

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A MATURE MISSIONS SENDING DEPARTMENT

BEFORE WE CONSIDER THIS, LET'S REMEMBER A COUPLE PRINCIPLES

- **Everything that is worth something, takes "time."**

You can't get maturity instantly. You have to make mistakes, confront battles, and win them, and have experience, which is impossible to get from reading a book, or just theory.

- **You need the right leader.**

Many times, a country is "ripe" for fruit, but the right leader has not been formed or is not willing or has not been selected to take on the challenge. As well, a real challenge for most of our "sending South" nations, is that they don't have a missions leader who has experience in being a missionary, therefore they have a "ceiling" as to how far they can take the agency. But after 10 years, there will be candidates who have been missionaries to come back and help and even possibly eventually take the leadership.

- **Most of our countries in the "sending South" are in the Pioneer stage**, and they have few or no sent missionaries, and very little real experience. The challenge is to continue on the next level of maturity.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A MATURE MISSIONS SENDING "DEPARTMENT"

1. They have sent missionaries outside their country for the long term, and to nations which speak different languages than theirs.

They have overcome the barriers of time (short term – long term), distance (not just going "close by), language (different language than the sending nation) and religion (different religion than the sending nation). Each barrier requires a greater effort than the previous.

2. Their income is in constant growth, and possibly they have even surpassed the "income" or "tithes" of the general headquarters, however it is supported.

How do you recognize a mature missions VISION in a country? When this doesn't bother them or cause jealousy, but they rejoice that more income is given to missions than to "general administration" of the work.

3. They provide pastoral care to the missionaries in the field.
They are understood and ministered to. (The local church also does this and the agency/department doesn't take the place of the local church.)

4. They have administrative personnel that are full time, and one or more of the executive team is dedicated full time to missions.
There are great difficulties if one is "married" to both their church and a full time job of leading a missions department.

5. They have a good image and reputation when it comes to the administration of the money and resources. They are not questioned about the use of money, because they have been transparent.

There may be some that complain about the amount of money given (which reflects that there is still not a mature “vision” in the country) but no one complains about the correct administration of those resources. (which reflect a “mature missions agency/department)

6. They have savings and money in the bank to respond to possible emergencies, and do not live “one day at a time.”
7. The responsibilities of decisions don’t fall on only one person, and there is a commission, as well as a “team” that constantly evaluate, decide, and execute decisions.
8. There is one or more persons in the team or commission that speak English, so that communication with the exterior is not limited.
9. There are training programs to prepare and orient future missionary candidates.
10. There are programs to motivate and mobilize the churches, in all areas, from teaching children, teaching young people, for intercession, and for promotion and missions information geared to the local churches.

STEPS TOWARDS MATURITY

▪ **PIONEER STAGE**

The beginnings can be slow, but we must be faithful with little to be given “much.”

▪ **BATTLES**

I do not know of a national program that is effective that did not fight many battles on many fronts as Satan tried to stop the advance of the program. I know of nothing that scares the enemy more than that 95% of our believers in the “sending South” become mobilized with missions vision for the world.

▪ **GROWTH**

Fruit and permanence is observed through progress and advances.

▪ **CONSOLIDATION**

A solid structure is organized and not just for the present growth, but in anticipation of the future.

▪ **RESPECT**

They have a good testimony before the national work. Many still do not understand the vision, but everyone “respects” the achievements and advances of the missions department, as well as their testimony.

CONCLUSION

*A mature missions department does not mean that the country has a MATURE MISSIONS VISION.
But a mature missions department will be advancing towards that goal:*

**THAT THE COUNTRY WILL EVENTUALLY HAVE A MATURE MISSIONS
VISION!!**