

*What  
can I  
do?*



A manual for making the  
**most** of your missionary

  
wycliffe  
Bible translators



## **In the busy life...**

of a local church "out of sight" can easily become out of mind. Missionaries leave town and we easily lose track of them until a prayer letter comes in the post. Missionaries often ask for prayer and sometimes ask for financial support but you can support your missionary friends in many ways beyond these two obvious needs.

It is our purpose in this leaflet to help you with ideas of how you and your church can greatly help your missionaries and the cause of spreading the gospel. Practical ways, simple ways, ways that will make you so appreciated by the missionary overseas.

We have suggestions for before they leave, while they're overseas, and after they return as well as ideas for praying effectively and sharing your vision for mission with others.

**Enjoy!**

# Easy ways to make the most of your missionary...

## Before they go.....pages 4-5

- ◆ Help with their house
- ◆ Store some of their possessions
- ◆ Ask what they need, what they read
- ◆ Arrange a holiday
- ◆ Arrange a place to live
- ◆ Promote their prayer letter
- ◆ Form a prayer group and then pray

## While they're there.....pages 6-9

- ◆ Keep in touch
- ◆ Look after home concerns
- ◆ Help elderly parents
- ◆ Encourage children back home

## When they return.....pages 10-11

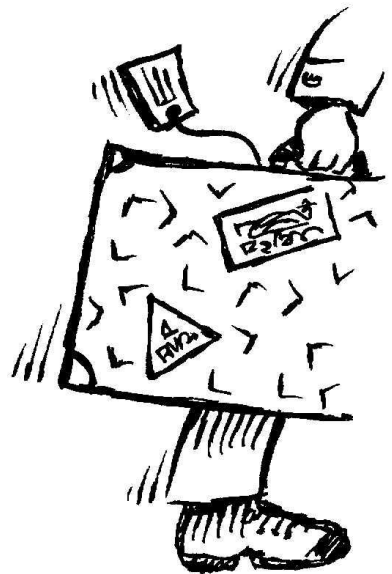
- ◆ Provide accommodation
- ◆ Share a vehicle
- ◆ Clothe them
- ◆ Help with schooling, holidays, meetings
- ◆ Visit them
- ◆ Welcome them home with a party

## Praying effectively.....pages 12-13


- ◆ As a church, a group or on your own
- ◆ With knowledge and understanding
- ◆ ...and sometimes at 3:00 am

## Sharing your vision.....pages 14-15

- ◆ Keep others enthused and informed
- ◆ Involve newcomers
- ◆ Make use of Wycliffe Resources
- ◆ Speakers and teams
- ◆ Suggested further reading



# Before they go



*Have a lovely time. We'll enjoy hearing about it when you get back.*

**T**here is a lot to think about and a lot to do as an overseas worker prepares to leave. It can be a stressful time leaving behind family, friends and familiar surroundings and stepping out into a very new situation. You can share some of the load by listening, understanding and praying for them during this time. You can also help with some of the practical details

**Help with their house**

You could be the home contact who not only helps find a tenant but also keeps in touch with the agent.

**Store some possessions**

Anyone who has moved out of a house knows how many boxes get filled. Is there room for one or two in your loft?

**Ask what they need**

Malaria pills? A water filter? A computer and printer? Any other tools for the job? New glasses or dental work before they go? Film to use on first impressions?

**Ask what they read**

You could offer a subscription to their favourite magazine or Bible reading notes.

**Arrange a holiday**

Give them a chance to relax before they leave.

**Arrange a place to live**

They may have had to vacate their home some time before they actually leave. Can you help house them before they go?

**Prepare a scrapbook**

New church members will arrive while the missionaries are away. They may want to know more than the prayer card and latest letter tells them. Family photos and background information can be a real help.



**Promote their prayer letter**

Regular prayer letters will be sent from the mission field. As well as advertising them and recruiting others to read them, you could be involved in producing and distributing them.

