



M I C H I G A N  
M I N I S T R Y  
N E T W O R K

WHAT EVERY PASTOR  
WISHES  
MISSIONARIES KNEW

Welcome,

One of my goals as Network Superintendent is to assist Pastors in practical ways. One way is to help the relationship between a Lead Pastor (church) and MMN missionaries.

Even though most missionaries have a heart for the local church, the process of raising financial support often can be challenging. This is a vital relationship that must be cultivated if we are ever to launch into our world with purpose.

This guide is designed to help you, the pastor, to learn from our missionaries how to work together effectively. This e-book is the perspective that every missionary wishes a Lead Pastor had.

May God bless your every step,

Aaron Hlavin  
AG Michigan Ministry Network  
Superintendent

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# INTRODUCTION

## Let's get started

Pastoring is more complicated, demanding, intricate, and intrusive than ever before. Pastors are required to be a little bit of an expert in almost everything. Unrealistic expectations often leave a pastor mentally fatigued and emotionally drained. Additionally, churches do not have unlimited resources and therefore face financial pressures.

These factors can affect the relationship between the missionary and Lead Pastor. When a pastor is tired, overworked, and under-resourced, a phone call from a missionary seeking support often further exacerbates the Lead Pastor.

Even so, missionaries *need* to connect with Lead Pastors and churches to raise prayer and emotional, and financial support. This is the current process that missionaries must walk through.

Pastors are generally pro-missions and pro-missionaries. But they often find themselves trying to manage the daily needs of their church and the needs of missionaries. Pastors understand that missionaries have deadlines to meet, expectations to accomplish, and funds to raise. They know it is not an easy process, but one that pastors are willing to support to reach the world with the powerful message of salvation through Jesus.

The pastor wants to be the missionary's friend, a partner in ministry, and a financial supporter. But they also have a responsibility to their church: The mission and the stewardship of the church's finances. Sometimes pastors get a bad reputation when they are focusing solely on their church.

So, we interviewed pastors to see the process through their eyes.

This doesn't encompass every pastor's perspective. However, it will give you, the missionary, a chance to learn what it is like to be a Lead Pastor.

Hope it helps you help them!

# WHAT PASTORS WANT MISSIONARIES TO KNOW

## 16 THOUGHTS FROM PASTORS TO MISSIONARIES

As we interviewed pastors, several common themes became clear. They are listed below.

- 1. Pastors have more to manage than just you.** Pastors' worlds are packed with urgent needs and complex situations. The expectations of pastors are greater than ever before. Missions are VERY important to them but are *one* of the very important parts of a church's ministry. Please understand that a pastor may be dealing with difficult situations that need their attention.
- 2. Pastors truly love missions and missionaries.** Pastors really care about the great commission. They do not need to be sold on reaching the world. They also care about you. They care about your life, family, and the mission you are called to. Please do not be nervous when you meet with them.
- 3. Don't "sell", just "present yourself".** Be uniquely you. The worst thing a missionary can do is try to be someone you are not. Be you! Pastors see many presentations and meet a lot of missionaries. What we want is for you to be authentic and real.
- 4. Don't be manipulative.** Sometimes missionaries will drop other pastors' names to gain influence with or suggest they will be in the area when they really are not. It is better to just call and try to connect, rather than try to gain an audience or the connection with someone else.
- 5. Know you are not the only missionary contacting them.** When a missionary reaches out to a church, remember you are one of many who have done so. That is not a bad thing, but it is a reality that the Pastor must manage. While you are certainly important, you must remember you are one of several equally important missionaries requesting time and support.
- 6. Be their friend.** Pastors need friends and want to be yours. They want to know you and your family. They want you to know theirs as well. They don't just want to give money but desire a relationship that is ongoing. One mistake missionaries make is to gain support and then stop communicating with the Pastor of the church who supports them.

- 7. Be prepared.** The worse thing a missionary can do is to come to share/present to a missions board/Lead Pastor unprepared. When a missionary cannot communicate well, it can cause a missions board/pastor to lose confidence. This will not help you gain financial support. Give the pastor and church something they can relate to. Share what you are doing, what impact you are making and your dreams. Remember: Short and effective is better than long and ineffective.
- 8. Be honoring to each pastor's process/services.** Give their congregations a sense that they are connected to the mission you are on. Do not make them feel like donors, but partners in ministry with you. Show your heart, passion, and sense of calling. Tell stories that are relevant and accurate. Be time sensitive to the request of the hosting pastor.
- 9. Be careful with social media.** Do not post statements or views that will create controversy in the local church. It is best to steer clear of political, critical, complaining, or negative posts. These can cause conflict between a pastor and a congregation.
- 10. Pastors live by faith also.** They only have so much money to share. When raising support, please remember that every time a church adds a missionary to its support, it is a long-term commitment made in faith. Pastors don't want to start support and end it, but they trust in God's provision to support you.
- 11. Each church is unique.** Every church is different. A one-size-fits-all strategy, presentation, and/or communication or concept may not work. Ask the pastor about the church prior to coming so you can connect with the church in a way meaningful way.
- 12. Their church may have a specific missions strategy.** Each church has its own DNA and that includes where they direct their missions funds. Just because you do not fit the focus of a particular church, it does not mean that they do not care... it's just that they have a different focus.
- 13. Sometimes they have to say "no".** When a pastor says NO, please understand that it is not against you, but simply a no. Be appreciative that the pastor is being honest and direct. A missionary would be wise to show gratitude that even though it is a no, they can move forward and not have to keep following up.
- 14. When your field changes, so may your support.** While pastors understand your field may need to change, please understand that may affect your support. Churches often pick up missions support based on ministry to specific locations.

**15. Say “Thank You.”** When a church can pick you up for support, say thank you. It is better to err on the side of too much gratitude, rather than nothing at all.

**16. If they can add you to their regular support...keep connected.** Way too often missionaries go silent, disappear, or do not communicate what they are doing. Remember pastors are stewards of their church finances and give an account for where missions support goes.