

Sending Churches: What It Means to Send

Q: What is a church committing to and how does Pioneers hope that a sending church will come alongside a field worker? What are they committing to?

A: If you've been a parent, perhaps you've had one of your kids come up to you and say, "Well, Mom said this," and then you find out maybe later that when they went and talked to Mom, they said, "Dad said this." And so, particularly in the beginning stages of that appointment process, we don't want any "Mom said this, Dad said this," with the local church.

It's easy I think for a church to assume that Pioneers is covering all the bases with this person. On our side, we're really hoping that that church is going to give us really good, honest, critical—not overly critical but you know positive as well—information about that person.

And so I would say that the first thing that they're committing to is that they are going to help us make a very good evaluation as to whether that this is a person that God's hand has been put on to be sent overseas in cross-cultural service.

But then on an ongoing basis we want that church to see themselves as the spiritual covering for that ministry. It's easy to kind of push the examples out to the toughest cases to explain that. If someone has a moral failure on the field, we want that church to play a role in helping that person through [the situation]. But even just in the daily life of a missionary, they're going to be up against some tough things on the field. We want to know that people are praying. We want to know that people are helping out in that ministry [especially] in a spiritual sense.

Today there's almost no reason why a church can't be face to face with their missionary once every couple years. And then when that person comes home on home assignment and reconnects to family and to that local church, we're really hoping that that church will be helping them to evaluate where they are in their ministry, helping them to think about the future and where they're going in that ministry, and then help refresh them spiritually as they hope to minister [on the field] again in the future.