

POSTINGS

articles for missions mobilizers



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Make December Count!

**10 ways to end the year
with global impact**

Does global outreach get your church's attention only 11 months of the year because Christmas activities push missions off the calendar in December? Here are 10 ways to integrate missions into the life of your church during this undisputedly busy month and begin to prepare for even greater impact in the upcoming year.

1. **Incorporate immigrants' Christmas traditions.** Are there members of your church who grew up in a Christian context in another country? Ask them about their family's or church's Christmas celebrations. How could you incorporate some aspect of their traditions into your Advent celebrations to remind your congregation that celebrating Christ's birth is a global event?
2. **Host international students.** Many international students do not have the option of going home for their holiday break. Instead, they face the loneliness of a nearly deserted dorm. Check with ministries working with internationals on university campuses to see if there are students who would like to spend part or all of their Christmas break in a host home. Since this may be a longer timeframe, an invitation to stay in a home in a different part of the country could be appealing in order to incorporate some sightseeing.
3. **Gift your missionaries with a book and dialog.** Many churches give their missionaries a monetary Christmas gift. In addition, consider choosing a great missions book (for recommendations, check out "best missions books" from [past December issues of Postings](#); this year's list will be published soon) and send your missionaries an ebook copy. And even better? Schedule an online discussion of this book in January just for your global workers. One thing that many churches learned during COVID was how much their missionaries enjoyed connecting through Zoom with their church's other global workers.
4. **Bless your global partners.** Many churches give their missionaries a Christmas gift but forget to include their indigenous partners. Why not give a personal monetary gift to national leaders and workers with whom you partner throughout the year?
5. **Include your international neighbors in Christmas activities.** Are there immigrants in your neighborhood or community who may be curious about your holiday celebrations but only observe them from afar? Encourage your church families to extend hospitality to an international family over the holidays. Hindu, Buddhist, or Muslim neighbors and colleagues will likely be much more comfortable in joining an initial activity in their neighbor's home rather than going to church with them. Suggest sharing dinner, dessert, tree trimming, hanging outdoor lights, etc. with an explanation of the meaning behind the traditions. In your pastoral prayer during worship, include a petition that God will use these holiday connections to begin long-term friendships with gospel potential.
6. **Challenge college students to summer opportunities.** While your church's college students are home for Christmas, find a time to meet with them and present possibilities for a global purpose for next summer's school break. Options might include applying for an overseas internship, participating on or leading a short-term team from your church, and pursuing an internship at your church or with a local outreach partner. Discuss financial concerns if this seems to be a deterrent. Could your church provide some funding?

7. **Call missionary retirees.**

It's heartbreaking to hear a retired missionary say that they feel forgotten by their church and think that their lifetime of service has been discounted. A friendly phone call could mean so much. Faithful servants should be remembered all year long, but Christmas is a great time to pick up the phone and have a chat. Even if you are a newer leader who is not familiar with their ministry, call and encourage them to share some stories with you. Let them know that your church honors their past service.

8. Care for your MKs. If the young-adult children of your missionaries are going home for Christmas, consider giving them a gift to help cover the cost of their travel. If they are staying in your country, look for ways to make their holiday special despite being far from home. This might be a goodie box, a financial gift, or an invitation to spend all or part of their holiday with a family in your church.

9. **Make New Year's resolutions in the area of missions.**

Whether or not you call them resolutions, as New Year's Day approaches, take some time to pray and consider how you can improve your missions involvement and leadership in the upcoming year. Is this the year you should take the Perspectives course or perhaps an online

college/graduate course in missions? Is God challenging you to increasing your personal intercession for the world? Communicate more often with global partners? Personally give more to missions? Prayerfully identify some specific ways you will obey His call to expand your own global engagement and set deadlines for follow through.

10. **Consider next year's goals for your missions team.**

Has your missions team slipped into the habit of dividing their time and energy between maintaining the usual programs and dealing with crises? If so, the beginning of a new year is a good time to step back and evaluate what faith-stretching goals God is challenging you to set and what changes you need to implement to make a major expansion of your congregation's global impact. Refuse to allow yourselves to use excuses for slipping into reactive mode and being satisfied with maintaining the status quo.

Don't put missions on a shelf for the month of December! Choose at least one of these ways to expand your global impact during Advent.

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