

MISSION FRONTIERS LETTERS

Are God and Allah the Same?

Since I too wrote a letter which disagreed with David Johnston's article, I now want to write this note of commendation. The response by David in the May-June issue which stated his overstatement of his case (and that he was sorry) warmed my heart. Most dig in their heels for a fight in the face of critical letters; David did not.

Thank you that we could learn from the open review of the question discussed by the original article, and that we can learn from the humble and growing example of one another. Thank you, brother Johnston!

Monty W. Casebolt
Livingston, MT

Why No Comments from Denominational Agencies on "World Christian Global Action Plan" (July-August)?

... Why were only para-church agency persons used to critique the WCGAP, not any of the major denominational missions such as the Southern Baptists, Assemblies of God, and Christian and Missionary Alliance? The implication is (it seems) a strong bias against such as important in major mission strategy.

Years ago I was director of missions, before retirement, of a small evangelical denomination and a former missionary in Latin America. I observed many sound perspectives from these denominational groups and others relative to strategizing and planning before and since the USCWM existed. Yes, I have great appreciation for the USCWM and for many of the para-church agencies.

Thanks for the articles in the current MF regarding the WCGAP and others.

Andrew M. Rupp
Ft. Wayne, IN

The Straw that Broke the Camel's Back

Mission Frontiers has been of immeasurable assistance in my mobilization ministry and personally very informative and inspiring, too. I have followed closely every fresh issue of the

last six years and also reviewed many back issues. The recent issue with the cover title "Putting Church on the Back of A Camel" was the last straw that broke this camel back of mine! ... I would therefore love to receive four copies of each of your future issues to enrich the library of our missions resource center. The Center serves to give missions vision particularly to students and is located in a seminary in Kwara State of Nigeria

Peter A.
Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

Only a Few African-Americans Attending Perspectives?

I get your magazine *Mission Frontiers* regularly and each issue blesses me!!

I'm African-American male (of those involved in missions, you tend to see a larger number of African-American women involved) and have a great desire to see more of a presence of African-American Christians, churches and ministries take on their global responsibility

This email was inspired by the picture I saw on page 17 of your recent [July-August] issue of *MF* [portraying a Perspectives class] where I saw not one single African-American. If I were to take a wild guess, I would say that that is the general picture of what takes place in the Perspectives classes around the country. I am sure there are a few that attend, but in the majority of the cases you don't find too many. That breaks my heart. . . .

[M]y purpose in sending this email was to let you know that there are African-American Christians out there desperately wanting a greater involvement for other African American Christians and churches. Keep up the awesome work in Christ!!

Elder Quintin Smith

Response from Consulting Editor Darrell Dorr:

Thanks so much for your letter. Perspectives director Steve Halley confirmed to me that relatively few African-Americans now participate in Perspectives classes. But take heart, for things may be starting to change! One indication of such change is a new book advertised on page 20: may you find African-American Experience in World Mission to be a powerful arrow in your quiver.

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Editorial Comment

Ralph D. Winter



How, in this world of universal pain and violence, can anyone for a moment question the existence of a Satanic campaign to reduce and distort the true glory of God?

Do mission agencies need to do “member care”?

In the Second World War I was in the Naval Air Corps training to become a carrier-based pilot. Two things were obvious:

1) I was soon expected to risk my life landing on the deck of a carrier at high seas, and

2) The Navy was taking very good care of these “fly boys” through training that was extensive, meticulous and high-quality.

For example, I had already been rated as “a First-Class Swimmer” before I transferred into pilot training. But that was “nothing” compared to what they expected of pilots who were supposed to be able (if shot down over water) to stay afloat without any floating equipment for a minimum of 19 hours. I think they called that “sculling”—just keeping your nose out of water with very slight movements of the hands.

Back then “taking care” of people in the armed forces emphasized safety, not softness. It was not a case of what was good for servicemen but what was good for the war effort. We were very well taken care of, but it was “you’ve got to learn how to swim because we can’t afford to put \$140,000 of special training into you and then have you sink out of sight the first time you’re shot down.”

Today, the mission agencies are a close parallel in some ways to the armed forces. That is, people don’t become missionaries in order to advance themselves but to advance the gospel. To pray “Thy Kingdom

come on earth” is to promote the glory of God in a captive, darkened earth, riven with evil and suffering, and to do so in direct defiance of a powerful and intelligent enemy who is out to get you and to trip you up in any way he can. (You don’t believe that? Then, that shows how skillful he is in “covering his tracks”—which, according to my pastor, is his greatest achievement.)

Right! The largest single blind-spot in American Evangelicalism is the near total absence of awareness of the larger contest between the Kingdom or rule of God and the forces of Satan. Most believers are merely fighting a personal battle, trying to do what is right and avoid sin. They may be “keep’n busy for Jesus” (bless their hearts) but they are mainly oblivious of the global, historical war.

Indeed, some mission work stresses merely resolving the sin question in individual lives. That is an important but partial picture. Jesus said, “He who seeks to save himself will lose his life, while he who will lose his life for My sake and the Gospel’s will save it.”

Member care and repair

This is why missionary “member care” often needs to be “member repair.” A movement can’t go in just two generations from a 5% divorce rate to a 50% divorce rate and still

produce missionaries who don’t need a lot of “member repair.”

It is soberingly true that in my years on the field member care was not a big thing but that now mission personnel directors are saying that if they did not recruit people who bring a lot of problems with them they would have very few from which to choose.

That is the tragic fact about missions today. Some young people are even expecting that by running away from their homeland they can outrun deep-seated problems, even problems not of their own making.

In the past few months *TIME* has run cover stories about millions and millions of children and adults who have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, other millions who have autism and other millions who are “bipolar.” This incredible explosion of the number of children who (at a minimum) are learning-disabled appears in missionaries’ families, too and pulls whole families off the field.

All this is added to many other instabilities in the American home. You wonder if we have very much to offer the world.

I am getting tired of pointing out that Americans have “invented” adolescence by a questionable prolonging of school incarceration to take a 17-year bite out of people’s lives in essentially non-functioning and non-serving roles, in the process alienating children from parents in extended absence from family life. But, miracu-

lously, many a missionary family avoids a lot of this precisely by being an isolated foreign family in a sea of cultural strangeness.

