



For Your
Church's

Missions Department

Ideas and
suggestions

directly from your

Missionaries

Ideas and suggestions

from your Missionary

QUESTION: What are some of the things that you as missionaries have enjoyed at missions functions you've attended?

"I enjoyed the conventions and services where the missions director and/or missions committee had taken time to find out as much as possible about the ministries represented. Pictures and video presentations are great, as well as sharing key stories which acquaint the congregation more with the ministries involved."

"We have enjoyed places where we got to meet and share with the whole congregation. Sometimes we have met with youth groups or women's groups or men's groups. A few times we have visited home cell groups and that was enjoyable. Of course banquets are always enjoyable times of meeting and sharing."

"One thing I enjoyed is that some churches have done small group settings for their missions conventions, bringing in many missionaries on one night, but in homes all over town. Whether for meals or just a time of sharing, I felt like I truly connected with the folks when I was in a home for that small group meeting. I still have contact with many of them, and even their children felt a more personal investment in my ministry. I get emails from them and I know that they are really praying for me."

"Speaking at a luncheon, being part of a prayer meeting, missions' parades that include the children, choir, special missions' solos or group songs, banquets. Also speaking to children either in Sunday school classes or in Christian School assemblies."

"1. BEING AT A MISSIONS FUNCTION WHERE YOUNG MISSIONARY CHILDREN (TEENS) ARE ABLE TO GIVE THEIR 'TAKE' ON WHAT THE MISSION FIELD IS.

2. HAVING THOSE INVOLVED IN 'NOT YOUR TYPICAL MISSIONARY ROLES' SHARE THEIR IDEAS AND MINISTRY WHICH MAY NOT NECESSARILY BE BY WAY OF PREACHING. WE HAVE A VARIETY OF MINISTRIES NOW ON THE MISSION FIELD FROM CAMPUS MINISTRY LEADERS TO COMPUTER TECHNICIANS, FROM CHURCH PLANTERS TO THOSE INVOLVED IN MEDIA MINISTRY. MISSIONS IS CHANGING AS CURRENT TRENDS ARE CHANGING ALL OVER THE WORLD AND WE HAVE A VARIETY OF NON-PREACHING MISSIONARIES WHO ARE ABLE TO COME AND SHARE THEIR PRESENTATIONS AT CHURCH MISSIONS BANQUETS."

QUESTION: What were some of the ways churches challenged their people to give to missions that you felt might be really effective, inspirational, and perhaps out of the ordinary?

"Usually the faith promises provides the time for challenging people. In two places we saw the ushers pass offering bags pre-filled with currency. People were encouraged to take the money they felt they needed as seed money with which to raise more money. Probably this would work better if done a few weeks prior to the convention and then have the money brought with celebration to the convention. Whatever the means used to challenge the people it seems important to get everyone involved including the youth and children."

"The pastor asking the people to bring the offering directly to me; one pastor included me as the practical example in his sermon and then asked me to speak at that point. Then, he came back up to the podium, concluded his sermon, and asked the congregation to respond with an offering."

" Some people have made a commitment to give up their newspaper/magazines subscriptions to support a missionary instead, which is a great example of sacrificial giving. One youth group sponsored a missions' drive with spare change, where they tried to fill water cooler jugs with money (divided into teams, this was a Speed-The-Light competition). The youth really got into it, and four water cooler jugs made well over \$1,000 in change and small bills."

"(Example) The missionary purchases small items for approximately \$300.00 and then the churches who host the missions convention auctions these items off to congregation and this auction event has been known to bring in up to \$1,500 in missions offerings."

"One of the most unique ways I have seen churches raise cash for missions is by using one hundred fold program. Approximately 30 days prior to the missions convention or service, each youth and adult member of the congregation is given \$5 and challenged to turn it into \$500. Through buying and selling, trading and a dozen other innovative means, I witnessed well over \$100,000 raised. This method incorporates the talents and interests of the people in the church."

"I think the most effective thing I have experienced is when I get the chance to spend a significant part of the time with the people in the pews---usually in a casual service or during a meal. They are comfortable to ask questions that can't be asked in a regular service setting. Spending time with a missionary during a meal is time that the people can connect with you and hear your heart for ministry. Also, I think when we can re-create experiences in the States that the missionary deals with on the field, there is a better understanding and connection between the missionary and church who is providing the support."

