**BEST PRACTICES FOR MISSION**

INTRODUCTION

Before we begin to search for possible best practices for Assemblies of God World Missions (AGWM), it is important for us to define what we mean by the term. Typically, *best practice* (BP) refers to a “discipline-specific benchmark for credible research (or other professional activity)”.[[1]](#footnote-2) Identifying best practices involves the process of instituting methods or techniques that are then evaluated for their effectiveness. Those that are most effective become standards known to produce superior results and are shared across the organization as benchmarks. Best practices are continually evolving as improved standards become evident, and for AGWM, they must be regionally contextualized.

A further acknowledgment must be made regarding the nature of the concept of BP in the Missions context. Whether it be teaching techniques that produce the highest test scores or the sales tactics that result in the most sales, the identification of BPs inherently demands the analysis of hard data. This is, admittedly, not the Missions world. While measurable goals always have an important place within the task of missions, the Kingdom of God is, ultimately, not quantifiable in human terms or dimensions. Therefore, the BPs identified and recommended in this paper are grounded in a biblical understanding of the Missionary task rather than the culling of data. What follows are recommendations that we believe reflect the principles and theology that will lead to BPs and carry with them an element of prophetic vision believing that the Holy Spirit will guide AGWM leadership as they seek to chart a course forward.

As practitioners and a community of senders, we will explore the BP discipline-specific benchmarks for credible professional missionary-ing. We will seek to define sets of practices, methods, or systems that would lead to effective superior results. The goal of BP in our context would be to assure that we are doing all we can in the most efficient, power-giving ways in order to reach the least reached and partner with and empower our brother and sister churches and their missions vision around the world.

Far from being a static formulation, the content of BPs is defined in a dynamic reflexive process that flows from the following questions for AGWM:

* + Have we captured a theology of the Kingdom of God that will inform our practices, rather than allow pragmatics or cultural business strategies to inform our practices?
  + What are the ideal characteristics that we are aiming for in a missionary, a missionary body, and a community of faith that sends missionaries?
  + What practices and mentality must we instill in Assemblies of God World Missions (AGWM) and the Assemblies of God (AG) in general in order to attain superior results?
  + What systems, paradigms, and methods from the previous two centuries of modern missions need to be discarded and which ones needs to be adopted in order for AGWM to evolve and flourish in the current century?
  + Is it necessary to have a new missionary paradigm that incorporates the rest of the world in our thinking and praxis?

The writers of this document have chosen to examine the formation of the missionary in light of the challenge of reaching the least reached and partnering with like-minded fellowships in the world. We recognize that outreach to UPGs is not an innovative fresh emphasis of the AG. The minutes of the 1921 General Council record the adoption of a *New Policy of the Foreign Missions Department* which stated that, “The Pauline example will be followed so far as possible, by seeking out neglected regions where the Gospel has not yet been preached, lest we build upon another’s foundation (Rom. 15:20).”[[2]](#footnote-3) The adoption of this policy did not represent a change in ideology or strategy but a written formalization of current practices meant to serve as a guiding principle for future missions work around the world. This emphasis on “seeking out neglected regions where the Gospel has not yet been preached” cannot be ignored.

In a 2012 Pentecostal Evangel article entitled “State of the Mission” AGWM executive director Greg Mundis states, “We must prioritize reaching out to those with limited access to the Gospel.”[[3]](#footnote-4) Mundis’ call actually reflects his desire for the AG to reprioritize the unreached. The growth of the Assemblies of God worldwide has been phenomenal. Still, many resistant areas of the world and the hidden peoples remain without an adequate witness of the Gospel. It is not enough to desire their evangelization; we must prioritize these areas and peoples and mobilize workers to reach them. Moreover, this re-prioritization should involve not just the US AG, but also all of our partners and sister organizations around the world. In this paper, we will focus on developing best practices in relation to this mandate. Although there are a vast number of arenas for which best practices should be defined, these are the topics we will cover in this paper:

* the individual vs. the collective call
* missionary training
* retention of effective missionaries
* church planting
* partnerships with national churches and other networks
* deployment of missionaries

THE CALL OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COLLECTIVE CALLING

**The Individual Call**

The mobilization of missionary workers to reach the least reached is intrinsically linked to the missionary call. Typically, Christian mission has relied on volunteers, whether professionally trained or not, to expand the message of the Gospel. Local churches have encouraged and facilitated evangelistic activity for their members where they live, but the taking of the Gospel to a new area or foreign land requires the willingness of someone to leave home and family and travel to the new location. In modern missions, this often has been accomplished through the individual call of workers to specific places. Mission sending agencies have been the facilitators of these individuals sensing the call to missions, empowering approved and appointed workers to reach the areas of their calling. AGWM continues to enable individual believers to follow Jesus wherever He leads. There can be no doubt about the success of many of the individuals who have gone out, following their passion and eager to make a difference.

Although the primary Agent in facilitating the missionary call is the Holy Spirit, Alan Johnson notes that the call is intimately connected to exposure.[[4]](#footnote-5) In other words, a person’s exposure to a place or a need has much to do with his or her decision to participate in missions activity, both short term and long term. The exponential rise in short term missions trips, whether coordinated through district or national offices or through a local congregation, has drastically impacted the calling of new personnel. Those areas that have more exposure and are able to receive and facilitate short-term workers benefit the most from the applicants for foreign missions work. While the growing interest in short term missions has yielded positive results in many cases, it has also meant that resistant and difficult to reach areas can remain under-exposed and, therefore, under-supplied with workers.

**The Collective Calling**

AGWM has long expected candidates for appointment to recognize both the individual and the collective nature of that call. The biblical foundation for the collective nature of the call can be seen Acts 13. Both Paul and Barnabas, serving on the church leadership team in Antioch, were simultaneously called and sent (Acts 13:1-3). Paul’s vision of the man from Macedonia lead to a collective agreement of the team that the gospel should be preached in Macedonia (Acts 16:8-10). Later Paul conferred with the leaders of the Jerusalem church to be sure that he was not running his race in vain (Gal. 2:1-2). Paul regularly travelled about with a team of workers and directed them. This collective activity in no way diminished the individual effectiveness of Paul; rather, it enhanced it. AGWM stresses to its candidates that they work as a part of field fellowships and that good partnership with fellow team members and the national church is essential. Area Directors are empowered to guide candidates and veteran missionaries to the neediest areas of endeavour.

**Best Practices relating to the Collective Call**

Best Practice: Leadership Casts Vision and Provides Strategic Direction

One of the main responsibilities of AGWM leadership is to cast an overarching vision, based on its historical biblical mandate, for new and existing missionaries. Today leadership has the challenge of drawing individualistic missionaries together in prayer to discern the purposes of God for our community. Collectively, leadership and followers must emerge from the time of discernment knowing what it is that *we* are to do, with each missionary knowing how their individual gifts and skills will fit into the collective call.

