the most challenging of all callings, cross-cultural ministry. Every cross-cultural servant that makes up Friendship's missionary family is treasured and we strive to be the best supporting church possible. But there is something unique about the relationship our church has with the young man our church had the privilege of interning and sending out, Rich Moeller. For years we waited on the Lord for this opportunity and the experience has been even more rewarding than we had hoped for. In a real way we have sensed that special bond that Paul knew with the Philippian church.

The rewards have been numerous:

→ We have spiritually reproduced ourselves in Rich's life and are an integral part of his ministry.

Our whole missionary prayer ministry has been intensified.

Knowing he is counting on us has increased the awareness of our personal responsibilities to him (i.e., everyday needs, financial, prayer, special needs).

Though several checks and balances are in place, we feel he has a unique accountability to Friendship.

We sense the rewards of "fruit that may abound to (our) account."

There is a deep joy and satisfaction in knowing our church is personally fulfilling the biblical mandate of world missions.

Statistically, the Lord honored our investment in Rich's life and our step of faith to be his sending church. The year we sent Rich

out and set aside a substantial start-up fund, our faith promise giving increased by \$30,000, even in the midst of an economic slowdown.

The privilege of being the sending church of a BBFI missionary has been both a rewarding and memorable experience. It is one we would encourage every church to participate in. I know we greatly anticipate our next opportunity!

TERRY WIESE CROSSBRIDGE CHURCH WESTBURY, NY

For our church, George and Luisa Dimakos continue to make missions real to our people. Our church family loves the Dimakos family. They are the face of missions here. Our people know that when they give to missions they are supporting not only the Dimakos family but the

SENDING CHURCH

Q&A

WE ASKED MISSIONARIES TO TELL US ABOUT THEIR SENDING CHURCHES

DANIEL & LAURA DUKE, PERU

One of the most positive experiences we have had with our sending church is their frequency of visits to Peru to encourage and help us in our endeavors to reach the people. We are in our fourth year on the field, and Lighthouse has already been here three times. Presently, four of our five interns are from Lighthouse. We are viewed by our sending church not only as missionaries, but as a church planter just a little farther away!

TIM ADRIAN WESTSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH HUTCHINSON, KS

At the end of a special Sunday morning service I asked Jordan and Nikki Nisly to come to the front of our auditorium. The broad smiles on their faces told our church a story — two years of arranging appointments, road trips, fund raising, meeting pastors, motel rooms, and fast food coffee were behind them. Saying good-bye wouldn't be easy but the promise of missionary ministry was now just days ahead ... and thus the broad smiles.

Before the formal ceremony of a church wide commissioning prayer, I asked Jordan's family to stand with him. Nikki's parents, visiting from Kansas City, also came to the front. Then I asked those who had taught Jordan in Sunday school to come forward. Next came AWANA workers and a team of youth

group workers. A couple of mentors and prayer partners also made their way to the front as did those who had worked in our church alongside Jordan. Eventually, about 40 people huddled around this young couple as the entire church prayed for God's hand of blessing upon their lives and ministry. This prayer service actually became an object lesson of the involvement and investment our church has had with a young missionary couple. It became quite obvious ... the Nisly family is one of us.

I have no doubt the people of our church will pray for the Nisly family ... and for several other families that we claim as our own. Giving to these families for personal or ministry needs usually comes in at a much higher level because ... they are one of us.

NATHAN BURCH AURORA BAPTIST TEMPLE AURORA, MO

One positive result of being a sending church is the unity and harmony the church experiences behind one of our own. For example, our missionaries Matt and Ericka Moeller were in need of a vehicle and a member of the church took him to lunch and bought him a brand new van. Another positive has been the increase in our faith promise this year. The church committed to \$116,000 in February at our mission conference. Through June the church is on pace to give \$148,000. God has truly blessed our church because we stepped out on faith this year as a sending church.

WANT MORE?

We had such a great response from our pastors and missionaries that we could not fit all their comments into print!
GO TO WWW.BBFIMISSIONS.COM TO READ MORE OF THE FEEDBACK WE RECEIVED.

other missionary families CrossBridge supports.

However, outside of the normal blessings of being a sending church, it has helped us in touching the lives of one of our young families in our church. George and Luisa were recently in our church when I introduced them to Peter, who is Greek. Peter invited the Dimakos family and our pastoral staff to his restaurant for lunch after the church service. We had a wonderful time of fellowship and delicious Greek food. While we were there, Peter and George began conversing in Greek to each other. Then they began to share in English how they came to Christ and the difficulties that it brought to their families. There's no separation of nationality and religion. If you're Greek ... you're Greek Orthodox. So resentment, anger, and sometimes being disowned by their family are the results when that person comes to Christ and leaves the Greek Orthodox church.

During their conversation, George asked Peter where he was from. Peter told him his family is from a small town and that he wouldn't know it. So, George said, no, please tell me where you're from. He told him, "I'm from a small village outside of Sparta called Skoura Varvitsa." Well, George was overwhelmed, as it is the same village he is from. After a few phone calls to brothers and sisters, they realized their families knew each other and were somehow related to each other. As we were leaving, Peter asked George if he would pray for him and his family in Greek. George began to pray and Peter began to cry. He told me he's never heard such a wonderful prayer in all his life. It's amazing how God could take two men from the same village and bring them together in a new country for His glory! Missions is personal at CrossBridge and being a sending church made that happen!

KEN MCCORMICK TRI-CITY BAPTIST TEMPLE GLADSTONE, OR

Tri-City Baptist Temple has been privileged to serve as the sending church for three families. Each of these families has helped keep our hearts sensitive to the needs of our missionaries. When one family had to leave the field due to severe health problems, they returned to TCBT and helped start our mission team. Knowing how easily missionaries can begin to feel discouraged, disconnected, and exhausted when on the field, they now send hundreds of cards to offer encouragement and to recognize birthdays, anniversaries, and other special days. The response has been overwhelming! Many of our missionaries have contacted us, thankful for the thoughtfulness and encouragement.

