

Guiding Principles for All WELS Cross-Cultural Ministry

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1. The Means of Grace (Gospel in Word and sacraments) is the only means God has provided to win the lost for Christ and to sustain believers in a community that confesses his name.
 - a. The Means of Grace compel, support, drive, motivate and instruct us in our ministries of outreach.
 - b. Communication of Law and Gospel must be done in a style and with a relevant content (e.g. applications, illustrations, and topical emphasis) that will be understood by the host (i.e., target) cultures.
 - c. As we use the Means of Grace, we also encourage the use of culturally relevant resources (e.g. strategies, methods, and modes of outreach) that do not contradict, diminish, obscure or conflict with these means.
2. We believe it is best to learn other cultures by listening (e.g. ethnographic interviews) and by participant observation.
 - a. We can uncover the specific cultural issues, questions, and hurts to which we can apply
 - 1) Specific law and gospel, and
 - 2) Specific mission strategies.
 - b. We can begin to develop practical theological applications and emphases that speak to the specific issues, questions, and hurts of the host culture.
3. We are willing to take risks for Christ and his powerful Word of truth and grace.
 - a. We are as flexible as Scripture allows in our methods of outreach, in providing training for mission workers and in using forms of ministry.
 - b. Because risk-taking may create tensions among God's people, we will take the lead in giving legitimacy and permission to new approaches to outreach ministry, and we will monitor the development of new approaches.
4. We commit ourselves to equip all the saints for works of service.
 - a. In accordance with the doctrine of Church and Ministry, we understand that the forms of ministry may vary from time to time and place to place.
 - b. All of God's people, whether ordained or not, have the privilege and responsibility to share the Gospel with the lost and to nurture the people of God. We are committed, therefore, to training laity for outreach and other ministries.
 - c. Within the framework of the doctrine of the Role of Men and Women, women also have the privilege

and responsibility to share the Gospel with the lost and to nurture the people of God. We are committed, therefore, to training and involving women in outreach and other ministries.

5. Our goal in cross-cultural outreach ministry is for all to experience and enjoy full partnership in the Gospel.
 - a. By “partnership” we mean that we of the planting culture:
 - 1) Show as much respect for the decision-making style, worship style, communications style, practical theological applications and emphases, and general cultural distinctives of the host culture as we do for our own.
 - 2) Do not require the people of the host culture to accommodate themselves to us and to our culture.
 - 3) Readily admit that we who are in positions of leadership in the planting culture do not have the answers for every situation and, therefore, we invite full participation from the host culture in discovering God-pleasing solutions.
 - 4) Understand that we gain credibility in the eyes of the people of the host culture when we admit our personal limitations and failures as we live in mutual respect and love.
 - 5) Encourage the host culture to formulate plans, set goals, and focus the vision for the outreach and nurture ministries we hold in common.
 - b. We are able to achieve the lofty goal of “partnership”
 - 1) When we see the world through the new perspective Christ has given us and not from a worldly point of view
 - 2) And when we join the Lord Jesus, who washed the feet of his disciples, and with him humbly express our love for others.
 - c. As individual children of God, who still live in a sinful world, we may give expression to this “partnership”
 - 1) By making a sincere effort to identify and lift the societal burdens that sin creates between cultures, and
 - 2) By using whatever positions of status and privilege society accords us to advance respect for others in keeping with God’s Word.
 - d. Since God’s Word enlightens people within their specific culture, God’s people in the host culture are crucial in determining methods of outreach, forms of ministry and training of workers within that culture.
6. Within our fellowship we seek church wide involvement and ownership of cross-cultural outreach ministry.

- a. We trust and support each other as each of us implements outreach ministry in the areas to which we are assigned, and we cooperate wherever responsibilities overlap and opportunities exist for joint work.
- b. We serve cross-cultural ministry best when the whole church works together.