After prayer, research, and consultation with appropriate contacts, AGWM leadership, particularly at the Area Director (AD) level, should be encouraged to funnel personnel and resources into least reached areas. In some cases, this will require encouraging and/or directing existing and new personnel to work in specialized teams and focus on specific areas or people. This leadership prerogative may at times supersede the individual missionary’s interest in labouring in a particular location. The missionary must be committed working in the harvest field, no matter where that may take them. The theological creed of “Here am I, Lord send me” may need to be stripped of added stipulations of location and specific assignment.

Best Practice: Teams to be sent to Specific Areas and People Groups

The use of teams in the missionary task during the New Testament era, especially as it regards the missionary work of Paul, is well documented and need not be restated here.[[5]](#footnote-6)

For AGWM, the importance of teams now goes beyond a traditional field fellowship and “teamwork” mentality. What is being advocated is the intentional formation of teams to be sent to specific areas and people groups. These teams would be formed around a common understanding of the team’s focus, approach and goals. A team leader would ultimately be responsible for the maintenance of focus, community and accountability within the team. Each team and team leader would also fall under an authority and accountability structure. The specific advantages of purposefully formed teams include, but are not limited to the following:

* A close and personal support and accountability system on the ground
* A distribution of gifts and callings towards a single purpose
* A pooling of ministry resources and talents
* An opportunity to model a Christian community, living out the truth of the eschatological Kingdom in the context of broken communities.

Best Practice: Invest Money and Personnel into Team Training Centres

Team training centres serve as launching pads for specific teams being formed, trained, and sent out to unreached areas. Part of an individual missionary’s preparation would include spending time at a training centre even before being allowed to join a specific team. [[6]](#footnote-7) Some centres would need to be country-specific. Others would be regional and designed to facilitate ministry to specific ethno-linguistic groups. Each centre would need a “champion” who spends significant time with the new missionaries and some time in the USA to cast the vision among donors.

The advantages of a training centre approach to teams include, but are not limited to, the following:

* A consistent and clearly understood and articulated ethos for team members.
* A valuable, on the ground, evaluation process for possible team members.
* An abbreviated fundraising time as the costs for attending a training centre would be significantly less than the budget needed for a fully appointed missionary.
* An intense and regulated approach to language learning and acquisition as well as character formation and evaluation.

The work of teams and the ethos of team life and community can itself be a strong pull for new workers. By emphasising the goals and focus of teams, a much larger net can be cast in local churches, Bible schools and universities for workers with a calling on their lives for missions in general. Taking the next step in committing to full time missions is made that much easier if there is a clear structure for training and support. It is therefore suggested that a renewed effort on the part of AGWM to clarify the importance of the collective call to the missionary task and the emphasis on intentionally formed and trained teams will make great strides towards increasing the number of full and part-time missionary workers in unreached areas and among unreached peoples. Best practices should be identified in order for AGWM to create structures and templates for the further development of other training centres, based on AGWM vision.

**Missionary Training**

**Why Benchmarks or Best Practices Need to be Identified**

AGWM is mandated to empower men and woman to be the “sent-ones” from the AG community with the task of reaching the unreached and partnering with like-minded fellow churches around the world. The continually morphing contexts, multi-cultural team players, and fluid global demographics multiply the complexity of the missionary role, requiring the missionary to analyze their contexts and alter their strategies multiple times during the course of their career—not only as an individual but as multi-national teams of co-laborers. Without a longitudinal education plan that would extend over the lifetime of the missionary this challenge will go unmet.

Two primary reasons for establishing best practice benchmarks for missionary training come to mind. First, reaching the unreached and the least reached across ethno-linguistic borders requires specialized skills for not only those who are the “sent-ones” but also for those who are leading and equipping the church to stay on task. Second, if a missionary is indeed a person with specialized skills, spiritual depth and a Holy Spirit calling who crosses cultural boundaries, he or she should be a professional with appropriate qualifications. If everyone isn’t a missionary, then what are the distinctives that identify those who qualify as “sent-ones”? What must they know in terms of ministry skills, biblical knowledge and cross-cultural expertise? Also, what must they be emotionally and spiritually? Mind-preparation, life competencies and Spirit-inspiration are integrated into the creation of a missionary.

**AGWM Efforts at Training**

Candidates do not arrive at the door of AGWM fully prepared and qualified. In fact, AG districts often recommend credentialed people with limited ministerial experience and academic training to AGWM for missionary appointment. To what extent does AGWM help them to attain competence and effectiveness by delivering tools and resources at the right time and place within their career in a form that is relevant, doable, and accessible?

Determining best practice in missionary training is not a new concern. As early as the Edinburgh Missionary Conference in 1910, there was a clear call to train missionaries to “know far more than the mere manners and customs of the race to which he is sent; … to be versed in the genius of the people…”[[7]](#footnote-8)

Since its first Missionary Conference in 1948, AGWM has instigated a variety of professional training programs for their missionaries. A two month Pre-field orientation was established in 1973 that provided each of the candidates with four graduate level classes, all taught by experienced missiologists: Melvin Hodges, Del Tarr, David Irwin, and Delmar Guynes. Sometime in the mid 1980s, this was shortened and presently it is nine days. School of Missions, an annual event since 1953 for furloughing missionaries, supplied on-going training. Today it lacks a training focus and is simply called “Missionary Renewal.”

Although missionaries are encouraged to pursue their theological and/or missiological studies paid with work funds if available, currently no mandatory continuing missionary education exists. AGWM regional or area directors may conduct their own seminars to provide on-going training to missionaries. Yet, a coordinated plan for intentional training does not exist in AGWM. A comment by Eugene Nida about Evangelical missionaries in general should cause us to ponder: “There are perhaps more missionaries today than ever before, but they are more poorly trained and prepared than at any other period of mission history.”[[8]](#footnote-9)

This committee encourages AGWM to reverse the trend of diminished training from our community, as it creates a lack of understanding of the corporate core values, identity, and a loss of unity on the field.

**Best Practices for Training Missionaries**

Best Practice: Create a Plan for “Integral Pre-field and Life-long Equipping”[[9]](#footnote-10)

Training and preparation of a missionary requires a big vision or a grand plan for “integral pre-field and life-long equipping.” Missionary training is a complex issue that requires a longitudinal plan created by missionary-education specialists from every region of the world.

Rather than a one-time event, training must be an on-going process in the life of a missionary, so that competencies are added towards professionalism, spiritual depth, and discernment. A sample trajectory is present in the following figure.

Two sources should inform the training process: (1) AGWM, in collaboration with educational bodies (AGTS, Bible schools, and various Universities), since it is aware of areas of specialization that are critical background for a missionary, and (2) the needs of the missionaries themselves. As adult learners, missionaries discover gaps in their abilities, and can request that training be created to “fund” their reservoir of knowledge and skills.

Best Practice: Educational Design Experts

A first BP would be to identify a team of educator-practitioners from each region of the world (including one or two key nationals) who would serve to design the grand plan. Adult education takes many shapes: formal, informal, and non-formal. Needs must be assessed, goals set, training pieces designed and delivered, learning process observed, outcomes evaluated, and then training pieces refined. A series of questions must be answered for which expertise is required:

* What body of knowledge, skill set, and spiritual characteristics need to be built into a missionary?
* When in a missionary’s trajectory is this body of knowledge, skill set, and spiritual characteristics needed? When is the missionary the most hungry to receive?
* Who provides the training—a mentor, professors, special chosen experts, etc?
* How often will the training be delivered—“as needed,” periodically, at regularly scheduled intervals?
* Are all topics for study necessary for the whole missionary family since exposing the whole team creates a common identity, spirit, vision, or DNA of AGWM? Or should certain topics be regionally specific?
* What methodologies should be used—traditional classes, webinars, distance education, group study, one-to-one mentoring, etc.?
* How will we know if we have reached our training objective?
* What are the consequences for lack of participation?