It is thus still true that not merely *de-*

spite the hazards of living in a foreign culture but *because* of it many, many missionary families and missionary kids end up with more wisdom, resilience, and maturity than those who play it “safe” and stay at home.

Some of the most remarkable people in the world are second-gen-

Most believers are merely fighting a personal battle, mainly oblivious of the global, historical war.

eration missionaries who are unsung and of whom this world is not worthy. This is no accident. Whatever member care or member repair is needed, there is something very vital and often astonishingly healthy about those close missionary families who brave hazards to fight the forces of evil at the front lines of this darkened world.

In any case, the *MF* articles by O'Donnell, Pollock and Reddix contain a great deal of distilled wisdom on issues that are both highly urgent and highly complex.

Short-terms and careers

In this issue you will find a helpful report from a poll of 75 campus workers about the near-total absence of "short-term missionaries" going on to become career missionaries. This may be generally true only because the vast majority of "short-termers" don't really witness firsthand any career work. Years ago one of my daughters came back from a few weeks of a short-term and said, "Daddy, if I thought that was what missionaries did, I would never become a missionary." Had she not grown up in a missionary family, she would probably not have noticed the difference between 1) a short visit of students to strange foreign places, which can be excellent education, and 2) a short-term which would expose them to real and meaningful foreign mission work.

I myself would probably have never become a missionary had I not gone with some church young people for just two weeks to visit five different missionary families, see how they lived, how amazingly they had been able to get through to an indigenous tribal people, etc.

But the embarrassment of riches is that nowadays there are far more young people who want to go out and "see what it is like" than there are hard-working missionaries who have time to drop everything and help a group of young people understand what they are doing. Some mission agencies plan for this quite effectively; missionary careers are more likely to develop in such a case than if the young people never even see a missionary at a distance. ☉

Unlocking the Mystery of Life

In the Evangelical movement today the next-biggest blindspot (see my editorial for the biggest) is the funny attitude we have toward the whole world of "science." We love our cell phones and computers and all that, but basically we suspect that science is really the worst of all threats to the advance of the Kingdom of God.

In some ways science does in fact set itself up as the ungodly, proud human knowledge that prompts John Templeton, in response, to champion "humility" among both scientists and theologians.

But, rightly understood, the Bible does seem clearly to suggest that the most powerful demonstration of the glory of God is His creative handiwork. And that is what scientists are dealing with day and night. Art is the study of what man has made; science is the study of what God has made.

Why should we let the scientists be the main ones to glory in every new glimpse into the fantastic intricacy of the human cell?

Sure, scientists may seem often to be striving to beat each other out, to win grants and prizes and so on. But there is a powerful group among them whose quiet fascination with the truly marvelous and mysterious in both animate and inanimate nature partakes of almost a holy awe.

Proof positive of the holy awe which God's creation can bring is the incontrovertible record of the Moody Institute of Science and featuring the redoubtable Irwin Moon, Ph.D. (UCLA).

Missionaries made such powerful use of those ground-breaking science films that at their peak they were wowing millions in 3,000 showings per day (with an average of 500 persons per showing) throughout the world. In addition, these science films made their way into over 100,000 public schools in this country alone.

Now here is the exciting point. Irwin Moon's daughter married the man (Jim Adams) who for 15 years led the team producing these spectacular science films at the Moody Institute of Science (one of the most strategic Christian ventures in the twentieth century). She and he are still working zealously behind the scenes carrying on that incredible tradition.

This, then, goes far to explain what is undoubtedly the most impressive video ever made on the glory of God and the false moves of certain kinds of science. "Unlocking the Mystery of Life" probes a whole world of awe essentially unknown

in the early days of the Moody Institute of Science.

Its photography employs the very latest computer graphics to portray an astounding world at the microbiological level which both dazzles and confuses the best brains on earth.

It also interviews outstanding scientists, whether believers or not. One scientist interviewed wrote a whole book on molecular evolution, only to yield finally to the simple fact that there has to be some guiding hand in nature rather than the idea (that has swept science, public schools, and even legislatures) of a Darwinian "unguided" evolution.

Now here is the amazing deal which, with your faith and action, can come true if we amass orders totaling 50,000 videos. Note from the producer's Website (www.illustramedia.com) that the retail price is \$22.63 (including shipping). If you (and enough others) can imagine the good use of just eight of these videos in your church (at 8 x \$22.63, or \$181.04 total), we can then arrange for you to receive 50 copies postpaid! That is, 50 for the retail price of eight. Or you can pay the retail price for 16 and we will ship 100 postpaid. In other words, through us you can *buy in units of 50* for $181/50 = \$3.62$ per video postpaid. To reserve your order of one or more case lots of 50, you may utilize our special Website (www.uscwm.org/count_me_in).

However, you may feel you must see this video before making a commitment for multiple copies. So, if you seriously feel you might get up enough interest for one or more units of 50 copies, we will rush you one copy (via first-class mail) for \$10, as a sample. (We will send only one copy in this situation.) If you are pleased with this powerful evangelistic tool, you can then utilize our Website to commit yourself to \$181.04 for each unit of 50 you feel you and your church, school, or fellowship can handle. You can turn around and give them away or sell them for any modest price. This video will wear well and will be passed around enthusiastically.

To obtain a sample copy under these conditions, send your check for \$10 (payable to the "Frontier Mission Fellowship") to Jeanne McKinney, 1605 Elizabeth St., Pasadena, CA 91104. (Inquiries may be directed to Jeanne at 626-296-7501 or jeanne.mckinney@wciu.edu.) *Do not send us any money other than \$10 for a sample copy. You will receive separate directions for payment for the case lots of 50.*

Kelly O'Donnell

Going Global:

A Member Care Model for Best Practice

Member care is going international! Over the past five years (1997–2001), for example, interagency consultations on missionary care have taken place in India, Pakistan, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Hungary, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, New Zealand, USA, Peru, and Brazil. It is especially encouraging to see caregivers emerging from the Newer Sending Countries and their efforts to develop culturally relevant resources. Email forums, web sites, written materials, interagency task forces, and missions conferences enable these and other member care personnel around the globe to communicate and contribute. The member care field is truly maturing. It is developing as an interdisciplinary and international handmaiden to promote the resiliency and effectiveness of mission personnel, from recruitment through retirement.

