



Presuppositions About Missions Challenged: *With Suggestions Following*¹

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1. It is not necessary that all missionaries be white, Anglo-Saxon, westerners, young, inexperienced or highly educated.
 - a) For example, Latin Americans, Asians, and Africans can be sent from third world countries to close and far neighbors. They also can be supported by their home country or be bi-vocational to support themselves.
 - b) Experienced people *sometimes* bring more maturity to the field rather than someone right out of college and/or seminary. Establish a requirement of work experience of two years in whatever field they plan to minister in. Don't forget the retirement-age people; they have much to offer and have a good many years left of active service.
 - c) Education can be joined with experience and *sometimes* even replace formal education with informal education combined with work experience. Discipleship by a pastor to the prospective missionary would be able to share, guide, form and prepare the new worker.
 - d) The new missionary could also train, learn some of the language and customs working in the home sending country, i.e., in large Spanish speaking populations in US cities or Muslim sections in London.
 - e) A radical idea would be to send out from a local church a couple who would *immigrate* to a new country and become bi-vocational missionaries more or less permanently in that new country. This would require large amounts of dedication and sacrifice on the part of the new missionary.
2. That mission agencies and boards give freedom and responsibility to mission bodies in other countries to make decisions in finances, place of assignment and other decision-making.
 - a) Local missions based on local economy. Missionaries live within the lifestyle of the country. This might need sacrificial living and enculturation.
 - b) Look for ways and means in operating mission work in harmony with local culture; for example, in countries with high illiteracy, use stories, songs and other non-print media.
 - c) Institutions such as seminaries, schools, hospitals and clinics, and printing processes to be created in partnership with local leadership.
 - d) Local representation on the home board from overseas countries.
3. It is not necessary that missions establish ministry goals for given countries.

The national church envisioning its own growth for the future lays down its *goals* for growth through evangelism, national TEE formation, methodologies relevant to their culture. The national church evaluates missionaries and nationals using its set indicators,

¹ Ted Ward. Presuppositions About Missions Challenged: With Suggestions Following. Unpublished document, 1980s

and it also revises and re-adapts its methods.

4. It is not necessary that missionary procedures reflect constituency/donor priorities for missionaries, ignoring national church felt needs.
A cooperative committee could develop procedures which better reflect national church needs. Develop educational materials to get these across to the constituency/national church, recognizing that the philosophy of American-based mission headquarters is different from the receiving church.
5. It is not necessary that the mission alone evaluate a missionary's ministry in a country.
Both local field and home board evaluation of missionaries will be very valuable.
6. It is not necessary that the mission provide all the debriefing experience for a returning missionary.
Since it is impossible to discuss failures with a boss, alternate opportunities for debriefing, re-evaluating the past and planning for the future would provide a needed service while on home assignment (furlough).
7. It is not 'necessary that the mission ignore missionary burnouts, relational conflicts, etc, which leads to resignations and leaves of absences.
Develop a realistic study of missionary mental health with financial resources available for adequate counseling, improving agency/missionary/field relationships.
8. We challenge the idea that it is good to send our young people to mission fields as soon as they feel a call to go. They need a lot of preparation and training on the home field.
 - a) All missionaries should have solid experience in ministry, not just fresh graduates from a Bible school or seminary, before answering a call to ministry or missions in another place (the principle of Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth). One must first learn and be a witness in their own home (place). Then, on that proven witness and experience, one may be qualified for service in other places.
 - b) If we stipulate a period of 3 to 5 years preparation, they will not be discouraged because that is "part of the deal." Meanwhile, they should begin to learn the language, culture and traditions of the country to which they go, while in their home place. This can be done by seeking out individuals and genuinely participating in one of the many congregations and groups of people (such as Indian, Japanese, African, Hispanic, etc) found in communities in the sending country.
 - c) If during the period of preparation and training, one begins to lose his/her sense of call to another place, or feels the call changing, then *stay home*. (Note: much of the world expects leaders to be older and grayer!)