

PARTNERSHIP AFRICA

A. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENTS

Our Mission Statement

We are called to faithfully participate in God=s mission of making disciples, practically demonstrating God=s love, and building the church of Jesus Christ in Africa, North America and elsewhere.

Why APartnership Africa≅?

Partnership Africa is a bold new mission initiative undertaken by Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission International (AIMM), a mission with a long and rich history of faithful missionary work in Africa. AIMM began as the Congo Inland Mission in Congo in 1912 and later expanded its work into Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa, Burkina Faso and Senegal. Mennonite churches in Africa which now relate to AIMM have a total membership in excess of 180,000. Over the years AIMM has also had an extensive Bible teaching ministry with African Indigenous Churches (AIC) in Southern Africa.

There are two primary realities which provide the impetus for this new approach to cross-cultural and international ministry. One is a North America reality. North American Christians, including Anabaptists, continue to be committed to mission. Many, however, are no longer interested in working through traditional agencies and structures. They wish to have direct access to the missionaries they send, to interact directly with emerging churches and conferences on other continents, and are increasingly interested in short-term projects.

The other is an African reality. God has blessed the faithful work of missionaries over the decades. The global Anabaptist church is now a reality. In many ways the passion and commitment to mission is now stronger in the African Anabaptist churches than in the North American churches. The time has come for the church in Africa to take its rightful place as a partner in global mission rather than to continue primarily as a recipient of North American mission activities.

Partnership Africa charts a responsible new approach to ministry which accommodates these two realities. While it is flexible, it also ensures that the lessons of mission history

will not be sacrificed on the altar of expediency.

It is anticipated that the relationships in Partnership Africa will be dynamic. Hence this document will need to be updated from time to time. To modify or terminate it will require the written consent of 75% of all the members.

Who are we?

AIMM is a partnership of Anabaptist conferences, congregations and other mission-minded groups. Partners are primarily, but not exclusively, from Africa and North America. As partners we are committed to carry out the mission as stated above. The June 2004 Joint Ministry Agreement (JMA) of the AIMM International Central Council (ICC) provides a list of all members as of that date. As additional members are added, the JMA will be updated. The JMA will be utilized in conjunction with this document.

Our Statement on Christian Mission

We believe the Bible is the Word of God and is the final authority in all matters of Christian faith, life and conduct.

We believe that Christian mission originates with God. It is God's work and God's people are called to participate in God's mission in the world. We affirm that Jesus Christ is the revelation of God in human form. The core of the good news which the church is to proclaim is that in his death and resurrection, Jesus Christ has overcome the principalities and powers, providing salvation for all who believe.

We believe that Jesus Christ is Head of the Church, God's instrument in the world today. Believers of every culture and nationality are part of the universal church of Jesus Christ. We identify with the Anabaptist heritage which includes believer's baptism and fellowship in a local body of believers, the new community where the new life in Christ is to be visible.

We believe that the Christian life can be lived only by a person who has entered into a personal and vital relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ brought about by the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion and sanctification. The new life in Christ leads to a new life in the world. As a member of God's new community, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, the believer earnestly seeks to live a life of servant-hood in word and deed; calls persons to the new reality of God's kingdom; renounces violence of every kind, seeks to live in peace with all people, works actively for peace, and identifies in caring and sharing ministries with those who suffer.

Our Statement of Principles and Strategies

Flexibility: In general terms, AIMM will demonstrate flexibility with respect to the way in which congregations and conferences can be involved in mission. This flexible approach will, however, honour mission history and the lessons learned therefrom as well as respect the evolving relationships between the Anabaptist churches from differing continents and cultures.

Decision making: Decisions concerning ministry in Africa will be made primarily in Africa through country-based Partnership Councils.

Gifts for ministry: The gifts of African Mennonite/Anabaptist conferences and congregations will be duly recognized and utilized in decision making and in program delivery. Similarly it will be a priority to recognize and utilize the gifts of both women and men. Assignments at the Council and worker level will be made without regard for financial strength/weakness or gender.

Accessibility: Conferences and congregations will have more direct access to the workers they send and to the emerging congregations. This accessibility will be managed so as to genuinely serve the best interests of the receiving community.

