

A Spiritual Covering

Though the exact phrase "spiritual covering" is not in the Bible (just like the terms "trinity" and "rapture"), IMF uses this open-ended expression to help others understand what we provide and expect from our membership. We believe that the terms and phrases such as "spiritual accountability", "Christian fellowship", "discipleship", "mentoring", and "intercessory prayer" are biblical concepts and all contribute to the concept of "spiritual covering" as we "submit" to one another out of our common reverence for Christ, not with a heavy hand of control, but as a loving arm of encouragement and biblical truth. (1 Peter 5:1-5; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 2 Cor. 8:21; Prov. 27:17)

- IMF is an evangelical association of ministers and churches with an emphasis on the centrality of Christ and the person and work of the Holy Spirit.
- IMF offers membership and appropriate ministerial credentials authorizing licensed and ordained members to perform all sacerdotal services.
- In addition, IMF provides many support services to members and their ministries and prays for them regularly.
- IMF requires a level of educational, professional, spiritual, and moral accomplishment and accountability.
- IMF offers church and para-church organizations membership and ministry-specific assistance.
- IMF assists in church planting and works of charity.
- IMF offers ecclesiastical endorsement for military, hospital, police, and prison chaplains.
- IMF is a Missions Sending Agency.

There is a biblical order in the Church. Those in leadership must be servant leaders, and as leaders, they can provide mentorship to those who are younger and less experienced in biblical truth and practice, remembering that they too must give an account to Christ who is Head of all things in the Church. Such is the opportunity and responsibility of providing a "spiritual covering" to those we mentor and serve as IMF takes the words of Peter to heart, "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be... Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another". (1 Peter 5:1-5)



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International Ministerial Fellowship Resource & Services Guide



*Two are better than one ...
A cord of three strands is not easily torn.*

Ecclesiastes 4:9a; 12b

About IMF



IMF National Headquarters in Minneapolis, Minnesota

International Ministerial Fellowship (IMF) is an association of laymen, clergypersons and churches, who work across denominational lines to love, serve, encourage and help enable those who are called to serve in front-line Christian ministry. Members include layworkers, senior and staff pastors, evangelists, missionaries, active and reserve military chaplains, hospital, hospice and prison chaplains and leaders in para-church organizations such as Young Life, Youth for Christ, Campus Crusade for Christ, Youth With a Mission and many more.

IMF membership provides many resources for churches, ministers, missionaries and chaplains, including appropriate credentialing for ministerial service. Members presently are serving in the U.S. and 51 foreign countries. IMF is a Missions Sending Agency and an Ecclesiastical Endorsing Agency for military, hospital and prison chaplaincy.

Ministry to men and women of all denominations is often expressed through suburban and inner-city churches, city missions, refugee camps, third world humanitarian services, as well as inter-city youth programs. Anywhere the heart of God can be found loving people in need is a potential location for Christian ministry, often expressed through the lives of IMF members.

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Fellowship, Mutual Nurturing and Encouragement

Fellowship

- Biennial National Assembly
- Area Ministry Partners Luncheons
- Distribution of member lists by state (limited to 2 states, residence state and one adjoining state)
- Distribution of member photos taken during personal contacts with representatives
- Personal relationships established through membership services and pastoral care
 - ▶ Senior Pastor conference calls (monthly)
 - ▶ Church Planters conference calls (monthly)
 - ▶ Volunteer opportunities to participate in IMF activities
 - ▶ Personal contact with IMF staff members and Area Pastor
 - ▶ Representatives (local or out state)
- Monthly leadership articles via email
- Pastoral calls to all members (twice a year)

Mutual Nurturing and Encouragement

- Spiritual counseling
- Special counseling services (upon request):
 - ▶ Police chaplaincy program
 - ▶ Marriage and family
 - ▶ Life situation
 - ▶ Missionary
 - ▶ Pastors and Boards

Awards and Other Recognition

- Anniversary, Birthday cards
- Death memorial (Christian flag flown at half mast/recognition in *Gathering* magazine)
- Flowers - hospital and funeral
- Living Memorial Gift Program
 - ▶ Honor the living
 - ▶ Memorialize the deceased
- Honors Awards

Consultations and Recommendations on Insurance (by IMF via Schwarz Williams)

- Life insurance consultations
- Health insurance and options (Medi-Share, etc.)
- Long-term disability insurance
- Long-term care insurance (i.e., nursing home insurance)
- Financial Planning (deferred gifts)

Consultation on 403(b) Retirement Accounts

- 403(b) deferred income (Retirement Program) for all IMF members (voluntary participation)
- Consultation on starting 403(b) plans for churches and other non-profit organizations
- Consultation on starting other retirement instruments

Professional Resources Available for Consulting on Legal, Accounting and Tax Matters

- Church planting or establishment of other religious organizations
- Legal models
- Research on specific issues/questions
- Recommendations for accounting systems
- Quarterly articles on church law and tax rulings

- Housing allowances and social security exemptions
- Consultation in preparing wills and bequests

Note: IMF does not practice law. If legal advice is required, contact a competent attorney.