Best Practice: Evaluate Candidate Competencies

Best practice requires an evaluation of candidate competencies for the task. New missionaries enter the AGWM family with varying levels of foundational knowledge, skills, and spiritual/emotional maturity as well as varying perceptions about what it means to be a missionary. A candidate’s likelihood of success on the field is dependent on his/her ability to adapt to the location and culture as well as their expertise and ability to contextualize their work skills.[[10]](#footnote-11) Parts of the training must be location and task specific. For instance, a candidate sent to a new and undeveloped field requires different training than one being sent to fill a position in a highly organized missions structure. AGWM must assess candidates not only to understand their call, spiritual life, and ministerial experience but also to know how to provide sufficient and meaningful training for the rigorous ministry ahead. We would recommend that AGWM create a competency rubric, using a variety of tools and resources, that would reveal what remedial or further training each candidate needed. AGWM should be empowered to set goals and standards that must be attained before an applicant will be appointed and sent. This includes people transitioning from MA to full appointment.

Best Practice: Focus on Desired Outcomes

AGWM expects their missionaries to be identified as (1) spiritually mature, (2) set apart by the community for sharing the gospel and building the church in a cross cultural context, (3) having a life-long commitment to the mission of God, and (4) professional, knowledgeable and experienced in the following areas:[[11]](#footnote-12)

* Theology (knows the Word of God and allows it to transform their lives even they prophetically allow it to critique culture—their own as well as the culture of their calling),
* Ministry knowledge and skills for the present and future of global missions (bringing specialized ministry skills to the mission context, such as youth ministry, compassion, church planting, teaching, leadership development, etc.),
* Philosophy and theology of missions which would inform a missionary’s identity as a sent-one and build into them the core missiological foundations for fulfilling his/her mandate, etc.,
* Cross-Cultural specialist (capable of exegeting culture in order to contextualize missional theology, philosophy and methodology to cross cultural contexts),
* Spiritual and character formation that is both horizontal and vertical. Pentecostal missionaries must have the ability to discern divine direction and walk in obedience in the power of the Spirit.[[12]](#footnote-13) Directly related to that personal transformation is the Holy Spirit refinement that enables the candidate to build healthy relationships with national partners, AGWM colleagues, and the people of their calling so that the embodied Truth will correspond to the spoken witness to the Gospel.[[13]](#footnote-14)

Best Practice: Embrace Various Partners to Help with Training/Education Efforts

Training that is done on the field should intentionally include both AGWM and national church partners as students and as teachers. Duane Elmer writes, “The best learning happens in relationship, in mutuality in partnership where neither side is above or beneath.”[[14]](#footnote-15) In the same way that AGWM endeavours to help interested national churches become sending agents through training and encouragement, so also our partner churches around the world can lend expert help to AGWM missionaries who need to gain cultural knowledge and build covenant relationships.

Best Practice: Train the Trainers

Best Practice requires that AGWM intentionally trains trainers.Although AGWM should listen to the voices of other missions organizations to prevent becoming in-grown, its best source of experts will typically be faithful and fruitful missionaries who have become mission educators themselves. Best practice should seek to develop regionally specialized missionary trainers who will serve as disciplers, mentors, coaches, and professors. The necessary components of a missionary educator should include (1) long-term experience, (2) spiritual wisdom and discernment, (3) missiological skills through disciplined forms of education, (4) a passion for mentoring and encouraging the next generation of missionaries.

Best Practice: Engage the Local Church and other partners.

Best practice views the local church as a partner in missionary development. Ideally a person develops emotional and spiritual health, learns basic Christian life skills, and develops a love for the Word in the context of his or her local church. Certainly the Lord of the Harvest will call certain individuals periodically to take the gospel to the nations. Therefore, the local church through its pastors, youth groups, Sunday School classes, discipleship groups, home groups, accountability groups, Chi Alpha groups, etc., must also recognize and accept the responsibility of preparing believer for possible missionary service. The Local church partners with AGWM by:

* Being the instrument through which a person finds Jesus and is discipled to spiritual maturity.
* Identifying giftings and providing training and practice for ministry within a community of faith such as children’s ministry, preaching and teaching, church planting and music.
* Giving opportunity to members for participation cross-cultural practicums and
* Offering centrifugal mission theology, casting a burden for unreached people groups by teaching, sending, giving and going.

Likewise, AGWM should assist local churches by providing resources that it knows will help prepare members for possible missionary service.

Affiliated universities and Bible Colleges working in partnership with AGWM educational missiologists should assure a seamless flow from home church to theological training to the field. Likewise, other sources of candidates such as Chi Alpha should be embraced as a partner in training. AGWM investment in any of these groups will strengthen the preparedness of the candidates coming to AGWM.

Best Practice: Have an Eye towards the Future

Best practice requires that we prepare missionaries for tomorrow, not for today.Like any organization, AGWM runs the risk of becoming outmoded or stuck in old paradigms. It must respond to and adapt to new realities as they develop. For instance, VanEngen states:

The third millennium may bring us back to a situation reminiscent of the early church, a mission necessarily from weakness, foolishness, and poverty. This would entail a radical paradigm shift in mission theology. This shift may not be optional. The drastic ecological, economic, political, social, religious, and demographic changes happening on our small globe are presenting us with a new reality that may well call for a new paradigm of theology of mission.[[15]](#footnote-16)

Best Practice requires freedom from institutional resistance to change and freedom to respond to the changing world as the creative Spirit of God guides AGWM toward the future in this changing world. Regular prayerful, prophetic evaluation must lie at the core of Best Practices.

Best Practice: Set Measurable Goals Related to Training

Training requires an investment of time and resources, not to mention the difficult work of critical thinking, prayerful times of reflection, and humble childlike learning. Although best practice requires that all missionaries undergo certain training, measurable goals should be to set such as:

* Every missionary have a minimal amount of theological and missiological training.
* A percentage of missionaries to receive advanced training, trusting that these will rise to the top as leaders, inspiring and influencing others.
* A percentage of the time be required in a missionary’s life for continued ongoing reflection, cultural exegesis, contextualization, strategizing and spiritual growth.
* A percentage of the missions budget spent on training.