International teams: The teams of workers in any given country will be increasingly international and multi-cultural, more fully reflecting the character of the church of Jesus Christ.

Africa Regional Mission Fellowship: AIMM affirms the Global Mission Fellowship of Anabaptist-related churches. It is a priority for AIMM to work harmoniously with the anticipated Regional Mission Fellowships.

Other mission involvements: Partners in AIMM will have the freedom to engage in ministry in Africa via other channels.

New partners: Other groups which meet the AIMM criteria and wish to join in this partnership will be welcome.

B. OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES: The tasks and functions of the various sectors in AIMM

1. The AIMM Partnership Councils (PCs) for each country/region of ministry

1.1. *Introducing the AIMM Partnership Councils*

It is anticipated that eventually each country/region of ministry will have a PC. These PCs will generally meet in that country/region of ministry and will administer the activity in that region. Since local dynamics vary greatly from country to country, it is important that each PC be shaped in such a way as to most accurately reflect local realities and to be most responsive to local needs. There will be a separate written Joint Ministry Agreement outlining the specifics of the partnership for each PC.

1.2. *Responsibilities of the AIMM Partnership Councils*

1.2.1. Each PC will have the responsibility to process and accept or reject new applications for membership on the PC.

1.2.2. The PC will be the final decision making body for the ministry in each country/region, i.e. the PC will have overall responsibility for on-site supervision including (a) program, (b) personnel appointments, on-site orientation and supervision, and (c) financial management.

1.2.3. The PC will formally approve a Joint Ministry Agreement and any other regulatory documents necessary to provide a proper framework for the work and to enhance consistent application of policy and smooth transitions as workers and PC members come and go.

1.2.4. The PC will organize itself, i.e. elect a chair, secretary, etc and ensure the staggering of terms in order to minimize discontinuity.

1.2.5. The PC will appoint and hold accountable the leadership staff who will provide day to day on-site supervision in accordance with an up-to-date job description(s) provided by the PC.

1.2.6. As international worker teams emerge the PCs, with assistance from the ICC, will develop and implement local support plans to enhance harmonious team relationships and seek to minimize the impact of the huge differences in the financial strength of the sending partners.

1.2.7. The PC will ensure that adequate resources, from outside the country/region if necessary, are available to the team of workers to assist in team nurture, conflict resolution and other types of worker care.

1.2.8. The PC will ensure that all legal obligations are met in the country/region in which it has program.

1.3. *Membership in the AIMM Partnership Councils*

1.3.1. Initial membership will be established at the organizational meeting in June 2004. Thereafter membership in AIMM will begin with membership in a PC. Membership in a PC

automatically makes a partner eligible for membership on the International Central Council (AIMM ICC).

1.3.2. Any agency, conference, congregation or grouping of congregations from anywhere in the world which meets the following criteria, demonstrates a willingness to freely share its God-given gifts for mission, and is approved by the relevant PC is eligible for membership on that PC.

- Each partner must indicate agreement with this document which includes the AIMM Mission Statement, Statement of Beliefs, Statement of Principles and Strategies and the Operational Guidelines.
- Each partner must sign a Joint Ministry Agreement for each country/region in which it seeks to participate.
- Each partner from outside the country/region of ministry is encouraged to provide at least one long-term worker to serve under the PC. On occasion a partner may not provide a worker. In such instances the following contribution will be required in order that this partner retain membership:

(a) A partner from a high income country must contribute a negotiated yearly percentage of the overall PC budget.

(b) A partner from a lower-income country must also contribute a negotiated yearly percentage of the overall PC budget.

- Each partner from the country/region of ministry must demonstrate sufficient commitment to and involvement in the ministry to satisfy the PC, e.g. involvement of local people either part-time or full-time, financial support, etc.
- In the event that a partner should wish to leave a Partnership Council, that partner shall be required to respect its commitments to the end of the following fiscal year.

1.3.3. (a) Any PC may, for reasons unique to the situation in that country/region, enter into co-operative agreements with other entities for purposes of ministry or in order to strengthen the work that the PC has committed itself to. It is not essential that such other entities adhere to the theological/missiological principles to which AIMM is committed since they will not actually be members of the PC.