**Form a prayer group**

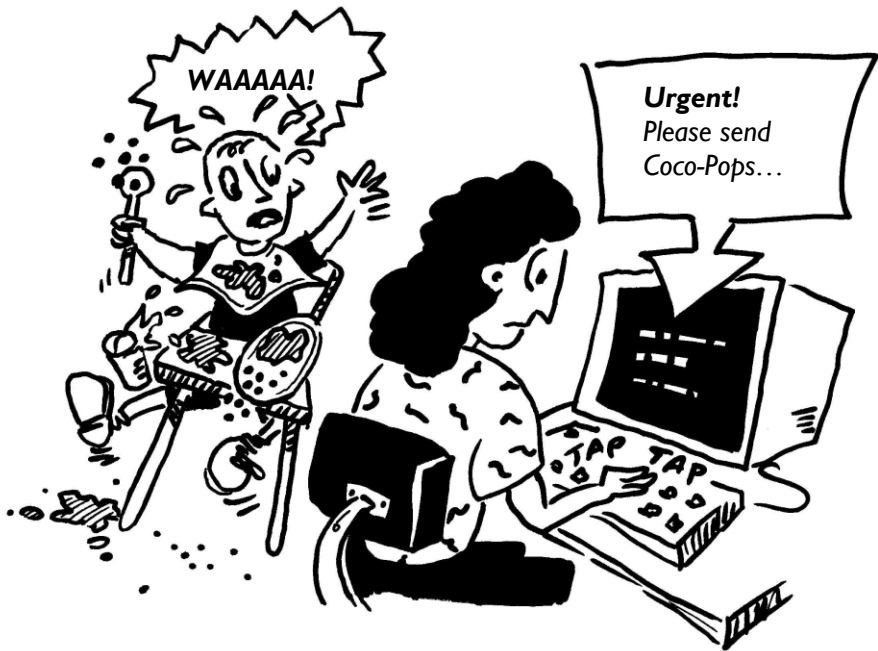
Prayer is needed now and not just while they're away. It also makes everything so much more personal if prayer partners and missionaries can get to know one another before the missionaries leave.

**Pray**

A whole category in itself!  
(See pages 12 and 13 for ideas)



# While they're there



**K**ee in touch. Anyone who has spent time away from home knows how good it feels to get a letter or hear a familiar voice on the phone. Imagine how it feels to have left everyone and everything and be a stranger in a foreign country where new relationships have to be forged in a foreign language. For those back home keeping in touch is an encouragement; for those on the mission field it can be a lifeline.

## Letters



Encourage church members to send at least a postcard, making the arrival of the mail bag an eagerly awaited event. Answering letters can be a major problem when time is limited and energy drained by heat and hard work. Most missionaries resort to some form of circular letter adding personal notes at the end.

Tell them about yourself, your family, your work, your church life, the nation, the weather, the economy, the football scores, anything that might be of interest. Send clippings from newspapers and magazines. Send cartoons, jokes and quotations. Whatever the letter says it says someone cares.

### **Cassettes**

You can do more than just dictate a letter. You could include the voices of several people, a bark greeting from a pet (a dog might perform better than a rabbit), snippets from the radio or TV.



*A dog might perform better than a rabbit.*



### **Telephone**

Try a live call in a service. Or you might be able to record the conversation for your church or prayer group. Plan a few questions and keep an eye on the clock!

### **E-mail**

Ahh, the wonders of modern technology! If your missionary has access to a computer that can send and receive electronic mail it shouldn't be too hard for you to find someone at home with the facility. If you're familiar with the process perhaps you could give some assistance to others that aren't.

### **Gifts**

Financial gifts are normally best channelled through the Wycliffe office, but how about sending on a book or some of their favourite magazines? But do check with your missionary if it will be costly to receive.

### **Visiting**

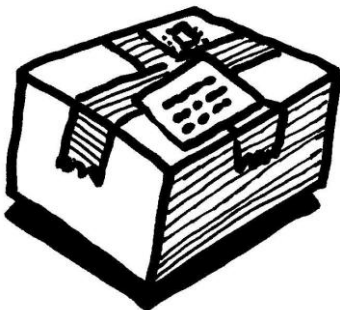
First hand experience of the work overseas is invaluable? A holiday with a difference? An extension to a business trip? Perhaps a group of you could get together and encourage one person to make the trip on behalf of all. Suggest the church puts money aside to send someone to visit.

