

The Case for Missionary Care with Ryan Martin  
Alex Kocman, Scott Dunford, Ryan Martin

*Alex Kocman:* On today's show: Why might church leaders be afraid to reach out and care for missionaries?

*Ryan Martin:* I think it's a case of being across various cultures, it's probably a case where one, kind of an out of sight, out of mind mentality. And so you're time zones apart, and your cultures apart, and so it's a case of I don't know how to relate to them, and the frequency with which I need to communicate and even a bit of I'm not going to be able to relate to them, much less are they going to be able to relate to me? And so I think almost a bit of apathy even to the idea of are we able to relate to each other and therefore are we able to provide the necessary care that's needed, would be a major component to that.

*Alex Kocman:* Ryan Martin, Director of Missions at Lightbearers joins the show to explain.

Welcome to The Missions Podcast, the show that explores your hard questions on missions, theology, and practice to help goers think and thinkers go. I'm Alex Kocman, Director of Advancement and Communications with ABWE, joined by Scott Dunford, West Coast Advancement Coordinator with ABWE and Pastor of Redeemer Church in Fremont, California. Good to see you again, Scott, been a little while since you and I have been in the saddle here recording, of course, for our listeners, they don't know that. But we're grateful for everyone that listens loyally week in, and week out. If you've been blessed by the show, there's some things you can do. Remember if you've ever been benefitted by The Missions Podcast, as we try to unite these worlds of thinking and going, go to [missions/podcast.com/support](https://missions/podcast.com/support) to show your support, help us bring you this content in a way that God can use and bless. And also remember to follow and subscribe, share it with a friend, all those wonderful things. And what really helps is leaving a positive rating and review; that helps get this content in front of others who can be blessed by it.

But Scott, what year was it, it was 2016 that you recruited me to ABWE, right? Is that –

*Scott Dunford:* That sounds right.

*Alex Kocman:* accurate?

*Scott Dunford:* That's right.

*Alex Kocman:* Let's go with that.

*Scott Dunford:* We met in 2015, and probably 2016 is probably when you officially started doing stuff for ABWE.

*Alex Kocman:* Yeah, yeah, my heart was at ABWE much sooner than the actual year that you recruited me. You know you join any kind of organization and it has its own lingo and jargon, especially ministry organizations, parachurch

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organizations, they all have their unique Christianese and their acronyms and things like that. I remember coming to ABWE and learning about this thing called Member Care. And it's a little bit of an odd turn of phrase, at least that's what my mind went to at first. Member care, okay, 'cause we never call our missionaries members, but okay, that's fine, they are members of the organization, we call them missionaries. But we have this Member Care department, I remember learning about, and you and I would work a lot with them on various things as people were joining as missionaries. We were working together on mobilization back in those glory days, back in the good ol' days, Scott, right?

*Scott Dunford:* Yeah, oh yeah, glory days.

*Alex Kocman:* And then care, okay, having a department that does care, I mean I care. No one's paying me to care, right, you care, sometimes I care.

*Scott Dunford:* Some days, some days I do.

*Alex Kocman:* Right, some days, on my best days I care. You know so coming in as an outsider who was not a missionary on the field, those are some of the questions that I'm asking. And then I have, I had probably a full year at least of a learning curve into my role when you brought me on as director of long-term mobilization. And people are calling and questions – and here I thought that being a mobilizer for ABWE would be getting on the phone with people and saying, “Hey, you know there's 2.9 billion unreached people groups in the world. Join, enlist as a missionary.” No, they already know that. They're like, “What's your admin fee?”

*Scott Dunford:* Mm-hmm.

*Alex Kocman:* Or “What kind of training do I need? What's the cost of living?” People have very practical, tangible questions at that point. And you know what people asked a lot about? Maybe you've had similar conversations, they'd ask, “What's your Member Care department like? What kind of member care resources do you offer?” You got questions like that too.