Best Practice: Consider Community Living and Training

Best practice in missionary training calls for a serious consideration of training embedded in community. Lee[[16]](#footnote-17) argues that there is great worth to community living model for teaching life skills. Issues such as conflict management, partnership, servant leadership and followership can only be learned by experiential learning in a discipling community. Neither books nor on-line learning will suffice. Furthermore a candidate can better be evaluated for his or her likelihood to succeed on the field or in mission teams in a community setting.[[17]](#footnote-18)

**Retaining Effective Missionaries**

Leadership of growing organizations and companies, both for profit and non profit, understand the challenge of retaining talented people who fit their mission, vision, goals, location, culture and budget. They recognize that they cannot take a lackadaisical approach to retention but must have a plan and even policies to guide them. AGWM should be intentional about retaining good missionaries. These workers possess spiritual maturity, anointing, perseverance, interpersonal skills, cultural savvy, linguistic talent, team spirit, and specialized skills. Their labors have been fruitful.

Statistics from AGWM for the period 2003-2012 indicate that attrition of fully appointed AG missionaries is highest during the first four terms of service. In fact, the greatest attrition takes place during or right after the second term of service.[[18]](#footnote-19) The chart below highlights the total number of fully appointed missionaries leaving AGWM over the last 10 years (2003-2012) during periods approximately equivalent to terms of service.

Table 4

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **YEARS OF SERVICE** | **NUMBER OF MISSIONARIES**  **LEAVING AGWM** |
| 0-4, first term plus itineration | 127 |
| 5-9, second term plus itineration | 176 |
| 10-14, third term plus itineration | 130 |
| 15-19, fourth term plus itineration | 122 |
| 20-24, fifth term plus itineration | 70 |
| 25-29, sixth term plus itineration | 38 |

Time will reveal who the most promising missionaries are and weed out those who, for one reason or another, would better serve God in other endeavours. While the departure of some missionaries from the field may not come as a surprise to AGWM leadership, loosing promising and/or good missionaries can be a frustrating event for AGWM and the work on the field. Common reasons for their exit include assumed new direction from God, health issues, family problems/responsibilities, fundraising challenges, team conflict, and other employment opportunities. A best practice goal for AGWM, therefore, should be to retain good missionaries through every ethical and spiritually-minded way possible.

Currently, AGWM missionaries completing a term of service and planning to continue in missions can look forward to increasing fruitfulness and responsibility on the field, a $100.00/month pay increase, and a chance to further his or her education if (00) funds exist. AGWM also allows personal and medical leave for special needs, grants transfers from one ministry location/ministry to another, runs an excellent Missionary Kid (MK) program, and permits qualified missionaries to participate in the Missionary in Residence (MIR) program in various AG schools around the United States.

For most, if not all, AGWM missionaries, such specific incentives are not the reasons why they choose to continue serving in world missions. They continue serving because they want to obey God and His call, advance the Kingdom, and touch lives around the world. They know that such a commitment requires sacrifice, and they are willing to make it.

Ultimately, AGWM does not want to stand in the way of God’s call or His perfect will for its workers. Some will leave AGWM for legitimate reasons. However, a broad set of practices regarding retention may help keep good workers from a premature and/or unnecessary exit from fruitful cross cultural ministry. There may be important steps AGWM can take, beyond the incentives outlined above, to encourage long term service by good missionaries, especially those still able to offer many years of service. The following list of best practices drawn from Human Resource experts has been contextualized for AGWM consideration:

* Encourage and provide regular opportunities for development. This could take the form of conferences, joining theological or missiological societies, and formal education. Beverly Kaye, a recognized authority on career issues, retention, and engagement in the workplace, indicates that single most important fact in keeping good people is supporting their growth and development. Development drives their commitment and productivity. She sums up this concept as, “help them grow or watch them go.”[[19]](#footnote-20)
* Build trust. If AGWM moves toward (1) emphasizing the collective call rather than the individual call and (2) emphasizing teams rather than individualism in its efforts to evangelize Unreached People Groups (UPGs), leaders in the hierarchy must avoid becoming unduly dictatorial. Missionaries still want to be enabled to make decisions and work in an environment of trust. In missions work relationships are everything. Nothing builds relationships better than trust.
* Don’t wait until it is too late. Flag good missionaries who may be contemplating leaving AGWM. Find out why. Find out if there is anything AGWM can do to keep them from quitting.
* Express appreciation. AGWM leadership should identify many ways to tangibly express appreciation for faithfulness and good work.
* Conduct “stay interviews”. Many organizations regularly conduct “exit interviews.” A small percentage conducts “stay interviews.” A “stay interview” is a meeting with a highly valued worker with the goal of identifying ways to improve the relationship between management and worker and other conditions needing attention. People want to be heard.
* Provide feedback to workers. AGWM must be intentional about providing feedback to its workers, both positive and constructive.

**Best Practices in Church Planting**

The challenge of reaching the least reached in the world is a daunting task. Many UPG’s are found in restricted access countries or places that are seemingly open but dominated by a major world religion other than Christianity. Other UPGs can be found in post-Christian Europe where the state church typically has a blighted reputation. We ask if the typical methods used by AGWM missionaries should be employed where a visible church infrastructure with sanctuaries, buildings, and bible schools, and visible infrastructure may not be possible or where the general population do looks with disdain on the church institution. We propose a missiological ecclesiology that would free our church planters from traditional, American, culturally-bound images of the church and allow for indigenous leadership structures, culturally appropriate worship styles, and organic growth patterns.[[20]](#footnote-21) The traditional church planting techniques modelled in the United States produce churches that are pastored by the church planter. That should not be the only model. Two other models that can be used are the (1) mother/daughter church model and (2) the church planting movement.

Best Practice: Foster Church Planting Movements (CPMs)

A church planting movement[[21]](#footnote-22) has been defined by Garrison as“a rapid and exponential increase of indigenous churches planting churches within a given people group or population segment”[[22]](#footnote-23) Rather than the pastor-planter model, CPM emphasizes church multiplication based on (1) the priesthood of all believers (not just clergy), (2) reproductive discipleship, (3) obedience to the will of God, and (4) faithful fruitfulness, rather than faithfulness alone. Smith and Kai describe the process as a believe-serve-mature, rather than believe-mature-serve. [[23]](#footnote-24)New believers are given tasks within the new community of believers from the beginning of their walk with the Lord. The missionary assumes the role of a coach and enables new believers to begin leading small groups and house churches within months of the beginning of the plant. CPM methods have been used in restricted countries, such as China and Laos, with great success.

Best Practice: Give Careful Attention to All Phases of Church Planting among UPGs

The creation of a viable new church or a church planting movement reflects a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, new churches and church planting movements move through recognizable phases. Tom Stephen[[24]](#footnote-25) has identified five of them:

* Pre-entry phase
* Pre-evangelism phase
* Seed-sowing phase
* Local leadership development phase
* Exit phase--Phase Out

The table (Table 1) below describes many of the activities that occur during each phase. Noticeably absent, however, is the task of creating healthy partnership relationships as the church flourishes and becomes a healthy “5-Self church” (see the section on deployment).