RON & KATHY REASONER, RUSSIA

The Lord sent my family to Hillsboro, OR, in 1987 to start Corridor Baptist Church. After six years, the Lord called us to Russia and Corridor became our sending church. This has given us an unusually close relationship with our sending church that has been nothing but a blessing over the past 20 years. Many of the core families were there when I pastored the church. The church has grown with us and our ministry in Russia. They provide us with an apartment when we are stateside.

JAMES & LORI BRADLEY, MEXICO

A good experience we have had with our sending church was our commissioning and send-off service. They made the service a very special time and we truly felt that our sending church was a part of what we were going to do on the field. We felt like they were part of our team!

DWAYNE & TAMMY WRIGHT, ETHIOPIA

Though there are many things our sending church has done for us, the one thing that stands above the rest is how our pastor prepared the church to send us out. He preached one whole service on what it meant to be a sending church — that it was more than just sending monthly support, but that we were a branch of their ministry and that the church must be ready to pray, support, and go to help us in all areas of need and encouragement.

RUSSELL JOHNSON INTERNATIONAL BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH MIAMI, FL

The most positive result of being a sending church has been the continued influence of our missionaries' lives on the people in our pews today. We differentiate between them and the rest of our missionary families by calling them our sent ones and keep them before our people constantly. We have had entire mission conferences with just our sent ones.

When they are present we always say: "This family sat in the same chairs you sit in today and built the ministries that you are now benefitting from; they simply went out and are continuing to be used by God in ____." This connection motivates our people to greater ministry here and gives them a vision for what God could do through them elsewhere.

The second positive result is the relationship we share with the churches they

start. We have churches that are our spiritual children and grandchildren in the ministry. We try to maintain genuine connections with many of the pastors and their congregations and, in return, that creates a sense of multiplication in every aspect of ministry.

HERB HUBBARD BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH SAVANNAH, GA

One of the great privileges of a church and pastor is to have God call missionaries from our midst. They become a great source of encouragement to the people. They become an example of sacrifice and remind us of our need to give and serve so they may continue to share the gospel. And they become a reminder that God loves people of all nationalities. The church that has the privilege of being a sending church is blessed.

SCOTT CARLSON PALM SPRINGS DRIVE BAPTIST CHURCH ALTAMONTE SPRINGS, FL

Being a sending church lets us literally send our church into the world. Just like our children, they've come from us and although we can be sad as they go, we are excited about what they will accomplish for the Lord.

R. D. WADE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MEADOWVIEW MESQUITE, TX

Of the 275 missionaries we support, 42 are sent out from our church. I think the blessing of being a sending church is the personal and intimate relationship we have with them; especially those who have grown up in our church! I think our people feel more of an ownership of their ministry because they truly are "our" missionaries!

LAMAR FERRELL BERACHAH BAPTIST CHURCH MIDDLETOWN, OH

Over the history of Berachah Baptist Church, three missionary families and one single lady have been sent out. What has been significant and serves as a positive result is that each missionary has roots that are deeply sunk into the ministry of our church. Each one was involved and committed to the ministry of this local church prior to their call as missionaries, for their surrender to the Lord was already in place. Interestingly, each missionary had family members who were actively serving in their sending church.

The missionary relationship with the local church and the church relationship with the missionaries never wavered. The missionaries while on the field knew their sending church was fully committed to them as unto the Lord.

This local church family has continued to be faithful in making phone calls, sending emails, mailing packages along with their faithful financial support. As the missionaries have returned for furloughs or short visits, the church has had the joy of renewing and strengthening the relationships with their missionaries. That has been a positive result for those sent-out servants of the Lord.

KEITH GILLMING LIGHTHOUSE BAPTIST CHURCH ST. LOUIS, MO

We are proud to be the sending church for the Dukes in Peru. I suppose one of the coolest things about our relationship is that we are great friends and since the world is so accessible, we are able to get into Cusco several times a year.

BRUCE HUMBERT SAUK TRAIL BAPTIST TEMPLE RICHTON PARK, IL

The positive results of being a sending church for STBT can be summarized in a single word ... friends. We love all our missionaries, but we are able to get a little closer to those for whom we are the sending church. They stay in touch with our church as much as we do theirs. They know about our "family" like we do theirs. They pray for our needs, like we do theirs. They send us personal notes like we do them. They know us by name, as we know them and their children, and their birthdays, and their anniversaries. They are like church staff.

LES & DONNA GARNER, MEXICO

Our sending church has been very good to us. Southwest Baptist of Amarillo adopted us in 1980 and sent us to Chihuahua at the conclusion of our second furlough.

Over the years, Southwest Baptist and Arden Road Baptist of Amarillo, the church I was saved and baptized in, have both been very special blessings for Donna and me. When we celebrated our 40th year of missionary service, our pastor, Bradley Speer, contacted our supporting churches to ask them to send a love offering to be given for us. Friends and loved ones from both churches responded to the request and also met together for a special service to show their love for us. We thank God for the relationship we have with our churches who give to our ministry and pray for us.

RUTH KING, JAPAN

Before I went to Japan, God gave me some very special friends and partners in my sending church. We served in the church together. When I return on furlough, I am overwhelmed with appreciation to those who faithfully continue to serve. The youth of the past are now deacons, teachers, and leaders in the church and community. They keep the church growing and faithful to the mission. The church has grown and accordingly must undergo transition. They are my partners and heroes. Because they are faithful, I can continue to serve God in Japan.

