

“Best Practice for Missions for WAGF Churches”

1. Missions Theology Foundations
2. Best Practices for the function and administration of Missions Sending structures/agencies.
3. Best Practices of Missions Engagement among WAGF councils and churches

Part 3:

Best Practices of Missions Engagement among WAGF councils and churches.

(These 13 points were worked on in London, Jan. 2020 and reviewed by the commission in Miami in 2022)

(Two meetings in Madrid and Dublin were postponed because of Covid)

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Protocols for Sending and Receiving of Missionaries for Missions Agencies Associated with the World Assemblies of God Fellowship

This document seeks to facilitate the sending of Assemblies of God missionaries and strengthen the relationships between the sending national church, the receiving national church (where one exists), other “like minded” missions agencies and their personnel, and the missionary.

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Justification:

The sending of each missionary is unique. Participants in the sending process must be sufficiently flexible to respond to the direction of the Holy Spirit regarding the needs of both the missionary and the missionary work. Even as ministerial ethics apply at the level of local churches so also missiological ethics apply to the relationship between the national churches, their representatives, and the missionaries of the Assemblies of God worldwide. This requires respecting the autonomous authority of each national church while affirming that Jesus Christ is Lord of the harvest and the final authority in the sending of the missionary.

General Principals and Observations:

1. As members of the Assemblies of God, our primary ecclesial loyalty is to our fellow Assemblies of God fraternities, councils, and networks. We should identify ourselves as such even when there is no immediate or obvious personal benefit or advantage.
2. Situations may justify cooperative agreements with other agencies if compatible with Assemblies of God doctrinal principles and work philosophy. Given that cooperative agreements with non-Assemblies of God agencies may establish precedents that affect other Assemblies of God sending churches, it is recommended that any sending nation that seeks to enter a cooperative agreement first consult with the WAGF missions commission.
3. In Assemblies of God polity, missions agencies, departments, or administrations are responsible for the sending of the missionary under the authority of the national executive committee (e.g. All official missions correspondence should be signed by the missions president) and the national executive committee of receiving church is responsible for receiving the missionary.
4. Given that the sending of a missionary to a nation may affect other sending churches of the Assemblies of God, communication and cooperation with the Missions Commission of the WAGF is vital.
5. The Missions Commission of the WAGF is a missions leadership network to promote and facilitate the missionary movements of the national churches of WAGF, not a mission agency. Those responsible for the sending of missionaries are the departments, agencies, and administrations of the national sending churches.
6. Practical arrangements: From the beginning, every church planted and ministry established by missionaries should adhere to indigenous church principles and be infused with missions vision and commitment with a view to contextually organize with other local AG churches resulting in an organized national fellowship/church.

Best Practices for Sending and Receiving of Missionaries (Potential Progression of Activities):

1. **What people or place:** Initial interest in a specific context may emerge in various ways including but not limited to: a specific call received by a missionary candidate, a request from the receiving church, contacts between leaders at WAGF or other international events, the influence of a diaspora community, an international media event, or proposed as part of a national church strategic missions plan.
2. **Seek local contacts:** Communicate with the WAGF missions commission to find contacts of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship in the people group, nation, or region (e.g. the national superintendent and/or executive committee, other AG agencies or missionaries serving in the target group) or other sources of information regarding current or projected missions activities in the receiving nation or people group.
3. **Letters of recommendation:** To facilitate connections and fraternal relationships, the WAGF missions commission may issue a letter of introduction for the missions president of the sending nation for presentation to national leadership and/or contacts in the receiving nation or region.
4. **Exploratory trip:** If feasible, conduct an exploratory trip to make contact with Assemblies of God leadership, missionaries, or believers or, in their absence, with other missions agencies or believers in target group.
5. **Official communication:** The missions president of the sending church officially communicates with appropriate leadership or contacts providing the missionary candidate's resume, a description of possible ministry and responsibilities of the missionary, and other relevant information.
6. **Practical arrangements:** Complete the official sending arrangements including: receive an official invitation from the national church where it exists, process visa and immigration work, prepare letters of introduction, set up means to deliver financial support to the missionary, and prepare a formal description of the missionary work.
7. **Notify WAGF:** In order to keep its database current, communicate to the WAGF missions commission relevant information regarding the missionary being sent.
8. **Cooperate:** To demonstrate unity in the Body of Christ, the missionary, the sending national church, and the emerging national church should seek fraternal relationships with other Christian traditions, other church planting activities, and/or missions agencies serving the target people group.

Conclusion:

The harvest is ripe and the workers are few. Unity in the body of Christ is critical to the Church's witness to the lost. Within the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, cooperation and mutual respect in the sending and receiving of missionaries critically influences its effectiveness in the fulfillment of the missionary mandate to make disciples of every nation.

Important Note: This is a 2-page executive summary of a 29 page document, which gives much more detail and guidance.

Our Response to Unreached People Groups

In the sending of missionaries, make it a priority to send to peoples where a Bible believing indigenous church does not exist among that people group, or is so small that the people group require(s) outside assistance to reach their society and beyond.

Justification:

Following the Pauline prioritization of the “regions and peoples beyond,” (Rom. 15:20; II Cor. 10) we should focus as much as possible to send missionaries to the peoples that have little or no access to the gospel, without limiting the call of the Holy Spirit.

Part 1: General Observations: Why do we Need to Prioritize our Sending to Peoples and Places with Little or no Access to the Gospel?

First, because it is unambiguously part of God’s redemptive mission. From Genesis 12:3, all the families of the earth will be blessed, to the prophetic vision of the nations streaming to worship Yahweh in Zion, to the five Commissions in the New Testament to disciple, preach, go as the Father sent Jesus to the uttermost parts of the earth, to the final vision in Revelation 5:9 and 7:9 where representatives from every tribe and tongue and people and nation stand in worship before the throne.

Second, because of current data, we know where the Church does not exist or is extremely small. Therefore, we cannot stand before the judgment seat of Christ and plead ignorance, and we will be hard pressed to explain how knowing this we did not pour prayer, resources, and missionaries into peoples and places that lack access to the gospel.

Third, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of harvest. Acts 1:8 is our watchword—when the Spirit comes we receive power to be his witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth. It is inconceivable that the Holy Spirit, who loves all people and is not willing that any should perish, would not be calling laborers into the harvest fields of the least-reached.

Finally, we are called to follow the Pauline model, proclaiming the gospel “to the regions beyond,” (II Cor. 10:16), where “Christ has not already been named” (Rom. 15:20-21). Therefore, the Church is commissioned and compelled to engage frontier peoples and places with the gospel.

Part 2: Best Practices for Engaging Peoples and Places with Little or no Access to the Gospel.

1. We recommend that each constituent body within the WAGF advocate and raise awareness to the end that every local church and believer are conscious of the existence and priority of peoples and places with little or no access to the gospel, both globally and within their own geopolitical boundaries.
2. The primary method of missionary engagement among the peoples and places with little or no access to the gospel is long-term, sustained, in-culture missionary deployment that results in the multiplication of disciples and planting of indigenous church movements.
3. Each constituent body should develop training processes that produce missionaries capable of discipling and planting indigenous church movements among the peoples and places with little

or no access to the gospel. We cannot assume that people trained to minister in an existing church environment are equipped for work among the “least reached.”

4. Missions sending structures should create opportunities to expose the church and future candidates to missionaries and representatives working in frontier context. As well, they should offer short-term trips to least reached frontiers. These will help facilitate commitment to the priority of responding to peoples and places with little or no access to the gospel.
5. In cases where long term resident missions engagement is not feasible, non-resident missions as alternative means of engaging the unreached is biblical, attainable, and, in some cases, necessary or preferable.
 - Non-resident missions is biblical. Paul, at times was unable to remain for long periods of time in most of the places he planted churches.
 - Non-resident missions can be a strategic means of reaching restricted access peoples and places with the gospel.
 - Examples:
 - An emerging national church near Iran has engaged very successfully in non-residential missions among Iranians using a variety of means. They have planted multiple streams of churches inside Iran that are multiple generations deep.
 - Sometimes believers disciplined in another country will feel a call to return to their native homeland, and can be instrumental in becoming an advocate for the planting or strengthening of the church.

Resources to consider that provide information on UPG's.

Compassion in Missions

The compassion of God was beautifully expressed through the life and ministry of Jesus Christ in healing the sick, delivering the oppressed, raising the dead, feeding the hungry and proclaiming the gospel. (Matt. 11) Following Jesus example, Paul and the New Testament Church also responded in compassion to human need as directed by the Spirit. As we follow that biblical example, WAGF missions entities will seek to empower the church to respond to all human suffering, but especially eternal suffering, through the declaring of the gospel by preaching and the planting of the church.

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Justification:

The relationship between proclamation and social concern is a biblical, historical, and current issue. Compassion has to do with “how” we live our lives in mission, not the “why we engage” in missions.

Part 1: A Theology of Compassion Ministry and the Role of Cross-cultural Workers; the role of the Church in the World:

It is our belief that the gospel transforms the human heart and restores value to life. This is essential to real sustainable social uplift. The gospel is the most effective change agent because it brings personal transformation, true human dignity, and empowers individuals, through the Holy Spirit, to change not only their own lives and that of their family, but also the social and economic environment in which they live.

