

A photograph of four hands of different skin tones (lightest to darkest) stacked on a dark wooden surface. The hands are positioned horizontally, with fingers pointing to the right. The top hand is lightest, followed by a medium-light tone, then a medium-dark tone, and the bottom hand is the darkest. The wood grain is visible in the background.

MISSION SUPPORT TEAMS

SENDING & SUPPORTING MISSION WORKERS

EMM

Eastern Mennonite Missions



ON A MISSION TOGETHER

“While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.” – Acts 13:2-3

No mission worker should serve solo. Mission workers who flourish and produce kingdom fruit belong to and are sent from communities of Jesus followers. These communities stay connected to their mission workers and provide spiritual, relational, and financial support.

To ensure that EMM workers have support in each of these areas, we ask each mission worker to form a Mission Support Team (MST). MSTs consist of four to eight people who help ensure mission workers’ spiritual, relational, and financial support and foster true partnership between mission workers and their sending/supporting networks.

“My support team has been just as committed to this ‘work’ as I am. I am grateful for their extensive logistical, financial, emotional, and prayer support. Because of their deep involvement, I have felt that we are all in this together.” – EMM mission worker

MST MEMBERS

MSTs are made up of family, friends, and people from the mission worker's congregation. These teams, along with EMM, form a vital part of the network supporting the mission worker.

EMM recommends that both short- and long-term mission workers form MSTs by inviting people to serve in the following roles:

TEAM LEADER: convenes team meetings and orchestrates the team's work in cooperation with the mission worker and EMM; usually someone with administrative and motivational gifts.

PRAYER FACILITATOR: circulates the mission worker's prayer requests and leads the prayer network; usually someone whom the mission worker trusts deeply and who has a heart for prayer.

PASTORAL CARE PROVIDER: mentors the mission worker in spiritual and emotional well-being before, during, and after the mission assignment; can be a pastor, mentor, or other trusted spiritual adviser.

FINANCE COORDINATOR: tracks financial contributions and monitors the mission worker's financial support; usually a detail-oriented, dollars-and-cents type of person.

CHURCH COMMUNICATOR: ensures that communication flows freely and frequently between the mission worker, supporting congregations, and other members of the support network; often someone with the gift of encouragement who is comfortable speaking in front of others.

Mission workers serving more than one year often ask people to cover two additional roles:

NEWSLETTER MANAGER: receives and distributes updates from the mission worker to members of the support network; usually a person with the ability to maintain a database of addresses. Graphic design skills are sometimes helpful.

CHILDREN'S ADVOCATE: discerns and tends to the special needs of mission workers' children; usually someone with a special interest in children. If the mission workers' child is older, the advocate could be a peer.

Of course, each team is unique. For example, sometimes it works best for one person to cover multiple roles, for a married couple to share a role, or for a role to be adapted to better fit the mission worker's needs. This is perfectly acceptable.

Parents of mission workers often make valuable contributions as MST members, especially in the Children's Advocate, Church Communicator, and Newsletter Manager roles. EMM does not permit parents or immediate family members to serve in the roles of Team Leader, Finance Coordinator, Prayer Facilitator, or Pastoral Care Provider.

MST PROCESS

A potential mission worker seeking God's direction about a missions calling should seek counsel from congregational leaders, family members, and trusted friends. These people often become MST members if God opens the door to a missions assignment.

| WHEN THE MISSION WORKER ... | THE MST ... |
|-----------------------------|--|
| is approved for service | is formed as people accept the mission worker's invitation to serve in particular roles |
| is preparing for service | <p>helps the mission worker to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · communicate his/her mission vision · raise financial support · develop a prayer network · prepare for departure <p>arranges for the home congregation to commission the mission worker</p> |
| is on assignment | <p>prays regularly for the mission worker</p> <p>provides regular encouragement to the mission worker</p> <p>communicates frequently with the mission worker and the support network</p> <p>monitors the balance in the mission worker's support account</p> <p>assists with raising additional funds if contributions are less than pledged</p> |
| returns from assignment | <p>helps the mission worker to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · reconnect in the home culture · find housing and transportation as needed <p>continues to provide loving support during a sometimes difficult transition</p> |

MST COACHING

EMM is committed to providing encouragement, guidance, and resourcing to MSTs through easy and ongoing access an MST coach.

MST RESOURCING

EMM resources MSTs by

- orienting each new MST
- training MSTs to work with their mission workers in raising full financial support
- providing resources for creating communication pieces and tracking contributions
- producing prayer cards to help mission workers and MSTs communicate with supporters
- providing ongoing encouragement and equipping by newsletter
- sending information about re-entry care to MSTs

A CORD OF THREE STRANDS

Our society urges us to be independent and self-sufficient. However, God's Word instructs us to relate interdependently to one another as members of the body of Christ. Interdependence is at the core of the relationship between a mission worker, an MST, and EMM. As "a cord of three strands is not quickly broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:12), so a mission worker, a support team, and a mission agency working together toward a common vision form a strong cord.

QUESTIONS?

Contact EMM's Mission Support Team coach at 717-898-2251 or mst@emm.org.



**Christ's transforming love compels us to
cross cultures, engage the world,
and multiply disciples of Jesus.**



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