DAVID PERDUE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH MILFORD, DE

Being the sending church for missionaries allows our church to personally know these special missionaries. It also allows us to know and minister to their children when they are in the States. This summer, one of our MKs is serving in our children's program, singing in the choir, and is actively involved in our church as he prepares to enter Bible college soon.

Even though we have 12-15 missionaries in our services each year, being the home church of a missionary seems to give our church a stronger connection to our missionaries ... and a greater vision for all missions. I believe being a sending church and/or having mission interns is very helpful in developing a church with a heart for missions. Our faith promise missions giving has tripled since we became a sending church.

IVAL ROBINSON SOUTHEAST BAPTIST CHURCH TULSA, OK

Some of the most blessed times in my ministry have been serving with our missionaries. Being a sending church is almost like taking the whole church to the mission field. The missionaries actually take the spirit and the excitement of the church with them to the field, and the church receives back the spirit and the excitement of the field our missionary is on. I look back through the years and still see the close ties between our church and those who have gone out. The morning sun brings a daily reminder that those we serve with in other parts of the world are serving our Savior in a very special way in a distant land.

We get excited hearing of those saved and lives changed in some of the most difficult places. One thing we always look forward to is our missionary coming home and spending

time with us, it is a bond that many families would like to have.

When our people have visited the field they are forever changed. One of our men who was very tight with his money went with me on a mission trip. I know his life was changed because as we were leaving he took out his billfold and pulled all the money from it and handed it to the missionary. His life and his priorities had just changed forever.

CHARLES RAY LIGHTHOUSE BAPTIST CHURCH MURFREESBORO, TN

Our faith promise offering increased by more than \$500 a week while our interns were with us. Our church family gave to their needs better than anything we had done in the past. Having an intern contributed to an energized excitement for missions.

STEVE PARKS
BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH
SAINT CHARLES, MO

It has been my privilege in the two churches I have pastored to lead them in sending out their first missionary couples. In both cases, it has brought a greater awareness of the dedication and determination required to get missionaries to the field God has called them to! The connection of the church to world missions is intensified and personalized.

It has also made me, as a pastor, more sensitive to the feelings of missionaries who call seeking bookings and support. I know the frustration our missionaries have experienced in not hearing back from pastors with whom they have left messages, so I endeavor to respond to missionary calls — even if we are not in a place to help them at the time. I know that it helps just to acknowledge their efforts.

JAMES GOODWIN
BEACON BAPTIST CHURCH
NASHVILLE, TN

To be the sending church of Mike and Cindy Burgett is an indescribable delight. I know of no other couple sweeter or more dedicated to winning the lost than they are. The members of Beacon love them and we love to have them home with us, but more than that we are honored to be a part of their ministry in Japan.

HOWARD BRAYMER
OPEN DOOR BAPTIST CHURCH
HARRISON, AR

We were running \$700 a week towards faith promise when Ricky Freeman became a BBFI missionary. He began the process and we went before the Fellowship to get him approved as a BBFI missionary. At our next mission conference

we were able to see our faith promise commitments jump up to around \$900 a week. As we were a small church, these were very exciting times for us. It has definitely made our church a more missions-hearted church.

ARCHIE EMERSON
OCEAN STATE BAPTIST CHURCH
SMITHFIELD, RI

Being the sending church of a missionary causes our congregation to feel a closer bond and connection to the missionary, and I think the missionary feels he/she has a direct lifeline to our congregation. As a church, we feel our commitment is deeper to our missionary who served among us and went out from us. Missionaries need to know they have a personal “American Embassy” ready to help in time of need.

CODY & DANNIELLE WILBANKS, ITALY

One Sunday night we Skyped with our sending church to give an update and share a devotion. When we appeared on screen everyone started cheering and some even made signs for us. Needless to say we felt loved and special to them. Between that, the many Facebook messages, packages, and emails, our sending church has been very good at letting us know we are loved and thought of.

BRUCE & PAM O’NEAL, MANNA

I’ve always felt that my pastor, Mike Haley, at Hallmark Baptist Church has been a great resource for me when I need to seek advice. He tends to look at the big picture. When God directed me to start MANNA Worldwide I went to my pastor seeking his advice. After talking with me extensively he sensed that this was of the Lord. He was a great encouragement at the time.

OLE & RENEE KONNERUP, KENYA

The monthly support from our sending church has always been more than they support other missionaries. Every time we have a special need or particular project, they help us with the need. When we are on furlough we are always brought before the church to either testify or preach, thus, keeping us before the church, reminding them to keep us in their prayers. Our sending pastor expects us to communicate with him more than just through our prayer letters. It is always good to hear from our pastor in reply.

PHILLIP HOUSLEY
PARK CREST BAPTIST CHURCH
SPRINGFIELD, MO

I know a church that experiences the process of becoming a sending church will increase their mission budget immediately. We have seen this happen in our mission budget year after year. Becoming so involved in the lives of individual families who are relying on God for their daily provision encourages people to be generous ... with their finances and their prayers.

We currently have eight families we have sent. It has been our desire to make our church family so familiar with our missionaries that they are affected instantly when needs are expressed. It is exciting to see the Scripture fulfilled here as we “weep with those that weep and rejoice with those who rejoice!” There are times when our missionaries experience deep need and that is a call for us

to respond ... there are also times of great rejoicing that we can celebrate lives changed and accomplishments on the field.

Last and certainly not least, we have endeavored to visit our missionaries with annual mission trips. This, we hope, is not only encouraging to our missionaries, but is a tool by which God can speak to the hearts of those participating. Many times our people have returned filled with greater love and respect for the works and some have even surrendered themselves to do the work of the Lord.