The Church will always find itself confronted with human suffering and alienation. In obedience to God’s mission the church must care for the widow, the orphan, the sick, the poor, the refugee, the migrant and the prisoner. The presence of Christ mediated through his Church can and must bring hope to the hungry, the thirsty, the homeless and the destitute. We respond in a manner that respects all people regardless of race, gender, or social status and we believe all people have intrinsic value and God-given dignity.

The Mission of the Church and Expressions of Compassion:

The work of the Pauline missionary band was to plant churches *that would then be able to participate in the mission of God in its broader sense*. This includes caring for the poor and marginalized inside their own community and beyond and embodying prophetic witness to the world of God’s rule now and in its future fullness. Our commitment to indigeneity means that we value and encourage the primacy and instrumentality of local engagement by the Church to respond to social needs. *This requires the cross-cultural worker to see one’s role as catalytic in nature to encourage, promote, and equip the Church toward compassionate responses and sustainable solutions to social injustices.*

As missions agencies sending cross-cultural workers we relate to the brokenness and injustices of our world as an apostolic missionary band whose priority work is:

- to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom in word and deed
- in order to plant reproducing indigenous churches where there are no viable church-planting movements
- resulting in local communities of faith

that are transformed by the Spirit and are sign of the kingdom to come that extend a hand of compassion to the broken and oppressed, and proclaim a prophetic message through word and deed, challenging social injustices.

The primary task of cross-cultural missionaries is not to grapple with social issues as stand-alone ministry, but to plant and then work with local churches to strategize, equip, and empower local members to do ministry. There is increasing evidence around the world that this kind of practice has produced indigenous church movements that have brought about true social transformation. We declare: “The greatest act of compassion is to plant a local church.”

Part 2: Best Practices for Missionary Involvement in Compassion Ministry:

As a missions agency sending forth laborers to plant and strengthen the church we engage human need primarily by creating new communities of faith and partnering with them in expressing God’s love and compassion both within and beyond the household of faith. This means that our cross-cultural missionaries and teams must cultivate all the gifts given by the Spirit and incorporate them in an integrative fashion.

Here are some integrative practices for cross-cultural workers who are involved in compassion ministry:

1. Compassion ministries stemming from social concerns should always begin with and include listening to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us.
2. Mission includes loving, compassionate care, which is a natural outgrowth of our spiritual life; yet the Bible is clear in its emphasis on eternal salvation received by hearing and responding to the good news.
3. Our mission is best accomplished when local workers partner with the indigenous church to develop vision and strategies for the needs in their community as they listen to the Spirit. Working with the indigenous church allows for accountability, local ingenuity, social stability, and sustainability.
4. The goal remains to make disciples and plant churches by ministering in word, deed, and sign to body, soul, and spirit—never to only create and maintain a program or a social ministry.

Recommended Best Practices for Practitioners of Compassion Ministry:

These practitioners should be:

- Mature Christian workers committed to the truth of the gospel, have a basic understanding of biblical missiology and have studied the principles of Christian community development.
- Committed to partnership with national and local church leadership so that the compassion of Christ is seen as an extension of the local believers and not the outside partnering agency.
- Respectful of the local church leadership and seek to empower and build capacity in those who will be responsible for the implementation and long-term sustainability of any interventions.
- Familiar with effective disciple making and church planting methods particularly for the local context in which they work.
- Consider language acquisition an important asset and as time allows make efforts to learn the local language.
- Study the cultural mores, behaviors, values, beliefs, and worldview of the local context to the greatest extent possible. All interventions into a group of people (spiritual, social, technical,

economic, or educational) carry a message that must be understood and interpreted from the host culture's worldview.

- Regularly evaluate all teaching for its cultural appropriateness, biblical correctness, and especially for the host culture's perception of it.
- Ensure that the organizations capacity or one's skill sets are not the only factor that shapes program design.
- Never do for others (especially the poor) what they have (or could have) the capacity to do for themselves.
- Ask people to identify what is important to them and listed to how they see their needs.
- Listen closely to those you seek to help, especially to what is not being said—unspoken feelings may contain essential clues to effective service.
- Avoid the distribution of “free goods” except in disaster/emergency situations.
- Treat every person with dignity and respect as people made in the image of God.
- Work with local people and empower them to advocate for their own rights.
- Conduct regular evaluations of ministry activities, asking questions such as:
 - Is it sustainable in the local context?
 - Is it an appropriate response to the situation or need?
 - Will it bring about lasting change or at least open the door to potential long-term change?
 - Will it strengthen or weaken the local church's Christian witness in the local community? (If a church exists. If not consider the potential future church.)
 - Is it an authentic expression of the kingdom of God, or just a good idea?
 - Is it based on a clear understanding of the most significant local needs? (A participatory asset-based assessment of needs and opportunities should be conducted)
 - Has there been good communication with the local community and the proposed beneficiaries of the project?
 - How has the local community been involved in shaping the ideas undergirding the project design?
 - What are the social and missional impact measures for the project? How and when will these be evaluated?
 - Is there a plan for monitoring the progress of the project?
 - Has a means of financial accountability been put into place?
 - Is there integrity and truthfulness in the way that the ministry or project is promoted and reported on? Has care been taken to avoid exploitation of individuals or groups in promotional and reporting media?
 - Have you thought through the possible unintended consequences of your proposed intervention? (www.tearfund.org/tilz)
 - Will the project potentially result in debilitating dependency or can it provide a pathway to self-sustainability?

Conclusion:

Just as Jesus as led by the Spirit to express compassion to people in need, so too the Church must follow his example. serving others by communicating the gospel in word, deed, and sign in order that women and men encounter Christ as Savior and Lord.

Business as Mission as a Response to the Great Commission

In the appropriate context BAM can provide access to places and peoples, as well as an “umbrella,” but should not be a substitute for sending and supporting “traditional” career missionaries. (BAM is a popular term used currently. But many of these same principals would apply to “Tentmaking” or “Bi-vocational” ministries).

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Justification:

In looking for sources from which to draw for this document one is immediately encountered with a stark difference between the manner in which BAM is defined and practiced by many of those writing on the subject and Pentecostal missionary practitioners sent by the Assemblies of God. (Resources offered by the BAM Global website carry titles such as Wealth Creation and the Stewardship of Creation, Role of the Church in Wealth Creation, and Wealth Creation and the Poor.¹ These topics are representative of the majority of available materials on BAM from a variety of sources).

Contrast this with a list of BAM objectives from one Pentecostal missionary practitioner. In referring to reasons for which to engage in BAM he notes access to the lost and unreached, visa opportunities, secure foundation for church planting, and credibility and a means of justification for presence among host people.

General Principals and Observations:

1. BAM as a focus has grown much in recent years.

It could almost be considered a “fad” by some, in that it is something that is recent in focus, and now is often talked about. There are principals and philosophy connected with BAM that is helpful for our work. There are also some extremes to be cautious in embracing and to balance so that our disciple making church planting focus is not diluted or diverted.

2. Principals and points of emphasis in BAM that are helpful to our vision and work.

- The WAGF Missions Commission would see BAM narrowly focused as a means, or platform for missionaries, making possible, or aiding, the process of making disciples, and planting churches among the peoples and places with little or no access to the gospel.
- Point of Emphasis: Access. Every geopolitical nation on earth engages in business. Furthermore, globalization and the democratization of business have increased both the breadth and socioeconomic depth of international interaction. Whereas business owners and high-level managers have long interacted across international boundaries, frequent international engagements have now become commonplace on multiple levels of employment responsibility and business. In other words, growing numbers of people, from multiple levels of responsibility, are experiencing increasing interaction with peoples of other nations through company and business relationships. All of this means that engagement in business provides access to peoples and places that simply does not exist otherwise. Most nations that reject or curtail the church workers or missionaries, do allow,

¹BAM Global, <https://bamglobal.org/reports/>

and in some cases encourage, the ongoing presence of foreigners for business. By engaging in business, the church gains access to peoples who are otherwise cut off from missionaries.

- BAM includes believers in Christ whose work takes them to peoples with no access to the Gospel. They should be empowered to give witness to their faith by ethical practices in business and engagement with those communities.

3. **Some of the concerns connected with BAM philosophy and literature.**

- Much that is written on BAM tend to see things such as human flourishing and preservation of the environment as mission with just as much claim on the missionary focus of the church as gospel proclamation and the making of disciples. While things such as human flourishing and environmental health may indeed be included in God's mission through Christ and represent worthy pursuits, we do not see them as the primary purpose or vocation of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, or its constituent members represented on the Missions Commission. The view most widely embraced among Pentecostals is that there are significant issues such as "human flourishing" that are of consequence which are part of God's mission but are not primary to the church's mission as expressed by Christ in his various commissioning statements.
- Some of the literature of BAM presents "self-support" as a priority and even a biblical example as per Paul and "tentmaking." An extreme position would be that this is a preferable means of missionary support, in order, to not depend on offerings or churches. The temptation to encourage "bi-vocational" ministry can be especially strong in countries where there is a weaker economy and the perception that the church does not have the ability to fully support missionaries. However, by sheer numbers of believers they could easily send missionaries if the church responded with passion, commitment, and action. To promote BAM as an alternative because one believes that the "church can't do it," or "doesn't have the maturity to follow through on commitments" is not a good motivation for considering BAM as a vehicle for going to other nations and cultures.