"Best practice" is a relatively new term within Evangelical missions, although the underlying emphasis on the quality of care has been part of Evangelical missions thinking and practice for some time. Specific examples would be the emphasis on providing proactive care to all mission personnel (e.g., Gardner, 1987) and the need to develop ethical guidelines for member care practice (e.g., Hall & Barber, 1996; O'Donnell & O'Donnell, 1992). What is new

and quite helpful, though, is the emphasis on publicly stating specific commitments to staff care in the form of written principles and evaluation criteria (key indicators), to which a sending agency voluntarily subscribes and is willing to be held accountable. This, in my estimation, is the greatest contribution of the current best practice context to member care in missions.

Overview of the Member Care Model

The basic member care model was developed by Dave Pollock and me, with some initial help from Marjory Foyle. It consists of five permeable spheres which are able to flow into and influence each other (see Figure 2). At the core of the model are the two foundational spheres of master care and self/mutual care. These are encircled by a middle linking sphere called sender care and then surrounded by the two outer spheres of specialist care and network care. Member care specialists and networks stimulate the care offered by the other spheres.

Each sphere includes a summary best practice principle related to the overall "flow of care" needed for staff longevity (Pollock, 1997): the flow of Christ, the flow of community, the flow of commitment, the flow of caregivers, and the flow of connections. Note that the flow of care is initiated by both oneself and others and that it

is always a two-way street. Supportive care thus flows into the life of mission personnel, so that effective ministry and care can flow out from their lives. Such a flow of care is needed due to the many cares and the assortment of "characters" in mission life!

The model includes the sources of member care, such as pastors from sending churches and mutual care between colleagues, and the types of member care, such as medical and debriefing care. Think of it as a tool that can be used by individuals, agencies, service organizations, and regions. The model is a flexible framework to help raise the standards for the appropriate care and development of mission personnel. Use it as "a grid to guide and a guide to goad." Here is an overview of the model....

*Sphere 1: Master Care
(Care from and care for the Master—the "heart" of member care)*

From the Master—the renewing relationship with the Lord and our identity as His cherished children, cultivated by the spiritual disciplines (e.g., prayer, worship) and Christian community, which help us run with endurance and enter His rest (Heb. 12:1, 2; Heb. 4:9-11).

For the Master—the renewal and purpose that derive from trusting/worshipping the Lord, serving Him in our work, often sacrificially, and knowing that we please Him (Col. 3:23, 24).

*Sphere 2: Self and Mutual Care
(Care from oneself and from relationships within the expatriate, home, and national communities—the "backbone" of member care)*

Self care—the responsibility of individuals to provide wisely for their



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own well-being.

Expatriate, home, and national communities—the support, encouragement, correction, and accountability that we give to and receive from colleagues and family members (see the “one another” verses in the New Testament—a list of these is in Jones & Jones, 1995) and the mutually supportive relationships that we intentionally build with nationals/locals, which help us connect with the new culture, get our needs met, and adjust/grow (Larson, 1992).

Sphere 3: Sender Care
(Care from sending groups—church and agency—for all mission personnel from recruitment through retirement—“sustainers” of member care)

All mission personnel—includes children, families, and home office staff, in addition to the “primary service providers” such as church planters, trainers, and field-based administrators.

Recruitment through retirement—includes specific supportive care coordinated by the sending church/agency throughout the life span and significant transitions

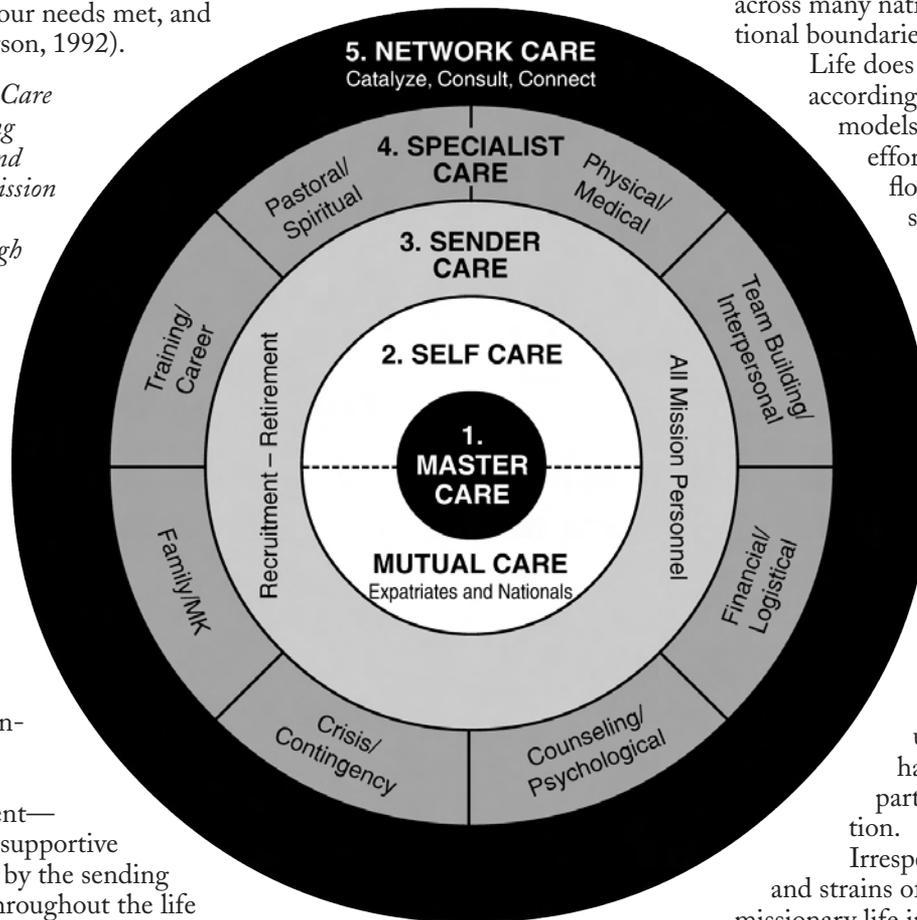
Sphere 4: Specialist Care
(Care from specialists which is professional, personal, and practical—“equippers” of member care)

Specialists—missionaries have a special call, need special skills, and often require various specialist services to remain resilient and “fulfill their ministry” (2 Tim. 4:5).