*Scott Dunford:* Yeah, and even as a pastor I had those questions. I had the privilege a long-time member of our church in Michigan on the 175th anniversary of our church and it had been 50, 60 years that we had been actively engaged in cross-cultural ministry and we had an 80-something year old man in our church who had served in Africa as a missionary. And the stories he told me were heartbreaking of having two children within a very short window of time get sick and die on the field. And then their middle child being put into a school, and she was terrorized because she kept thinking, “When am I gonna die? My other two siblings died,” and then just traveling around from spot to spot. And eventually their health was ruined and had to come off the field. And were dealing with a lot of things that they didn't even know that they were, they didn't understand the ideas of trauma and even

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this idea of missionary care. And it was just kind of simply, “Hey, you’re serving Jesus so suck it up, and keep going.”

So it brought to my mind even then that there has to be a better way to care for missionaries. And the things that missionaries go through, whether that’s being kicked out of a country and having to relocate or even just living in a third culture and raising a family there, or the trauma of reentry after even a good ministry are just things that the average person just doesn’t really deal with, and the average pastor doesn’t think through. So it’s really good to have someone who’s thought a lot about it, and not just a lot about it from a practical standpoint but thought about it biblically in a deep way and this is Ryan A. Martin. And I don’t think you ever go by Ryan A. Martin, but we call you that because we had a Ryan J. Martin who is my long-time friend, was in my, was a groomsman in my wedding and spoke about –

*Alex Kocman:* I thought the name sounded familiar.

*Scott Dunford:* Johnathan Edwards.

*Alex Kocman:* Okay, now it all comes together –

*Scott Dunford:* Yeah, this is a different Ryan –

*Alex Kocman:* a different one.

*Scott Dunford:* it’s a different Ryan Martin, so I mean –

*Alex Kocman:* Was it, didn’t we talk about Johnathan Edwards with him or something?

*Scott Dunford:* We did, we did.

*Alex Kocman:* Okay.

*Scott Dunford:* So this is exciting for me, I wanna see how many Ryans we can get on this show. But Ryan, welcome to our show.

*Alex Kocman:* So far two.

*Scott Dunford:* He’s the Director of Missions at Lightbearers, where he’s gonna talk about that in a second. He’s a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and currently pursuing his doctorate of ministry from Southeastern, writing on this topic. Married, three kids, and they live in one of the most underrated cities in the country in my opinion, Fayetteville, Arkansas. So go ahead, Ryan, with that introduction, tell us a little bit about yourself, why Fayetteville’s a great place for missionary mobilization and your role with Lightbearers.

*Ryan Martin:* Right, thanks for having me on The Missions Podcast. I have listened quite regularly and have enjoyed the conversations around all things related to thinking and going and sending and receiving missionaries. So, grateful to be on today. Scott, as you said I’m married to Rebecca, we’ve

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been married eleven years this November, we have three kids all with missionary names: Hudson, obviously named at Hudson Taylor; Annie, named after the mission mobilizer Annie Armstrong here in North America; and then Hattie, she's our youngest, she's named after a unsung hero in the missions world, Hattie Garner who went out from her local church in South Carolina. And so don't have any actual connection to her except we were just looking for missionary names and ran across that name and felt the Lord leading us to our third child, our second daughter –

*Scott Dunford:* Lottie was just too in your face, I guess, huh?

*Ryan Martin:* Well, there was already a family member that had taken that name. No, we went with Hattie instead, so.

*Scott Dunford:* That's great, love it.

*Alex Kocman:* Lottie was too on the nose. You know I tried to convince my wife to name our daughter Dunford and just it didn't –

*Scott Dunford:* So glad –

*Alex Kocman:* take off the ground.

*Scott Dunford:* I'm so glad that she prevailed on that, poor girl.

*Alex Kocman:* You know these kids these days and their crazy names. So Ryan –

*Scott Dunford:* Tell us about Lightbearers.

*Alex Kocman:* you've written a –

*Scott Dunford:* I wanna hear about Lightbearers –

*Alex Kocman:* Okay.

*Scott Dunford:* don't cut us off.

*Alex Kocman:* All right.