NATHAN BEAL
IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH
NIXA, MO

The main benefit of being a sending church is that it provides a more immediate, personal, and passionate connection between our local

congregation and our overseas missionaries. We are a small, country church, but our membership understands exchange rates, housing situations, cultural difficulties, etc. As a pastor, I want our sent missionaries to understand that they are still a vital part of our local congregation. I invite them to send updates on our church Facebook page between their prayer letters. We also like to communicate about events, praises, and prayer requests. My biggest concern as a sending pastor is to keep the relationship strong by treating the missionary like a member of our church staff by offering regular prayer, encouragement, and counsel while soliciting the same from our missionary. A missionary should be a spiritually mature and gifted member.

TRACY ROBY**OVERLAND PARK BAPTIST TEMPLE
OVERLAND PARK, KS**

Being a sending church is a tremendous blessing and provides numerous benefits for the cause of world evangelism. The personal touch, because the missionary is one of our own, ignites the church's passion for missions. When the missionary is already someone you love, it adds a personal attachment and responsibility to what is happening on the field. When the heart is captured for missions, partnering with the missionary is a natural response.

Preparing the missionary becomes a first-hand lesson on missions. The church is acquainted with the call, the approval, deputation, and sending of the missionary. The sending service provides the church opportunity to celebrate the fulfillment of New Testament missions. Becoming a sending church is the greatest overall boost to the missions program.

RICHARD EDWARDS**FIRST COAST BAPTIST CHURCH
JACKSONVILLE, FL**

What a blessing it has been to be the sending church for the Shadle family to Ethiopia. Our church family really fell in love with this family during their mission internship here and they established many close relationships that have benefited them now that they are on the field. We are a strong, mission-minded church, and being a sending church just brings it that much closer to home. Many of our people are able to keep in touch with our missionaries regularly through the technology available today. Having served on the mission field, I know the encouragement it is to hear from family and friends back home, and to know that you have a church family behind you at all times.

I have been able to visit the Shadles on two different occasions since their arrival on the field and was able to witness first hand what

the Lord is doing through them for His glory and honor. What a blessing to bring those good reports back to our church family, allowing them to see the investment we are making in the lives of this family. We have been able to meet many needs for them — through the church and individual families here — and we have a great partnership.

JOHN WATERLOO
**CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH
PONCA CITY, OK**

The level of awareness concerning a missionary's needs is raised as a sending church. We take seriously the responsibility to pray for and provide needs for any couple we send out of our church. Although we partner with other churches, the main responsibility is in our hands. This has helped our members and leadership to realize the cost of sending and

WADE & DONNA RASMUSSEN, ZAMBIA

As we prepared to return to the U.S. after two years as TEAM missionaries, we were uncertain about where to settle while we made the transition to career status. We were surprised when our sending church's new pastor let us know they were preparing a house near the church for us. He expressed concern that the church had not done enough to support us. We never felt that way, but were encouraged by his sensitivity to a common missionary need — a place to live on furlough.

We were blown away when we arrived at the house. Our church family had pulled together to paint, clean, and furnish the house for us. They even put family photos on the walls to make it feel more like home. We love to travel and present our ministry in new churches, but it will be very nice to have a place to crash near our sending church when we are not on the road.

PHIL & MELODY STEPHENS, ZAMBIA

The first thing I would mention directly relates to our sending church; it is also our home church. This is an advantage as the people know us very personally and the pastor has a vested interest beyond finances, prayer, and coordination in the mission and missionary work. He is personally responsible for us and with us before the most high God. He is our pastor! As having pastoral oversight, he is in a position scripturally to care, consider, encourage, and correct.

JOHN HADLEY**MARSH LANE BAPTIST CHURCH
DALLAS, TX**

Marsh Lane Baptist Church is the sending church for Scott and Norma Edwards, missionaries to Portugal. Our whole missions family is very important to us, but Scott and Norma are especially close because Scott was raised here, surrendered here, left for Bible college from here, and was sent to the field from here. The fact that he is one of us makes our relationship that much sweeter.

We just made a trip to Portugal to visit the Edwards and the Smiths. I took along with me two families from our church who have known Scott for decades. It was a very enjoyable and informative time seeing what our prayers and

support have helped accomplish through them. It connected our families with the work there at a much deeper level, and those who went have become really invested in that work.

As a sending church, it is easier for members to understand the obstacles all missionaries face. A sending church understands the responsibility they have to the missionary and the missionary's responsibility to the church. Being a sending church gives the church an opportunity to be involved in missions at more than just a financial level.

Every church can and should be a sending church. There is a financial cost, of course, but it is not so much as to prevent any church from doing it. Being a sending church benefits your church's mission program by putting a real, personal face on missions.

LINZY SLAYDEN
**FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH
OWASSO, OK**

We have seen the benefits of being a sending church to include a settled obedience to the Word of God, which gives us peace and focus. It gives us an interest and connection to the country where we are sending our missionary. It makes our people ask the question, "Does God want me to be a missionary?" It gives us an opportunity to visit that country on a personal or church mission trip. It gives us a better understanding of how New Testament missions works in the area of preparation, deputation, commissioning, and support.

On another note, we are impressed with the responsibility to pray for our missionaries.

maintaining a missionary family on the field.

The interaction with missionaries out of our church has also raised the awareness of the need for more missionaries around the world. I can think of no negatives when it comes to being a sending church for a missionary! It is and has been one of the greatest endeavors of our church family!

LYNN TURNBOW GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH EARLY, TX

The church really gets to know the missionary family because of the extra time spent with us in between visits to other churches. I have noticed that several of our members have developed a strong relationship with the missionaries sent out from our church. They are always excited to hear they are coming and often invite them to meals, etc. in their homes

while they are here.