Table 1

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1. Pre-Entry** | **2. Pre-Evangelism** | **3. Evangelism** | **4. Leadership Development** | **5. Exit Strategies or Phase Out** |
| Identify unreached people group | Unify team around common missiology and praxis | Sow seed—culturally relevant gospel | National believers take on tasks that the team is modelling | Observes national church planters in action |
| Lay foundation of financial and prayer support | Prayer walk | Search for people of peace | Coach and mentor national believers | Coach if necessary but certainly encourage |
| Call for a team to gather | Cultural surveys and build relationships | Identify leaders among those who become followers | Reverse the roles till the nationals are doing most of the tasks | Plan for absences of the team |
|  | Prepare culturally appropriate strategies | Transmit vision of church to developing followers | Participates in de-briefing | Building healthy partnership relationships |
| Identify a team leader | Concentrated language learning | Model the tasks |  | Working together to plant more churches |

Best Practice: Partner with AGUSM in Outreach to Immigrants and Diaspora Populations in the USA

The task of reaching the immigrant or Diaspora populations in the USA technically lies within the domain of Assemblies of God United States Missions (AGUSM) efforts, however both AGWM and AGUSM could benefit by wise partnership. The following are excellent reasons to foster a strong partnership:

Some of the immigrants that belong to approximately 250 UPGs in the US are planning to return to their home countries. Some find Jesus on universities through Chi Alpha groups or similar ministries or through local community outreaches. If they are well discipled in the United States, they could be instrumental in the work in their homelands. AGWM needs to work with Chi Alpha, ethnic fellowships, the Intercultural Dept. of AGUSM, and other cross cultural ministries in order to disciple students and other immigrants so that they will be faithful and fruitful Christians in their home countries, not just in the USA. Care should also be exercised so proper indigenous church principles are inculcated in the immigrant believers so that they, upon their return to their home country, do not think of or rely on the USA as an ongoing source of financial backing.

Learning to understand cultures and working with a people group in the USA can provide excellent training ground for missionaries that want to go overseas. Some candidates could benefit from a two to four year assignment first with AGUSM before attempting to reach the same people group in a closed and difficult country.

**Partnership: Discovering Our Place In The Greater Mission Community**

**Introduction**

Partnership is an important word in missions, yet the word remains a concept searching for definition, even as the word mission has lost a sense of biblical meaning. Our globalized world has embraced the fact that working together is the right way forward. Whether we speak of agreements in business, education, government or religion; if there is an agreement for working together, the term partnership is used.

The challenges of urbanization, the increased focus on unreached peoples, the effects of globalization, the growing vitality of the Majority World Church, and significant expansion in their mission efforts have all converged to encourage a mission climate supporting cooperative efforts. Also, the shift of the centre of gravity of global Christianity from north to south and from west to east is having a significant impact on who is doing missions in the 21st century. No longer is missions from the west to the rest, but from everywhere to everywhere. This has fostered a dramatic increase of strategic partnerships in missions due to the emergence and success of a Two-Thirds world mission force.

This section will deal with best practices in AGWM’s missional partnerships, especially in the light of its renewed focus on unreached peoples. We recognize that as a mission with representatives in over 200 nations, there is no single way forward. There are places we work where few if any Christians exist and no national fellowship can be found. There are also countries with strong, mature national churches. What we can offer in this document are sign posts toward the goal of partnership with sister fellowships toward reaching those who have never heard, along with probing questions and suggested action steps.

As an organization, we have strongly embraced and practiced the principles of the indigenous church and partnership. This is one factor that has powered the growth of the Assemblies of God worldwide in the past few decades. The natural next step is to enter into intentional ministry partnerships with national churches for the sake of those who have never heard. Paul Gupta writes: “As ex-patriot churches and mission organizations adjust their vision and redefine their role to partner with national churches, they may have a greater impact for the kingdom of God than was ever possible through pioneer efforts.”[[25]](#footnote-26)  Rey Calusay, General Superintendent of the Philippine Assemblies of God agrees, stating, “The next generation of the missionary church will have a brown face.”[[26]](#footnote-27)

**Best Practices in Partnership**

Best Practice: Give Room to the Holy Spirit to Lead and Guide

There is significant evidence to believe that partnership was a vital missiological concern to the Apostle Paul. In his writings, he modelled principles of working with local groups of believers. Roland Allen writes that Paul had a “profound belief and trust in the Holy Spirit indwelling his converts and the churches…”[[27]](#footnote-28) This trust in the Spirit enabled Paul to call men and women to a deep fellowship and participation in the gospel. Paul mobilized and mentored fellow workers as he shared his call and life with them by means of nurturing partnerships.

The Church has drifted from the biblical pattern of ministry relationships cultivated by the Apostle. From a western perspective, there is a pragmatic approach to collaboration which emphasizes methods, money and management. Best practice must base partnership on biblical foundations.

Without diminishing the need for shared goals and values, structure and communication, it is also vital to understand the role of the Spirit in initiating and sustaining partnerships. We have neglected this aspect of the Holy Spirit’s ministry. He must be more than a silent partner in our efforts. There is strong biblical support that Paul emphasized the role of the Holy Spirit in building and sustaining ministry partnerships. Andrew Lord agrees taking the role of the Holy Spirit in partnerships one step further. He writes, “It is important to recognize the yearning of the Spirit for unity and I want to suggest here that the Holy Spirit works to unite by the creation of partnerships and as the 'go-between' brings mission communities together within the movement out into the world.[[28]](#footnote-29)” This is perhaps a unique contribution we can make to the theology of partnership, giving the Holy Spirit his rightful place in drawing people together for serving God’s purpose. Best practice allows space for the Holy Spirit to unite believers in pursuing *Missio Dei****.***

Best Practice: Incorporate Ways and Means for Sharing of Vision and Strategic Planning

AGWM should allow for modified on-field structures that make partnerships genuine and useful. Melvin Hodges and Morris Williams were the two missiologists who contributed most to AGWM praxis in the area of partnerships. Hodges believed that partnership was the ideal situation, where “the missionary is neither over nor under the national church, but working alongside the church as a fellow worker.”[[29]](#footnote-30) Williams suggested a growth continuum in the relationship with the ultimate being partnership, a “co-ordination of national church/sending church ministries—a united effort based upon written or vocal agreements.”[[30]](#footnote-31)

The principles stated by these mission leaders continue to speak today. However, in the decades since their books were written, the world has dramatically changed. Other nations are sending their own workers. Often a country now has a national church, and missionaries from several sister organizations may work in the same place. This new world requires even greater sensitivity and interpersonal skills to navigate. Since we are often the senior mission organization in a country, we have an obligation to model good practice through a commitment to pray and strategize together. As a practical matter, efforts should be taken to not only allow, but promote the sharing of vision and strategic planning.

Best Practice: Continue to Focus on Pioneering, Training, and Challenging

The question arises as to what roles AGWM missionaries should have in partnership-based missions today? We have a history of service to the church and of the sacrifice of many workers. We have years of relationship and cross-cultural experience which continues to translate into influence. AGWM missionaries can function as significant partners in the following ways:

* By continuing to pioneer in difficult unreached areas. Westerners are often able to bridge ethnic barriers more easily than local people.
* By providing training and serving as a resource to the broader AG fellowship. Wonsuk Ma writes: “This is the time for western churches to assist two-third world churches to become effective, intentionally Pentecostal mission forces.”[[31]](#footnote-32)
* By creating a missions training program in conjunction with stronger national churches to enable both AGWM and non-AGWM missionaries to be more effective in reaching UPG’s.
* By challenging our sister A/G fellowships around the world to mobilize their best workers for those who are without witness. This is full circle missions.
* By serving as a catalyst, the missionary brings a unique lens or worldview that allows him or her to see or exegete a culture and to discover places of spiritual need.
* By bringing need and opportunity to the attention of others.
* By coaching and guiding. Quality veterans can mentor individuals, guiding, inspiring and working with two-thirds world workers as they prepare for and begin their service to the hard places.
* By serving as facilitators of ministry, connecting opportunities for service to needed people and resources.
* By being an advocate for the unreached to US Assemblies of God and national churches with whom we partner.
* By willingly letting others evaluate our partnership initiatives.
* By showing how fellow servants/friends work together in cooperation based on mutuality.

