

# Ideas for Supporting Mission In Your Church



Church Missionary Society SA & NT 4/195 Victoria Square, Adelaide SA 5000  
ph 8212 4838 fax 8212 4177 e-mail [sa@cms.org.au](mailto:sa@cms.org.au) [www.cms.org.au](http://www.cms.org.au)



## **Why should we be involved in Mission?**

### ***Some thoughts from one of our CMS members in SA***

"Supporting Mission is to be part of a huge, strong, worldwide enterprise called the Kingdom of God. It is a mind-expanding activity, in which you learn a lot of geography, and stuff about world events that doesn't get into the news. It takes one out of the holy huddle mindset, with the assurance that, however feeble the Church may seem in one's home country, it is expanding by leaps and bounds in many places of the world. It provides a stream of prayer material which enables the exercise of power — God's power focused through prayer and praise — out into the wide world. Above all, it is the immense privilege which God has granted us: that of being part of the team which gets Kingdom things done, part of the cause of godly events.

We should remember also that our spiritual lives are the result of Mission. Without the train of evangelists, pastors, teachers, scholars, translators and martyrs, back to the Apostles, there would be no Christian church. We owe it to them to honour their work on our behalf, and to do our bit to keep the flame burning. "No man is an island"! The Dead Sea is dead because water flows in but not out. The Sea of Galilee is full of fish because water flows both in and out."

Alasdair Livingston

## **Get to know your missionaries!**

The Lord has given us a mandate to take the gospel to the nations, to give everyone the opportunity to know Him. We're not all called to 'go' and so we send our representatives to work on our behalf, to be the channel for us to reach out to those who don't know the Lord. The best way to encourage this mission within your Church is for people to get to know missionaries and through them, get to know the people with whom they are working.

Missionaries are just ordinary people like us with strengths, weaknesses and needs like anyone else, but serving the Lord in a different place. Living in a different culture can be exciting and stimulating, but can also be



draining, frustrating and lonely. We, their supporters, are on the same team, and it is in getting to know them that we can discover the best ways we can help them in their task. Here are a variety of ideas of things that we

can do as individuals, Home Groups, and congregations. The list is in no way exhaustive – just ideas to get you started. If you have a brilliant idea share it with others so we can all encourage each other in our responsibility to care for our missionaries and to be involved in the Lord's great commission to go and tell.

### **Small groups - adopt a Missionary**

Decide amongst the group which missionary you would like to adopt.

**While your link missionary is on home assignment** look for ways to help, encourage and get to know them.

- Ask their CMS Advocate if they need help finding and/or setting up a home for them, or if they will need a car.
- Provide a "welcome home" hamper including food & household items to get them started when they first arrive back.
- Provide meals for them, particularly when they first arrive or when they have a particularly busy schedule.
- Offer to show them around (they may not be familiar with the area in which they are staying) – show them the best places to shop, hairdressers, etc

- Offer to help their children adjust to a change of culture – eg clothing advice, latest trends in vocabulary, understanding Australian rules football.
- Offer to go shopping with them – particularly for teenagers.
- Think of things they may need help with – changes that have occurred since they were last home eg bus tickets and routes, road rules, rubbish collection, recycling, water restrictions etc.
- Invite them to your home for a meal.
- Invite them to join you on outings - picnics, the beach, the zoo etc.
- Offer to baby-sit for them.
- Ring them to see how they are going and if they need help with anything.
- Give them a night out, together if a couple, or with a friend if single.
- Invite them to join your home group as often as they can, at least once to share their story and their ministry, more if they would like, and more when they are able just to be a part of the group.
- Invite them to dinner with the home group.
- Decide as a group if you can financially support your missionary. Think of ways to raise money as a group to do it.
- Be sensitive to their needs – when they just need time to themselves.

**While your link missionary is on the field** think of ways to keep encouraging them.

- Receive regular prayer updates and pray for them within the group each meeting.
- Buy a phone card and ring the missionary during your group meeting, or talk to them using Skype.
- Send photos of your group, making sure they are not too large – providing they are happy to receive attachments.
- Write emails about what your group is doing, or news on members of the group, prayer requests from within the group. (But don't expect that you will get a personal reply to every email.) When e-mailing, check before sending attachments or long messages. In some countries e-mails are monitored. Find out if there are topics that you should avoid mentioning for security reasons. Ring the CMS office for their latest security guidelines.



- Send the parish bulletin occasionally and tell them about what's going on at church.
- Include in letters what is happening in politics, sport, the community.
- Press reply and respond to missionaries' prayer/news emails.
- Remember their birthdays and wedding anniversaries – with a phone-call, SMS, email, or birthday card.
- Send a parcel but make sure you know what is suitable to send (check with the CMS office if unsure) and that it won't incur charges at their end - videos, magazines, books, chocolates (but not to hot countries in their summer) or things for their children. Check first to see what they would like. If you send parcels check that they won't have to pay heavy customs duties. Mark your parcel 'printed matter only' (if that is what it is), 'NCV' (no commercial value) or 'gift'. Tell them that you are sending the parcel and what is in it.