There is a much better response to voiced needs from "our" missionaries than there are to other requests for help. The church knows it has a responsibility to help whenever possible. Some of our members have accompanied us on trips to Nicaragua and have been able to see personally what their mission dollars can accomplish in another country. These become especially faithful and generous with their mission giving.

MIKE MARCELLUS FIRST INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCH AUSTIN, TX

We have six missionary families currently serving the Lord out of our church. We strongly believe that their ongoing interaction with others in our church helps us cultivate more individuals, couples, and families to surrender

to the ministry. We believe this because we average two and a half people a year going to Bible college to prepare for ministry.

One young man just graduated from the graduate school in Springfield and is on staff at High Street in Springfield. We already have two others at Boston Baptist College and we have eight more that will head to Boston Baptist this year. We also have around 15 others who have surrendered their lives to full-time service and will go to Bible college somewhere in the next three to five years. We have seen 92 who have made it all the way through the preparation process and are in or have served in ministry.

It is a joint effort, and without the BBFI, the Mission Office, and those associated with it, and the opportunity to affiliate with them to assist in getting missionaries trained, approved, and sent, we would not be able to do this. Then for them to be able to come in and teach others about missions and ministry is priceless.

ROSALIE HOOGE, MEXICO

When my husband was very ill, my sending pastor, Eddie Lyons, came to visit with Marv and had a very good, informative visit. When Marv went to be with the Lord, Pastor Eddie was there again and was a great help during a very difficult time. Since that time he has been accessible to help me make some important decisions and has been a great help. I don't know what I would have done without his emotional and spiritual support.

JONATHAN & JOANNA LIGGETT, ITALY

Our sending church has been behind us every step of the way and is always eager to meet our needs. Over the past couple of months, we have begun to raise our set-up costs. Our sending church was the first church to be involved and gave above and beyond what we were requesting! We are greatly encouraged and invigorated by their willingness to do whatever it takes to get us to the field.

BILL & BARBARA NEEL, JAPAN

One of the greatest things I can say for my sending church, which is also my home church, is their faithfulness to these missionaries, their missionaries to Japan.

Our sending church, Central Baptist Church, Lewisville, TX, has faithfully, without missing a month, supported us for 48 years! Therefore we praise God for a loving, gracious, and faithful sending church.

DAVID & TONYA LILES, PERU

Our church sent a team of 45 well-trained, well-prepared short-termers to significantly aid in the local church and mission ministry here. Additionally, they helped us with a home during our last furlough. We receive comments and prayer requests from them on a pretty consistent basis. They communicate that they truly care.

It also reminds us of our responsibility to give to missions. It affords us an opportunity to be a blessing with special gifts, etc. It gives us a positive spiritual element that we are involved in world evangelism in a biblical way. It impacts our church overall in prayer, giving, caring, and going. Our mission trips have taken on a more personal and serious element. It brings the spiritual need of the world to us in a real way. It increased our mission giving by 15-20 percent and it has helped our mission involvement both at home and around the world.

LEWIS MCCLENDON VENTURA BAPTIST CHURCH VENTURA, CA

The positive results for our missionaries is

having a pastor and church that knows each member of the missionary family, knows where they minister, and knows the problems and challenges the missionary family faces. Because the missionary has spent time at our church, and the sending church pastor and members have visited our missionary on the field, the church is emotionally attached to "our" missionary. They feel each circumstance the missionary family goes through and weep with them when they weep and rejoice with them when they rejoice. In our case, our missionary's son married one of the girls who grew up in our church, and they have become another one of our sent missionaries.

On a pastoral level, our sent missionaries and I communicate regularly by email and

phone. I am a sounding board and a place to vent when needed. Every struggle they have is communicated to me so that I can pray and advise. I recognize that the solution I give may not apply, but the conversation we have can still be helpful to our missionary.

The positive result for our church is an added awareness of every missionary we support. Because our members know the missionaries we send, they want to know more about our mission program and other missionaries we support. Missionaries become real people just like them who need prayer and encouragement. Many people in our church read missionary letters as a result of knowing more about our mission program and missionaries.

WE ASKED OUR MISSIONARIES,

“WHAT IMPROVEMENTS COULD BE MADE IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR SENDING CHURCH OR PASTOR?”

We have listed their suggestions in random order.

I think a visit from the sending pastor to the field would be encouraging for both. If the sending church is able, it would also be good for a group from the church to visit their own missionaries.

While working on staff, we developed a love for our sending church and her members. **I would suggest more contact** as to what is specifically happening back home. We not only desire specific prayer on our behalf, but also desire to pray more specifically for our sending church and her successes and difficulties.

Communicate with us! We pay for a VOIP phone line to call the States and to allow people in the States to call us on the field. It would be nice to have people, and especially our sending church, take advantage of it.

I sometimes wonder if my sending church knows that we exist.

There does still seem to be a breach of communication between our pastor and us. **Rarely does he call us just to see how we are doing.** Usually we are calling him and more often than not, it is because we need something. We would be humbled if he initiated the call.

Through the years, the biggest issue between the missionary and sending church/pastor has been communication. **The missionary is expected to produce a letter every couple of months but rarely receives communication from the sending church/pastor.** This can produce miscommunication. It can also be discouraging to the missionary.

If there is one thing **I would like improved in our relationship with our sending pastor it is to have better communication.** To be honest, we never hear from him. Even when I email him to check in he rarely replies.

MAX & DEBBIE HARMON, PERU

When first approved, our small sending church in Perryton, TX, paid all our expenses to go and stay for Fellowship Week and the next week of candidate school. Then they paid our plane tickets (five family members at the time) to Peru after language school.