Coming from a missionary who has served both as pastor and later Home and World missionary: "As pastor, I made it a practice to have one missionary a month to speak at the church...from a variety of missionaries representing different parts of the world and specialized ministries. This gives the congregation a worldview. (Pattern for missions giving that worked well for this church.) I prepared the congregation ahead of time by announcing that we would be taking two offerings during the service. In addition to our regular offering, there would be a second "free-will offering" received for the missionary and their work after they spoke. I always gave the people the opportunity to respond financially as the Holy Spirit would move them *after hearing* the missionary speak - they always responded generously and sacrificially.

Our church never had a missions convention...(although the church was giving 20% of its income to missions and supporting 20 missionaries on a monthly basis.) If I was still pastoring, I would have an annual missions convention. "

"I watched a video of a Pastor Friend who ate live bugs on a missions "dare" from his congregation and raised thousands of dollars....I don't know that you want to go that far, but it worked for them! Another youth group once every three months runs a "SPUD THE LIGHT" night at church where they would sell hot baked stuffed potatoes after service....I've heard of other churches raising missions monies by having missions walk a thons...All of the above are quite out of the ordinary....Sometimes I think it is good that churches give Youth/College and Career age folks at their churches the challenge of thinking up ideas for missions fund raising.The Assemblies of God World Missions Office has missions kits as well as excellent 2-5 minute DVD's from ministries all over the world that churches can order (go to the website www.ag.org and go into Missions category) and use to help in their fund raising."

QUESTION: What are some of the ways you've been treated (or perhaps gifts received) that made you and your family feel honored, special, and appreciated as missionaries?

"The more personal the treatment, the more impacted the missionary will be. Although each missionary comes with a financial challenge, dollars are far from being the only need. Knowing that there is a genuine interest in one's ministry goes a long way."

"It is always special to feel that we are being treated well by a congregation. Flowers or fruit or any other basket of goodies put in the motel room is always an appreciated thing. To have someone from the church meet us at the motel at an appropriate time to take us to the meeting place is helpful and much appreciated. This not only insures that we get to the right place on time, but also gives us a new friend to guide us into the church or other meeting place. It is not a matter that we cannot find our way, but this is just something extra special.

"Special touches such as fruit baskets, a hotel room with an ocean view, flowers."

"The biggest way that I am blessed and made to feel comfortable is when I spend time with the pastor and church members and we get connected---now I am part of their family. They regularly email me, send notes and cards, send packages when on the field, and call when I am in the States. It's the little things they do to let me know they are thinking of me and loving on me."

"WHEN VISITING CHURCHES BEING ABLE TO SPEND TIME WITH A PASTOR OR MISSIONS REP OVER A MEAL SO THEY CAN GET TO KNOW US REALLY SPEAKS VOLUMES TO US OF THEIR INTEREST IN MISSIONS. ALSO, THE TIME AND ENERGY SO MANY SMALL GROUPS TAKE TO SEND NOTES/PICTURES OF THEIR GROUPS WHO PRAY FOR US. CARDS WE RECEIVE FROM YOUNG SCHOOL / SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN THAT LET US KNOW THEY ARE PRAYING FOR US. THESE ARE SOME OF THE BEST GIFTS WE COULD EVER RECEIVE. OUR HOME CHURCH HAS BLESSED US IN SO MANY WAYS, BUT ONE THING THEY DO WHENEVER WE GO HOME IS TO SEND US AWAY FOR A FEW DAYS REST. "

"Things, food, materials, come and go, but time and relationships that folks from churches have invested in us have been the most valuable and appreciated gifts anyone could give to our family. Worship CD's, church service CD's, movies, music, books, magazine subscriptions are gifts that can be sent fairly easily through the mail which are appreciated and do not usually go through customs. Things in the English language are not always easy to come by and if they are, cannot be afforded at overseas prices. There are even online magazine subscriptions, etc. that can be bought and no mailing necessary."

(Example) "One church during their missions convention hired a limousine to come to the hotel and pick up missionaries and deliver them to the church where there was a red carpet rolled out. Some of the men of the church were waiting dressed in tuxedos; they presented the missionary wife and daughter with a bouquet of roses as they exited the car, and then escorted them into the banquet area. Many of the church people had lined either side of the carpet and hallway into the missions banquet and they clapped and cheered as the missionaries walked past. That night the church went all out to treat the missionaries present like royalty; gave them a cash offering to spend on a much needed vacation; even purchasing individual gifts for the MK's and made the whole family feel special."

QUESTION: For those of you who have children, what are some of the ways churches have made or can make your children feel honored, special, and appreciated as “missionary kids” ?