(b) An associate member is an interested church or organization that is exploring partnership in a given PC. Upon approval by the PC, an associate member can participate freely in PC meetings and issues, according to the discretion of the PC. Associate members do not have voting rights and have no financial obligations to PC programs. After a period of a maximum of two years, the associate member and the PC will evaluate together whether full partner status is desirable.

1.4. *Decision-making in the AIMM Partnership Councils*

- Each PC will determine a decision-making process suitable to its situation, e.g. majority vote, consensus, other. Initially, and until a contrary decision is made, the majority vote

will be utilized in decision-making within the following framework.

1.4.1. Partners originating in the country/region of ministry will have representation on the PC reflecting its commitment to and involvement in the ministry of that country/region. The precise number of representatives will be determined by each PC.

1.4.2. Each partner from outside the country/region of ministry will have a minimum of one voting representative on the PC. In cases where one external partner provides a disproportionately large number of workers or other resources, the PC will assess whether additional representation from that partner is advisable.

1.4.3. The workers in the country/region will have one voting representative on the PC.* If there is a large worker team the PC will assess whether additional worker representation is advisable.

1.4.4. The lead staff person/Director will be a non-voting member of the PC.*

*If the lead staff person is the only missionary, the two are to be combined and that person has a vote.

1.5. *AIMM Partnership Council meetings*

1.5.1. Meeting frequency - For the first two years the PCs will meet at least twice each year. Before the end of the second year, the PCs will make a formal decision concerning meeting frequency, location, format, etc for the future.

1.5.2. Co-ordination of meetings - It is likely that partners with involvement in more than one country/region will wish to appoint the same representative to more than one PC to minimize travel costs. It will therefore be important for PCs to coordinate meeting dates. The ICC staff will provide co-ordinating assistance as needed.

1.5.3. Annual General Meetings (AGM) - In the interests of order and co-ordination across the entire AIMM network, it will be important to agree on a common fiscal year. The AGM shall occur near the end of the fiscal year and shall approve program plans and budget for the next fiscal year.

1.5.4. The second meeting - It is suggested that the second meeting of the PC in a given fiscal year should focus on vision, philosophy and longer term planning in order to provide staff with the guidance they will need in developing detailed program and financial plans for the coming year and more general plans for the longer term.

1.5.5. All PC meetings will deal with immediate administrative issues as required.

1.6. *AIMM Partnership Council budgets*

The budget for each PC will cover the following costs in the country/region of ministry:

- all program costs including all local program related travel;
- housing for all personnel;
- non-salary expenses of all supervisory/support personnel;
- salaries/benefits of in-country/region casual personnel such as guards, etc.

- in-country/region costs related to the hosting of PC meetings.

1.7. *Leadership staff for each PC*

1.7.1. Each PC will appoint leadership personnel, such as a Director/Team Leader and a Financial Manager, on either a full-time or part-time basis, depending on the size and complexity of the program in the country/region.

1.7.2. The person(s) thus appointed will provide day to day supervision and leadership as assigned by the PC, including implementation of program plans, supervision of personnel, budget preparation and financial reporting.

2. **AIMM and the International Central Council (ICC)**

The ICC is the governing body for the international sector of AIMM. Its makeup and functions are outlined below.

2.1. *The AIMM ICC and the emerging Global Mission Fellowship (GMF)*

As stated earlier in this document, the members of AIMM celebrate the recent establishment of the GMF and anticipate the emergence of a Regional Mission Fellowship for Africa as well as other Regional Mission Fellowships. AIMM is committed to working in harmony with such regional fellowships and stands ready to adapt as needed in order to ensure a harmonious working relationship.

Nevertheless, despite the promising developments referred to above, it is important that for the foreseeable future AIMM have a functioning international council. Though the AIMM ICC will need to be held lightly and though the responsibilities and powers of the AIMM ICC are significantly reduced from the former arrangement, it is still needed in order to assume several important functions.

2.2. *Responsibilities of the AIMM ICC*

2.2.1. Responsible to meet all legal obligations

- The change from the way in which AIMM has operated in the past to the way in which AIMM will operate in keeping with this document, involves some legal changes as well.