During our first furlough, when we arrived stateside, they had rented a house, furnished it, and filled the pantry with food and even provided a used car. All of these things helped us stay out of debt. They also helped us with airfare to come stateside for our parents' health issues and later for funeral services.

ERIC & SARAH LANTRIP, AUSTRIA

When Sarah was sick and we didn't know what to do, we sought the Lord and sought the Lord's people in our sending church. He definitely provided. Our sending church (Bethany Baptist in Melbourne, FL) specifically helped in many ways. First, they provided us with a place to live. Second, they helped our teenage children transition by showing them overwhelming love and support through the youth ministry and Brevard Christian School. Third, Pastor Branch gave us ministry opportunities in areas where God had given us spiritual gifts such as teaching an adult Sunday school class. This helped us know that we were of value to that local ministry. He also listened as we shared our struggles. All of these things were exactly what we needed at the time. God brought us home to our sending church for healing. He didn't leave us there though. He helped our entire family through the people of our sending church and then sent us back out. We don't know where we would be without God's grace that came through the people of our sending church.

KEVIN & SARAH PINE, ENGLAND

To list all the positive experiences we have with our sending church would take a very long time. We had the privilege of serving at Flat Creek Baptist Church in Cape Fair, MO for six and a half years before being TEAM missionaries and now career missionaries.

They are family to us. We know they are behind us both in prayer and financially. They are a constant encouragement via emails and letters, and when we are in the area in person. It's so encouraging to get a note from one of the members or to call and talk with someone and hear how the church is doing.

If there is ever anything we need or whatever is going on with us they always want to know about it. Half of the congregation was willing to drive an hour to see our approval as BBFI missionaries. We have a great sending church!

WE ASKED OUR SENDING PASTORS,

“WHAT IMPROVEMENTS COULD BE MADE IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MISSIONARIES AND THEIR SENDING CHURCH OR PASTOR?”

We have listed their suggestions in random order.

A short, regular email sharing a struggle and or joy of daily life — **a point we can connect with and pray for.**

It is very special for me to receive a call just asking me to pray for a need, individual, or a witnessing opportunity because I am their pastor and we are their church. **It is important**

that our missionaries know that if there is a need, concern, or heartache, their pastor and their church want to know first.

Some could send letters more often; after all, we send them a letter every month in the form of a support check

Sending churches ought to be taught how to

take care of a missionary as much if not more than the missionaries are taught how to be a missionary.

The **missionaries need to be very clear and honest in their communication with sending pastors and churches.** When they are on furlough, and in their hometown, they need to go on visitation and do things expected of regular church members whenever possible.

Our sending church has not been interested in being our sending church. **The church was a very faithful supporter for 45 years. They have changed their name and have another pastor whom I do not know.** They have also dropped our support due to our age. We are looking for another sending church.

My relationship with my sending church was good under the former pastor, but, except for monthly support, there is almost no contact now.

When the out-of-sight-out-of-mind dilemma reaches global distances in a world where communication has hit instantaneous levels, **it is easy for a family on the field to feel forgotten.**

The only improvement we can voice would be **more contact with our sending church.** We want to know what the prayer concerns are, get a copy of the prayer list, and be kept updated on the happenings of our home. Sometimes we feel so isolated and out of touch with them. We spent years serving at that church before the Lord called us to the field — but part of our hearts remain at home. They truly are our church family, and families stay in touch.

Our church has been wonderful to us but to hear from the people and specifically the leadership and staff would be nice.

I've been a missionary for 40+ years and my sending pastors have changed about six times. **Not one of those pastors has made any effort to get to know my family and me.**

A phone call every once in a while just touching base would help us feel more connected and part of the church family. Every time we come stateside we know fewer people in the church and less of what is going on. **More personal contact initiated from the church is a must.**

The only thing I can think of is I wish our new pastor would communicate more with me. But he doesn't do computers or email.

CONTINUED ➤

CHRISTINA FULMER, KENYA

A few years ago, when I was in the States, my mother's Alzheimer's condition reached the obvious stage. Life in her and her husband's home became quite difficult for me. I spoke with my pastor about it and immediately the folks at Twin City Baptist Church began a daunting task of remodeling the mission apartment for me. Many of these great folks find it difficult to climb stairs — but they did not let that stop them in this labor of love.

That apartment has become a haven for me when I am in Indiana. During my mother's husband's stay in a nursing home, his subsequent death, selling their home, and moving my mother into a nursing home, the love and kindness of my church family has made all the difference in my heart. Because I had a "place to be," I was better able to make the difficult decisions and cope with the stress that resulted from these changes.

While in Indiana in May, my pastor asked if it would be okay with me for the church to let some other folks use the apartment in my absence. To my reply of, "Of course, the apartment belongs to the church," he kindly replied, "Oh no it does not, that is your apartment, it was made for you." Now, that makes a gal feel loved!!!

TONY & JOY ANZALONE, ECUADOR

Early in our missionary service our sending church, Great Lakes Baptist Temple, and pastor (then Ted Wille) were great benefits. The church maintained our staff salary for several months during the beginning of deputation. The pastor gave us a strong recommendation, contacting pastors in our state and his pastor friends around the country.

Our church is known for being missions minded and this was also a benefit to us on deputation. Our sending pastor was very interested in our work once we were on the field. We had good communication. The church was always involved in helping with unexpected needs, and gave offerings for special projects whenever possible. When we returned to the church after our first term on the field, the church welcomed us and helped us get ready for furlough by supplying a van for our travels. All of these things encouraged us to be faithful in our ministry because of their faithfulness as our sending church.

Twenty-four years since our missionary ministry began, our sending church and pastor (now Pastor David Chittenden) continue to bless us with faithful support, communication, counsel, and prayers for our ministry and personal needs. In spite of very difficult financial times for the church, they still treat us as a special part of their missionary team by giving very generous monthly support.