Eight specialist domains of care—these can be understood and remembered under the rubric “PPractical TTTools FFFor CCare”. These domains and specific examples are as follows: Pastoral/spiritual (retreats, devotionals); Physical/medical (medi-

cal advice, nutrition); Training/career (continuing education, job placement); Team building/interpersonal (group dynamics, conflict resolution); Family/MK (MK education options, marital support group); Financial/logistical (retirement, medical insurance); Crisis/contingency (debriefing,

Figure 2
A Best Practice Model of Member Care



evacuation plans); Counseling/psychological (screening, brief therapy).

Sphere 5: Network Care
(Care from international member care networks to help provide and develop strategic, supportive resources—“facilitators” of member care)

Networks—the growing body of interrelated colleagues and groups which facilitate member care by serving as catalysts, consultants, resource links, and service providers

Resources—the network is like a fluid that can flow into the other four spheres and different geographic

regions to stimulate and help provide several types of resources.

Applications and Final Thoughts

This best practice model is relevant for two main reasons. First, it is biblical in its core concepts, with its emphasis on our relationship with Christ and with each other, along with the role of self-care. Second, the model is general enough to be both culturally and conceptually applicable across many national and organizational boundaries.

Life does not always work according to our best practice models. Likewise, our best efforts for providing a flow of care can only go so far. We must remember that God is sovereign over any member care model or approach. His purposes in history often take precedence over our own personal desires for stability and order in our lives (Jer. 45:1-5). This is frequently the case for missionaries, where hardship, disappointment, and unexpected events have historically been part of the job description.

Irrespective of the struggles and strains of life in general and of missionary life in particular, we know that there is still much joy in the Lord! Joy and pain are not mutually exclusive. Joy is refined by and often flows from life’s challenges and pains.

Member care is important not because missionaries necessarily have more or unique stress, but rather because missionaries are strategic. They are key sources of blessing for the unreached. Member care is also important because it embodies the biblical command to love one another. Such love is a cornerstone for mission strategy. As we love, people will know that we are His disciples. 🌐

Care & Caregivers

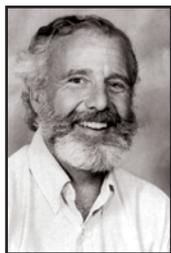
In the missions community, care of personnel is the fulfillment of our mandate and the natural expression of our fellowship. It is, of course, more than just protection against financial loss or safeguarding our investments. Such care is not an event, nor is it necessarily automatic. Rather, it is an intentional, planned, and ongoing flow which occurs throughout missionary life.

Stage 1: Recruitment

Key to good recruitment is "honesty in advertising." The likely cost must be spelled out, as well as the needs and rewards. Jesus directs His disciples to count the cost before building a tower. This does not mean that a high cost precludes building the tower, but rather by counting the cost one avoids discouraging and destructive surprises.

Stage 2: Screening

The agency should be seeking the best possible people to do the task. Candidates need to meet basic requirements, but the agency should acknowledge that recruits will grow and learn with time and experience. The agency needs to be protected from bad choices for the sake of itself and its existing teams, as well as for the sake of those who will be served. . . . For those who are probable candidates and potential personnel, there is... an important screening process that is called "screening in,"... designed to discover as much as possible about each individual, in order to direct and place each one (and the entire family) wisely and then to deliver appropriate care and support throughout their entire life experience....



*David Pollock is the director of Interaction, an organization committed to support and care for interculturally mobile families and third-culture kids. He is also the co-coordinator of the WEA Missions Commission Member Care Task Force and has written extensively, including co-authoring the book *The Third Culture Kid Experience: Growing Up Among Worlds*. This article is excerpted from chapter 2 of *Doing Member Care Well* (2002, William Carey Library and the World Evangelical Alliance).*

Stage 3: Preparation and Pre-Field Departure

Pre-departure orientation, properly developed, should accomplish several objectives. First, it should assist people in "leaving right." Leaving right is key to entering right and to the correct process of reentering when one returns to the place of origin. Secondly, this experience should assist in developing and defining expectations that are both realistic and sufficiently positive. Thirdly, the orientation should help develop a frame of reference that provides basic understanding of one's own reactions and responses to the new environment and helps to develop a positive attitude toward good adjustment and ability to learn....

Stage 4: Departure

An important aspect of the pre-field experience is the opportunity for proper farewells. The commissioning of missionaries is an important step in the process, but often the less formal aspects of departure are just as critical. Being certain that a "RAFT" [Reconciliation of unresolved conflicts, Affirmations, Farewells, Thinking about the new destination] is built to help one get to the new location is important....

Stage 5: Arrival

Probably the most important aspect of arriving is to have healthy, proactive mentors. A mentor, who is an important type of caregiver, performs two tasks. First of all, mentors introduce the culture to the newcomer. They answer questions that are asked and questions that should have been asked.

They make suggestions, correct errors, and generally guide through the uneasy experience of being foreign. The second task of mentors is to introduce the newcomer to the community. Sometimes this is accomplished automatically by virtue of the mentor's reputation, which can open relationships to others, while at other times the mentor must actively introduce the newcomer....

Stage 6: Field Life

Specialists with knowledge and experience in the international and missions community are critical in providing a flow of adequate care. A flow of caregivers who can deliver care through their specialties of medicine, psychology, crisis intervention, pastoral care, team building, conflict management, education, training, fiscal support, and career development across mission agency lines is necessary.

Stage 7: Preparation for Returning "Home"

For many, the process of returning to one's "home" country is more challenging than moving to a new one. Also, for many the first such transition comes as a shock. Preparation for this change is both loving and necessary. The same process of leaving right via a "RAFT" is necessary for returning right.... Another part of repatriation includes the preparation of those receiving the overseas sojourner. Neal Pirolo (2000) in his book *The Reentry Team* uses the model of the church of Antioch as the basis for forming both right perspectives and right plans for healthy missionary reentry....

Stage 8: Reentry

...Mentors are vital to reentry support. The healthiest and most helpful people should be invited to be mentors for adults and young people alike. The role of mentors is to inform, answer questions, and give guidance to returnees.

Stage 9: Ongoing Support

There are at least three special categories of people in the missions community who should have specialized and ongoing support. They are the "beginners" [third-culture kids], the "finishers" [retiring missionaries and others concluding their missionary careers for other reasons], and the "injured" [physically, psychologically, or spiritually].... 🌐

More than Counseling

The member care world is developing and growing. “Member Care” once meant counseling for missionaries. Now we see a movement to provide practical support that far exceeds the earlier practice.