4. **Best Practices for BAM**

- Business created must offer legitimate goods or services (not a shell for something else). BAM ventures must be profitable, sustainable and built upon a well construed business plan. We do not endorse poorly conceived or disingenuous business done in the name of Christ and His mission.
- BAM projects must operate with the upmost integrity, honesty, Biblical stewardship, and accountability.
- BAM projects must exist for the ultimate purpose of making disciples and planting the church.
- Every BAM person should be trained properly.
- Every BAM person should have the spiritual support of a sending church or agency.
- While the BAM concept can be a biblical strategy (Example: Paul and tentmaking) it should not exclude missions giving or missionary sending by the Church. Even though BAM business successes and profitability are increasingly reported among missionaries, and there is great potential to create wealth for missions purposes, BAM should never be used as a complete replacement of the involvement of the wider church body in financing the mission of the church. A church that is giving to missions will be a church that is praying for missionaries.
- The BAM and its use of profits should be structured in such a way as to discourage abuse or migration of focus from church planting to personal gain, and from reliance and dependence on the Spirit to independence.
- Even though BAM can be used as a means of justifying missionaries' presence in a given

context, it must never become the end goal or fulfillment of the role of the missionaries. This is a greater temptation than it may at first appear. Missionaries struggling to learn language and facing resistance of their efforts to proclaim the gospel can be tempted to throw themselves, their efforts, and passions into a business role. This manifests in missionaries giving increasing mental energy and time working in the business and less resources engaging the gospel with the people of their calling.

Conclusion—Key Points to Consider:

1. An oft overlooked benefit of BAM is its ability to engage a broader spectrum of the body of Christ in missions. Businesspeople who have historically seen missions in more traditional categories of pulpit ministry, teaching, or health care are now given opportunity to bring their gifts and experiences to bear in missions through BAM.
2. Good BAM projects are those that **provide access to people**. Some businesses are quite good at generating profit and are easy to justify in the local business community but produce very little contact with the local or target population. Access, and opportunity to engage the lost and unreached, are the greatest asset provided by any BAM.
3. BAM must serve the mission of establishing the church among all peoples rather than being an end in itself. While we understand that some may disagree with this position and, as those referred to in the early portion of this document, see the business itself as the mission, this is not our position. While appreciating the benefits of business conducted in an ethical and Christ-like manner, we engage in BAM so that Jesus is made known and his church is established among all peoples.

Transitioning the National Church to Become a “Mission Sending Force.”

The importance of encouraging new senders, missions agencies, local churches, and missionaries to assure that every national church develops a capacity and practical plan to respond to the Great Commission.

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Part 1: Justification and Observations:

One of the greatest joys we can experience is helping a national Pentecostal church begin to catch ahold of and obey Christ’s mandate—to “Go and preach the gospel to the ends of the earth!”—WAGF shares in the privilege of helping birth this vision in new movements, and will continue to encourage a “world” vision to be taught, preached, and shared.

Historically, one of the normal expectations of a genuine move of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost) in a land, sees the birth of a burning desire to share Jesus’ love with those in need... first at home—but this vision grows as the Spirit of God opens our eyes to see further and further from our home base... and we realize that we must send missionaries to reach those people and places with little or no access to the gospel. In the development of each national church structure, one of the litmus tests of the effective penetration of the gospel in a culture is the moment when that national church actively strategizes to fulfill a vision for missions beyond their borders. This is an inherent part of BEING PENTECOSTAL!

In that light, it is vital that local and national churches understand the need for developing a plan for sending long-term missionaries. This is part of the work of the Holy Spirit in developing the national work, bringing it to new levels of missionary engagement as a movement; new workers will be called to go, and new senders will be necessary. Reaching the world will not happen without serious planning on the part of the national church—**Priority** level planning!

Part 2: Best Practices to Transition a National Church to Become a “Missionary Sending Force”:

1. A national church must have a conviction that to be fully indigenous, involves going “full circle” sending missionaries. Inherent in the idea of “self-propagation,” includes not only reaching one’s own country, but also reaching the world. Therefore, if we add the word “World-wide” to “self-propagation,” many of our national works are not fully indigenous. A church becomes fully indigenous when it learns to send.
2. Take advantage of networking opportunities and learn from the experience of other countries, especially through WAGF events, forums, and opportunities to know other leaders.
 - A testimony from Romania: *“Acceptance early on by WAGF Missions Commission leadership enabled cross-pollenization of ideas and a huge advance in structural development. Romania borrowed “statutes” for forming a legal entity (Agency) from Argentina, financial accountability programs and planning from El Salvador, ideas from Finland on how to do missions, borrowed forms and structures from the US church. These models and friends empowered the development of a national structure that is unique to our own country and needs!”*

Thus, it is important to help new vision for missions grow in a national church by offering suggestions for structures, dialog with other leaders, and desire to hear of the steps a new work takes.

3. Include World Missions Vision Casting as a part of national church events:
 - In General Council timeframe, include a session or a half day promoting seeing beyond national borders, missions vision casting as an integral part of the national church strategy.
 - National or regional conferences, on a yearly basis, using a structured approach to help local churches practice regular world missions giving.
 - Offering a structure nationally for recognizing and training new workers as qualified, approved missionaries.
 - Aiding new candidates in their first service programming and fundraising efforts.
4. New senders can facilitate the sending of initial missionaries by taking advantage and collaborating with multi-cultural Pentecostal church planting teams. New efforts do not have the critical mass to send out several workers to the same country. We can do much more as teams of International Pentecostal workers, if we learn to build bridges, help one another, and cast missions vision in all regions and national movements.
5. Work alongside other WAGF missions senders, in cooperation when possible, and in conjunction with the national church if one exists.
6. Seek experienced mentors when possible from sister AG movements who already have missionaries on the field in question. For at least the first year of ministry, having a local mentor where possible to assist with finding language and culture training suggestions or looking for lodging, etc. is of tremendous value. Here we can cooperate with one another and help each sending team grow stronger. The same goes for mentoring the administration of the missions sending structure.
7. The new sending force needs structures for mobilizing, training, sending, funding, and partnering.

Conclusion:

The missionary task cannot be completed without the participation of all national and local churches in the Great Commission.

Indigenous Church Best Practices

Biblically based, historically proven, indigenous church principles provide the missions philosophy to which WAGF MC is committed.

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Justification:

Multiple contemporary philosophies of mission do not align with Church planting principles found in the New Testament. Furthermore, biblically derived indigenous church principles have been instrumental in the growth of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship. Therefore, we encourage new senders as well as traditional senders to embrace these principles.

Part 1: Foundations and Definitions:

1. **Theological Foundations:** Joel prophesied the coming of a day, first longed for by Moses, in which all God's people, young, old, male, female, slave, and free would be filled with the Spirit, enabled to proclaim the messages of God. That day came, recorded in Acts 2. When believers, among a host of others, are called to steward what God began among his people, the empowerment of all of God's people for His work among the nations. The Spirit is outpoured so that all can participate in, and be made instruments of, the salvation offered in Christ to the nations. Our convictions about the indigenous church flow naturally from Pentecostalism.

Our Pentecostal convictions, drawn from the New Testament Church exemplified in the book of Acts, (Acts 14:23, and other references) are practically manifested in missional ecclesiology using "indigenous church principles" that come from people such as Roland Allen, Henry Venn, Rufus Anderson, Alice Luce, and Melvin Hodges.

While numbers of sending organizations and missions traditions embrace and practice the indigenous church principles to varying degrees, the theological antecedents of those principles clearly link them to Pentecost. Pentecostals believe the Spirit has been poured out for all, Slav, Korean, French, Fulani, and Chechen.

Indigenous church principles are historically summarized as the three self-formula, self-propagation, self-government, and self-support. In recent decades missiologists concerned with some deficiencies in the breadth and depth of the application of the three selfs added others such as self-sending and self-theologizing. We will assume however, that these additions while valuable, are subsets of a fuller application of the original three.

2. **Definition:** An indigenous church is a community of believers birthed in a specific context who are Spirit-led and Spirit-empowered to accomplish God's purposes for and through that community. Like the various churches described in the New Testament, particularly in Acts,

these local and national communities of faith are to be Spirit-governed, Spirit-supported, and Spirit-propagated.²

Part 2: Best Practices for Missionaries and Missions Agencies:

The indigenous church principles that focus on the “three-selves” are equally valuable to the new church planter as well as those that find themselves working with established churches.