If there is a work day or special conference, and **they are in town, they need to participate.**

I think the missionaries need to stay in better contact with their sending church. Seems like some **never even take into consideration that their actions may reflect on their home church.**

Just like any relationship . . . give of yourself. Give what you appreciate receiving. When you are overwhelmed with your personal needs/ desires, **it is easy to forget that the very people you are asking to help are often in deeper need than yourself.**

You can't say enough about communication. We want to help, support, pray, and be emotionally attached. We simply can't do that if we don't know what is going on. **Stay connected!**

It's hard for me to help you raise money with partial information. I'll be asked questions and if I answer, "I don't know," more than once the opportunity is probably lost.

Communication is always an important key to successful relationships. **Some of our missionaries send out weekly updates of**

their services and I have found those to be a blessing! That little bit of information also reminds me to pray for those missionaries more.

One need in the local church is for more **transparency in the area of financial support the missionaries receive** and how it is allocated and used on the field. Some gray areas exist, whether it be in retirement accounts, real estate, or travel, that could be more openly shared with the sending church and sending pastor.

CONTINUED ➤

Our sending church changed pastors while we were on the field. **While we don't know our new pastor well, I believe that open, honest communication has helped us begin to build a good relationship.** In addition to this, I believe that our working relationship will grow, in a way it never would otherwise, when he visits us on the field and observes and participates firsthand in our ministry.

The weak link in our experience has been communication after a change of pastor. Although there was much trust and freedom in the past, it is easy to allow doubts and fears of rejection to cloud the lines of communication.

I suggest that the sending church arrange for a new pastor to visit the missionaries commissioned by the congregation during

the first year of his ministry. This may allow the pastor and missionaries to get to know one another better and will provide first-hand knowledge to the pastor of the field and ministry.

It would be great if our church could send a monthly or quarterly update to all its missionaries that it supports that details what's going on in the church. **Many times we feel we are out of the loop and are the last to know if something major is going on.** We would like to know specifically how we could pray for our church.

It would be **nice to have our church respond to a prayer letter or update.**

Better communication and visits to the field to see ministry.

Not one person from our sending church communicates with us on a regular basis.

I believe they love us and pray for us. Over the years, we have invested much in my sending church, and they have invested much in us.

But right now, we feel very disconnected from them.

WANT MORE?

We had such a great response from our pastors and missionaries that we could not fit all their comments into print! **GO TO WWW.BBFIMISSIONS.COM TO READ MORE OF THE FEEDBACK WE RECEIVED.**

JORDAN & NIKKI NISLY, PHILIPPINES

It is hard to recall just one story that best sums up our relationship with Pastor Tim Adrian and Westside Baptist Church. I have been truly blessed to have spent my entire life at Westside. My parents were married at Westside; I was raised and dedicated there; I grew up in Sunday school and AWANA and accepted Christ through the church. I committed my life to missions through the influence of my pastor and my youth pastor, Gary Ridge. Pastor Tim's son, Matt Adrian, has been my best friend since high school and was my college roommate.

When I returned years later as a young married man, the church embraced my wife Nikki and made her feel at home right away as if she had always been there.

ERIC & AMANDA SHADLE, ETHIOPIA

First Coast Baptist Church understands the role of a sending church. We arrived in Ethiopia in August 2009. Our pastor, Richard Edwards, has already come to Ethiopia twice to visit us in the last three years. It is not uncommon for our family to talk with our pastor by email or Skype at least every other week. We frequently receive packages from our church. Our sending church is involved in all our projects, from renting a church building, vehicle repairs, and other unexpected needs. Video updates from the work here in Ethiopia have been shown at First Coast to keep the church aware of the progress. Our sending church is a source of spiritual accountability, personal encouragement, and financial backing as we do the work here in Ethiopia.

TARL & ADRIENNE REEVES, ENGLAND

We've had many positive experiences with our sending church. It is always great to know they are in our corner, they care about us, and they are praying for us continually. Since we are new to the field, most of our experiences center around our transition from stateside ministry to work on the mission field. Orlando Baptist trained us, ordained us, and sent us off.

We had an incredible time at our mission conference where we felt loved and appreciated for the journey ahead. We were given wisdom in handling situations while on deputation and on the field from our pastor. We fully understood that no matter what happened to us, our church would be behind us every step of the way. We had an amazing time at our send-off service where friends, churchgoers, and family gathered around us to pray for us and wish us well.

The missionary can contribute to improving the relationship they have with the church by staying in regular contact with that church through monthly letters, sharing needs and prayer requests, making a call or Skype with the sending pastor to talk about various things, no matter how insignificant it may be. **Knowing they are accountable to you for the investment you are making in their lives goes a long way** in improving the relationship between the missionary and the sending church.

Communication with the pastor and church family. If we know what's going on we are more likely to be personally involved with regular prayer and support.