*Ryan Martin:* Previously have served on staff in the local church the last 13 years at University Baptist here in Fayetteville as Missions Pastor, and have recently transitioned to Lightbearers. And Lightbearers is a parachurch ministry that was started back in the mid-90s actually over in Norman, Oklahoma, and transitioned over to Fayetteville. But was started with a desire to see college students be discipled, trying to really, really two emphases. One, to close the gap in a number of college students that are leaving the church during their collegiate years, and then secondly to see mission dollars get to the least reached parts of the world. And so both of those desire kind of came together in the founding of Lightbearers. And so it is a parachurch ministry that does residential discipleship with college age students. Here in Fayetteville we have our primary ministry operations, but we also have ministry operations over in Starkville,

Mississippi as well as in Stillwater, Oklahoma. And so we own residential property in and around college campuses and students that are in the Lightbearers programs commit to two years in the program while they're taking studies in their undergraduate programs. And they are mentored by a local church member who walks with them and disciples them over the course of that two years.

They also then attend the Lightbearers Institute, which is a two-year, four-semester program that covers four semesters of Old and New Testament and then systematic and applied theology. And that's all taught by local church pastors and Lightbearers' staff. And then we see rent money that's generated off of the property then go to help fund church planting work in the 10-40 window. So that's how the missions component is tied into that. And so we're able to through the program, obviously mobilize them towards the nations. We don't want to take the place of the local church, or usurp the local church's role or even see ourselves as a sending organization but more so a discipleship ministry that seeks to, in the fray of our ministry, mobilize students towards the nations. And so able to equip students in that way, be able to take them on trips, to be able to see partners that Lightbearers supports, and see where their rent money is going towards and help even set hopefully a good foundation and trajectory for their lives to be sent for the sake of the Gospel around the globe once they graduate.

*Alex Kocman:* Very cool. We approve, we approve.

*Scott Dunford:* That's awesome.

*Alex Kocman:* That is exciting, encouraging to hear about. I have a question, I think I'm allowed to ask it now, so I kind of –

*Scott Dunford:* Yeah, I'm sorry, Alex –

*Alex Kocman:* got a little too excited earlier.

*Scott Dunford:* I was a little too hand slappy there, but –

*Alex Kocman:* That's okay.

*Scott Dunford:* I did want to hear about –

*Alex Kocman:* I –

*Scott Dunford:* you know you were rushing ahead.

*Alex Kocman:* I slap your hand a lot so I probably deserve it, so. Now I'm gonna ask a question and it's that you've written this series of articles on the Upstream Collective, go to that website because a lot of good resources on the sending side there. And you've written articles on what missionary care or member care look like biblically. And again I think we've got this kind of simple idea of well, yes, we should care, and we should support, and pick

up the phone every now and then with our missionaries. But you show that there's probably a lot more of the New Testament than we would assume. So why'd you write that series and what's essentially the case that you're making?

*Ryan Martin:*

Sure, yeah, I think part of it really stemmed from just being in the local church and a missions pastor role and being able to have a front row seat to our partners that we were supporting. And really over the last two to three years, COVID certainly played a role in it, but I think even before that, just seeing the one, principle that a lot of churches see the sending of missionaries really as the finish line more so than the starting point. And so we commission them off and we send them out, and then it's kind of one of those where sure, we may send an email every now and then, or we may highlight them during a special missions offering, emphasis week, but beyond that, we don't really see that the local church is to be the lead player and the lead role in that care component.

Oftentimes I think local churches too have just passed off the role of missionary care to agencies and see that they're going to have a lot more resources to be able to handle that. And certainly uniquely they are able to focus in particular areas, but I think even as we've seen from New Testament examples in particular that really it is the local church that needs to take the lead role and be the lead player in that. And two, I think it was just a case where I began even to see even from our own partners where that was an acute need for them. Be it because they had kids that were struggling to acclimate to the field, or be it because they were long-time missionaries who were now empty nesters and they were moving from more of a village setting in say, South Africa, into more of an urban setting and they were having to adjust to those different cultures on the field. But then also they were finding that they were just running themselves very thin and almost having to come back off the field such that they didn't reach a point of burn out. And so beginning a more active role and more active approach as a local church to really begin to care for those people.