Best Practice: Recognize and Embrace the Work of other Legitimate Missions Agencies and Missionary Networks

For the past century, AGWM has supplied many pioneers and ministry leaders around the world. We humbly recognize that today’s global mission force is much larger than AGWM, that we cannot reach all UPGs alone, and that we must realign our thinking to include a greater openness and emphasis to team and multi-cultural partnerships based on respect and mutuality. Lazarus Chakwera, President of the Assemblies of God of Malawi, has stated that “the new western missionary must come as a team player knowing there are other members on the team who have giftings as valuable as their own.”[[32]](#footnote-33)

Best Practice requires AGWM to accept the premise that missions agencies belonging to the World Assemblies of God Fellowship and other like-minded groups have an apostolic calling to the least reached. We commit to encouraging them and collaborating with them whenever possible. This collaboration may include introductions to ministry organizations, mentoring, assisting in obtaining visas, welcoming international partners relationally to the AGWM mission family, and providing assistance financially to establish a platform for presence and witness. Best practice in these relationships will involve power giving and affirmation to national leaders rather than attempting to control agendas.[[33]](#footnote-34)

Best Practice: Create Multi-national Engagement Teams to

Plant Churches among UPGs

Creating multi-national engagement teams to plant churches among UPGs entails relational and organizational networking. At times it may also require the sharing of financial resources. Many Assemblies of God national leaders around the world have stated that they have the manpower if the western church would assist with financial support. Without a doubt, this approach can bypass relationships and turn partnership into a monetary transaction.

We believe that each national church that truly purposes to support its called missions workers will find the means to do so. We would urge that when AGWM is approached by partners in ministry with requests for financial assistance that approved funds be designated for projects focusing *on launching* workers and ministries that eventually become self-sustaining. When we invest, we must make sure that it is strategically seeding the development of viable missions programs. For instance, AGWM may wish to invest in national projects to develop models of “business as missions.” Robertson McQuilken accurately states that, “sharing financial resources in a way that is spiritually empowering and Great Commission-completing for both donor and recipient is our greatest unsolved problem.”[[34]](#footnote-35) This quote challenges AGWM to seriously consider developing best practice guidelines for the financial aspect of partnerships.

Best Practice: Engage with Local Assemblies in the USA that Send Workers

AGWM should work closely with Districts and their Schools of Ministry to provide missiological teaching and opportunities for dialogue with pastor/leaders about missions. Philosophically, AGWM follows the volunteer mission society approach in which the agency is tasked to do what local churches could not. Now, many local U.S.A. congregations send mission teams and individuals to work in specific locales without any contact with national leaders or a resident missionary team. Tension and misunderstanding on the field are created when church-based missionaries have mixed expectations, lines of authority are blurred, and workers may not be qualified spiritually, intellectually, physically, or emotionally for challenges they will encounter. A partnership paradigm means we value zeal and contribution of local congregations but seek ways to add missiological principles and local cultural insight.

Best Practice: Sow the Vision for Partnership in AGWM Personnel at Every Opportunity

The vision for partnership with national churches, other agencies, and networks must begin at the highest leadership level of AGWM and filter its way down to all other levels. In the spirit of humility and openness, the following efforts should be undertaken:

* Teach and emphasize partnership principles and dynamics at MT/MR, using both western and majority world teachers and practitioners.
* Conduct seminars and workshops on developing and sustaining partnerships conducted at the Area or field level.
* Identify models of successful partnerships with national churches to be shared through AGWM communication channels.
* Engage in regular meetings with national churches with the objective of strengthening relationships, praying for one another, identifying UPGs in the nation, and catalyzing national church movements toward missions to those who have never heard.
* Document progress using evaluative tools that enable annual updates to regional offices and to the World Missions Board.
* Offer training and assistance to US churches desiring a long-term commitment to a country to enable greater focus on the unreached.
* Encourage an on-going dialogue at the World Assemblies of God Fellowship (WAGF) or regional leadership levels concerning partnership paradigms with the goal of reaching those who have never heard.

Best Practice: Seek to Bless and Assist Non-Aligned Church Networks

Where No National Churches Exist

Because AGWM is serious about penetrating the final frontiers of missions, they will enter highly resistant parts of the world where a fully developed national church organization does not exist. In some cases, AGWM workers will encounter groups of believers that have organized themselves into networks of local churches.[[35]](#footnote-36)

Questions arise concerning the kind of relationships that should be encouraged by AGWM missionaries and their teams in countries where networks rather than well-developed national churches exist. The following are practices to be encouraged.

* Respect the experience and wisdom of network leaders
* Avoid playing the role of expert
* Stay steer clear of creating dependency
* Whenever possible, allow nationals to take lead roles in witnessing, conducting church activities, baptizing, etc.

Best Practice: Seek Cooperation With Personnel From Other Evangelical

Agencies And Networks With A Vision For Upgs

Not only will AGWM missionaries need to deal effectively with non-aligned church networks, they will also encounter personnel from other mission agencies and networks operating on the same fields. Well-known mission agencies and various networks usually have an agenda, ministry goals, and some strategy for their work in any given country. AGWM should recognize that it cannot possibly reach the nations alone, and it should welcome the opportunity to partner with other agencies and networks whenever beneficial.

**Missionary Deployment**

As AGWM embraces its role as equal partner with the national churches of the world to touch the least reached and empower as well as be empowered by national partners to fulfil the Great commission, serious consideration must be given to the distribution of the missionaries that the Lord of the harvest has put into our hands. Their placement must reflect the identity and task that the Spirit is assigning to AGWM for this century. The list below are suggested BPs for missionary deployment.

Best Practice: AGWM Regions Should Assess Deployment Goals to

Reach the Least Reached and Partner with National Churches

BP would call for each region of the world to regularly evaluate their region on the basis of need, asking the following questions: (this could be/should be done with the national church if possible)

1. Where and who are the least reached and the unreached in this region?
2. What is the strength of the national church, not only in numbers but in organizational competency? DO they have the vision and the skills to reach the lost? Is their leadership equipped with adequate training and resources, both financial and personnel?
3. Is the national church growing or is it in decline?
4. What are the demographic changes in the region that would call for changes in deployment strategies to that region? (for instance, the remarkable growth of Islam in Europe should tell us that despite existing national churches, there needs to be an increase in missionaries to Europe.)

Responses to these questions will form a foundation for regional or even area-wide plans that would be help guide the work assigned to missionaries, both in the individual and collective sense.