- If you prefer talking to writing, send an audio or video tape or a CD of you or people at your church.
- Send sermon tapes to encourage your link missionary.
- Send resources to help with their work - books, ideas and creative suggestions for teaching activities and presentations for students and children, craft supplies. Check first what they would like, what they can't get in their country, and what will not attract duty.
- Visit them – a well-planned visit from supporters can be a great encouragement to missionaries.
- Keep in touch with their family back home, especially teenage children back for education, adult children and parents. Offer help where needed.
- Join with one or more other small groups and invite the Parish Mission Secretary or the missionary's advocate to come and share the latest news and prayer points – show a power point or video clips, have an international meal together choosing food from the missionary's host culture.

## Phone Hook Up

Arrange to have a phone hook up with your link missionary, either in a church service or in a small group, providing the time difference with Australia allows it – you don't want to be waking up your favourite missionary in the middle of the night!

This is a wonderful way of having direct contact with a missionary in a large group, but it does need someone with technical know-how, expertise and experience to supervise it to make it work. If you have such a person, go for it! If not, a simpler option is to use a speaker phone in small groups or an amplified speaker phone in a church or large group meeting.

- Prearrange the time with the missionary to make sure they will be available and ready.
- Some of our missionaries are in sensitive areas where secure phone conversations can't be guaranteed (phone lines may be tapped or houses bugged). Make sure you are aware before hand of the things or words it would not be wise to mention, and have in mind alternatives.
- Make sure you are aware of any things you should avoid talking about 'publicly'. Whoever is making the call may be privy to some information or news which is not for general consumption.
- If it takes place in a church service it is nice to welcome them with a round of applause and to farewell them with the same. This has the twofold effect of including the audience in the conversation

and encouraging our missionary. If it is in a small group the phone can be either put on 'speaker' mode or passed around to individuals.

- Be as chatty as possible. Folk read their prayer news and newsletters so they may already be aware of the general news – what they love to hear are specific, up-to-date, newsy stuff and also the 'little' things as well as the big things. Make sure you are up-to-date on the latest public news they have given. Possible areas to cover are: ministry, recreation, accommodation, language study, people they've met, opportunities for others, current affairs which relate to them, 'how can we help', the future, today..... etc. etc.
- Try to make it a conversation, not an interview!
- Have five or so questions prepared – but be prepared to ask follow up or lateral questions depending on the response. This can be really hard to do – it is easy to be thinking about the next question rather than the response to the last. Having two people working together may help to overcome this.
- You may like to ask at the end "what are a couple of things you'd like us to pray for now?" and be ready



to add them to a few other things you've prepared to pray for.

## Individual Phone calls

- Encourage missionaries by ringing them for a birthday or other special occasion, or simply to have a chat.
- Check out phone cards which will provide cheap calls for that country.



This website will give you information on the rates for cards available to use for each country –

[www.ozprepaidcards.com.au](http://www.ozprepaidcards.com.au)

- Check out the option of using SKYPE - a computer programme which will allow you to talk through your computer to someone else with the same programme anywhere for free. There is also the option of both parties being able to see each other with the use of web cams (video cameras on the computers). For more information about it look at [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)

## **SMS Messages**

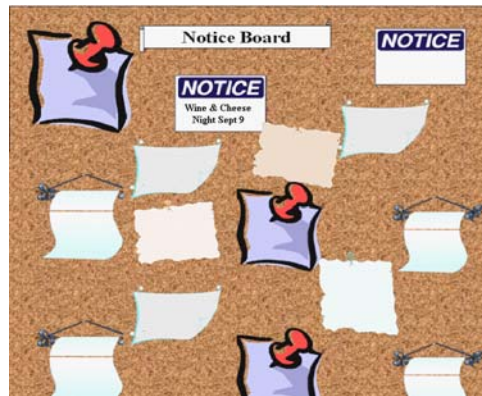
Encourage missionaries by sending them SMS messages if they have a mobile phone. Check first though that they are happy to receive them – they may be charged to receive them in their country.

## **Mission Notice Board**

Arrange for your church to have a notice board specifically used for mission promotion and education.

- Ideally, it should be placed in a strategic place where people can see it easily and read it without being in a busy thoroughfare.
- One person should be responsible for looking after it.
- Ensure that it is visually attractive using bold colour and catchy headlines to catch the eye.
- Change it frequently, keeping it up to date.
- Display missionaries' latest news and prayer points with photos (some missionaries must not have their photo displayed –check with CMS first).
- Include details of link missionaries' birthdays, anniversaries etc that are coming up.
- Advertise upcoming meetings with missionaries in church services, small groups, dinners etc.
- Advertise needs for missionaries' home assignment needs like housing, car etc.

- Include promotion for short term and long term opportunities.
- Advertise CMS events – Summer Conference, Winter Dinner, Prayer Days, regional prayer meetings, CMS Fellowship.
- Use to challenge folk to become CMS members, and to support missionaries financially.



## Church Web Site

If your church has a web site, arrange to have your link missionary feature on it. Include photos, information about their work, up to date news and prayer points, links to the CMS website, how folk can be involved in supporting them, and contact details for your church's mission representative.

