

Declaration on: Home (Domestic) Missions, Missions Agencies and Domestic Cross-Cultural Missionaries

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Within the World Assemblies of God Fellowship various perspective exist regarding the relationship between evangelistic outreach and church planting within one's own national borders often designated as Home or Domestic missions and Foreign, International, World, or Global missions. A third category, cross-cultural missionary activities within one's own national borders struggles to find a place within church organization and structures. What follows is modified, edited version of a paper developed in Latin America to address this and related issues.

1. Opening and planting churches at the national level, although a very important task and part of the extension of the national work, should not be recognized as "missions", as it lends itself to misinterpreting the task of cross-cultural missions. Local church planting and evangelism effort should be differentiated from global missions. Instead of using the term "missionary" for these people who work in church planting at the national level alternate designations should be used such as "church pioneer," "church planter", "church founder", etc.
2. In many of countries there are ethnic groups that require a cross-cultural effort for the Gospel to be communicated to them. Due to cultural barriers such as language, very different customs, or even geography, being distant and isolated from local national churches, communication forms used by local churches are not effective in reaching these groups leaving them without a contextual witness of the gospel.
3. In response to these domestic ethnic groups, national missions or church agencies need to develop specific strategic initiatives to reach these groups. These initiatives and workers should be identified with names or categories that distinguish them from international efforts, but that still denote the cross-cultural nature of the outreach (Examples: ministry to national ethnic groups, domestic cross-cultural missionaries, or cross-cultural workers, etc.).
4. Domestic cross-cultural missionaries should be valued and recognized for their calling and commitment to reach these ethnic/cultural groups who need a Gospel witness. God loves each soul, and therefore calls people to minister among the cross-cultural groups of every country. These calls must be affirmed because these missionaries also pay a price in leaving their culture, if not their country, to fulfill it.
5. These cross-cultural efforts could become self-sustaining over time, since the missionary who works in his/her own country does not need, among other advantages, a visa to work in the midst of an ethnic group. Therefore, the missionary has options to generate his/her own support, or be supported by the congregation being established, which is not the case of missionaries who leave the borders of their country. However, there will be special cases, places that will require the domestic missionary to be supported long-term. For example, to raise up pastors from that culture, or to continue establishing new congregations, or to continue to prepare and train pastors of that culture, this may require a full-time, fully supported cross-cultural missionary.
6. In recognizing this special aspect of cross-cultural missionary work, the national church must never present these domestic cross-cultural efforts as a justification for not sending missionaries abroad. God has given the global church a clear missionary mandate that includes all peoples, all nations, and every person.

7. God loves each soul, and therefore calls people to minister among the cross-cultural groups of every country. These calls must be affirmed because they also pay a price in leaving their culture, if not their country, to fulfill it.