



Being An Effective Adopted Missionary

As in all adoptions, the children have responsibilities also. Likewise, adopted missionaries have responsibilities to their supporters—it takes two to have a good relationship. Below are a few helpful hints to be an effective at being an Adopted Missionary.

Prayer

The prayers of your supporters and those they touch is your most important asset. Without prayer you might as well go home. Though at times it can be frustrating having to raise support, the first time you go through a crises you will feel the difference. With improvements in technology, prayer can be timelier than ever in the history of missions. When my wife and I got car carjacked, my son had a seizure, and when a pastor in a remote church took a second wife and our missionary friend had to confront him, an e-mail went out immediately and within minutes the encouraging e-mails literally from the other side of the world were coming back saying they were praying. I have other friends in Africa who are with organizations that essentially hire them—no support raising, but they don't have the same amount of prayer support; personally, I would rather have a little financial difficulties and the prayers.



Pray for your supporters as they let their needs known to you; make sure you let them know you have been praying.

Encouragement and Communication

First, always try to have a spirit of thankfulness in your letters. Paul always emphasized this to his supporters in his letters (Examples Eph 5:20, Col 4:2, 3:17, 1 Thes. 2:13a, 5:16-18) Thank your supporters for their involvement in your ministry. Ensure that they understand that their support and prayers are an integral to your success in "our ministry."

Second, one of the most effective ways to receive encouragement and communication is to communicate yourself. You are responsible to communicate with your supporters (both churches and individuals), especially since they are investing their time, money, and prayers in you. Furthermore, the number one complaint I hear about missionaries is their lack of communication; many missionaries have had their prayer and financial support cut off simple because of a lack of communication.

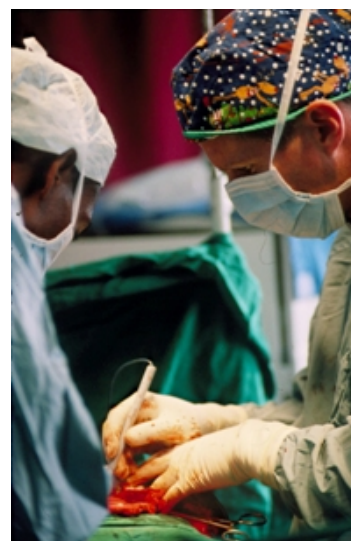
In this day and age, the burden of having to sit down and write a quarterly newsletter is almost gone (though newsletters can be effective, especially for those few who are not on the internet); today, the best way to communicate is e-mail. **Make a goal to communicate AT LEAST once a month at the very least!!!** Below are a couple of guidelines for effective communication through e-mail.

- **Less is more! Don't send novels.** Try to keep your e-mails to no more than a couple of paragraphs. When people see a long e-mail more often than not they will just skip it for later (missed opportunity for timely prayer.)
 - If you have a lot to say, consider breaking your information up into two or more e-mails and send them a few days apart. This will also keep you on the top of their minds longer.
- Send a few pictures to support your topic.
- Little things can be the big things.
 - Just little note on prayer needs, praises, or answered prayer; a couple of sentences are all you need.
 - A short ministry update, again just a couple of sentences on salvations, work completed, or blessings.
 - If you notice a cultural difference that people might find interesting send a quick bullet on it. People always find this interesting.
 - If there is a birthday or special family event send a little update.
 - Share the needs you see, yours and others. You will be surprised.
 - Through just making a need known we have received thousands of dollars to meet that need.
 - God can bless others. On numerous occasions, people who read our e-mails and pray for us but don't financially support us, have blessed others because they have felt moved by something we shared about another person's need.
- **You Must Have** a digital camera and video camera; many are both. Remember a picture (or video) is worth a thousand words!
- Invest in communication and the internet. Do what you can to have easy access to the internet. Even in the middle of nowhere satellite links are often available at reasonable prices.
- Send a short 1MB video (approximately one minute video). Most digital cameras have the capability to take video also.
- Since so few don't have e-mail, see if you can have a supporter cut and paste your e-mail updates on a Word document and have them send it out to them.

Raising Material Support

So you have to raise financial support. Raising material support is often the most frustrating thing for missionaries. We have all been there. Fortunately, it is God who ultimately has to raise the funds, but below are a few ideas that might help.

- Start with your family, friends, and their churches. Ask anyone you can to be your advocate to help you get in from of the right people. Having a reference is much better than just going to a church with no relationship at all.
- Cold calls are never fun, but most churches will be nice and supportive. Many will even pray with you, even if they have no intentions of supporting you.



Resources and Raising A Support Team

Raising a support team is a must. Going without one would be missionary suicide. About 50% of all missionaries don't make it through their first term. Having a good team behind you is all but required. Just as in the military, you will probably need ten or more people actively behind you; this is the ratio of infantry men to support personnel in the U.S. military...this ration is probably true for God's army.

- Every missionary trying to raise support must read the following books:
 - Betty J. Barnett, *Friend Raising: Building a Missionary Support Team That Lasts*. It is available from Christian Book Distributors (www.christianbook.com)

Neal Pirollo, [*Serving As Senders*](#). You can get it from www.eri.org/publications.htm (it is also available in Spanish and about 20 other languages).