The article by Kelly O'Donnell in this issue of *Mission Frontiers* portrays the scope of member care, so I won't repeat that here. Rather, I'll share with you what missionaries are telling me about ways their sending church or agency can partner with them to improve their success rate in planting churches in the remaining unreached people groups.

Success, in my estimation, is completing the Great Commission while exhibiting the love expounded in 1 Corinthians 13. A veteran missionary in Central Asia said to me, “Our message of a transforming relationship with Isa (Jesus), of salvation by grace, was most believable and had the greatest fruit when our message of God's love was lived out in their presence.” Others have told me that locals who observed successful resolution of conflict between missionary workers saw the basis for a credible message: “Behold, how they love one another.”

Don't Forget Us!

“Where are your parents and grandparents?” asked the Afghani boy of his Western playmate. The Afghani was struggling to understand how the Western family came to live in their village but left their extended family back home. We leave many of

our most important friends and family when we go to the field. When not successfully navigated, this reality can result in greatly diminished effectiveness. Staying successfully connected with our existing support system, while building another system on the field, is key to successful transition and longevity.

“Please come and spend time with us.”

Making well-planned visits to the field is one way to stay connected with your workers. A well-planned visit is one where we go as “learners” to provide encouragement and support. The first key is listening and observing. Numerous workers have told me of the encouragement they receive when their pastor comes to spend time with them. It is beneficial for both church and worker to insure that their relationship be more than monetary. These visits help dispel the unproductive thinking “Are they really doing what we support them to do?” and “Do we really mean anything to those people back home?”

“Help us stay accountable.”

It is hard to be completely forthcoming with people who don't know us and love us. Mutual respect is a sign of healthy relationships. The difference between a financial ledger and reality is well illustrated by the recent collapse of multibillion-dollar companies. Building and maintaining relationship with your workers may make the difference between the startling news of collapse and the ability to provide help and account-

ability along the way. Do you have the relational respect as well as the relational authority to provide meaningful accountability?

Accountability goes beyond financial responsibility. It has been my experience that missionaries welcome pastoral care, which extends to supporting and tracking their spiritual growth. To know someone through the seasons of their spiritual and relational growth is as important for your flock on the field as at home. For church planters, who often feel that they are reliving the book of Acts, your ongoing correspondence and relationship will make you their Paul or Barnabas. Do you want to influence the pastoral care of newly-reached peoples? Pastor your workers on the field.

“Please actively invite us to stay connected to our church home.”

What can be done to stay connected? This may start with an honest assessment of your desire to stay connected. If years have gone by with little meaningful contact, it still may not be too late to turn this around. Are you the sending church of a missionary? When a number of churches and individuals are financially supporting your worker, there is often the expectation that “someone else” is pastoring and meaningfully relating to Bill and Sally in Bonga-Bonga Land.

In recent years I have come to know a pastor of a small church in Arizona. To hear Randy tell the story, you recognize that they have sent some of their best when they sent “Tom” and “Lisa”. Randy says that if the senior pastor is not enthusiastic about their workers planting a church in this unreached people group, then how can he expect the congregation to reach out to them?



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A limited budget does not stop this small congregation from doing a great job staying connected through visits, mail and logistical support. Other churches contribute to the support of this couple, but Tom and Lisa know where their home is and who provides primary care for them.

“Please tell our sending agency and sending church to stay connected on our behalf.”

I am pleased to see increasing efforts being made by agencies and churches in this regard. When it comes to pastoring and personal contact, there is a role for both church and agency. When the one knows what the other is doing, the support is more focused and the worker is less likely to feel abandoned and forgotten.

A missions pastor for a large church has this approach: “I interview agencies to see if there is a good fit with our people before we approve their working with the

care for our people.” This type of partnership utilizes the strengths of church and agency.

Get to Know What Our Life in the Field is Really Like

Here is where I need to focus on the role of suffering. Participating in the sufferings of Christ is normative in every Christian life. Furthermore, without exception, every long-term worker I have spoken to has experienced suffering in ways that exceed their experience back home. We often don't know about this suffering unless we are in close contact. After all, it is hard for any of us to speak of our difficulties and our reactions to suffering. This is especially true when workers are concerned about being seen as

which we are tracking with each other over time makes possible sharing in each other's sufferings and rejoicing in each other's triumphs. “Weep with those who weep, and rejoice with those who rejoice.”

Some of the usual and customary stresses in the life of a cross-cultural worker are relatively easy to anticipate or observe. Other, subtler stresses are only known by those who understand the specifics of living in a particular location and the history of the worker.

“Does anyone really know what we are going through?”

These less-obvious challenges are part of the stuff of missionary life. Frequent transitions can be discerned “between the lines” in the typical prayer letter:

- “We have wonderful opportunities to minister in the next village.” (Translation: Dad has been gone for days or weeks while local warlords battle in the city.)

- “We had an inspiring missionary conference.” (Translation: We needed to move children and possessions over mountain passes to an unfamiliar location, and we pray we don't have problems crossing the border when we try to return “home”.)