Best Practice: Set Short and Long-term Goals for the Deployment of AGWM Missionaries

Intelligent and Spirit-driven deployment calls for strategic streamlining, whereby collective calling, regional assessment, and individual calls intersect, giving direction to the sending of missionaries. We believe it is reasonable to set a short-term goal (5 years) of having 50% of AGWM missionary personnel deployed in church planting among least reached people. Their efforts may include evangelism, church planting, compassion, student ministry, etc. Another 25% would be sent to countries where less than 5% of the population is Evangelical Christian to strengthen the local church and work alongside them to reach the unreached. The remainder of the AGWM team would work with national churches in Church ministry (CM) roles, casting vision and giving skills to the national church to identify and embrace their role in the mission of God.

A long term goal (10 years) would increase the percentage working in CP roles as described above to 75%. These roles would involve a variety of tasks (evangelism, church planting, compassion, student ministry) and will morph as AGWM grows into its role as an equal partner alongside of our national church missions efforts.

A matrix for assessing regional and area needs such as the one given in Table 3 should be developed by AGWM and used to aid in the task of discerning deployment.

Table 3[[36]](#footnote-37)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Matrix for Deployment** | | | | |
| **ZONE 1** | **ZONE 2** | **ZONE 3** | **ZONE 4** | **ZONE 5** |
| AG National Church or Partner Denomination Established | AG National Church or Partner Denomination Established | AG National Church or Partner Denomination Established | No AG National Church or Partner Denomination Established | No AG National Church or Partner Denomination Established |
| Established Church is:  Self – Governing  Self – Propagating  Self – Supporting  Self –Theologizing  Self – Missionizing | Established Church is:  Self – Governing  Self – Propagating  Self – Supporting  Self –Theologizing  Self – Missionizing | Established Church is lacking in one or more of the 5-selfs  (See Appendix 1 below)  Pentecostal Unions or House Church networks exist and open to partnership. | Organic networks of House Churches exist that are open to partnership. | No related organic house church network yet established. |
| Country is more than 10% Evangelical and/or Body of Christ in that country has the capacity and willingness to reach UPG’s in their country | Country is **less** than 10% Evangelical and/or Body of Christ in that country has the capacity and willingness to reach UPG’s in their country | Country is **less** than 5 % Evangelical and/or Body of Christ in that country **does not have** the capacity and willingness to reach UPG’s in their country | Country is **less** than 5 % Evangelical and/or Body of Christ in that country **does not have** the capacity and willingness to reach UPG’s in their country  **OR**  Country more than 5% Evangelical but with multiple  UPG’s | Country (**indigenous population**) is **less** than 1 % Evangelical Christian with **Multiple Unreached and Unengaged People Groups** |
| Multiple other Evangelical Denominations, Mission agencies exist in that country | Multiple other Evangelical Denominations, Mission agencies, exist in that country | Other Evangelical Denominations, Mission agencies, exist in that country | Few Evangelical Denominations, Mission agencies, exist in that country | Few other Mission agencies exist in that country  No national Churches exist in that country |
| **# of CM Missionaries Needed** | **# of CM Missionaries Needed**  **­­­­­­** | **# of CM Missionaries Needed** | **# of CM Missionaries Needed** | **# of CM Missionaries Needed**  **­­­­­­­** |
| **# of CP Missionaries Needed** | **# of CP Missionaries Needed** | **# of CP Missionaries Needed** | **# of CP Missionaries Needed** | **# of CP Missionaries Needed** |

Assessment is a challenging exercise both because it requires time, brutal honesty, and a willingness to align an organization’s activities with its stated mission and goals. We believe that, led by the Holy Spirit, we will be able to recognize areas where we seem to be weak or even failing. AGWM regional directors and area directors should regularly, annually, evaluate its personnel placement in regard to the goals of reaching the least reach and to partnering with national churches.

**Key Performance Indicators**

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are indicators that organizations use to measure success in fulfilling their mission and overarching goals. AGWM may want to consider KPIs in the area of finance, deployment goals, UPGs targeted for missionary intervention, UPGs now engaged, etc. These KPIs need to be reported monthly at the most senior level of AGWM leadership. Subordinates to top AGWM leadership will make sure that data is constantly updated in an automated data system that the AGWM director and any member of the top leadership team can access 24/7. Ideally, when KPIs fail to meet expectations, leadership should be able to “drill down” into the data system to ascertain where the challenges exist.

Likewise, individual missionaries need to develop a personal values, vision, mission, and action steps.  These should be reviewed every term.  The values, mission, vision, and goals would agree with team and regional goals.  What is their strategy to reach the goals that they feel God has given them?  The field moderator or area director could help each missionary in developing these as a means to disciple, encourage and engage all missionaries in relationship and fruitful ministry.

**Conclusion**

The BPs put forward in this document are recommendations that we believe reflect the principles and theology that will lead to superior results in the tasks of preparing missionaries to reach the unreached and partner with national churches. By creating missions BPs, we are striving to work together in the most efficient, power-giving ways possible. We have attempted to propose BPs that have an element of prophetic vision believing that the Holy Spirit will guide AGWM leadership as they seek to chart a course forward.

With our few pages here, we have suggested, not necessarily tried and true methods but a series of questions and proposals that should help AGWM think through and develop BPs. Many other topics of equal importance could have been considered. Some of the BPs in this document incorporate areas and approaches that, for a variety of reasons, have not traditionally been embraced by AGWM.  However, as the world continues to change and Missions continues to adapt to a changing world, we feel that AGWM can and should embrace new areas, bringing with it a Pentecostal worldview and distinctive.

ACTION Points:

For AGWM to:

1. Cast an overarching vision and provide strategic direction for new and existing personnel through a biblical understanding of collective calling.
2. Advocate for the intentional formation of teams to be sent to specific areas and people groups.
3. Consider reversing the trend of diminished pre-field and on going training by creating an integral pre-field and life long equipping strategy.
4. Create a team of educator/practitioners with two members from each region and at least two NC representatives to develop a “grand plan” and goals for the continuing education of missionaries.
5. Create a competency rubric for evaluation of candidates.
6. Give each region the task of developing BPs for ministry skills in their cultural and church contexts.
7. Encourage the development of innovative CP models.
8. Facilitate the collaboration between AGWM and AGUSM in regards to working within UPGs in the US which has global implications.
9. Encourage training programs in conjunction with strong national churches in order to more effectively reach UPGs.
10. Promote the idea of partnership through training at MT/MR and on-field venues.
11. Continue and deepen dialogue with Districts and local churches in regards to work with UPGs.
12. Set short and long term goals for the deployment of AGWM personnel working amongst UPGs.
13. Develop a BP for financial partnerships.