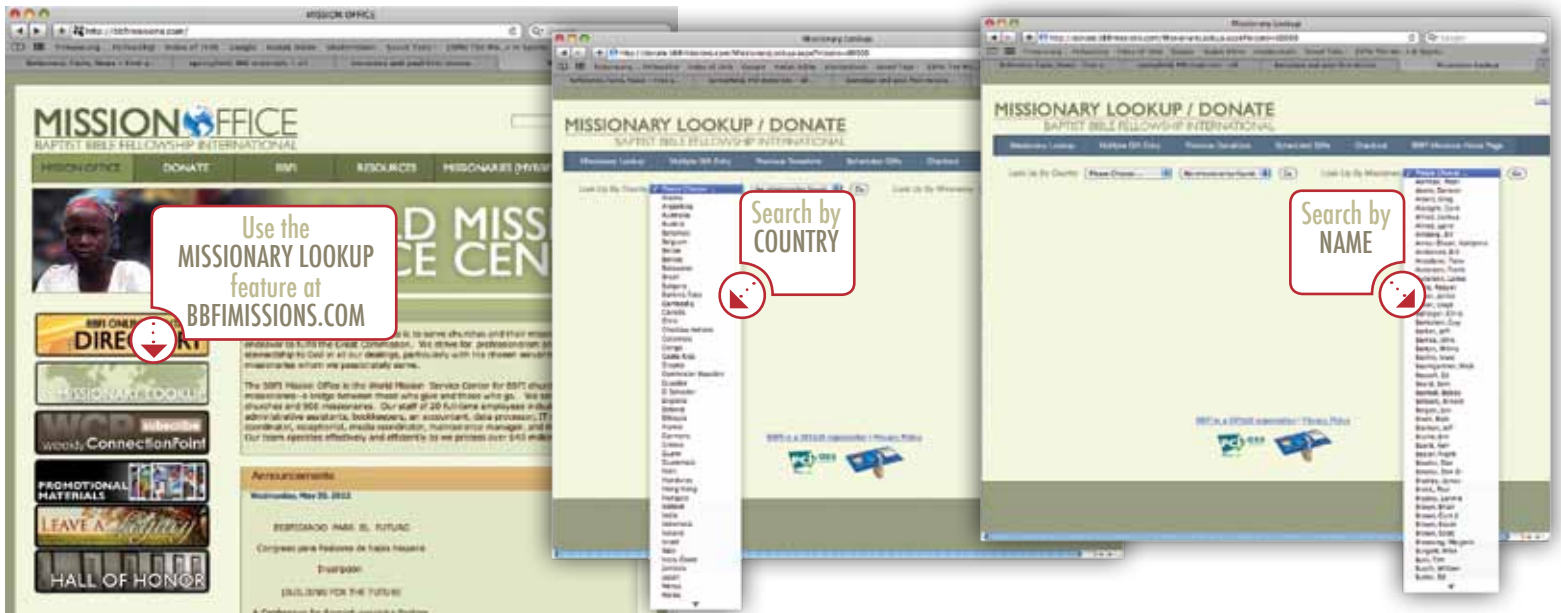
The missionary improves the relationship by communication. **When they communicate with members, they should encourage them to faithfulness and prayer.** They should regularly tell them how much it means for them to give to missions so they can be where they are and other missionaries can take the gospel around the world.

When they come home they **should be faithful to services.**

Calling to touch base would be a good idea. It seems like the only time some missionaries call is when they need financial help.

Missionaries could **improve their relationship with their churches if they looked at their role while on furlough as a staff person** rather than someone in constant need. Helping to solve problems instead of being disengaged.

GET CONNECTED AND STAY IN TOUCH WITH OUR MISSIONARIES!



JAMIE NEWELL, NICARAGUA

I love the relationship I have with my sending church, Lee's Summit Baptist Temple in Lee's Summit, MO. I grew up in my sending church, so it is even more of a special relationship, because the same group of people that commissioned me saw me grow up. They were at my high school and college graduations. They are very much a huge part of my family. It is crucial to me to have this family caring and praying for me while I serve in Nicaragua.

I remember one time I was sitting with the choir facing the entire church and the pastor asked the church, "How many fathers does Jamie have in this church? If you're one of her fathers, stand up." About 50 men stood up. Then the pastor asked, "How many of you own a gun?" About the same amount of men remained standing. I remember laughing, feeling loved, and feeling hesitation for the day my future husband meets my slightly overprotective family.

CRAIG & AMANDA DYSON, ETHIOPIA

We have been blessed to have a great sending church behind us and I can confidently say we would not be here without their support and encouragement. Being on the field can be difficult at times and it is nice to know we have our sending church behind us. We love knowing that we can be honest with our church and if we are struggling through life here we don't have to worry that they will suddenly stop supporting our ministry.

It is a great asset to know that we can talk to our pastor about anything and he will give us sound biblical advice while still encouraging and standing behind us. We have always had great experiences when we have needed something on the field to know that we can ask our church for help. There have even been times we have not even asked or expected. This is not something we take lightly or frivolously. About a year ago when our insurance went up, our sending church informed us they were going to cover the expense of that increase via our support.

Mid-Way was a huge blessing when we went through the loss of our daughter Ava. Pastor Upchurch and the whole church family stood beside us and wept with us as we went through such a difficult valley. The church graciously helped us in our time of need and preacher was very supportive as we struggled with different emotions even though we were still on deputation. He didn't push us to get to Ethiopia quicker, he encouraged us to wait patiently on the Lord and His timing in our lives. Their love and support through this journey as well as our ministry here in Ethiopia has forever linked Mid-Way with us as our home.

Update your pastor and your sending church on your goals annually. Then be available for follow-up calls (Skype) throughout the year to review progress.

When you return on furlough, have a plan for the care of your family. Do not assume that your sending church will have a place for you to stay.

JOE & SYLVIA WELLS, ECUADOR (RETIRED)

During our first few years in Ecuador, our pastor and his wife allowed our sons to live with them during their last year of high school and attend the church's Christian school. Our church, Landmark Baptist in Richmond, VA, put tens of thousands of dollars into the ministry in Ecuador.

Their retirement plan for us was a tremendous blessing. When we started drawing Social Security they gave us this money to invest as needed in our retirement. Now that we have retired, they have decided to support us for life.

Communicate early and often with your sending pastor concerning any changes to your ministry. (New church plant, furlough plans, starting a college, etc.)

Realize that sending churches are not banks. **They are happy to give but they will expect some deposits from time to time.**