❑ **Don't forget the children**

Overseas workers certainly appreciate it when you think of their children. Try providing educational materials not readily available where they are. Write to the family and not just "the missionary." Write to the children directly. Send small gifts, or comics. Send news of their friends and their interests. Remember their birthdays. Show you care. The children will like it too!

**Mailing Overseas.** Do find out about the quality and reliability of the postal service. In the best systems mail sometimes goes astray. In the worst systems mail always goes astray unless you know how the system works. In some of the more politically sensitive countries you might have to be careful what you write. Think about the time it will take and the relative value of surface or airmail (however fast mail gets to the capital it may take a lot longer to reach some of the more remote areas missionaries are working in).

With parcels there may be extra charges to pay, not only by you but also by the person you're sending it to! Be aware of the difficulties but don't be discouraged if there is a problem, there might just be another Wycliffe member flying out to that part of the world who could take the package by hand.



## Look after home concerns.

The distance separating you and your missionary prevents you from helping in many of the practical concerns they have. The distance separating them from other practical concerns may provide you with many opportunities to help. They have left behind property, possessions and people. Not everything can wait until they return. How can you help?

### Help elderly parents

Individual situations will differ widely. Sensitivity is the key and offers of help may be only gradually accepted. Letters or phone calls may be more appropriate than visits in some cases.

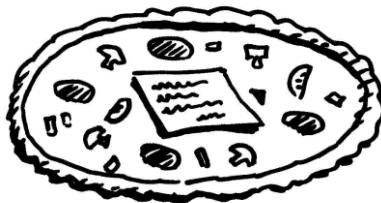


### Encourage children back home

Older children may be studying at college or university in this country. Being a substitute family for your friend's children may be an immense relief for the parents as well as a help to their children. Consistency is important so plan a realistic level of sustained involvement.

#### **You could:**

- Write, or send a card, from time to time.
- Send a food parcel.
- Have them stay for a weekend or a holiday.



# When they return



**G**oing to another country as a missionary can be a traumatic experience, but so can coming home.

Having become accustomed to living in a new environment there is *reverse culture shock* as the returning missionary has to adjust back to life in an affluent consumer culture. There are a lot of adjustments to make and friends helping with the practical arrangements can make the transition easier.

## **Accommodation**

Any property they own may be let and unavailable. Is there any chance of their having a place to themselves (singles as well as families)?  
Can you provide them with basic food items?



### **Transport**

Could a car be given or lent for the early days of their return? If a hire car is needed you could make the arrangements. (*Ask us about companies that provide cars at reduced rates to missionaries.*)

### **Clothes**

They would surely appreciate a shopping trip for new clothes. Or, if they have children, ask families in the church if they have good quality second hand clothes or toys to give.

### **Schooling**

Schooling may need to be organised if they have children. Might there be particular problems with this that you could help with by doing research?

### **Holidays**

Help arrange a holiday for them or their children.

### **Deputation**

A lot of the time back home will be spent taking meetings re-establishing contacts and publicising their work. Organising a diary and arranging advance bookings in your area (in liaison with your missionaries!) may be a way to help.

### **Visiting**

Overseas workers usually appreciate spending time with prayer partners on a more personal basis. But with so much travelling they may find it easier if you arrange to visit them.

### **Welcome back party**

A welcome party *can* be a great way to show you care. Give them a little breathing space first and make sure that they welcome the idea.

# Praying Effectively



**P**rayer works, and prayer works better when we work at prayer. Prayer flows from our relationship with God and relationships need time and commitment. Instead of a hurried blanket blessing ("Lord bless our missionaries") we need to take time in thinking about those we pray for and time in listening and talking to God. Everyone can pray and all missionaries need a lot of people praying for them.

**As a church**

Include a regular mission prayer slot in church services.