But then also too I think just helping the local church see that sending and supporting and caring, all those avenues of missionary support that the local church is called from the Scriptures to help provide and is called to do, I think is supposed to be a total buy in, it's not just to be reserved for the leadership of the church to do those things. But really each member has a part to play and I think even too the church can see themselves being invested more so in the accomplishing of the Great Commission as they're seeing both in that sending role but then also in providing missionary care.

*Scott Dunford:*

So as you're going through some of this writing, and I know you're doing a lot of diving into beyond what you've just written on the blog of course, but what are some of the key passages that you're bumping into and interacting with that really highlight the need for missionary care. I mean

we're talking about Paul who's functioning as a missionary and dealing in a missions community of sorts. What are some of these passages that you're finding that speak to this, these issues?

*Ryan Martin:*

One of the passages that I started out with was 3 John verses 5 to 8 where we see John commending Gaius for receiving in what were really itinerant missionaries into that church. Certainly those missionaries may have been known within kind of that broader community, but he commends Gaius for his hospitality and receiving those missionaries in. But then in turn as they were able to stay with that church for a period of time, Gaius, and that church then sent them off in a manner worthy of God for the purpose of sending them out for the sake of the name. and so really using that passage as a foundation to say prefield care, and really even before we send missionaries out, is a key component to the missionary, to the missionary's care, even before they reach the field.

Then I also looked secondly at Philippians 2:25-30 as a passage that speaks to on the field care where we see the relationship between Paul and Epaphroditus where I think all of us are well familiar with just the relationship that Paul had with the church at Philippi, even as we see from Philippians 4 where he commends them for the partnership that they shared in the Gospel. And part of that partnership was the sending of Epaphroditus to Paul even while he was imprisoned. And the great sacrifice, not only for that church to send Epaphroditus but then also too the sacrifice that Epaphroditus incurred as the passage points to the fact that he endured great hardship even physically in terms of going and serving Paul for a period of time. But then Paul sees a point at which he needed to send Epaphroditus back to the church of Philippi and admonishes that church to receive Epaphroditus back in a way that would celebrate just his sacrifice and service to Paul and wanted to commend again the church at Philippi for sending one of their own to stand alongside Paul for a period of time.

And then thirdly, I think not only prefield care, on the field care, but then also post-field care as we receive missionaries back. Even as I've surveyed missionaries on the field this is one of the areas that keeps coming up is you know if churches are maybe unfamiliar or unaware or weak in a particular area of missionary care, if they're doing missionary care at all, it's in that reentry phase and just not knowing how to receive missionaries back from the field. And so looking at Acts 14, particularly verses 27 and 28 where Paul and Barnabas come back to the church at Antioch where they sent out in Acts 13, and they spend what Luke says there no little time with them. In other words, they spent as much time as was needed to be able to report back to that church all that God had done, particularly opening the door of faith for them to proclaim the gospel throughout Asia minor. And so you see there just an accountability that Paul and Barnabas felt to that church to go back there and be able to report all that God had

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done and to be able to share not only in the successes but also in the failures and the struggles that they experienced along the way in that first missionary journey. And so really using that again as a foundation for what it looks like to receive missionaries back from the field.

*Alex Kocman:*

So Ryan, that's a helpful biblical foundation. While you were sharing some of that out of curiosity, I dove into Google trends and looked at just the word care. Now that word is a big, generalized word, right? I mean you talk about health care, what does that mean, emotional care? But I wanted to see what was happening and from 2004 to the present, the search frequency, and that represents discussion and thought, content on the web has almost doubled around this word care. One potential source of that, we live in this day and age of self-care, right? So all that to say care is on the radar of the secular world, of the culture at large, not just the church. And it's not a hard concept to grasp, right? So you shared those passages, what is unique about what's presented in those passages that the typical, let's just say Americans since many of our listeners are American, that the typical American wouldn't immediately perceive behind that idea of providing care?

*Ryan Martin:*

Yeah, I think it's a case of being across various cultures, it's probably a case where one, kind of an out of sight, out of mind mentality. And so you're time zones apart, and your cultures apart, and so it's a case of I don't know how to relate to them, and the frequency with which I need to communicate and even a bit of I'm not going to be able to relate to them, much less are they going to be able to relate to me? And so I think almost a bit of apathy even to the idea of are we able to relate to each other and therefore are we able to provide the necessary care that's needed, would be a major component to that.