“When our children were with us, it was always nice to have them recognized or some small gift presented to them publicly. We always tried to make them feel that they were part of the missions team, and recognition by a church helps make that more real to them.”

“Although our children are grown, I can remember a small church giving them a “change offering” when they were small. Also, in cases where there are teenage missionary kids, being included in the youth activities of the church can be a real plus.”

“I mentioned to one church that I never get any *real mail*, only junk mail (and even that not in English), and someone took it upon themselves to organize a “mail drive” for me. A woman purchased several packs of blank greeting cards, and each Sunday she would ask two or three people in the church to fill them out, and she would mail them to me throughout the week. I got to hear from a lot of people who wouldn't normally write to me (deacons, busy moms, teenagers, etc). It was so great to get all those cards in the mail, and a lot of people included their email address in their little note, so I got even further personal contact out of it.

A few people got even further involved and have sent me old magazines, and that is a nice thing to do. I don't have much to read in English (or that has to do with American life), so the magazines are always interesting, even if out of date. One lady clips all the crosswords from the Sunday paper (along with the answers, of course) and sends them to me.

Two things that I think are incredibly useful: books on CD (great on those long car trips or flights) and gift certificates to standard restaurants (pizza hut, Ruby Tuesdays, other national chains). We spend hours on the road and a gift certificate keeps us from having to spend so much on meals. Plus, if it's a “nicer” restaurant, it makes a good treat, instead of always McDonalds!”

“I am closely involved in the lives of our missionary kids (MKs) on our fields and have observed that our children become more adapted to the country they come to live in, and they tend to break all ties with the United States. When it then comes time for them to move back for college, a good amount of these children are not able to adapt to their own home country.”

I am passionate to find a way to “bridge” this gap in the lives of our MKs and I see our churches and their youth groups may be one use tool in helping our MKs in this area. I am not exactly sure

of all the specifics of how this can work, but I am convinced if *before* a family leaves for the mission field that somehow their children can be “adopted” by a group in a particular church (their home church would be ideal) this would be a big help. Then if this group could keep in close contact through out the MK’s missionary life on the field by not only letters or cards on their birthdays, but by an occasional phone call, photos sent back and forth, emails, messaging online, constant communication (not necessarily physical *gifts* are always needed as kids need relationships from their home country and this *gift* is the greatest.) Maybe the group could even plan bi-yearly trip to the MK’s field or bring a team to help the MK’s family and possibly send for the MK him/herself to fly home for a church wide event. **Many MK’s do not see their grandparents for 4 years at a time.** Or perhaps maybe a church would help grandparents to get to visit their families on the field or help a missionary family get home for Christmas once out of the 4 years they area away. I understand there are a large number of missionaries and churches certainly cannot afford to do this for everyone all the time. Possibly a District could inquire into missionary families who really need time with family the States and try to be a help in this way. These are all just “possibilities” ...and one that is heavy on my heart as I have seen children (including my own), take many years to re-adapt to their own culture because their contacts on the field were limited to family.”

QUESTION: What are some of the things you've said to each other---"I really would like to see or wish they would"

"CALL BACK! ☺ Even if the answer is "No, we cannot support you, or cannot have you for a service" it helps to just have the honest answer. I don't have to keep calling and leaving messages..... which make me feel like a stalker...or that they are avoiding me at district and sectional functions. ☺ "

"I really wish they would just return my phone call."

"If the pastor would just call me back...."

" I always appreciated the pastors/churches that told me what type of clothing to wear. I don't always know which churches are casual and which aren't, and I didn't like being dressed way better than the pastor and everyone one else at times. I also would never want to be too casually dressed. At least one church requested that I not wear pants at any time while I was there (overnight) and although I have different convictions, I did appreciate that they gave me advance warning, so I would be prepared. If pastors can just give a heads-up on whether they are traditional, formal or very casual, that does help."

We have sometimes said, "I wish the young people could have been part of the missions service", or, "I wish the children had been with us in the service." Often youth pastors have their own programs arranged and don't want to have those arrangements bothered by having to bring their youth into the adult service. We have seen the young people and children as the ones most often challenged by the Lord to become involved in missions.

"Before sending gifts/packages overseas, ask the missionary if it will have to go through customs in their country and then cost them money to retrieve. I remember being in foreign country for language school and a church sent us a fruit cake for Christmas....bless their hearts, this was a great thought, but the customs department wanted us to pay \$45 to get the cake out of customs. We told them to enjoy the cake, and I'm sure they did. "