Ecclesiastical Endorsement for Chaplaincy

- Issuance of ecclesiastical endorsements for hospital and military chaplaincy
- Military
 - ▶ Recognition by all branches of U.S. military
 - ▶ Active duty and reserve
- Civilian
 - ▶ Hospital/hospice
 - ▶ Prison
 - ▶ Police
- Marketplace ministry

Free Professional Crisis Counseling

- Three hours of free crisis intervention counseling annually
 - ▶ Moral
 - ▶ Spiritual
 - ▶ Marriage and family
 - ▶ Professional
- If member needs continuing counseling, IMF will help set up long-term counseling in their local area
- Qualified counselors available

Consultation and Referrals for Development and Fundraising

Programs for Churches and Christian Institutions

- Direct mail
- Memorial programs
- Tithing (10/90 program)
- Private foundations
- Capital Campaign Programs

IMF is a Missions Sending Agency

Full Service Missions

- Missionary Candidacy Evaluation and Deputized fundraising training
- Publishing, printing and mailing bi-monthly missionaries' newsletters
- Maintenance of donors' files
- Processing of donations received
- Thank-you letters/tax-deductible receipts
- Monthly notification of financial donors
- Free web page in IMF's website Missionary Directory
- Christmas stocking program (for Children of IMF Missionaries)
- Written communications with missionaries by Coordinator of Missions Field Services or the Director of Missions Ministries
- Site visits by Missions Department Leaders
- Budgeting tools and Financial Planning

Partial service missions

- Processing donations received
- Thank you letters/tax-deductible receipts
- Free web page in IMF's website Missionary Directory
- Christmas stocking program (for Children of IMF Missionaries)

- Written communications with missionaries by Coordinator of Missions Field Services or the Director of Missions Ministries

Non-Agency Missions

- Free web page in IMF's website Missionary Directory

Miscellaneous Services

- E-mail correspondence/phone calls with the Missions Services Specialist
- Missions articles in *The Gathering* magazine
- Missions Department promotions via colleges, conferences, and visitations
- Writing, publishing and distribution of IMF missions brochures and directory
- Response cards for Giving Program donors

Short-Term Missions

- IMF facilitates several short-term missions trips per year
- Orientation
- Cross-cultural training
- Short-term mission trip opportunities posted on the IMF website

Fellowship with IMF members

Biennial National Assembly in the Minneapolis Area

- Highlight national speakers
- Gathering of IMF members, their families and others
- Seminars/Workshops(plus tapes and videos to purchase)
- Networking
- Lifting up spirits, encouragement to members
- Spirit of inclusiveness
- Emphasis on worship
- Board of Directors meeting held during Conference
- Visit with IMF Area Pastor Representatives
- Community goodwill
- National headquarters sponsors open house
- Intercessory Prayer Group members hold prayer vigil

Ministry Partners Luncheons

- Regional luncheons
- Pastors' luncheons (local)
- Women's brunches (local)

Intercessory Prayer Group is Available for Urgent and Continued Prayer Needs

- Weekly Prayer & distribution of Prayer cards ("we prayed for you today...")
- Internet (www.i-m-f.org) - prayer letter on website
- Annual "40 Days of Prayer, Fasting & Devotions"
- Intercessory Prayer Group available 24/7

Information Technology (IT) Department

- Value-added services to member churches
- Off-site technical support
- Computer systems management via PC Anywhere and related software (charge required)
- Provide in-house systems (hardware and software) needs, technical assistance and systems management
- Three page Web site design for Member Churches

IMF Web Site (www.i-m-f.org)

- Introduction and history
- Membership services
- Members only
 - ▶ Monthly Leadership Guide
- Sermons/teachings
- Good news
- Members listing
- On-line application download for membership and appropriate rostering
- Prayer letter
- On-line IMF store with links to books, music, t-shirts, etc.

Partnerships and Alliances with IMF

- IMF provides all its membership services to other ministry organizations through partnerships and alliances.

Appropriate Credentialing

- Lay track
- Clergy track
- Ordination services available
- Installation services

Area Pastor Representatives

- Application interviews
- Welcome new members via telephone calls
- Discipline issues
- Ordinations/installations
- Area referrals for IMF

Quarterly *Gathering* Magazine

- Current articles on member activities, leadership, and services
- Education resources
- Networking opportunities
- New member recognition
- Listing of organizational leadership (current)
- Announcement of Fellowship events and activities

Consultation and Recommendations for Continuing Education

- Distribution of a list of approved educational organizations (colleges, seminaries, off-campus classes)
- Counseling and recommendations available on specific Christian organizations and education options in light of member needs
- Recommendations by IMF staff
- Biblical stewardship seminar
- Training for 13-week finance management class available (to be offered in church by church members)

Subcontracting (Back Office Services) for Ministry and Missionary Organizations

- Accounting services include annual IRS and State reports
- Publishing, printing and mailing bi-monthly or quarterly newsletters
- Maintenance of donors' addresses
- Processing of donations received
- Thank you letters/tax deductible receipts
- Monthly listing of supporters sent to missionaries