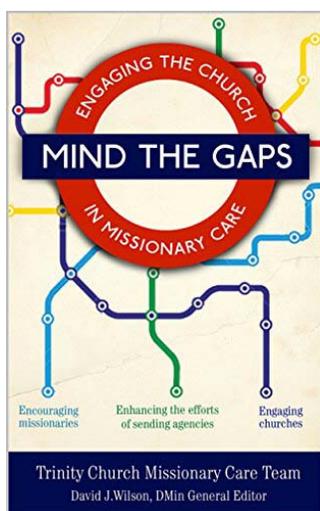

Book Review – *Mind the Gaps: Engaging the Church in Missionary Care* by David J. Wilson

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Wilson, David J. *Mind the Gaps: Engaging the Church in Missionary Care*. Believers Press, 2015.

When we at MRN present a “Missionary Care Workshop” for churches who would like to care well for the missionaries they send, our theme song continues: “Missionary care is



the task of the sending church!” That’s when the questions start: How can we encourage missionaries when we really don’t know what they are experiencing? How can we get more of the sending church involved in “care teams” or “prayer teams” for the sake of each individual mission effort? What is the best way to organize for care and prayer? When folks start asking such questions, my first thought is, “Wouldn’t you like to sit and have coffee with a missionary care team who has done it, and then written a road map of how they got there in a “vibrant, timely and relevant” way? We are pleased to point to resources like: *Mind the Gaps: Engaging the Church in Missionary Care*.

This is a book for those in the local church wanting to organize for prayer and care of missionaries who may be thinking, “We can’t do that?! We just don’t know how! Where do we start?” This unique guide for developing direction and purpose for the missionary care team in the local church is a great place to start. Written by the “Trinity Church Missionary Care Team” from six different points of view, it starts with the foundation: who are the people you *want* on your team? In an effort to “demystify missionary care” from the thinking that “this ministry is only for professional mental health providers or seminary-trained pastors,” team member Linda Parker starts by forming her own care team with those who have a heart for missionaries, have the needed character qualities and have the skills or experiences that would help care for missionaries. Through prayer, chapter 2 goes on to describe the care team writing their “POEM” or Philosophy of Effective Ministry including statements of purpose and core values. In a move to deal effectively with confidentiality issues, here you can find a sample policy the Trinity Church developed for your consideration.

Part Two of the book gives a step by step process from screening the candidate missionary to successfully launching them into the field. Part Three is on “Making Connections,” connecting the sending church with the missionary through prayer and reporting. Part Four includes separate chapters on meeting the needs of the missionary

including spiritual, emotional, practical, and professional effectiveness needs. Before concluding with a broad bibliography, the material deals with transitions, whether they are changes in the ministry or reentry and retirement.

We highly recommend this excellent, practical resource. Kelly and Michele O'Donnell, psychologists who have been writing and speaking about missionary care since the late 80s say, "This book takes seriously the responsibility for Christians to relevantly participate in the Great Commission and the challenging issues facing our world."