

## How to get the most out of a mission speaker

1. **Connect the speaker with the whole presbytery –**
  - a. If at all possible, get your speaker on the docket at presbytery—either as a speaker or as a preacher. Try to get them at least 20 minutes on the docket. After all, the speaker is a mission worker commissioned to serve God’s mission on behalf of the whole church. The GAC (on behalf of the whole PC(USA)) has appointed this mission worker. Think of it as an exciting event. Assume that others share that feeling. You gotta believe in the “product” you’re selling. The speaker won’t let you down.
  - b. Advertising the speaker throughout the presbytery may not help to fill up the speaker’s schedule, but it will build name recognition in the long run.
  - c. How about an email or letter to all churches announcing the speaker, describing his or her ministry, and inviting churches to host the speaker. Again, this may not help fill up the schedule, but it will be helpful in building up interest for the long term.
2. **Keep the speaker busy -**
  - a. Speakers *like* to be busy. They’re away from home, and while they’re away from home, they want to work. They want the chance to tell their story, so even a small group is better than none.
  - b. It may be hard to find a church for every night of the week. But getting the whole church together isn’t necessary. You don’t have to have a potluck. Just find a group of interested people for an informal pizza party in someone’s home and have a talk with the mission speaker. Remember: Speakers *need* to tell their story. You are performing a ministry by gathering a group to listen to the speaker’s story.
  - c. If after trying all the churches in the presbytery, you still have room in the speaker’s schedule, then perhaps a seminary, university, college, or even a public high school are good ideas. Other possibilities: community ministers gathering, civic organizations such as Rotary Club, Junior Chamber of Commerce, etc.
3. **Get on the phone –**
  - a. If you want to fill up a speaker’s schedule, you will have to get on the phone and call churches. You may want to start by calling in the chits that are owed to you and ask people that you already know to do you a favor. You may have to do cold calls. Advertisements in presbytery or synod newsletters may be helpful. It’s also good to give the speaker’s visit a high profile on the presbytery Web site. Announcements (with flyers) at presbytery meetings may also help fill up the schedule. But nothing works like a phone call. Be persuasive. Assume good will on the part of other person. Ask them which of the open dates works best for them to host the mission speaker.
  - b. Don’t rely on voice mail or email. Keep trying until you speak with the right person and you get a “yes” or a “no.”
4. **Make sure the speaker gets to preach**
  - a. Be sure that the speaker is offered a pulpit on Sunday. This may mean that you can’t get the speaker into one of the largest churches. A speaker doesn’t feel they’re

really being used if they don't get a chance to interpret God's word from the pulpit. It's an honor that you're conferring on your guest. It's hospitable.

**5. Sunday is a busy day**

- a. Besides preaching, speakers can also be asked to lead adult Sunday school. Often it's possible to organize an after-church potluck (at the same church or a different one). Then there are other groups that might be meeting on Sunday evenings, such as youth groups.

**6. Ideas for weekdays**

- a. It's not necessary to gather the whole church. Look for meetings of interested people: Presbytery Women, sessions, mission committees, prayer breakfasts, or special gathers such as potlucks, afternoon teas, pizza parties, etc. Sometimes a meeting or a lunch with a single pastor can begin a relationship that eventually involves the whole congregation.

**7. Hospitality**

- a. If you invite a mission speaker to your presbytery for a week or longer, the Mission Connections office will pay the mission speaker's travel expenses to the presbytery. See Carol Somplatsky-Jarman about this. You are responsible for travel within the presbytery and hospitality: sleeping arrangements and meals.
- b. If possible, try to house the person at the same place through his or her stay—though not necessary, your speaker will appreciate not having to pack up and move every day.
- c. While it's important to keep speakers busy, it's also important to let them have down time. You may need to program a whole day off if your schedule is really full.