1. Indigenous church principles should be applied, to the degree possible, from the very beginning of church establishment rather than viewed as a goal toward which to transition at some future point in the church’s growth.
2. Remember the missionary’s primary function is as a church planter/pioneer (Two phases: a. evangelism, b. teaching converts including the training of national workers and leaders.)
3. A missionary is temporary in any local area; the church, rather than the missionary, must be the center of the work.
4. Avoid maintenance ministries; prioritize going to new fields.
5. Avoid measures that would stifle indigenous efforts.
6. Refuse to occupy a position that a national can fill even if they are not as experienced or skilled in the role as a missionary.
7. Avoid jealousy and empower others to take the lead. The missionary’s spiritual ministry will always provide his/her proper place in the body of Christ whether he/she holds an office or not.
8. Be aware of the impact of the missionaries’ presence and be prepared to withdraw at the proper time. Assume new roles.
9. Influence through spiritual leadership. Above all else, let the missionary maintain his/her standing as a “man or woman of God.”³
10. Christians should continue to live in their neighborhoods and pursue their occupations, being self-supporting, and witnessing to their family members, co-workers, and neighbors.⁴
11. Missions should only develop programs and institutions that the national church desires and can support. There are times when a missionary will play a vision casting role to help create desire on the part of the national church.
12. The national churches should call out and support their own pastors.
13. Church buildings, when used, should be built in the local style with money and materials given by the church members. (it should be noted that church buildings should not be assumed to be a necessity and, in some cases, may be a hinderance or a cause for unnecessary persecution).
14. Intensive biblical and doctrinal instruction should be provided for church leaders regularly.
15. All foundational training materials should be available, easily understood, and reproducible in the expectation of locals themselves doing the training.⁵
16. All ministries should be established in such a way that they can and will be run by locals.

² DeLonn L. Rance, “Historical Perspectives on Pentecostal Mission Theology,” In Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig. *Contemporary Mission Theology: Engaging the Nations. American Society of Missiology Series, No. 53.* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017), 180-190 (184).

³ Items 2.2 – 2.9 are adapted from: Melvin L. Hodges, *The Indigenous Church* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1976), 126-129.

⁴ Items 2.10 – 2.14 are adapted from John L. Nevius “The Nevius Plan.” John Mark Terry, “Indigenous Churches,” In A. Scott Moreau ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 483-485 (484).

⁵ Items 2:15 – 2.19 are adapted from Roland Allen. John Mark Terry, “Indigenous Churches,” In A. Scott Moreau ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 483-485 (484).

17. Church finances are provided and controlled by local and national church members.
18. The new disciples should be taught to provide pastoral care for one another.
19. Missionaries should encourage and expect local believers to exercise spiritual gifts freely and immediately.
20. No outsider can fully contextualize the gospel and church life within a foreign context.
21. Remote leadership through the use of technology is no substitute for the development of local and national church leadership.

Conclusion:

Spirit empowered indigenous church principles remain foundational to our WAGF missiology and practice today in the 21st century.

Short-term Team Trips

Short-term teams have value when incorporated into a long-term missions strategy.

Original prepared in Jan. 2020 in London by WAGF Best Practices Task Force

Justification:

Short-term teams have become quite popular as a missions expression in many countries. The best practices that here articulated will help the short-term team to support the long-term missions engagement.

Part 1: General Principals and Observations:

2. **When short-term teams do well they produce healthy outcomes for both the sending and receiving church.**
 - Many strong missions churches believe that short-term teams have helped them build better missions vision and response. Teams involve people in missions and they return from the field with a unique perspective and outlook. They normally result in a higher degree of enthusiasm and commitment by those that have participated in the experience. It is a great tool for mobilization. Churches that send teams tend to send more missionaries.
 - Many long-term career persons have experienced a mission trip at a formative time in their life, most likely as a teenager or young adult. Short-term mission trips are a great way to expose people to a potential call.
 - Short-term teams can be a blessing to the receiving church, both by exposing them to Christians and lay people from another culture.
 - Short-term teams should support and prepare the way for long-term missions commitment and experience. They should be a “means to an end,” and not an “end in itself.”
3. **Concerns related to short-term missions teams.**
 - If a church or country only sends short-term teams, the people will tend to not have an accurate perspective on missions. Potentially missions can become equated with only financial support and not the “call of God.” Often times short term participants come to believe that missions can be accomplished with short-term missions alone, leading to a faulty missiology.
 - Another result of a church/country with only short-term expressions is that they could only go to where the church is either strong, and/or at least functioning. They would most likely avoid difficult places that require a long-term commitment, or countries where the church has a minimal existence and a largely unreached country. They would also possibly avoid places that have language barriers.
 - A receiving country or local church that only receives short-term missions, can potentially equate missions with funds and special offerings, and not respect the ministry potential or even sacrifice of those coming to visit them.
 - Often short-term teams have no missiological formation or reflection, resulting in a flawed praxis. It can indirectly lead to a de-emphasis on career missionaries and the need for incarnational ministry. It can indirectly lead to a de-emphasis on church planting and the proclamation in word and deed. (Church planting and discipleships take more than two

weeks, two months, or two years).

- A disproportionate percentage of missions budget can be designated to short-term activities.
- A short-term focus can lack contextualization and cultural sensitivity, and the inability to submit to national leadership.
- Avoid a tourism mentality among those participating.
- Comment: the experience of a lifetime does not always convert to a lifetime of commitment.

Part 2: Suggestions and Recommendations for Best Practices to Correctly Implement Short-term Teams into a Long-term Vision:

1. Encourage the sending church to prioritize long-term missions, including the financial support focusing on the sending of long-term missionaries.
2. Communicate clearly the expectations for a short-term trip.
3. Intentionally connect the short-term with the long-term. Understand that ultimately short-term efforts will only be effective when linked to missionaries and national churches in long-term vision and activities.
4. Missionaries and their agencies should have the courage to “say no” to a team whose purpose does not connect with the strategic plan of the missionary’s ministry and national church goals.
5. Provide orientation and training for the short-term team, in order to facilitate positive long-term effect. The training should include spiritual discernment, cultural sensitivity, and basic missiology.
6. Create space in the team experience to hear the voice of the spirit and experience Spirit-empowerment.
7. Provide debriefing that includes practical expressions of a deeper commitment to missions.
8. Short-term trips should prioritize time with career missionaries in order to develop a lifetime of missions commitment.
9. Short-term teams should build missional discipleship goals into the experience; therefore a trip should result in: increased prayer, increased giving to long-term missions, increased concern, increased personal witness, and increased commitment to global missions.
10. Channel the desire to visit other countries and conferences to also include missions mobilization activities.
11. Short-term teams should start close to your church home; look for cross-cultural opportunities in your own city and country to build missionary vision without the cost of an extensive trip.

Conclusion:

The WAGF MC believes that with a long-term, informed perspective, short-term teams can complement, edify, mobilize, and benefit the missionary enterprise and the local and national churches that send and receive them.

Diaspora Opportunities

The diaspora provides opportunities to plant churches and do cross cultural missions. Diaspora populations can become bridges to reach all peoples.

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Justification:

Even as God used the diaspora in different contexts in the Bible for spiritual purpose, so too he can use these movements of people today to accomplish his purposes. As diaspora Christians migrate opportunities for planting the church among those communities and beyond can serve as a platform for further missions outreach. However church planting movements resulting from the diaspora does not absolve the church from its responsibility to send missionaries to those peoples and places with little or no access to the gospel.

Part 1: Biblical Examples of God’s Spiritual Purpose Through the Diaspora

1. **Abraham**—In Gen. 12:1-5, God asked Abraham to “intentionally” migrate to another land, as part of his redemptive strategy, unveiling a great blessing to all nations.
2. **Joseph**—As God used Joseph to save the world through a “host nation,” Joseph recognized that “God sent me here...” (Gen. 45:4-8).
3. **Mordecai/Esther**—Mordecai and his niece Esther were part of Jews that were “driven to exile” by war. This “forced migration,” enable them their diaspora missions to save the entire “Jewish Nation” throughout the 127 provinces of King Xerxes.
4. **Daniel**—His spiritual influence changed a nation.
5. **Nehemiah**—The book of Nehemiah illustrates how he took advantage of his “diaspora position” to obtain favor for his Jewish nation (Neh. 5:14-16).
6. **Day of Pentecost**—Pentecost represents the Harvest. That was the beginning of the Church Harvest. God chose to birth the church among the diaspora Jews of the world.
7. **Persecution of the Church**—the persecution of “the Way” resulted in: “they were scattered and went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). “So then those who were scattered because of the persecution... traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word speaking to no one but the Jews alone” (Acts 11:19). “and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11:26). These diaspora people planted the Church in Antioch where the movement was first called “Christians.” This multi-cultural church later transitioned from a “diaspora” church to missionary sending church.
8. These Biblical examples provide strong historical antecedent and theological argument in favor of creating sustainable framework for the deployment of diaspora peoples in missions as complimentary strategy to fulfilling the *Missio Dei*.”

Part 2: Observations of Benefits and Challenges of Church Growth Through the Diaspora:

There are several characteristics prevalent in most diaspora movements, be they “European,” “Latin,” “African,” or “Asian.”