*Scott Dunford:*

We've talked about this before on this show and we've thought about it in depth but the, in many ways heart-wise and mind-wise there's a lot of connections between us and the biblical world. As far as logistics go, like just nothing similar. You know the thought of two missionaries trying to find each other where Paul's trying to find Timothy, and the inability to find each other. Just thinking, well, they don't have cell phones, they don't have email, I mean it's kind of like word of mouth and figuring out like where to, you know it's almost like doing detective work to find each other in these cities in the ancient world. And so there, and even just the accessibility. I had a phone call with one of our missionaries serving in Korea currently and we could Facetime and have a good conversation, but whereas you might go years without seeing someone in that time. So trying to bridge that gap between you know here's the principles we see in Scripture, here's the command, we know that it's there for us to be engaged with it, but practically living it out seems to be, you know, takes some work. So what are some of the practical suggestions for the 21st



century that you would give us in carrying out some of these principles as we deal with missionaries?

*Ryan Martin:*

Yeah, I think one thing, and let me back up real quick. Even in Philippians 2, I think I would add that somebody here in America might be able, or may not see right on the surface or maybe look at and kind of be like “Huh?” it would be just the idea of sacrifice and do I want to be able to put myself out there and to be able to, you know, maybe that God’s not calling me to long-term but even a short term stint like Epaphroditus took and to be able to give of myself, of my time, be it for two weeks, six months, two years. To be able to go alongside and provide care and understanding just the sacrifice that that demands and counting the cost even in that regard is huge.

But I think too just some practical ways, I think one, let me just kind of work through just the order of prefield, on the field, and postfield care. I think prefield one of the practical things is for churches to really begin to take ownership in doing prefield assessment. I think churches are going to know their missionaries best and anybody that’s going alongside an agency obviously is gonna have to go through some interview processes and things of that nature. But I think it’s a case where churches are gonna be able to know their people best and be able to see them in ministry contexts that the agency is not going to be able to see. And so to be able to rightly understand is this candidate somebody that we see is called by God, and that call is then affirmed by the local church, are they emotionally, spiritually, physically prepared to go to the field? It’s not that they’re necessarily have everything in right order but they’re in a healthy spot such that that they’re going to be able to thrive on the field. Certainly issues that you have here stateside, the volume only gets turned up, the heat only gets turned up on those things as you go overseas. And so I think learning to access your candidates well on the prefield side of things.

And then I think for on the field care, I think prayer certainly is a key component in that. And so whether it be putting your missionaries before your church body on a regular basis, be it in the church that I’m currently a member of, we have a missions spotlight during the offering time each week. And so a missionary is highlighted and we pray for that missionary during that time. Or another great idea that I’ve seen is to put missionary’s names and short bios in their member directory and so you’re able to see that and make a point every month to be praying through your member directory as well as praying for your partners on the field.

But then another key strategy I think is being able to provide advocacy teams. Now you know depending on the size of the church that you have, it may determine how robust you can provide this ministry. But I think even having, whether it be individuals that are assigned to particular partners or whether it be you’ve got a whole team of lay members that are a part of an advocacy team for a particular partner, and such that both the

partner is advocated for but then also too that the church is advocated for. And so that advocacy team or those advocacy leaders would help in providing things such as prayer requests, putting those before the body, would be those advocacy groups are calling and having regular contacts and correspondence with partners on the field, knowing with birthdays are, anniversaries are, kind of being the first point and touch point of contact for the missionary as they would be communicating back to the local church. As well, the advocacy team member will then communicate to the field to be able to catch those missionaries up on things that are going on in the sending church. And so that's another way.

And I think too, and I've seen some churches do this well, where they set up not just mission trips that have kind of a ministry component to it, but they set up trips that are more just pastoral care visits or member care visits. And so you send maybe one or two of your elders and a couple members over or maybe it's those members that have a bit more capacity in their life and so think about empty nesters that are going to be able to go over to the field and to be able to provide extended periods of time and just love on missionaries, to be able to just sit and be able to be a listening ear for them to be able to give them tangible expressions of gratitude and thanks, even in care packages and things like that that they can deliver on the field is another way.