These are defined in Attachment A entitled "Schedule for Reorganizing AIMM International". AIMM ICC is obligated to follow through on these changes.

- Further, AIMM ICC is committed to continue to meet all legal requirements in whatever jurisdictions the agency operates.

2.2.2. Responsible to monitor, resource and enhance vision for the PCs and workers

- The AIMM ICC will be responsible for the overall vision, philosophy and policy guidelines for work done under the various country/regional partnerships.
- The ICC will engage resource people such as missiologists to ensure that the missionaries, PCs and the ICC are given the best and most current information concerning mission thinking.
- The ICC will ensure that all the participants in AIMM are made aware of pan-African realities and will encourage partners to respond to the challenge presented by other areas of need in Africa and beyond.
- The ICC will monitor the activities of the PCs to ensure that they continue to function in harmony with AIMM philosophy and guidelines.

2.2.3. Responsible for networking

- The ICC will receive, respond to and share program reports from the various PCs.
- The ICC will ensure that, as requested, assistance will be provided to partners in planning and implementing educational and promotional activities concerning the work of the various AIMM PCs.

2.2.4. Responsible for the AIMM ICC budget and financial accountability throughout AIMM

- Most of the funds utilized by the various AIMM PCs will be received, receipted and legally accounted for by the membership, i.e. the conferences, agencies and congregations who partner in this venture.
- The AIMM ICC will administer those funds forwarded to it by the various member groups.
- The ICC will respect the designations for the funds it receives. In situations where specific projects or programs are over subscribed, the ICC reserves the right to apply such funds to other AIMM ministries.
- The ICC is responsible for the development and implementation of a budget for the specific activities of the ICC and its staff.
- The ICC will receive and respond to regular (at least annual) financial reports from the PCs and, in consultation with the PCs, arrange for external audits of the PC accounts as deemed necessary.
- The ICC will provide an annual consolidated statement, for information purposes only.
- The ICC will assume responsibility for the AIMM General Fund including:
 - (i) fundraising in the historical AIMM constituency which may or may not relate to any

partners;

(ii) ensuring that those funds are utilized within the parameters of the fund or, if necessary, taking appropriate action to change those parameters.

2.2.5. Responsible for the administration of the AIMM ICC General Fund

- Unless and until the AIMM ICC changes the parameters of the fund, it will utilize this fund as follows:

(i) to assist with the financing of workers provided by partners from low-income countries who lack the resources required to assume full financial responsibility for those workers;

(ii) to assist with the travel and lodging costs of AIMM ICC representatives from low-income countries;

(iii) to finance the expenses of the ICC and its staff;

(iv) to cover such other expenses as may be approved by the ICC from time to time.

2.2.6. Responsible for the AIMM ICC staff

- The ICC will appoint and hold accountable such staff as are required by the ICC to carry out necessary staff functions. Anticipated staff functions include the following.*

(i) Staff will attend to day to day office requirements including ongoing communication and contact with potential partners.

(ii) Staff will research and assess potential new areas for ministry and, as appropriate, will assist in the development of new PCs.

(iii) Staff will attend to preparations/follow up related to the annual meeting of the ICC.

(iv) Staff will assume accounting responsibilities associated with the ICC itself and, as negotiated with the various PCs, provide for auditing of the financial records of the PCs.

(v) Staff will attend to fund-raising and reporting to the AIMM constituency not relating directly to one of the AIMM members.

(v) Staff will seek to provide, or arrange for, support for the AIMM members, PCs and missionaries to ensure a constant renewing of the vision for mission for the whole of Africa and beyond (See 2.2.2. above).

*Note #1: It should be noted that the above describes what is anticipated as long-term staffing needs of the ICC. The current AIMM International Council has arranged for interim staffing for the transition period. It is anticipated that the transition will be completed by no later than June 30, 2005.

Note #2: It is highly unlikely that any one person can fill all the roles referred to above. Nor is any of these roles close to full-time. It may be expedient for the AIMM ICC to make part-time contractual arrangements with individuals or AIMM partner agencies to fill these roles.