1. **Economic Motivation:** A primary motivation that provokes the diaspora movement is economic: better jobs, better salaries, better social welfare programs. Religious persecution and violence can often be other motivations.
2. **Church Planting Opportunities:** A possible opportunity emerging from migration (when the diaspora comes from a country with a strong church) is aggressive church planting. As an example, London today hosts more than 50 Romanian Pentecostal congregations. One of the major London “mega churches” has over 70% immigrants.
3. **Cultural Comfort:** One of the tendencies of any diaspora movement is to maintain the culture of the motherland. They represent a culture within a culture—offering a bit of “home” when people are far away. One of the results of this duplication of “home” as such often tends to cause them to be somewhat closed to reaching the new and local culture. In order to belong to that diaspora church, one must accept that cultural package... and this is often an obstacle to local evangelism. To become part of the ethnic church that has been planted, one must adopt cultural mores from a culture that is “foreign” to the local national population.
4. **Multicultural Churches:** On the other hand, the diaspora churches are usually becoming bi-cultural entities. They want to maintain the bond with their motherland, but at the same time enjoy the benefits of a better life with greater economic blessings. It has been observed that they are VERY open to the need to reach other cultures, because of their immediate context. This openness makes them very warm to the message of sending missionaries to reach other cultures.
5. **Missional Minded:** It is a natural and very fertile ground for preaching and teaching missions. As one example, the generosity seen in Romanian diaspora churches has made it common for Romanian missionaries to want to visit and recruit the friendship and sponsorship of these churches. If channeled correctly, the diaspora church can be a vital part of missions giving through the national structure. Work must be done to help the diaspora movements identify with the national mission’s agency—to teach missions vision and help them take steps to become involved in support. Often the diaspora church is more powerful economically than the homeland church.
6. **Caution not to rely only on diaspora works:** On the other hand, it is inherently weak if missionaries only strive to seek support from diaspora churches that they perceive to be potentially economically powerful. Missionaries dare not ignore the homeland churches and primarily target the diaspora works for raising support. Both churches, “at home” and in the “diaspora,” need to be challenged to get involved in sending missionaries.
7. **Development of a sound missions structure:** Another characteristic observed is that often a diaspora church may have an independent nature, and may develop its own missions’ sending structure—independent of any national organized plan. There may be little governance or missiological understanding in the resulting efforts. It is important to teach the benefits of teamwork and long-term strategizing in the diaspora church plants.

Part 3: Suggestions for “Best Practices” Regarding “Diaspora” Churches:

1. **Missional training before leaving home country:** Churches can attempt to identify people who are planning to immigrate, whatever the reason, and give them orientation that will equip them to have “missional objectives” in their planned intention.
2. **National church diaspora integration:** The churches of the receiving nation should work towards integrating this “spiritual people resource” into being a blessing in their country.
3. **Memorandum of understanding:** In the case of credentialed pastors/missionaries going to another country to plant a “diaspora church,” there should be a memorandum of understanding between the sending and receiving entities, which result in a protocol and process for integration.

4. **Networking:** The diaspora missionaries should be able to network with the national churches where they intend to open a diaspora outreach or outpost ministry, even while maintaining their uniqueness.
5. **Bridge building:** When it is not feasible to integrate a collection of diaspora church within the national movement, seek to build bridges of fellowship that can open doors for mutual understanding.
6. **Outreach to migrant communities:** Diaspora churches are uniquely suited to reach other migrant communities and that strength should be nurtured.
7. **Adaptation:** Diaspora churches should strive to adapt to and reach out to the host culture.
8. **Missional vision:** Diaspora churches should strive to have missions vision that will result in them also becoming senders to places and peoples with little or no access to the gospel.
9. **Reach the least reached:** Diaspora missions should not be restricted to North—South migration (countries more open to the gospel) but should also encourage East—West migration (countries less open to the gospel). These mostly Asian countries are beginning to attract economic migrants, and, in many cases, traditional missionaries cannot enter.
10. **Discipling the diaspora:** Church planting among diaspora peoples can be an effective means of conserving the harvest of previous efforts from the sending nation.
11. **Evangelizing the diaspora:** The diaspora church can become a tremendous evangelistic church in reaching the unchurched from their culture, as they seek community with their own home culture.
12. **Continue frontier missions:** A diaspora church should not become the sole vision or missions outreach of a national work. While taking advantage of natural diaspora opportunities, a national church must continue to look beyond its borders and not sacrifice traditional and frontier missions outreach.

Conclusion:

Diaspora communities provide unique opportunities to not only extend the reach of the Church but also provide access to the gospel to those communities that surround them.

The Importance of Missionary Sending Structures

The WAGF MC has a goal that every national church movement develop a structure to send cross-cultural missionaries that is appropriate for them.

Original prepared in Jan. 2020 in London by WAGF Best Practices Task Force

Justification:

While some local churches do have the ability to send cross-cultural missionaries on their own, most local churches participate in global missions through collaboration with sending structures. Those structures facilitate collective action on the part of many churches and individuals. Some have interpreted the sending of Paul and Barnabas from the house church network in Antioch as the sole biblical model for all cross-cultural sending. This document contends that the biblical and historical data is better understood as mandating a sending *function* but allows for freedom in the choice of the *forms* in which that sending takes place. The WAGF MC desires to see that sending function carried out through every WAGF national church movement in forms that are most appropriate for them.

Part 1: Biblical Foundations and Observations:

Since Acts 13:1-4 shows Paul and Barnabas embarking on what is traditionally called the first missionary journey from their work in the Antioch church, many often argue that the biblical model for sending missionaries is the responsibility of the local church. The implication of this view considers that other historical forms of sending, such as the formation of missionary sending agencies, is a pragmatic compromise and less than biblical. We will argue here that rather than limiting sending to the responsibility of a local church, Acts and other New Testament passages allow for a freedom of form to fulfill this biblical function of sending cross-cultural workers to plant the church where it does not exist.

First, one has good reason to think that the worship and fasting of the Antioch church leadership was precisely *because* they felt they had more to do from the Scripture mandate given to them than they could do with their structure of a network of multicultural house churches. Arthur Glasser observes:

The final characteristic of this missionary church was the nature of the burden that caused its various leaders to come together, not just to worship the Lord, but to wait before him for the revelation of his will concerning their future service. From the response and instruction given by the Holy Spirit, we infer that their burden concerned a problem they were unable as localized congregations to solve. The fact that fasting is twice mentioned (13:2-3) underscores their sense of urgency..." (Glasser 2005, 301).

The Spirit's answer is people released to cross geographic and cultural boundaries to plant the church. Missiologists have noted that here in Acts one sees two redemptive structures: the local church and the missionary band. God works through both of these structures to bring salvation to the world through the unique strengths of each. The missionary band is smaller, mobile and, as one sees from the Acts narrative, tasked with planting local church structures where Christ is not known.

Secondly, Acts 13:4 indicates the Holy Spirit sent and guided Paul and Barnabas. The Antioch church

did not direct or made decisions for them. They were accountable to the Antioch church, supported by them, and reported back to them, but Antioch did not direct the missionary activities of their team. Paul's work, which Luke tracks throughout the remainder of Acts, comprises many workers, multiple teams, varying sources, and methods for support with Paul clearly in charge. Other places in the New Testament gives insight to how mobile missionary bands were sent. The verb *propempo* is always used in contexts of Christian ministry and with helping to provision people (see Titus 3:13 to speed them on their way, seeing they lack nothing; Acts 15:3 uses *ekpempo*; Rom. 15:24; I Cor. 16:6, 11; II Cor. 1:6 all use *propempo* with the idea of helping to send by provisioning; III John 6 speaks of sending on those who have gone out "for the sake of the Name"). Thus, it was not reliance on a single church to either send in terms of provision or to direct the work; rather it was the responsibility of many churches in many places to help those going forth to proclaim Christ while the mission band conducted their work in accordance with the call of the Spirit and their understanding of Scripture.

Part 2: Function and Form in the History of Missionary Sending: Freedom to Develop Appropriate Forms:

Ralph Winter, from his perspective of teaching missions history, makes this comment about the Acts 13 passage:

In fact, the profound missiological implication of all this is that the New Testament is trying to show us *how to borrow effective patterns*; it is trying to free all future missionaries from the need to follow the precise *forms* of the Jewish synagogue and Jewish missionary band, and yet to allow them to choose comparable indigenous structures in the countless new situations across history and around the world—structures which will correspond faithfully to the *function* of patterns Paul employed, if not their *form!* (Winter 1999, 222).

On this understanding then, Acts 13 does not set down a once-for-all, single model of missionary sending; rather Luke shows a *function* in the body of Christ, that some are tasked with taking the gospel across cultural and geographic boundaries to plant the church. From the perspective of Christian missions history, one can see that while the forms of both the local church and the sending of cross-cultural workers have changed over time, the functions of planting local churches, the ongoing ministry to their community, and the sending of missionaries to plant the church where it does not exist have remained the same. In terms of missionary sending, the church is not bound to a single kind of sending structure; instead each national council is free to develop structures that are most appropriate for their setting.

Part 3: Pragmatic Observations on Sending Structures:

As this section builds a practical case in favor of a diversity of missions sending structures, it does not ask the question "Is one model more biblical than the other?" Rather it questions, "Which model allows the largest number of churches and people to participate, and does not limit involvement to just a few?" One thing is certain, God's model does not wish to limit, but to expand the involvement of as many churches and persons as possible in his Great Commission.