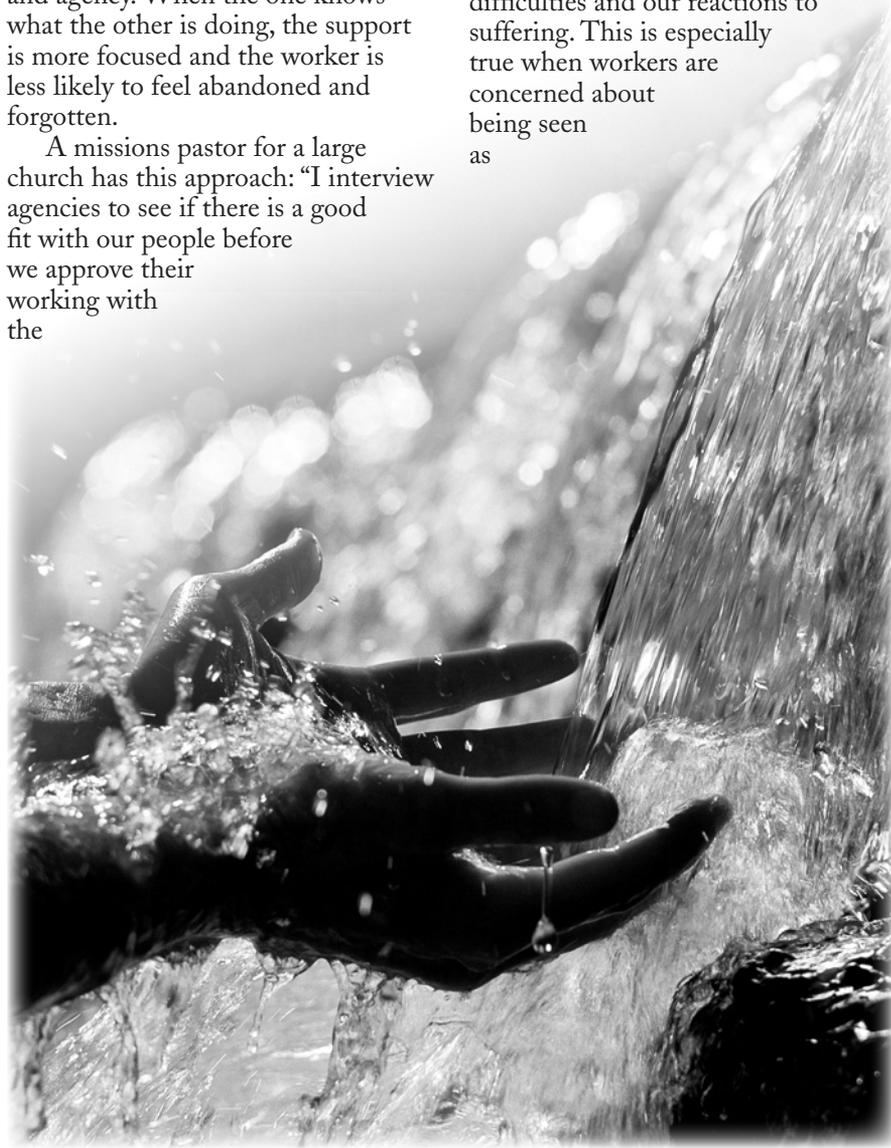
- “We finally received our visa to remain in the country.” (Translation: After years of needing to leave the country every few months and living with the uncertainty that we might not be able to stay, we can now settle down, unless the government changes and we have to go through this all over again.)

- “We have seen the new church grow and appoint elders.” (Translation: We may now be asked to leave the country because the new church is visible and not welcomed in this place.)

- “Our son has been accepted with a full scholarship to a college of his choice.” (Translation: How will he do? When will see him next? Is there money for us to visit him if he needs our encouragement?)

“We are doing OK. How are you?”

When we look closely at life on the field, we see another category I call “chronic stress” – the stresses that become so familiar that the worker may not recognize them as stresses.



agency. We want them to know what we will do to provide pastoral care and connection and want to know what they do to train, support and

weak or unspiritual. The principal antidote to this type of shame is to have honest, grace-oriented relationships with our workers. Relationships in

This lack of recognition may reflect helpful adaptation, but it can sometimes come at the price of physical or emotional breakdown.

One category of chronic stress is

it difficult to form longstanding relationships and can be misunderstood by peers back in the home country.

Often forgotten in the missionary picture are parents, grandparents

partner to work through just one of those books ...”

Spiritual health is not just a private matter. Fellowship with fellow believers brings to us the benefits of the “one another” truths in Scripture. Do your frontier workers have the opportunity to worship with others? Is there someone who will correspond with them as a spiritual mentor?

Do you want to influence the pastoral care of newly-reached peoples? Pastor your workers on the field.

Help Us Plan for Crisis

One arena in which relationships between church, agency and worker can be severely tested is the arena of crisis. Confusion, disorganization and blame are all likely to happen when there is not adequate planning and a relationship of trust between these entities. The net effect of no planning or insufficient planning is to damage the workers and possibly the work in ways that could have been avoided.

A crisis can be defined as any event or events that disrupt the usual way of living and working. I bring this up with church-planting teams by asking the question, “What three or four predictable events would disrupt your church-planting strategy and work?” I ask churches, “What event or events on the field would disrupt your normal life and put demands on the church which could be disruptive to business as usual?”

Here is a list of crises that are likely in the frontier missions context. It is possible to make contingency

concern for physical safety and health. One mother told me that when she was a single worker she didn't pay much attention to the almost-weekly bombing and brief skirmishes that happened in her city on a disputed border. However, now as a parent she was suffering frequent anxiety attacks and was talking with her husband and the sending church about relocating.

As workers in jungle environments know well, vigilance is a principal defense against illness. I have noticed that this vigilant self-care does not translate so well in urban environments. I see workers ignoring signs of relational, emotional and physical distress, and sometimes it takes a pastoral visit to point out the difficulty. Like the frog which remains in the gradually warming water, some workers get boiled before they recognize they have been exposed to chronic stress.

“I really appreciate those who faithfully remember our birthdays and special days.”

Another category of chronic stress is relational loneliness, which affects singles, married and children. One single woman had 27 different roommates in her 15 years of field service. Singles are often “assigned” a roommate because of cultural necessity; personality differences aside, this is a major issue.

Stability of friendships is sometime very difficult to maintain. David Pollock and Ruth van Reckon highlight this in their book *The Third Culture Kid: Growing Up Amongst Worlds*. I have heard David describe the “quick release” approach to MK friendships. Not knowing how long they will have to be with a peer, MKs can connect quickly and let go quickly. This is an adaptive behavior, but can make

and significant others. I like to refer to all these as the missionary family. What can your church do to connect with these important members of the missionary team? Opportunities for blessing your field worker abound in the arena of their family “back home.”

“We are hanging in there, please pray for our devotional life.”

Some supporters are surprised to realize how missionaries can struggle with spiritual dryness. “What do we have, if we don't have Jesus?” one worker asked of his colleagues at a recent spiritual retreat. Someone retorted, “And what will happen if Jesus doesn't have us?”