2.3. *Membership/voting in the AIMM International Central Council (AIMM ICC)*

2.3.1. Any member on a Partnership Council is eligible for membership in the AIMM ICC.*

A PC member may, however, choose not to assume membership in the AIMM ICC.**

2.3.2. Each member or partner will have one voting representative regardless of the number of PCs in which it participates or the number of missionaries it supports.

2.3.3. Each PC will have one voting representative. The lead staff person on the PC will fill that role.***

* There is one exception here. Missionary representation on the ICC will be indirect, i.e. via the PC reps and via the reps from their sending partners.

** It may be that because of cost or other reasons, some PC members will choose not to join the AIMM ICC.

***It is important that each PC be represented at the ICC by the person most knowledgeable concerning the actual program on the ground. Further it is important that the program leaders have the opportunity to interact more broadly.

2.3.4. To meet legal requirements it will be necessary for AIMM Canada and AIMM US to each appoint a representative to the ICC. These can be chosen from among the individuals already representing another member on the Council, i.e. one of the partner agencies.

2.4. *AIMM ICC meetings*

2.4.1. Meeting frequency and timing - For 2005 and 2006, the ICC will meet at least once each year, as soon as possible after the first round of PC meetings in a fiscal year has been completed. No later than the second annual meeting, the ICC will decide how frequently to meet in the future.

2.4.2. Location of meetings - It is recommended that in 2005 and 2006, the ICC meetings be held in the most economical location, given travel costs, etc. No later than the second annual meeting, the ICC will decide on meeting locations for future years.

2.4.3. Annual General Meeting - Since it is anticipated that the ICC may meet only once a year, the agenda for that meeting needs to attend to items normally included in an annual general meeting, i.e. act on financial and other reports, approve the proposed budget, etc.

3. **The AIMM members**

The various Mennonite/Anabaptist conferences, agencies, local congregations and other groups which make up the membership of the ICC and the PCs, are the primary human resources without which the mission cannot succeed. Through its staff and representatives each AIMM member will assume the following responsibilities.

3.1. *General responsibilities*

Generally the AIMM members will ensure that the mission, its vision, programs, personnel needs and financial needs are adequately understood by its constituency so that the constituency can make an informed decision to support the mission through prayer, the sending of personnel and the provision of finances.

3.2. *Specific responsibilities*

3.2.1. Promotion - Though members are encouraged to request assistance from the AIMM ICC and its staff, each member is responsible for mission promotion in its constituency.

3.2.2. Personnel - Similarly each is responsible for the recruitment and initial preparation of workers for the countries/regions in which that partner has chosen to participate. Here too, assistance from the ICC staff will be available on request.

3.2.3. Financial responsibility

Financial imbalance

The reality is that now, and for the foreseeable future, there will be a huge imbalance between the financial capacity of partners from high-income countries and partners from low-income countries. The AIMM understanding of partnership recognizes and validates all mission-related gifts. Hence the AIMM approach to financing the mission includes a practical flexibility which allows for all partners, regardless of financial strength, to participate meaningfully.

Responsibilities of partners originating in high income countries

(i) Personnel costs

In keeping with its own support and personnel policies*, each partner will assume financial responsibility for:

- the recruitment and initial preparation of its personnel,
- the support and ministry costs while on assignment in the sending country,
- the support/benefits package and international travel of the workers it has assigned to the various PCs.

*If requested, the AIMM ICC staff will arrange for assistance in the development of such policies.

(ii) Program and administrative costs

- Each will assume responsibility for program and supervisory costs in the country of mission activity, according to a negotiated percentage and a participation formula acceptable to all involved partners.
- Each will assume responsibility for the travel costs of its representatives on the various PCs and the travel costs of its representative to the meetings of the AIMM ICC.

(iii) AIMM ICC General Fund

There is no formal requirement that AIMM members contribute to the ICC General Fund. Nevertheless, because of the important functions of that fund as described in 2.2.5, partners originating in high income countries are invited to contribute to the fund voluntarily.