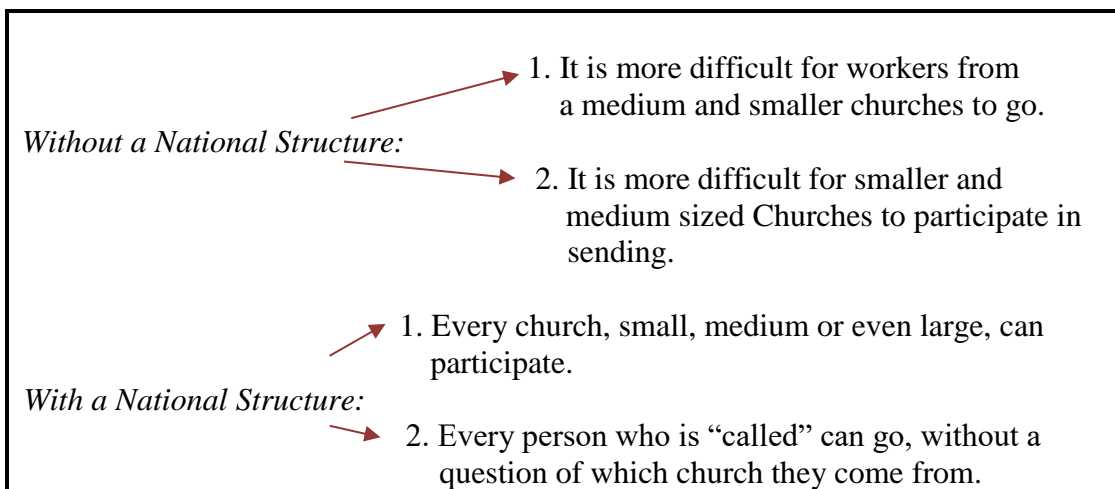
National sending structures are vital to enable the church to reach the world.

- 1. It is the best way to involve the largest number of churches and people in the sending process.** To have a "local church sending model" limits in a pragmatic sense the number of churches that can send in a typical country to less than 5-10% of the churches.
- 2. It is the best way to ensure that those God calls the church sends.** What happens to a person

from a church of 50 people, and God calls him/her to go, in a system where only larger churches can practically do the sending? That person would be forced to resign and change churches in order to be able to facilitate his/her calling. A system that causes people to break off relationship with their local church in order to find a way to go surely is not ideal.

One must remember that a large majority of the churches in the World Assemblies of God Fellowship are small or medium sized and from countries that have weak economies. This makes it more difficult for a missionary to be sent if he/she does not belong to a large church. Surely it would be best to have MOST and as MANY of the 370,000 churches in the WAGF network involved as possible, and not limit it to as few as 1,000 churches that could actively send under a “local church” only model.

3. **Is there one model that is best for everyone? Answer: No, one size does not fit all.** Each country differs from another. Some countries have very strong districts or regions with decision making being delegated to them from the national office. Some countries have weaker districts or regions where the national level makes most of the decisions. Some General Councils have thousands of churches and others have hundreds and others have a few dozen. Each country and situation are unique. Principles and ideas can be learned but each country must find its own unique solutions, identity, and structure that will be functional and work for them.



Part 4: The Five Most Common Current Models of Sending Structures:

1. **Local church as sender model.** The local church sends the missionary without the direct supervision of a national missions structure.
 - **Advantages of this system:** A missionary is directly related to his local church and does not have the pressure of raising finances. In some countries this may be the only model or system available.
 - **Disadvantages:** In many developing nations with weaker economies, small church find it difficult to send missionaries. A local church will control the missionary agenda, which often does not produce an indigenous church. As well, those God calls from medium and smaller churches in those contexts may not be able to go. From an international perspective, if several churches have several missionaries in the same receiving country, instead of “one voice,” they have “many voices” in that country, and that can cause confusion and misunderstanding in some national church contexts.

2. **National Sending Structure/Agency with a “pool” or centralized fund system.** This is where churches give to a central fund, and that fund decides how the funds should be administered. From our experience, it is very difficult to use this model in “start-up” situations in most “new sending” countries.
 - Advantages of this system: The missionary has less pressure in raising funds.
 - Disadvantages of this system: churches give to an office and not to a person and are potentially less motivated to do so.
3. **National Sending Structure/Agency with churches giving specifically towards the missionary.** A national structure with a functioning committee or commission makes decisions in approval of missionary candidates, and the structure of supporting and sending them. There is a central fund and funds are channeled through the missions agency, but unlike the pool system, the churches designate their offerings to individual missionaries and normally a small percentage (5 to 10%) of these funds covers the administrative budget of the agency.
 - Advantages: Potentially every church can participate, and every “call” can be considered to go. Churches have more motivation to support the missionary because they have a personal interest in giving to that missionary. Yet, there is still accountability and structure.
 - Disadvantages: The responsibility to raise the budget falls largely on the missionary. Though their local church may be able to provide a large percentage of their missionary’s budget. When it cannot, the missionary has to raise his/her budget when he/she comes home on “furlough or deputation.”
4. **“Hybrid” of a National Sending Structure/Agency combining working with local church.** This is a middle of the road model for countries with strong local sending churches, but that also need or want some type of national structure. The agency approves, coordinates, and is a contact and “voice” for the receiving countries, but the local church has participation and voice in important decisions. Some Latin and European countries have done this. They have a national department yet allow the local church to participate in information and important decisions, if they want to. However, the local church does not control the missionary. To the receiving church, the department and country sends the missionary, not just a local church.
5. **A Network of strong sending churches.** This serves as a potential model for countries where there are many large and strong autonomous churches. It also applies as a potential model for places that has a weak national church structure where most of the decision-making takes place at a local church level. We have not yet seen an implementation of this model, but it would serve as a unique niche and something that would be a potential hybrid and bridge providing some sort of alternative to a “local church as sender model.”

In this model, the missions sending structure serves as "network" and coordinator between sending churches (large ones) or districts (very autonomous). This could also serve as a potential model with very organized and autonomous districts or the local church does things on a district level, not on a national one.

Part 5: Best Practices Concerning Sending Structures:

1. When the national church develops a structure, the structure must serve the vision and not the vision serve the structure. National sending structures must strive to be relevant, and realize that the structure is only beneficial if it results in the growth and response of the national work in responding in sending missionaries.
2. The expectation for missionaries of the local church sending model is that they deliberately network with the body of Christ in their country of service. Networking in the home country with other local church senders will also help in the sharing of resources and information that can

mutually benefit all local church senders.

3. In the development of sending structures, seek to maximize the involvement of as many members and local churches as possible in praying, giving, and going.
4. In the development of sending structures, seek to empower missionaries to be successful in the fields of service by being a bridge between the senders, receivers, and the sent.
5. Missionary sending structures need to allow the missionary team to make field-based decisions rooted in missiological principles and not be limited by the ministry agendas and philosophy of the sending base church.
6. In making decisions about methods of sending, one should not be driven by economic considerations alone.
7. A structure dedicated to cross-cultural missions should be distinct from that of a domestic church planting structure. History has shown that when cross-cultural missions combines with “home missions,” cross-cultural missions always suffers neglect.

Conclusion:

The missions sending structures of the WAGF network facilitate the participation of all A/G general councils, churches, and members, to participate in the Great Commission.

Member Care

Member care is an essential component of our sending structure, including strategies and options for response in a crisis situation.

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Justification:

A missionary's well-being is an essential element for long-term effective service on the field. A healthy member care strategy for an agency will respond to the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of the missionary.

Part 1: Observations:

The missionary is the most valuable asset of any sending missions agency. While the call of God is paramount, requiring a willingness to give all for the cause, we recognize the need for holistic care of missionary personnel.

Biblical precedents for "member care" can be exemplified by the interaction between the Philippian church and Paul, in sending Epaphroditus to minister to Paul's needs.

Above all else, "member care" recognizes that the sent ones are "human beings," with spiritual, physical, and emotional needs that often can be multiplied in the stress and complications of many mission fields.

Part 2: Recommended Best Practices for Member Care:

1. Each missions sending structure should have "member care" as one of the essential components of its internal structure.
2. Member care should include training and practice in "self-care," care within the ministry team, pastoral care, professional care when necessary, and critical incident care in the event of emergencies.
3. Develop or improve an intentional strategy to support missionaries in ongoing prayer. As well, the missions agency leadership should bathe the candidates in prayer, standing behind them before the Lord.
4. Missions agencies as well as local churches should maintain regular ongoing communication. Today with modern technology, they can keep in regular communication with the missionary. Communication allows the missionary to know both that someone cares for him/her and stands behind him/her in prayer. Agencies should prepare a form that asks questions regarding missionary health, ministry, concerns, spiritual growth, etc. Today communication can help alleviate a missionary's loneliness and give insight into his/her areas of need.
5. Caring for missionaries in the basic areas of self-care (emotionally, physically, and spiritually), family-care, and team-care (fellow missionaries working on field) will help encourage their longevity in service. Member care has many facets and varies radically from country to country. Many of the following suggestions require an economic outlay that may seem overwhelming.