Spiritual vitality is so key. Just look at the volumes of books and helps available in the average Christian bookstore in the USA. I watched a woman who had just returned from a remote location, where she had served a four-year term. Her eyes filled with tears as she glanced over the abundance of spiritual helps at our local Christian bookstore. Some days later I asked this woman about her reaction in the bookstore. She lamented, “If I would have had a prayer

plans for each of these: (a) travel-related injury (with possible evacuation to receive care) or death; (b) other sickness, injury or cause of death; (c) natural disaster requiring relocation; (d) evacuation for various reasons (e.g., persecution, armed conflict); (e) moral failure of the missionary, necessitating removal from the field; (f) crisis with a family member in the home country (e.g., with a parent or child in college); (g) compromise of information or security (e.g., a church web site makes inappropriate comments, Christian or secular media inappropriately comment on missionaries' work, computers are taken, phones are tapped).

The cooperation of church and agency can keep a tragedy from becoming a debilitating crisis for the church-planting team, church and agency. Be prepared. Ask your workers about their contingency plans, and work on a complementary plan that is realistic for your church or agency. Ask the agency their policy in times of crisis such as political unrest or sickness of a worker. Unspoken and unreconciled expectations create common problems when time comes for response to crises.

Help Us Locate Specialists Who Can Increase Our Effectiveness

Help from specialists is a way of life for the resource-rich Western world. Finding a specialist willing to go to workers in the field is not too difficult. But, as one worker said, "We need someone who understands what life is like in this place, our limited resources, our limited energy, and our need to make cultural modifications to many Western ways of doing things." At a debriefing I was leading, one worker from a war-ravaged location coined the term "disaster tourist" to identify those specialists who are not really prepared to help in the local context of disintegrated infrastructure and danger. He said that much time was spent caring for specialists rather than "doing the work we are here to do"!

This is a dilemma: how to elicit appropriate expertise and meet the expectations of the field worker looking for advice that will work in their location? I have found that those

specialists who are willing to go as learners, to ask "what is it like here?", are the ones invited to return. Humble service by specialists, many of whom have respect and prestige back home, speaks volumes about Christ and His love.

I encourage you to prepare a list of specialists, e.g., in your church, that you could mentor toward serving your workers in the field. To help you, I repeat here the eight specialty domains mentioned by Kelly O'Donnell in chapter 1 of *Doing Member Care Well*: (1) Pastoral/spiritual (retreats, devotionals); (2) Physical/medical (medical advice, nutrition); (3) Training/career (continuing education, job placement); (4) Team building/

The cooperation of church and agency can keep a tragedy from becoming a debilitating crisis for the church-planting team, church and agency.

interpersonal (group dynamics, conflict resolution); (5) Family/MK (MK education options, marital support group); (6) Financial/logistical (retirement, medical insurance); (7) Crisis/contingency (debriefing, evacuation plans); (8) Counseling/psychological (screening, brief therapy).

Is It Really "Furlough"?

Those highly anticipated trips "home" from the field are such mixed experiences. Good books and other resources can help you prepare for the time your workers are at home. Neil Pirolo's *Serving As Senders* and *The Reentry Team* are good choices with good insight. Much can be done to make the experience a good one for workers, families and churches. Don't let this be an event that just "comes and goes" with little planning. Each trip back to the home church or home country is full of possibility for blessings and refreshment.

One common theme for workers on "furlough" is to overbook themselves speaking, visiting, studying, seeing "all the family" and generally not resting. You can help by recommending and giving accountability to a furlough plan that includes rest.

The plan could also be to help with logistics like housing, transportation, getting schoolbooks and supplies, and arranging medical, dental and other health checks. It can also help if you sponsor dinners where a number of supporters can come in one evening to hear news and enjoy time with their missionaries.

Pray, Pray, Pray

Just as we have experienced times of difficulty in prayer, so have our missionary friends. Let's be plain and practical in this matter. Those who have stopped praying (for any reason) are in serious danger of missing the mark. The words of Jesus are compelling: You did all these things in my name, but I never knew you. Ouch!

Prayer is an intimate subject. Asking someone about his or her prayer life can be comparable to asking about his or her sex life. (And what if they ask *us* about *our* prayer life?) Yet if we want to be successful in church-planting and in the sending and supporting of church planters, we need to be prepared to appropriately ask.

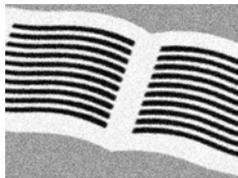
Conclusion

In this article I have highlighted areas that missionaries have brought to my attention. I have touched briefly on issues that are more complex than my comments may suggest. If you want to learn more, I recommend the two most complete books on member care presently in print: *Doing Member Care Well* and *Too Valuable to Lose*. (See the William Carey Library advertisement elsewhere in this issue of *Mission Frontiers*.) I strongly recommend these books to every church and sending agency. Read the research, reflect on the applications, and find your place in the final frontier of discipling the peoples and demonstrating the command of Jesus to "love one another as I have loved you." 🌐

NEWS

Notes

Mission Journals



✍ The July 2002 issue of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly (EMQ)* features a cluster of articles on “Missions & the Arts”, including Richard Shawyer’s contribution on “Indigenous Worship”. Meanwhile, the July issue of *EMQ* has other good things to offer. William Dyrness (co-author, with James Engel, of *Changing the Mind of Missions*) briefly responds to the criticisms of his controversial book. You’ll also find brief, readable reviews of other books, including *A Dictionary of Asian Christianity*, *Peoples on the Move*, and *Peacemaking*. You can learn more via www.wheaton.edu/bgc/emis or contact *EMQ* at PO Box 794, Wheaton, IL 60189, Emis@wheaton.edu.

✍ The *International Bulletin of Missionary Research (IBMR)* spreads another fine meal before us with its July 2002 issue, featuring Charles Taber’s lead article, “In the Image of God: The Gospel and Human Rights”. Three notable mission leaders are profiled: Harold W. Turner (Centre for New Religious Movements), Robert Reid Kalley (service in Brazil), and Paul Brand (medical missionary in India), the latter in an autobiographical “My Pilgrimage in Mission”. Gerald Anderson adds a review of Barrett’s and Johnson’s *World Christian Trends* and the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, showing appreciation for this monumental reference set but raising some appropriate questions as well. Learn more via www.omsc.org. For subscriptions, contact the *IBMR* at PO Box 3000, Denville, NJ 07834.