And then as we move then from prefield and on field to then returning back from the field. I think even those advocacy teams but also others within the church. I think helping missionaries think about even six months prior to coming back from field kind of what life is going to be like as they come back off the field such that those missionaries can think through those transitional periods. And then too just thinking about what are the practical needs of the missionary as they come back in from the field, be it a car, be it a mission house, getting the kids enrolled in school if that need is there. And even too I think giving them opportunity for the missionary to speak back into the life of the church, and so looking for those avenues and opportunities is another key way to provide just that reentry care.

*Alex Kocman:*

So I'll make a confession, I was reading through one of your articles more focused on Epaphroditus and Philippians yesterday, and we've had this kind of big, hairy audacious prayer at our church that in the coming months and years, likely years, that we would send out a missionary from our fellowship. But we're chilling at about 100 people right now. We probably have fifty or sixty members. So it's not impossible but I'm reading this article of yours and I'm thinking, "Will God expand our sending capacity until we've shored up our caring capacity?" Would he potentially not have us to send a missionary until we're adequately caring for those that we already support. And that's a question that goes through my mind. You already talked a little bit about church size and what's

feasible. I think coming out of COVID, that's not just a hypothetical question, I think churches or small churches had to cut back programs. There's been growth in our church, it's, you know I fly by the seat of my pants, I can't speak for the rest of the staff, but I fly a little bit by the seat of my pants. And so what would be some unique encouragement that you'd give to people in very small churches as to how to truly care well with limited resources?

*Ryan Martin:*

Sure, I mean regardless of church size there's a health to going deeper with fewer. And so even if you've got 1,000 plus member church and you've got expansive resources a lot of times we think the more mission partnerships that we have, the more robust and the more recognition that we're going to receive in terms of, you know, our missions focus and that sort of thing. And yet I think we've got to think whole church in this in such a way that the church understands that, they understand they're partners, they know their partners well. And so one encouragement that I would give is go deeper with fewer, and so don't think that just because you have one, two, five, ten missionaries as compared to maybe twenty-five or more that you're not doing something in the kingdom as far as sending and caring. And so I think too start with fewer and go deeper in those relationships, such that the missionary knows the church well and the church knows the missionary well.

But then also too I think start with just kind of where are the gifts within your church such that you're gonna know where to provide the best care. And also too, coupled with that are what are the needs of the missionary. And so I think seeing God just kind of web those two things together to be able to help provide adequate care where there are needs and where there are gifts within the church. And so Neal Pirollo who's written a lot on sending and a book called *The Reentry Team* talks a lot about just various opportunities to care. Everything from logistical support to things like physical support and counseling support, things of that nature. And so thinking about where are the giftsets within our church such that we can kind of form our care strategy around those giftsets would be another encouragement that I would give.

*Scott Dunford:*

So on the other side of it, if you're a missionary listening and you may be thinking "I, I wish I had care. And I don't know how to go about letting my church know." What kind of advice would you give to a missionary on the field who's probably listening to this going like "I am thankful for my agency but, and I'm thankful for the financial support, but, and I wish I had some emotional support that he's describing. I'm feeling discontent listening to this." How would you advise them to kind of begin, be in the process of talking about this with their church?

*Ryan Martin:*

Yeah, I think some of it is as we spoke to earlier and just where there's, where we sense maybe an inadequacy to be able to kind of be able to cross back over those cultures of those barriers of culture and distance and time.

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Just to be able to just be transparent and to say, “Hey, I’m a member of your church, I don’t want to just be seen as one who has been sent out and forgotten, but rather I’m just an extension of this local church just in a different context, in a different culture.” And so to be transparent and honest with that church, and particularly the leadership, and to say, “I would love, we would love some care.” I think maybe even start with having some of the pastoral team come over to be able to see the work and to be able to just provide a pastoral care visit. And to be able to really sit down on the field, to be able to allow that, those leaders to be able to see you context, your culture, to be able to walk alongside you such that as the leadership catches the vision for that care, then they’re gonna be able to really cast a vision for that for the rest of the church body. And then from there to be able to then explain and you know kind of dialogue about ways in which you can be receive care from the church and ways that you maybe you’re gonna be able to speak back into the life of the church in a healthy way and in a way that’s gonna help mobilize that body even more so. And so that would be one way.