Even for those just beginning to develop “sending” strategies, the following questions should be considered by each missions sending structure.

- Some form of healthcare insurance is needed for all long-term workers.
 - If their home country has a health care provision in the work contract, that usually requires they must be physically present in their country (return home) in order to benefit. In such a case, do missionaries need to come back to their homeland for basic care, childbirth, or major medical crises?
 - On site, in many countries, there are private and international healthcare plans that workers can join by paying monthly fees. Are there local healthcare plans in the land of service that they can join? How much will it cost?
 - It may be that the host nation offers a national healthcare plan that they can use. This all varies from country to country, but a viable plan should be worked out according to the situation.
 - How should an agency handle emergency health situations? Can the emergency be handled locally and financed by the home country’s insurance, can the agency buy evacuation insurance or have a fund to allow emergency travel back to the home country for needed care. One suggestion is to deduct a percentage of the missionaries support towards their return airfare as well the missions structure should have “emergency savings” to be able to respond to critical needs.
 - Retirement Programs—Are there retirement program benefits in the homeland? What is offered for those who may live outside its borders?
 - Recognition of the sending agency/group as an NGO in the home country can offer the possibility of legal work contracts and national benefits. Is the sending agency legally recognized by the local government?
 - If so, a national pension plan is offered in many nations. Can the missionaries be part of such while living outside of the country? Does this require a work contract?
 - A work contract—Do the missionaries need a work contract to have governmental recognition in the land of service?
 - Retirement—Is there a national pension fund? Does the national church have a pension fund in which the agency can participate?
6. Crisis funds—Besides saving to potentially help evacuate missionaries from crises, a portion of the missions structures support could be designated to a “crisis fund,” for care and support beyond the actual emergency. Examples: to offer debriefing opportunities and/or counselling after Post Traumatic Stress events. What does the missions agency do to help missionaries readjust when back in country?
 7. Take advantage of networking and events with other agencies to find out what policies and materials they have put into place.
 8. Member care sometimes involves crisis intervention which consists of helping missionaries deal with traumatic events, family issues and grief, as well as resourcing counseling services.
 9. Visits—It is recommended that there should be pastoral visits from leaders or representatives of the missions agency on a periodical basis, as well as encouraging the same from the local church.

Conclusion:

Missions agencies and structures need to intentionally include member care in their supervision of missionary personnel.

Networking Where There is No National Church

Networking between the WAGF sending entities seeks to plant indigenous local churches, with the long-term goal of developing an indigenous national church movement.

Original prepared in Jan. 2020 in London by WAGF Best Practices Task Force

Justification:

Even as Paul grouped churches (for example churches in Macedonia, Achaia, and Judea), and as individual believers need fellowship in local churches, local churches need fellowship with one another. WAGF sending entities should network in order to plant indigenous local churches that result in a national organization. A national organization allows local congregations to celebrate with others of like faith, providing encouragement, correction, and participation in activities that connect them to God's mission in the world.

Part 1: Challenges and Realities of Working in a Country with no Recognized National Work:

1. In countries where there is a recognized national church, the initial work becomes a “clearing house” to receive workers from different WAGF entities, motivating unity among the distinct sending countries, and avoiding the potential of creating multiple expressions of A/G churches among that people or country.
2. Current scenarios include contexts where there are A/G workers from various sending countries in the same country, working where there is no national church, but they do not connect with each other. Sometimes this has resulted in the various sending countries having their own networks and contacts before they become “aware” of each other. Since these initial “expressions” of the church might be quite different from each other, it becomes very difficult to merge them together.
3. In the absence of a national recognized or even legal work, it is more difficult to network workers from a number of sending countries, and there is potential for confusion not only among the different workers, but among any national believers that might be their disciples. It is unhealthy to start multiple national works independent of each other. If all WAGF sending entities have a common goal of working towards a single national church, it will promote unity and will facilitate church planting among that people and beyond.

Part 2: Best Practices for Networking Among Sending Agencies, for Forming a “National Church:”

1. Affirm that “house churches” can be a valid expression of the body of Christ and a traditional model of the church (buildings, government/legal recognition) does not invalidate the “body of Christ” for that context and situation.
2. Affirm and strive to have communication and networking between different expressions as they become aware of each other.
3. If a sending agency is going to enter a country with no national recognized work, they should communicate with WAGF Missions leadership to find out what other countries or expressions might already be working in that area. If it is feasible, do not start a new expression without an attempt to work with others that are already there.

4. Consider multi-national church planting teams whenever possible. (Live Dead can provide a blueprint and model for this).
5. When a new field has multiple workers from multiple countries, and these workers have consensus to attempt some type of network or organization between them, make sure that it is “natural,” and that all involved have mutual acceptance and can comfortably work together.
6. International churches can be a tool for evangelism and church planting in some contexts. However, they should not be an “independent” work but strive to connect and network with others in the body of Christ in that country.
7. One possible model for countries with government restrictions is to organize nationally and join the WAGF even when that work has no legal recognition by the government.
8. Contexts with no national church occur in part because these contexts have been historically “resistant” to gospel outreach. In order to form a national church those WAGF entities working in that context will need to cooperate and network while recognizing that the formalization of a national church will take time to develop.

Conclusion:

Just because a country has challenges in having a legally registered national work, that should not be a hindrance to have a vision for a national church. They must work towards that possibility, recognizing that circumstances might change that would allow a “national work” to emerge.

Missionary Training

To develop effective missionary training programs requires the identification of missiological principles and missionary competencies followed by the development, implementation, and evaluation of training models and processes of missionary formation.

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Justification:

The processes of missionary formation are means utilized by the Holy Spirit to empower missionaries to fulfill God's personal and corporate call to make disciples of all nations. Training improves missionary effectiveness, longevity, and lowers avoidable attrition.

Part 1: General Observations:

1. Jesus, the Master teacher, dedicated three years to training his missionaries, the apostles, providing practical and high-quality theological education. If the apostles required training, the importance of training today's missionaries should be prioritized.
2. All missionary training should lead to a deeper love and relationship with Jesus, greater dependence on the Spirit, more effective communication of the gospel to the lost, and a growing commitment to the planting and nurturing of the church. Critical to missionary ministry is the learned competency of discerning divine direction and responding in obedience as empowered by the Spirit. As each missionary's call is unique, all missionary training should be customized to equip the missionary as a life-long learner to fulfill that call. All missionary training must be fully Pentecostal in content and form.
3. Missionary competencies include but not limited to: spiritual, emotional, relational, and physical health; biblical, theological, and missiological knowledge and practice, skills in cultural adjustment and communication, language learning, and contextualization; family and team life and member care; leadership development and training; missions mobilization skills; specific ministry skills (e.g. evangelism, church planting, spiritual warfare, counseling, education, relief and development); and practical life skills. To develop these competencies, training must integrate practical and academic formation utilizing multiple training models in the process of the missionary's engagement in life-long learning including pre-field, on-field, in ministry, and professional learning experiences to match missionary, agency, ecclesial, and field needs.
4. Missionary training acknowledges the impact of culture and context on learning. For example, Western culture emphasizes concepts, policies, and procedures while many non-Western cultures focus on the relationships, social skills, and family life. Both aspects are important. Missionaries face different types of spiritual warfare. In some contexts, demonic activity is explicit; in others more subtle. Missionaries coming from other continents to Europe need to be prepared to meet a Post-Christian or even Anti-Christian context.
5. All of God's people require missiological training in order that mission vision and commitment saturate every local church from children to seniors.
6. All theological and ministerial training must be based on biblical missiological foundations.

Part 2: Initial Missionary Training Questions for Sending Agencies:

1. Who needs training?

All members of God's missionary people including:

- All local church attendees of all ages, local and national church leaders, missions executives, missions mobilizers, and missionary trainers of the sending church (i.e. the senders and supporters),
- the missionary (i.e. the sent), and
- all local church attendees, local and national church leaders, missions executives, missions mobilizers, and missionary trainers of the receiving church if one exists (i.e. the partnership entity).

2. What type of training?

- The content and delivery of missiological training should be contextual aligning with the learning needs of the students. All of God's missionary people need to be able to read the Bible as God's missionary story and identify their role and responsibility in God's narrative including their individual and corporate participation in sending and supporting missionaries through prayer, giving, and other activities.
- Missionaries need to be equipped with the competencies identified in 1.3. above and trained to their specific calling and task including specialized ministry training (e.g. Bible translation, church planting, leadership development, media, sport, art, Business as Mission)
- Training for partners in mission (senders and receivers together) creates a common vision under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and understanding the role of the strategies and goals Partnership requires good mutual understanding and creation of common goals that emerge through an effective dialogue in the mutual formation process.

3. Who provides the training?

Diverse entities at multiple levels: local church, mission department/missions organization, theological/missiological training institution, and other partners in mission including collaborating entities in the field.

