



Chinese International Missions, Inc.

08.01.2024

Home Assignment

~Theresa Poon, CIM Board

Summer is a popular time for missionaries worldwide to go on home assignments in their home countries. CIM's missionary in South Africa, pastor Alex Ko, and his family was also on such a journey this summer here in the U.S., after being on the field for the last seven years since they joined CIM. Even though the U.S. is not their home country, that is where the main support come from.

Tracing the origin of furlough, or home assignment, we only need to look to our Lord Jesus. After their mission, Jesus pulled His disciples aside for a time of rest and renewal—"Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, He said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.'" (Mark 6:31). A great reason for home assignment is for missionaries to take time for a formal debriefing and refreshing. Most missionaries, not only those who have experienced hardship or crisis, would do well to seek this opportunity.

Perhaps the word "furlough" has too much of a connotation of "vacation" or "rest". Furlough is not a vacation, and that is why missions now call it "home assignment." Most missions agencies ask their missionaries to commit much of that time to nurturing relationships with their support base—aside from continuing education, training, and connecting with aging parents, grown children, extended family, and friends who live in their home country. If, and when, necessary, support raising can also take place during this period.

I suspect that the term "home assignment" is widely used now because missionaries and their organizations want to emphasize that missionaries who are temporarily back in their home countries are still working and doing ministry. They are not on vacation. Instead of a ministry assignment on the field, they have been assigned to do ministry in their home country for a while.

Missionaries' kids (MK's), also known as TCK's (Third Culture Kids), could face additional challenges as they, in their relatively young ages, have to adjust to a new environment than the ones they have been accustomed to for the last several years. Some might even be born in the missions fields and have never been to their parents' home country.

How could supporting churches and individuals welcome returning missionaries?

House them—If you have the gift of hospitality and the blessing of extra space in your home, why not host some returning missionaries. Even if you cannot host them for the entire duration of their stay, a couple of weeks could help. The ministry sharing and cross-cultural experiences you will hear from them promise to enrich your understanding of how God brings people in other parts of the world to Himself.

Lend them a car—That extra car you have sitting in your garage waiting for your college-bound child to use can be offered to returning missionaries to use so as to save them rental car expenses.

Invite them for meals—Missionaries usually do not have the luxury of eating food that is from their home country in their field. Some barbecue or a home-cooked meal will be much appreciated, for sure.

Babysit their kids—If the missionary family has children, why not offer to babysit them and let the parents have a day (or at least a night) off. Missionary couples do not have the luxury of having date nights in the field. You do not necessarily have to have experience in babysitting. Some age-appropriate activities as simple as board games and just running around in the backyard and play some sports will be great already.

Host groups to meet the missionary—There are surely brothers and sisters in your church that do not know and have not met the missionary. Why not host a potluck party and allow these believers and even those who already know them an opportunity to hear the missionary's stories and in return, introduce the missionary to the larger church family. This could hopefully add more to the missionary's prayer support group.

Fund them—Some missionaries have the extra task of raising support funds during their home assignment. This had happened during the outbreak of COVID-19 when some supporters had to drop from funding the missionaries due to a change in their own financial situation. It could also happen when a support church face internal turmoil and has to split,

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or the church is a declining one and has to close altogether, or the missions department of a church decides that missionary is not in the scope of their missions environment. If you are led by the Holy Spirit, why not invest in kingdom business. You will surely reap harvest manifold.

So how could you welcome missionaries on their next home assignment?

PRAYER REQUESTS

1. Thank the Lord for preparing minister Alex Ko’s family for their mission trip to the U.S. this time. They have safely arrived home already. No matter if it was with church sharing arrangements, accommodation and reception, and all other arrangements, they were all full of the Lord’s grace. Thank the Lord, his knee has recovered, and he could walk without crutches before leaving South Africa, which made the trip scheduling much easier.
2. Thank the Lord for leading Rev and Mrs. Chiu from Canada to South Africa to support the PECCC and the gospel ministry there. May the Lord watch over and protect their serving and living as they end their stay in South Africa.
3. Thank the Lord that this past Sunday, brother Hong was baptized at Belo Horizonte Chinese Church in Brazil.
4. Praise the Lord that the CIM short-term missionary team that came to Brazil in July was protected by God and everything went well.
5. Pray that the Lord will continue to give strength to Claudia of the Belo Church to lead the young people there. Let them desire and know the Lord even more through this spiritual retreat!
6. Please continue to pray for guidance and direction for CIM Canada’s next steps for their Roma Ministry. After attending the Roma Network Conference and the subsequent visits to Roma communities, Rev Isaac Quan has been presented with different opportunities.
7. Pray also for the finances of CIM Canada ministries. Pray for new donors and a healthy general fund to run their ministries. In order to run their ministries effectively they are currently seeking.
8. Continue to pray for Janice, coworker in Ghana, as she continues with her ministry after her maternity leave. Pray that she can find balance between her work with CIM and caring for their baby, Lucy.
9. Please continue to pray for the recruiting effort underway to fill job vacancies in CIM for a Director of Ministry to oversee STM and daily operations, and an Executive Director successor. If you know of anyone who is interested and qualifies, please contact us.
10. Pray that God will move more brothers and sisters to join the ministry so God’s kingdom would be more prosperous. Pray for God’s abundant provision for all the financial needs of CIM.

NOTE

Please call 408-596-4567 to contact CIM for questions or comments. Thank you for your continual support.

FINANCIAL REPORT

June 2024

	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expense</u>	<u>Balance</u>
General	\$22,403	\$7,179	\$15,224
Missions	\$24,532	\$33,383	-\$8,851
Total	\$46,935	\$40,562	-\$6,373

To contribute to CIM ministries:

- 1) Make checks payable to “**CIM**” and mail to: P.O. Box 700185, San Jose, CA 95170-0185, USA
- 2) Donate online via credit card, go to: www.cimusa.org Click on “**Give**” and follow directions. Thank you!



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