Responsibilities of partners originating in low-income countries

(i) Personnel costs

In keeping with its own support and personnel policies*, each will assume financial/in-kind responsibility for:

- the recruitment and initial preparation of its personnel;
- the support and ministry costs while on assignment in the sending country;
- in keeping with formulas reflecting relative financial strength and provided by AIMM ICC staff, will assume responsibility for a negotiated portion of the support/benefits package and international travel costs of the workers it has assigned to the various PCs.

*If requested, the AIMM ICC staff will arrange for assistance in the development of such policies.

(ii) Program and administrative costs

In keeping with formulas provided by AIMM ICC staff, will contribute to supervisory costs in the country of mission activity, in proportion to its contingent on the mission worker team as well as responsibility for the travel costs of its representatives on the various PCs and the travel costs of its representative to the meetings of the AIMM ICC.

3.2.4. Appointment of representatives to Partnership Councils

- Each member will appoint the representative(s) to the Partnership Council(s) in which it participates.
- Members will exercise care to appoint representatives who
 - (i) have a good understanding of and commitment to Anabaptist/Mennonite mission perspectives,
 - (ii) have a genuine interest in international/cross-cultural mission,
 - (iii) are reasonably informed about international/cross-cultural mission, and
 - (iv) intend to serve on the PC for a minimum of 3 years.
- Members will provide a thorough orientation for appointees to PCs.*

*If requested, AIMM ICC staff will arrange for assistance in planning and implementing such orientation.

3.3. The Women=s Auxiliary

3.3.1. Introduction

One of the unique features of AIMM history has been the active and supportive involvement of the Women=s Auxiliary (WA). The fact that it continues into the new AIMM can be interpreted both negatively and positively. Negatively, it suggests that women in the Mennonite churches of Africa and North America are still not properly integrated into the leadership and decision-making bodies of the church. Hence a separate women=s organization is required for women to be meaningfully involved in mission. More positively, it reflects the development, over the decades, of deep and meaningful relationships between groups of women in North America and Africa.

At this point in our history, it seems the continuation of the WA still represents considerable gain for women in Africa and North America. Nor is it likely that the discontinuation of the WA will speed their fuller integration into decision-making structures.

It is assumed, therefore, that for the foreseeable future the WA will organize itself in North America as it has in the past. Good communication between the WA and the various Partnership Councils will maximize the benefit derived from this unique arrangement.

3.3.2. Option #1 - Full membership in one or more Partnership Councils

The WA, upon meeting the financial and other qualifications, could join one or more of the Partnership Councils as a full voting member and function like any other participating constituency group with a particular interest. In that case, the WA would also be eligible for membership on the ICC. As with the AIMM International Council in the past, the WA can attach its annual meeting to the meeting of the new AIMM ICC if it so chooses.

3.3.3. Option #2 - Sponsor specific projects in one or more countries

A less costly and more flexible option is for the WA to continue current communications with Mennonite women=s groups in one or more African countries and negotiate projects to sponsor. Each project will then need to be approved by the relevant PC before it is implemented. The WA still has the option of attaching its annual meeting to the meeting of the AIMM ICC. Full membership in the ICC is not an option since membership in a PC is a prerequisite.

4. The missionaries

AIMM welcomes missionaries originating in Africa and North America as well as other parts of the world.

4.1. In each country/region of ministry, missionaries will be invited to select from among them a representative(s) on the PC.

4.2. Most missionaries will be fully involved in the local work whether that be translation, church planting, evangelism, training leaders, teaching bible, various social ministries, etc as specified by the PC.

4.3. In each country/region one or more of the missionaries will carry responsibility for staff/program leadership, either part-time or full-time, as assigned by the PC. This will include responsibility for on-site orientation for new missionaries.

4.4. Similarly, in each country/region, a team member will be responsible for financial records.

4.5. All long-term missionaries should be prepared, if requested, to assist in the processing, placement and supervision of short-term personnel, both in and from their country of service.

4.6. All missionaries will play a major role in keeping the partners and their constituencies informed and inspired through communication while on-site and especially during assignment in their sending country.

4.7. Depending on the expectations of the sending body, missionaries may be required to participate in finding additional personnel as well as in raising funds for their support and/or on-site program costs, especially while on assignment in their sending country.