APPENDIX 1

FIVE “SELF” QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NATIONAL CHURCHES

Instructions: The questions are designed be answered simply as (1) for “yes” or a (0) for “no”. Add up the points to evaluate areas that need mission help, and the extent of indigenaity.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Self Governing** | Yes/no |
| 1. Is the Assemblies of God (or partnering National Church) registered with the Government? |  |
| 2. Is there a National Church Constitution? |  |
| 3. Are all the executives National brothers and sisters? |  |
| 4. Do they have a regular General Council? |  |
| 5. Can they grant work permits to missionaries? |  |
| 6. Do they have more than one District? |  |
| 7. Have there been AGWM personnel in country for 25 concurrent years? |  |
| 8. Is there a system for credentialing ministers? |  |
| 9. Do they have other partners beside AGWM? |  |
| 10. Do they belong to national church Alliance? |  |
| TOTAL |  |
| **Self Supporting** |  |
| 1. Do they have a bank account? |  |
| 2. Are pastors generally supported by local church tithe and offerings? |  |
| 3. Do they partner in one time projects? |  |
| 4. Do they have an executive treasurer? |  |
| 5. Is there a system for monthly church financial reporting? |  |
| 6. Is there an annual financial report? |  |
| 7. Do they support national ministries? (children, youth, women, etc.) |  |
| 8. Do they receive any financial subsidy from non AG entities? |  |
| 9. Do they receive any financial help from non American AG entities? |  |
| 10. Do they have a proposed budget plan for next year? |  |
| TOTAL |  |
|  |  |
| **Self Propagating** |  |
|  |  |
| 1. Does the national church have more than 100 local churches? |  |
| 2. Are there more than ten evangelical denominations active in the country? |  |
| 3. Are there more than three full gospel denominations active in the country? |  |
| 4. Is more than 35% of the country nominally Christian? |  |
| 5. Is more than 10% of the country evangelically Christian? |  |
| 6. Are there more than five full gospel denominations active in the country? |  |
| 7. Are there more churches in the country this year than last year? |  |
| 8. Are there more national believers in the country this year than last year? Do they adequately represent all segments of the population? |  |
| 9. Are there more credentialed (officially recognized) ministers in the country this year than last year? |  |
| 10. Are there national full time evangelists? |  |
| TOTAL |  |
|  |  |
| **Self Theologizing** |  |
| 1. Do they have one Bible School? |  |
| 2. Do they own three or more Bible School campuses? |  |
| 3. Do they have a Degree Program in their Bible School? |  |
| 4. Do have an MA program? |  |
| 5. Do they have more than 200 diploma graduates in the last 5 years? |  |
| 6. Do they have more than 100 degree graduates in the last 5 years? |  |
| 7. Do they have more than 20 MA graduates in the last 5 years? |  |
| 8. Do they have an extension Bible School program? |  |
| 9. Do they have more than 10 National Professors? |  |
| 10. Do they support the Bible school on a monthly basis? |  |
| TOTAL |  |
|  |  |
| **Self Missionizing** |  |
| 1. Do they have a national missions department? |  |
| 2. Has the country hosted an 11th hour institute? |  |
| 3. Do they have any national missionaries working among an UPG in country? |  |
| 4. Is there a working missionary support system? (Central Fund/Itineration) |  |
| 5. Have they commissioned any Foreign Missionaries? |  |
| 6. If they have foreign missionaries, do they work with an UPG? |  |
| 7. Do they fully financially support at least 5 foreign missionary units? |  |
| 8. Are there any national brethren working exclusively among Muslims? |  |
| 9. Are there national missionaries working in more than three UPG’s? |  |
| 10. Are there national missionaries working with a UPG with no known believers? |  |
| TOTAL |  |
| GRAND TOTAL |  |

A questionnaire[[37]](#footnote-38) using the five-self-principles can serve as a tool to evaluate the level of indigenous capacity of the national church. When compiled, each category will have a ranking of 1-10 (“one” being non existent and “ten” strongly indigenous). The five subtotals will be collected and nations/peoples groups with the lowest scores are those to which we should devote our urgent attention. The delineation of the five “selfs” will allow AGWM to pursue strategic placement. If a national church or people group is strong in all the ‘selfs’ except self missionizing, then it would be appropriate to assign a missionary to that country in order to help the NC build its own missions program. If a country scores a 50 (completely indigenous) we should commit at least one missionary unit to that country to provide skill sets and training in areas where the church is lacking (for instance, ministry to students, gypsies, etc.). If a nation/people group is weak in any of the five self categories then AGWM can consider sending missionaries to assist that church in the particular area of incompleteness. The more categories of weakness in a particular nation or people group, the higher our priority in sending or resending missionaries there.

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1. Gilbert, Marvin and Alan Johnson, eds. *Missiological Research*. Cape Town: Privately printed, 2011, p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Assemblies of God General Council Minutes, 1921, 61 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Mundis, Greg, “State of the Mission” Pentecostal Evangel May 6, 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Johnson, Allan, *Apostolic Function* (XXXXXXX), 19-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. For a broad but thorough and well documented overview, see the two volume work by Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*. For Paul and his co-workers specifically, see the standard work of Wolf-Henning Ollrog, Paulus und seine Mitarbeiter. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. The Live Dead Cairo Centre can serve as a good model in both a practical and philosophical sense. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. [Whiteman 2008: 6](#_ENREF_5) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Whiteman 2008, 8 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Taylor 2008, 86 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. [Lee 2008: 113](#_ENREF_2) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Whiteman consulted sixty North American Protestant missions regarding important topics for training missionaries and produced the ranked list below:

    1. Mission Team Dynamics
    2. Cross-Cultural Communication
    3. Understanding Cultural Differences
    4. Discipleship
    5. Biblical hermeneutics and contextualized hermeneutics
    6. Spiritual Warfare
    7. Policies and Procedures
    8. Theology of Mission
    9. Culture Shock
    10. Understanding World Religions

    We suggest that two other topics should be added to the list: the present AGWM focus on the four pillars and security, given that we live in an age of escalating security threats around the world. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Rance, 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Taylor, 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Need citation [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. [Van Engen 1996:259](#_ENREF_4) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Need citation [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Taylor, 127 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. Statistics provided by Bob Friesen, AGWM. Attrition takes into account all reasons why missionaries leave AGWM, including death. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Beverly Kay Webinar, Oct. 2, 2012, <http://www.achievers.com/resources/best-practices/employee-retention>, (accessed Feb. 19, 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. See 2010-2011 J Philip Hogan lectures online at: http://www.agts.edu/news/news\_archives/2010\_09koeshall\_lecture.html [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. See Acts 2: 41; 5: 14: 6: 1, 7; 9: 35, 41-42; 11:14, 20-21; 13: 44-49; 16: 15; 19: 9-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. David Garrison, Church planting movements: How god is redeeming a lost world, (Richmod, VA: IMB:Wigtake Resources. 2007) 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. Smith and Kai, 2011: 80 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Tom A Steffen, Passing the Baton, (Colorado Springs, CO: Center for Organizational and Ministry Development, 1997) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
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32. William A. Kirsch, “A Report Theological Education in Africa Responding to a Pentecostal Tsunami” (paper presented at the Asia Pacific Theological Association‘s General Assembly, TCA College, Singapore, September 10, 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. See Appendix 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. Guthrie 2000, 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. See Appendix 3 for discussion about networks in Iran and China. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. The following Table was originally developed by Dick Brogden and has been modified for the purposes here. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. See Appendix 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)