4. How long should training be?

The requirements concerning the training duration depend on type and length of ministry. A short-term worker does not require the same training as long-term worker. Those serving to complete some practical task may not need as robust training as missionaries involved in church planting and Bible education ministry. Preparation for participation in a short-term ministry team may only require a couple of weekends. Other short-term assignments may require several weeks training. Long-term missionary service requires ministerial, theological, and missiological training including a special course of study for missionary candidates that may take weeks or years to complete. Training for partners in mission to build a common strategy to ultimately result in the receivers becoming senders may be accomplished through continual open dialog and through short seminars or training sessions that should occur periodically (e.g. monthly, annually).

Part 3: Best Practices for Missionary Training Programs:⁶

1. **Needs Identification**—The missionary training program must regularly identify the learners' needs, needs of the organization and all involved in the training process in order to adapt the program to the learners' needs and ministry.

⁶ These best practices, with some modification, emerge from "Missionary Training Assessment: An Instrument for Evaluating and Improving Training Programs" In *Integral Ministry Training Design and Evaluation*, edited by Robert Byrnjolfson and Jonathan Lewis, 198-201. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library. 2006) 198-201.

2. **Alignment**—The missionary training program must consistently align its methods and content to match the mission, values, and vision of the sending church/agency, the national church, and the World Assemblies of God Fellowship and re-aligns as changes occur. To facilitate alignment missionary training leadership needs access to key decision-makers and executive leadership.
3. **Core Values**—The missionary training program must create an environment that intentionally allows missionaries and missionary trainers to:
 - Experience Spirit-direction, modeling, and participating in the spiritual disciplines including discerning God’s voice in prayer, in the Word, and in community, and
 - experience Spirit-empowerment, living in total dependence on God for life and ministry, walking in the intimacy and fullness of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and promoting the exercise of spiritual gifts and signs and wonders in all phases of the training. Trainers demonstrate humility, adherence to solid biblical and missiological principles, a history of obedience to Spirit-direction and dependence on Spirit-empowerment in both teaching and ministry, and a commitment to creating a safe, “grace-filled” learning environment that builds community and provides opportunities for growth in personal and corporate spiritual life.
4. **Training Design**—The missionary training program employs adult learning theory and methods respecting the learner’s abilities and background. Training is grounded on a Spirit-directed, biblically based evaluation of the knowledge, skills, and character of effective missionaries. Learning activities help learners develop capacity for life-long growth in knowledge, skills, and character for ministry. The scope of the program assures training for all levels and roles in the organization. Trainers model cross-cultural sensitivity in training methods and manners, are required to be life-long learners, intentionally growing in knowledge and skill, and actively engage in ministry beyond the training program. Training values are made clear in teaching/learning process.
5. **Resource Stewardship**—The missionary training program makes careful use of spiritual, human, and financial resources measuring the cost effectiveness of training against improved ministry performance. Training techniques and resources are shared reciprocally with other trainers and organizations in order to collaborate with WAGF networks, receiving churches, receiving teams, sending churches, agencies, and schools.
6. **Evaluation Strategy**—The missionary training program has a clear, measurable, and feasible evaluation plan, regularly evaluating the program in terms of learning, behavior, and organizational results, assessing the extent to which training contributes to personal and organizational effectiveness. The evaluation of learners goes beyond knowledge alone to measure skills and character, reviewing various program elements including time, delivery system, accessibility, user friendliness, and stewardship of organizational resources in order to make program improvements.
7. **Accountability**—The missionary training program contains accountability procedures for reporting to all those that involved in the training process on the efficiency and effectiveness of the program including a review by a panel of peers.

Conclusion:

Due to the dynamic nature of the missionary enterprise and missionaries’ changing needs, missionary training programs must continually adjust and change to be effective. This, while holding fast to biblical truth, universal missiological principles, and the need to equip those God calls and empowers for missionary service so that every people and person have access to Christ; Savior, Healer, Baptizer, and Soon-Coming King.

Missionary Selection and Recognition

Key practical steps for agencies for endorsing and appointing new missionary candidates.

Original prepared in Jan. 2020 in London by WAGF Best Practices Task Force

Justification:

Missions agencies should serve a purpose of identifying, examining, affirming, and endorsing the call of God of new missionary workers before the national church.

Part 1: Biblical Impetus: Defining the Challenge:

The concept of the urgency of the harvest and the need for harvesters is clearly communicated in the Bible.

1. Matthew 9:35-38: The labors are few and we should pray for laborers. Both were of great concern to Him.
2. Matthew 20:1-7: He seeks to engage the labor force and there is a sense of urgency in the time of day and taking advantage of the time for harvest.
3. John 4:35: Seeing the urgency of the harvest.
4. Matthew 24:14: The sense of closure related with the harvest and eschatology.

Part 2: Observations for Recruitment and Selection:

1. **Agencies need to have a paradigm shift in missionary recruitment.**
 - There is a great urgency. The Church can harm the entire harvest if it does not engage *all workers, from all peoples, to all places, all the time.*
 - The Task here, therefore, is creating the platform and framework to “unleash” the entire Harvest force of the Church by engaging it strategically, and **removing all obstacles** to the effect.
2. **Missionary recruitment criteria.**
 - In evaluating the process, the following should be taken into consideration:
 - Relationship—Relationship with Christ, the Church, the spouse, family, and leaders. Does the candidate demonstrate the fruits of the Spirit in his/her relationships?
 - Training—The candidate must show competency not only in secular training, but also theological, missiological, professional, and as well potentially mentorship.
 - Calling/Passion—Candidates must show evidence of their calling and passion through reaching the lost and their call recognized by spiritual leaders. They must also show affirmation to the Great Commission mandates.
 - Spiritual/Moral/Emotional—Candidate must demonstrate stability and consistency in spiritual, moral, and emotional disposition. Pentecostal missions requires candidates to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Candidates must have a sound devotional lifestyle and emotional disposition. They should not be in debt at the time of appointment. Candidates must be emotionally and mentally sound, not having any form of psychiatric or physical disability (except allowed by competent medical authority).
3. **Case study from one country on how they approve a missionary.**

- The following is a model implemented by a few countries.
 - Step 1: If married, both spouses must be called. Then the single or couple must receive approval from their local pastor, the sectional leadership, and/or district presbytery before they can apply to the missions agency.
 - Step 2: The missionary candidate writes or contacts the director of the missions agency indicating his/her call to missions and obtains approval to continue the process.
 - Step 3: The missionary candidate submits a formal application with his/her educational resume to the missions agency and missions board.
 - Step 4: The missions board screens and interviews the applicant (single or couple). The screening process determines if the applicant has met all personal and educational criteria. The interview continues the screening process.
 - Step 5: The missions board recommends the candidate to the executive committee for appointment.
 - Step 6: The missions director deploys the appointed missionary to the designated field and supervises his/her work.

It must be understood that every country should develop its own protocol.

Part 2: The Importance of Both Strategy and Dependence on Guidance of the Holy Spirit:

1. The bedrock of the Pentecostal heritage is dependence on the Holy Spirit. Most of the early missionaries did not have excellent training, or maybe would not meet the requirements of today, but they had a call of God and that pushed them towards paying a price and showing great commitment.
2. Though a missions sending entity might have a focus or priority on certain countries or unreached people groups, etc., there should still be a consideration of the personal call and conviction that a missionary candidate must have. To the best of the agency's ability, a candidate should not be turned down only because their burden or call does not coincide with a country's priorities (That does not mean that the person should not have to defend his/her call and be able to convince others of its genuineness).
3. The leaders of a missions sending entity must continually pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He will call people that missions leadership might not have called, and he has a strategy that missions leadership might not have implemented or considered.
4. Dependence on the Holy Spirit does not mean that missions leadership should not seek to have a strategy, and as well make plans, both short and long term, and goals, that would be part of their vision.

Part 3: Best Practices for Selection, Recruitment, Mobilization, and Endorsement:

1. It is important that the missions agency have a policy in writing (a Missions Manual), that will make the way clear for potential candidates on the pathway to become a missionary.
2. It is important that the missions agency have a policy in writing internally of their requirements and let potential candidates be aware of those requirements.
3. It is equally important that there be a degree of flexibility, to be able to respond to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in unique situations.
4. It is important that countries learn from each other (networking), but they should not "copy" the requirements of other countries because each country is unique.
5. Avoid creating unnecessary obstacles that are difficult to overcome. For example, in one country it might take two years to be ordained, and in another country ten. The requirement, therefore, of the necessity of being "ordained" might make becoming a missionary prohibitive. The intentions

might have been good in having the requirement, but short sighted in understanding the impact it will have on potential candidates.

6. It would be good to have various missionary categories so that candidates, for example, who have spiritual maturity but not the Bible school education could be allowed to serve.
7. Acknowledge that the Spirit uses multiple means to initiate, nurture, and confirm the call to missionary service. For example, Paul “recruited” Timothy to join the missionary band.
8. The processing of each candidate is unique, requiring spiritual discernment on the part of leadership to determine whether obstacles or circumstances justify them not being accepted as a candidate.

Conclusion:

The Holy Spirit urgently desires to move all laborers into the harvest field. The missions sending structure should facilitate the process of mobilization and selection of missionaries, in such a way that it minimizes obstacles.