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**The Church/Agency/Missionary**

**Sending-Triangle Worksheet**

**What is your role as the missionaries’ sending church? What responsibilities is your church delegating to the mission agency? What is the missionaries’ accountability to your church and the mission agency? And how do all of these roles and tasks complement one another?**

Not every sending congregation can, or wishes to, fulfill all possible sending functions, nor to the same degree. That is why the missionaries, the leaders of their sending church, and representatives of the mission agency need to sit down and discuss their long-term roles in the sending process. Together you can clarify the responsibilities each member of the triangle—church, agency, missionaries—will seek to fulfill.

The following lists are starting points for a healthy, three-way dialog about the interrelated roles. It may be helpful to present some hypothetical situations and discuss the expectations and actions of the three entities in such a scenario.

After the responsibilities are confirmed or adjusted, each party needs a copy of the finalized list. Due to leadership transitions and shifts in viewpoint, it is wise to review and evaluate these roles at the beginning of each home assignment via an in-person (preferred) or phone conversation including the sending church, agency, and missionaries.

**THE CHURCH’S ROLE AS SENDER**

*Check each responsibility that you as the church are ready to fulfill. Are there additional responsibilities you want to “grow into”?*

* Recruit and carefully screen potential cross-cultural workers.
* Help develop future missionaries’ gifts, godly character, and ministry readiness by providing varied service opportunities inside and outside the church context.
* Assist your missionary candidates to research the best mission agency through which you will send them. This includes evaluating not only the agency but also the field leadership, potential team, and national partners.
* Understand the financial requirements and provisions for your missionaries. If anything you consider essential is not provided or not adequately underwritten in their support package, determine how to address these needs.
* Commit a generous amount of financial support to your missionaries, taking a step of faith commensurate with the commitment to trust God that you expect of your missionaries.
* Help appointees to build an advocate team to make sure that there is a steady stream of information and service flowing to/from your missionary workers.

**The Church’s Role as Sender (continued)**

* Volunteer assistance, expertise, and other resources whenever possible in order to provide missionaries with all they need to accomplish the task for which you are sending them.
* Hold your missionary responsible for regular reporting (a standardized form is easiest but accept alternatives if the missionary is already completing a similar report for others).
* Share responsibility for major decisions related to your missionaries’ ministry. Your church speaks into decisions regarding location of assignment, primary ministry focus, and agency membership.
* Delegate on-field supervision to agency leadership, but, with prior agreement with the agency, you may take an active role in helping to determine ministry priorities and strategies. *(Define any field decisions the church will participate in beyond those mentioned in the item immediately above.)*
* Provide on-field pastoral care throughout the workers’ ministry, in cooperation with the agency. This includes care for the entire family as well as serving, to the degree possible, adult children and aging parents.
* Work with the agency to address on-field problems involving your missionaries and missionary families based on healthy, open communication and mutual respect.
* Make sure that your missionaries and their agency have a crisis response plan. Understand both the plan and the way emergency interventions will be funded. Work closely with the agency to resolve any crisis situations such as health emergencies, political unrest, natural disasters, physical attacks, etc.
* Assist missionaries with home-assignment logistics such as housing, car, children’s schooling, etc. Work with the agency to make sure that your missionaries are ready physically, spiritually, emotionally, and financially before they are cleared to return to the field.
* Help to provide renewal and “retooling” as well as appropriate service opportunities during home assignment. Make sure your missionaries have time to rest and adequately reconnect to family and your church family.
* In close cooperation with the agency. This includes not only children with them on the field, but young adults away from home and parents.
* Work with the agency to make sure that missionaries are adequately preparing for retirement.
* Inform other supporting churches of the missionaries’ needs and ministry, as appropriate.

**THE AGENCY’S ROLE AS FACILITATOR**

*Check each responsibility that the agency is being asked to fulfill. Some may already be completed at this time. Note any limitations or further clarifications.*

* Recognize and respect the centrality of the local church in missionary sending.
* Require that potential missionaries be enthusiastically recommended by their local church which affirms their maturity, missionary call, gifting, and experience prior to appointment.
* Develop with the sending church a clear agreement regarding the church’s involvement in strategy and field priorities.
* Commit to ensuring that sending church, missionary, and agency are communicating regularly.
* Provide quality on-field leadership and accountability.
* Partner with the sending church to provide quality spiritual care for their missionaries and their families while on the field.

**The Agency’s Role as Facilitator (continued)**

* Provide a spectrum of services from the home office to free up missionaries as much as possible to focus on ministry.
* Provide quality pre-field training and opportunities for life-long learning throughout service in order to maximize missionaries’ ministry impact.
* Consult with the sending church when serious personal, family, or ministry problems arise.
* Involve the sending church whenever major decisions regarding location, ministry focus, or termination of service are considered.
* Report regularly *(define frequency)* to the sending church regarding the effectiveness of missionaries’ ministries and their personal well-being.
* Cooperate closely with the sending church to maximize the benefit of home assignment for the missionaries and the church.
* Provide assistance to the sending church in global vision development and cross-cultural missions mobilization.

**THE MISSIONARIES’ ROLE AS “SENT ONES”**

*Check each responsibility that you, the missionaries, are being asked to fulfill. Some may already be completed at this time. Note any limitations or further clarifications.*

* Actively participate as much as possible in the ministry and body life of your sending church.
* Recognize that the affirmation of your sending church is an essential ingredient of God’s call to missionary service.
* Understand and accept your sending church’s expectations and requirements for service.
* Believe that you are to be accountable to your sending church, even though direct supervision has been delegated by the church to the agency.
* Facilitate the investment of church resources (time, finances, gifts, and other expertise) to achieve ministry goals, recognizing that the whole church, not just missionaries, are called to the missions task.
* Report to the church regularly *(define frequency)* and honestly regarding your goals, ministry accomplishments, and personal and family well-being.
* Consult with your agency and sending church throughout any major decision-making (regarding change of location, primary ministry focus, agency, resignation/retirement, etc.).
* Do not attempt to put your sending church and agency leaders in an adversarial relationship in order to serve your own ends.
* Inform your sending church regularly of prayer requests and answers as evidence that you believe ministry results are dependent on intercessory prayer.
* Involve your sending church in setting priorities for home assignment, and reserve significant time for face-to-face contact with your sending congregation in order to minister and be ministered to.
* Recognize that part of your task is to assist in the global-vision casting and mobilization of your sending church.

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