Adventures In Missions
Isaiah 58 Project

Overview
Isaiah 58 tells us that we are to repair broken walls and restore streets with dwellings. A group of Haitian pastors believe that God wants to use this disaster to bring about revival in the Church. They see that people are turning to God in record numbers. They see the hundreds of thousands of orphans and feel God calling them to re-father the nation. They have united together and are partnering with Adventures In Missions (AIM) to that end. Through a strategic relationship, families, communities, and churches have the opportunity to help Haiti get back on its feet and usher in a new season for the country.

Our Strategy
The goal is to connect the American Church to the Church in Haiti in their time of need. We want to help Haitians rebuild without the paternalism of the past. That is, we want to equip and empower the local church without promoting dependence. To do this, we ask that Haitian pastors form local committees that will do needs assessments. A local missionary* will broker the relationship between that committee and a partner church in America. These intermediaries will help ensure that the U.S. Church's actions match its intentions. Our goal is to ensure long-term self-sustainability and integrity of the relationship on both sides.

Three Parties
- U.S. church
- Adventures In Missions representative (i.e. missionary)
- Haitian community committee

Community Strategy
We ask for each community to form a 3-5 person committee composed of a pastor, a community leader (such as a health worker or other business leader), a teacher, and a village elder. We ask that each person be able to share ways in which they have helped their community in the past. We ask for references.

This committee will help target aid. It will compile and prioritize community needs, communicate them to AIM, oversee distribution of funds and other resources

Why a Committee?
- It will demonstrate to the community at large that the resources coming in are Haitian-controlled.
- It will help get the voice of the community behind initiatives (hearing the voice of only one person can easily take us down a road that sounds good but isn't what the community wants).
- It will be harder for the strong personalities in partner churches to manipulate the process or work-around the AIM missionary.

Phases of the Project
Initially, we'll focus on relief. As time passes, we'll move to build homes for those most in need.

Within a community, we'll do a mix of relief, development, and ministry work. All projects get categorized according to whether they are to meet immediate survival needs (relief) or to help a family or the community to grow in some way (development), or to help address emotional and spiritual needs (ministry). In development or ministry projects, and especially when helping families, we will expect Haitians to provide a majority of the work and resources to minimize dependency issues.

- Relief - Food, water, medicine
- Development - Housing, water access, agriculture, training
- Ministry – Counseling, discipleship, prayer, church planting

We'll prioritize communities according to need and trust relationship with the community. Eventually, we will begin to focus on those communities where we can make the greatest sustained impact.

Partnership Process & Accountability

1. AIM staff researches basic info on local Haitian churches and complete an info sheet. They perform a basic "needs assessment", speaking to the local church about expectations. AIM ensures that we under-promise and over-deliver.
2. Potential U.S. church partners sign up.
3. AIM staff passes info sheets to potential partner churches along with a training email.
4. Partner churches establish a plan of care in tandem with AIM.
5. Requested funds are approved by and channeled through AIM missionaries to local churches.
6. AIM staff ensures accountability for expenditures and report back. They broker the relationship with the churches.
7. AIM staff act as a point of connection and help ensure that dependency doesn't creep into the relationship.
8. After the first month, both churches in a partnership reconfirm with AIM staff what their expectations of the relationship are. AIM staff checks in once a month thereafter.
9. Three levels: Level 1: U.S. church provides help through relief supplies.
   Level 2: Relationship grows thru development & ministry plan compilation.
   Level 3: Plan is implemented.

Agreements
AIM asks that all U.S. churches that participate in this program honor our role in promoting a healthy relationship between the Haitian community committees and American churches. We will make the introductions and oversee the program. It would be unhealthy and unwise to not have a buffer like Adventures In Missions in the relationship, given our credibility and integrity as an organization. We will provide accountability and a unifying force for the program. It is important that partnering churches and the local communities that represent them understand and agree to these expectations. In exchange for a party's trust, we agree to function in a way that honors all parties involved. We ask that all parties sign an agreement confirming their intent to abide by this understanding.

Training & Relationship Development

- Initially commit to prayer and friendship.
- Focus on developing relationship.
- If an urgent need is presented, contact the AIM representative and defer to someone that can visit the family.
- Plan to invest time and energy into this. Once-a-week contact is a minimum, and even more, if God moves you to do so.

U.S. Church's Job

- To listen, learn, empathize, and pray.
- Discuss a giving strategy with AIM rep.
- Report back to AIM contact weekly (email is preferable, but calls are okay, too.)

Weekly Accountability Reports

AIM contact stays in touch weekly for the first month and then at least monthly thereafter.

U.S. Churches

1. Number and type of contacts
2. Family needs identified
3. Results of prayer

Haitian Churches

1. Was the contact helpful?
2. Were you encouraged?
3. Do you want to continue?

Cautionary Word

Dependency, which is always a concern in missions, is a particular danger in this situation. Haiti was poor before the earthquake, and now many Haitians have little hope of rebuilding their lives. It would be very easy for well-meaning American churches to inadvertently become paternalistic, fostering dependence instead of development and self-sustainability. The article at the end of this document examines the complexity of this issue.

*Missionaries brokering relationships should understand the culture and the missiological methods necessary to promote a successful partnership.

Isaiah 58 Communities Plan

www.adventures.org

Application form

Dear pastor and community leaders,

We represent a network of churches in America that want to help Haiti. We believe that Jesus Christ wants to use the partnerships we form to bring his kingdom to Haiti. We want to help you and your community. If you want to partner with us, please complete this application to tell us about the needs in your community.