**(IMPORTANT: Check with the CMS office first for guidelines in case your missionary cannot be put on the website for security reasons!)**

## **Church Congregational Exposure**

- Pray for the link missionary regularly. Include up-to-date prayer points each week, either in the pew sheet, or in the prayers.
- If your church has notices scrolling on a power point at some stage of the service, include recent photos and prayer points of the link missionary, or advertisements for a mission prayer meeting or fund raiser for supporting the link missionary.
- Keep the congregation informed of the missionary's latest movements, work programme, health, etc
- Have a regular mission spot in services, sometimes with a report from the Parish Missionary Secretary, or a link missionary's advocate, using power point photos or a phone hook-up.
- Have missionaries' prayer emails and prayer letters available for members of the congregation who want them to read at home.
- Allow at least one service for the link missionary to speak to the congregation while they are on home assignment.
- Have one person as a designated CMS representative for each congregation.
- Encourage the clergy and parish council members to be involved in mission. Offer to pay for the clergy to attend CMS Summer Conference.
- Encourage clergy and parish council members to consider visiting link missionaries on the field.

- Utilise expertise in the congregation to promote mission. eg One of our missionaries is providing images and video footage to a friend who is producing a short video every few months to be shown during services and meetings. Video is a great medium to grab people's attention and helps people who haven't previously met the missionary to get to know them and their ministry.
- Another great tried and tested idea – “We are currently doing a preaching series on Revelation in the evening at Trinity. A few weeks ago, tied in with the second sermon (which covered the letters to the various churches) the service leader had arranged for Tab to send over a voice recording (she emailed it over a sound file) which was "to the church in Adelaide". This was played during the service. Tying input from Tab into the theme of the service / sermon was great & continued to tie in the connection between Tab's ministry & the church's ministry. We hope to do a phone / internet hook-up in the evening services later in the year.”



## Involve Children

- Invite missionaries to speak to Sunday School classes or other children's groups.
- Ask the CMS Children's Worker for help.
- Encourage families to 'adopt a missionary' and include the children in communicating with them, praying for them, raising money to support them, getting to know them when on Home Assignment.
- Choose a country on the world map – find out about it and pray for it.
- Follow children's interests and apply them to praying for missionaries e.g. train lines through the world – follow the railway and pray for the countries it goes through.
- Have a garage sale to raise money for missions – invite singles from your church to join in with you.
- Money box – encourage children to give from their allowance voluntarily. Why not make a CMS Give Box – Template available from the CMS office.
- Cooking – bake things together to sell to neighbours to raise money for missions. Include children in sampling recipes from other countries - see Prayer Guide resources on the website.
- Use children's knowledge and interest in world events to pray for the world and situations.



- Foster interest in the world.
- Talk to CMS's children's worker for ideas or to share your struggles.
- Check out the resources on our website for kids and parent/teacher resources at [www.cms.org.au](http://www.cms.org.au)
- Use the CMS Kids Prayer Diary "Pray around the World" – talk about families, ages of children etc and help children identify with Missionary Kids. Creative and interactive activities are also effective learning tools for young people.

For example, you could:

1. Have a prayer party. Cake, balloons, flowers, party poppers – all of these can represent different prayer points for cross cultural mission, and is a delicious way to make prayer fun!
2. Use a variety of styles and forms of prayer. Ask children to draw their prayer points.
3. Make group prayer fun and pray 'popcorn prayers'. In a similar way to how popcorn randomly pops when cooking, encourage children to jump in with a brief prayer. You may need to open the prayer time, and close it again after an appropriate silence.
4. Pray from the Bible. Encourage the children to memorise the verses from God's word so they can pray them anytime.

5. Use visual reminders. Decorate a room with pictures and maps. Then walk around the room, explaining what God is doing in the world and ask the children to pray that people in different countries would know Jesus.

- You could also encourage children to save up and buy something from the CMS gift catalogue ([www.cms.org.au/giftcatalogue](http://www.cms.org.au/giftcatalogue)).
- You could even make a shoebox of goodies to send to missionary kids.

### **Recommended books and Web sites**

“Operation World” (21st Century Edition) by Patrick Johnstone Word Australia – up to date information to help you pray for the world

“Window on the World” by Daphne Spraggett & Jill Johnstone - Paternoster Press UK – an exciting book to inspire families to pray

[www.cms.org.au](http://www.cms.org.au) – the official CMS website

[www.smbc.com.au/missions\\_links.htm](http://www.smbc.com.au/missions_links.htm) - lots of links to interesting mission sites including maps and information on many countries

[www.lcms.org](http://www.lcms.org) – an American Lutheran mission website which has lots of ideas which may inspire you

[www.dualreach.org](http://www.dualreach.org) – an American site with lots of ideas for caring for missionaries on home assignment

[www.new-life.net/mission4.htm](http://www.new-life.net/mission4.htm) – ideas for praying for missionaries

[www.ericavijay.net/prayer/pray\\_m.htm](http://www.ericavijay.net/prayer/pray_m.htm) - prayer pointers