**As a group**

There may be a mission prayer group in your church, or you may be able to start one.

A Wycliffe prayer group, possibly drawn from a number of churches, will concentrate on praying for specific members and for the organisation as a whole.

A support group for an individual or family will be particularly concerned to maintain good communication with the Wycliffe worker(s) concerned, supporting in a variety of personal, spiritual and practical ways.

**Individually**

There is value in both group and individual prayer. If you have a regular time set aside for prayer and Bible study you can include your overseas worker in your prayers.

## **Pray**

**With understanding**

The more we understand about someone's situation the easier it is to find the words to pray for them. Missionaries are human. You understand what it's like to be human. Pray for their health, for their work, for their family, and for their on going awareness of God's love and power. Learn as much as you can about the work they are doing and the country where they are working.

**With Knowledge**

As well as general information, keep as up-to-date as possible with the specific needs of your missionary (see pages 6 and 7). When you receive fresh information, share it with others who are also praying (keep in touch with other groups praying for your missionary).

**...and sometimes at 3am!**

Prayer is two-way. As you are praying expect God to speak to you about what to pray for. Also expect God just to bring people to mind. There are countless stories of people feeling led to pray and only later finding out that it was the exact time of a real emergency.



# Sharing your vision



**Y**our missionary needs your support, your love, and your prayers. Missionaries are no different in their needs from anyone else; they just differ in some of their problems. Missionaries want to know that people understand them and they want everyone to know what leads them to do what they do. To truly care for your missionary you need to care about their mission. You need to love Jesus, and to love the people he loves.

Mission is not just the task of the "missionaries" but of the whole church. Your mission enthusiasm can, and should be, infectious.



### **Keep others enthused and informed**

Don't ask people if they've seen the current prayer letter – ask them if they have *read* it. Tell them about any additional news you have received. Ask if you can read extracts at church meetings or house groups.

### **Involve newcomers**

As you introduce new people to the other members of the church don't forget to introduce them to the missionaries. Fill them in on some of the background. The latest prayer letter may assume people have read the earlier ones.

### **Make use of Wycliffe resources**

To find out more about the people Wycliffe workers are reaching out to, take advantage of our free quarterly magazine *Words for Life*, our monthly prayer diary entitled *Call to Prayer*, or our range of posters, leaflets, books and videos. You can also find out more at [www.wycliffe.org.uk](http://www.wycliffe.org.uk)

### **Speakers and teams**

A good way to find out about our work is from one of our workers. Our Response Centre can normally put you in touch with someone who would be willing to come and help you with a meeting or special event.

### **Suggested Further Reading**

**Serving as Senders** by Neil Pirolo, OM Publishing, ISBN 1-85078-199-0. An excellent look at the role of senders in supporting world mission through providing moral support, logistics support, financial support, prayer support, communications support, re-entry support...

**Re-Entry** By Peter Jordan YWAM Publishing ISBN 0-975-40-3. Recommended reading for those returning from overseas mission and for church members welcoming them back.

**It is a privilege to be part of a church reaching out through world mission.**

---

**When you send a church member out as a missionary that person stays as a part of your church body.**

---

**Here are a few practical suggestions on how to care for your missionary.**

---

Available on the web at:  
[www.wycliffe.org.uk/whatcanido](http://www.wycliffe.org.uk/whatcanido)



**Wycliffe UK**

Horsleys Green  
High Wycombe  
Bucks, HP14 3XL

tel. 01494 682268

e-mail: [askus@wycliffe.org](mailto:askus@wycliffe.org)

web site: [www.wycliffe.org.uk](http://www.wycliffe.org.uk)

**Northern Ireland:**

342 Beersbridge Road  
Belfast BT5 5DY

tel. 028 9046 9905

e-mail: [nireland\\_uk@wycliffe.org](mailto:nireland_uk@wycliffe.org)

**Scottish:**

129 High Street  
Linlithgow EH49 7EJ

Tel. 01506 840 500

e-mail: [Scotland\\_uk@wycliffe.org](mailto:Scotland_uk@wycliffe.org)