✍ *Missiology: An International Review* offers in its July 2002 issue at least

two articles of note to those with special interest in frontier mission. In “The World in My Parish: Rethinking the Standard Missiological Model,” Michael Rynkiewicz asserts, “Contrary to the standard model, culture is contingent, culture is constructed, and culture is contested. The missionary situation is not as simple as it has seemed.” Find out what he means and why it matters. Rabban Sauma also contributes a helpful article on “Ancestor Practices in the Muslim World: A Problem of Contextualization from Central Asia.” For further information, contact *Missiology* at 616 Walnut Avenue, Scottsdale, PA 15683-1999, E-mail cdepta@mph.org, Web www.asmweb.org/missiology.htm

✍ The *International Journal of Frontier Missions* continues its accelerated catch-up schedule to get current. By the time this issue of *Mission Frontiers* reaches your hands, *IJFM* issues 18:3 (Fall 2001) and 18:4 (Winter 2001) should be available to you. In both issues Joseph and Michele C. continue their series on “Field-Governed Mission Structures in the Bible and Throughout the Centuries”.

Issue 18:4 gives you an array of articles portraying “lessons from India”, compiled by Jamie Bean and the USCWM’s Institute of Hindu Studies. For *IJFM* subscriptions, contact: 7665 Wenda Way, El Paso, TX 79915, E-mail 103121.2610@compuserve.com, www.ijfm.org

Focus for Prayer



✍ Throughout 2002 Morocco has been the focus of special prayer by thousands of people via the “Arise Shine Morocco” effort spearheaded by Frontiers. It’s not too late to participate. If you’d like a free copy of the 52-week prayer booklet, contact Janet T. by phone at +1-480-834-1500 or by E-mail at prayer-us@frontiers.org

✍ During September 2002 Libya is receiving similar attention. For example, www.springsinthedesert.org will give you opportunity to enter into a more compassionate understanding of Libya and its needs.

Darrell Dorr

Darrell Dorr is the Consulting Editor of *Mission Frontiers*.

✍ **Annual Meeting, North American Chapter, International Society for Frontier Missiology**
Orlando FL, 3-5 October 2002

- Is there something inherently wrong with the way mission frontiers are currently being addressed?
- The task of “unreached peoples” isn’t over: taking a closer look at the history of the movement and the challenge ahead.
- Mainly unaddressed by mission agencies, the greatest single stumbling block to the world’s educated is no longer invincible.
- Rarely discussed issues of fundamental mission structure simply won’t go away.
- Essentially abandoned by traditional missions, India’s Hindus are still a colossal, unresolved challenge.

This year’s ISFM meeting is part of the larger gatherings of the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association (IFMA) and the Evangelical Missiological Society (EMS). For details and registration, see www.ifmamissions.org/train.htm. Further questions about the ISFM meetings may be directed to Rory Clark at +1-626-398-2108 or rory.clark@wciu.edu, or you may learn more at www.ijfm.org.

Servant's Love

The foundation for working with the Body of Christ

—Greg H. Parsons

We hear stories of CEOs in secular companies and their ability to make tough decisions and be ruthless when necessary. While some of those stories may now be revealing their “other” side in the corporate financial scandals of our day, we believers often admire them—openly or secretly. People with similar gifting may lead our churches or ministries.

Of central importance to us is to think through what we appreciate in these people and why. We don't want to “throw out the baby with the bath water” and say we cannot learn from them at all, or fail to grapple with how these issues translate within the Body of Christ.

Last Sunday morning I was reminded of the men who gathered to get their Kingdom assignments in the upper room—or so they thought. They came with all the expectation you can imagine. Jesus had entered the city just a few days before to the praise and cheers of the people. He had cleansed the Temple and then inhabited it by teaching there for two straight days. Things were looking good to the Twelve.

As they came into that borrowed upper room, there was no servant there with a low enough rank to wash their feet during that particularly muddy time of year.

But they reclined with their feet away from the table thinking, perhaps, that someone else should do that. They, after all, were going to be on Jesus' right or left—or as

close as possible. Perhaps the order around the table that night would give a clue as to what Jesus was thinking since He hadn't answered them directly when they asked Him. John, that bold “son of thunder” (the CEO stereotype?), was right next to Jesus.

How often do we see examples of leaders demonstrating loving servanthood in the Church? What would happen if we founded our relationships upon an active, loving servanthood?

Apparently Peter was late enough not to get on the other side. Probably Judas was there actually.

Of course, that sets the scene for Jesus washing their feet—the thing no ruler over one of the 12 thrones would do—but the King himself did.

After Jesus finished, and sat down, He said, “Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord’ and do so correctly, for that is what I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet...” (John 13:12b-14a)

How would the average CEO or President finish that sentence?

How would you? We might expect, “you wash My feet.”

Stop for a second. Have you thought about how much we might go through to be able to wash Jesus' feet? We would stand in long lines. We would wait for days perhaps (maybe even longer than for the Rose Parade or for concert or play-off game tickets!).

But Jesus tells us something much more difficult, “...you too ought to wash one another's feet.”

Many commentators believe that Jesus is demonstrating the new commandment of love—which He will teach about later in the evening.

So the question of us is: how do we who claim to follow Him apply it? How often do we see examples of leaders demonstrating loving servanthood in the church?

While we can learn from various patterns in our culture and around the globe, the secular model is not our standard here. When we see the church in the West blindly following a secular pattern, a good missionary might ask, “Does that model necessarily work well for spreading the church in other lands and from different backgrounds?”

The core character issue of a

loving, servant's action is central for the Christian and especially for the missionary. One of the biggest applications for us is not necessarily in the missions, churches, or ministries we lead but in our homes and in the small circle of believers we serve with day-to-day. As this issue of *MF* points out, many of the biggest problems for field missionaries is related to the dirty feet of our co-workers (read: interpersonal relationships). What would happen if we founded those relationships upon an active, loving servanthood? How much would non-believers see Christ in us through our service and love for each other?

At the same time, Paul often refers to himself as a servant of Christ—a role we have, too. We can serve each other to the extreme that we don't know why we are serving. We don't see where it is all leading.

But for some, it is far easier to hide behind “serving Christ,” partly because we can use our personal sense of calling or using our “gifting.” In reality, that calling may be our own idea (not God's) and that “gift” is really a way of masking a character flaw that the Lord really would like changed. ☉



Rev. Greg Parsons is General Director of the U.S. Center for World Mission. He's been on staff at the USCWM for 19 years.