And then too I think just looking for those relationships that you’re closest with. I know that even in my time as a missions pastor, those partnerships that seemed to go deepest and seemed to really kind of take hold the most within the life and ministry of our church were those that the missionaries were deeply invested not just within the relationships among the leadership of the church, but also too within other members within the church. And so even reaching back to those members and saying, “Hey, can we set up just a regular phone call?” May it be every other week or once a month just to be able to have some sort of correspondence. And it could be just a very casual conversation, or it could be dealing with some very heavy, crisis care counseling situations as well. But at least just some regular touchpoints that you can provide.

*Scott Dunford:*

Very good.

*Alex Kocman:*

Ryan, this is helpful, I think these are all good questions for people to ask and for a pastor listening. Or maybe a missionary’s listening to this and thinking “Oh goodness, I’d love to send a link to this to my pastor.” Well, it won’t be perceived as passive aggressive, if you feel the need to be cared for more, I’m giving you permission right now, just share this link with your pastor and he’ll forgive you. Because the need to care and like you said the need for churches to see their sent-out workers as extensions of their own church, that’s not a common approach. Across denominations that’s the problem regardless of where the funding is coming from and how much skin that church in the game. It’s that inescapable problem of out of sight, out of mind. So Ryan, any final encouragements and also how can people get more of your writing and your work?

*Ryan Martin:*

Yeah, I mean I think a couple final encouragements. One is just to see that churches have a key role in the sending process, again, to kind of break the

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mentality that sending is the finish line, but rather to see it as the starting line. And just as missions' history would teach us, as William Carey said, "If I will go down, then you'll hold the rope." And that we need rope holders on the other end to be able to be there for when tough times come. There's multilayers of things that missionaries go through and so for local churches to see that missionaries need you, need your encouragement, need your support, but then also too for missionaries to see their opportunity to speak back into the life of the church to be able to encourage and exhort and help mobilize their church to be on mission. And one of the ways that you can best do that is through missionary care. I think as far as ways that you can continue to read the stuff I'm writing on missionary care, again, as has been referenced, is the Upstream Collective. I'll write on other topics outside of missionary care, but you can go to the [upstreamcollective.com](http://upstreamcollective.com) to get those blogs. As well I've written a few blogs on the Center for Great Commission Studies at Southeastern Seminary's website and so you can google that and find that blog post, or those blog posts there on that Great Commission Seminary's, or Great Commission Center's website.

*Alex Kocman:* Great Commission Center at Southeastern. Ryan, thank you so much, we appreciate that. And again, listeners, you have permission to share it with your church leadership, it's not passive aggressive, it's okay. They'll get the idea.

*Scott Dunford:* In fact you –

*Alex Kocman:* We could all care for missionaries better.

*Scott Dunford:* If you go to the ratings section and click five-star rating and hit send, then a little indulgence will pop up that you can just click and copy into your email from Alex directly to your pastor.

*Alex Kocman:* Every time a coin in the coffer –

*Scott Dunford:* I hope they know we're kidding –

*Alex Kocman:* clings, right?

*Scott Dunford:* because if some people who don't know that we're joking – but, yes.

*Alex Kocman:* Right, a soul from purgatory springs.

*Scott Dunford:* *[Inaudible]*

*Alex Kocman:* Not quite, but something like that. Scott and I have some, we have some issues to work out here. But Ryan, thank you for joining us on the show today. Listeners, thank you for being a part of this. Go to [missionspodcast.com](http://missionspodcast.com), not pot cast, podcast, go to [missionspodcast.com](http://missionspodcast.com) –

*Scott Dunford:* Speaking of issues.

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*Alex Kocman:* Yeah, speaking of issues. Podcast.com for more content; every episode comes out Sunday night at 7:00 p.m. And we'll see you next week on The Missions Podcast.

*[End of Audio]*