To qualify for the resources our network can provide (food, housing, and water), you must form a committee. This committee will help ensure that resources are distributed in a way that is as fair as possible, beginning with those who are most needy.

Community name_____

Name of Pastor_____
Name of Church_____ Accountability person over you_____
Number of people in the community your church is located in_____
Where are you located?_____
How many families in your community were affected by the earthquake?
_____
Describe your community's needs:
_____
_____
_____
_____

What is your vision to re-develop your community? _____
_____
_____
_____
_____How can we be praying for you and your community?
_____
_____

Committee
You will need to form a local committee that connects to your AIM contact. On this committee should be 3 – 5 people of integrity and reputation from your community. They should be respected by others in the community - perhaps a teacher, a doctor, or an engineer.

Person #1. Name_____ Occupation_____
Person #2. Name_____ Occupation_____
Person #3. Name_____ Occupation_____
Person #4. Name_____ Occupation_____
Person #5. Name_____ Occupation_____

Please share anything more we might need to know on the other side of this paper.

DEPENDENCY IN MISSION PARTNERSHIPS

Principles for enabling the servants of God in hard places

By Daniel Rickett

The loudest objection to partnership with non-Western missions is the fear that it will create dependency. We seem to assume that it is better to leave our brothers and sisters in Christ alone than to run the risk of making them dependent. But as Chuck Bennett points out, to refuse to share our resources with overseas brethren because there have been abuses is "like outlawing marriage because we discover some husbands abuse their wives. The problem is real, but the proposed solution misses the point."(1)

The issue of dependency in mission relationships is widely recognized. What is often overlooked is that there are two kinds of dependency: healthy and unhealthy. If there is to be a productive partnership, it is crucial that we understand the difference between the two. Only then can we develop ways to use it constructively.

Dependency Defined

Dependency is the state of relying on someone or something. To be dependent is, first and foremost, to be reliant on another.

Reliance can actually be more important than being independent. The fact is that no one can go it alone. In many ways, every one of us depends on a wide variety of people and institutions. Pastors depend on parishioners, missionaries depend on donors, organizations depend on employees, universities depend on students.

Certainly it is possible to rely too heavily on someone or something. When medical patients become habituated to drugs we call it dependency. When people remain on government welfare for a lifetime we call it dependency. When an adult child remains too long with his parents we call it dependency. Yet when a missionary receives all of his or her support from a few churches, we *don't* call it dependency. When a mission agency relies exclusively on a single association of churches, we don't call that dependency either. Although every church and mission is sustained by multi-lateral dependencies, we don't think of them as being dependent.

So what makes a certain kind of dependency acceptable and another kind unacceptable? Why is it that a dependent child is legitimate but a dependent adult is not? The answer lies in the dependent's willingness and capacity to do his or her part—that is, to take responsibility and give something back. Although we are all dependent in countless ways, dependency goes over the line when people fail to take responsibility where they can.

Dependency in the Body of Christ

Perhaps the first thing to understand is where dependency fits into the Christian context. The biblical view of the Church is that it is one body made up of many parts (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). In this body, God distributes spiritual gifts for the building up the Church and putting Christ on display. The nature of the Church is such that as each part does its work, the entire body grows in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-16). Is it not outrageous for the eyes to tell the hands that they have no need of them? Or the feet to tell the ears they are of no use?

If Christians are to avoid dependency, what are we to do with the command to carry one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2)? What are we to say when we see our brother

in need and have the means to help (1 John 3:16-20)? And what are we to make of Paul's collection of funds from the churches of Asia Minor for the suffering church in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:1-3)?

Rather than steer Christians away from reliance on one another, the Bible seems to celebrate dependency in the body of Christ. Yet this is clearly *not* the way we normally think of dependency. The dependency implied by the image of the body is *complimentary* and *reciprocal*. One part of the body cannot deny another part without in some way denying itself. All the parts of the body are knit together in such a way that every part has something to give and something to receive. Perhaps this is why the New Testament authors so often remind us of our oneness in Christ. Christians are designed for each other as well as for Christ.

It is important to note that, as with all analogies, at some point the comparison of the human body with the spiritual body of Christ breaks down. The parts of the human body are obviously mutually dependent. But mutuality among Christians does not happen so automatically. It requires a conscious effort. Such dependency demands regard for the commands of Scripture and cooperation with the Holy Spirit. The declaration of the Bible that the body of Christ is one must be balanced with the demands found in the Bible. All of the instruction about how to do good and relate to one another as members of Christ's body are expected from and commanded of all believers. For example, believers are declared one in Christ, yet they are commanded to be like-minded, to love one another, and to work together with one heart and purpose (Romans 12: 4-8, Philippians 2: 1-2). In Christ there is no racial or cultural distinction, yet Christians are commanded to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace (1 Corinthians 12: 13, Ephesians 2: 14-16, 4:3). The Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts as He sees fit, yet believers are commanded to use their gifts for the common good (1 Corinthians 12: 1-11, 1 Peter 4:10-11). No part of the body of Christ can cease to be part of the whole, yet all believers are admonished to have equal concern for each other, to share in one another's sufferings and rejoice in one another's victories (1 Corinthians 12: 14-26).

Clearly, then, dependency in the body of Christ is not *passive* but very *active*. It demands that Christians take up their responsibilities in the body. Such commands as to share with one another (Romans 12:13), care for one another (Galatians 6:2), support one another's interests (Philippians 2:4), and serve one another (1 Peter 4:10) all require responsible action. The command to do good, especially to the family of believers, is given to those who receive as well as those who give (Galatians 6:10). No Christian—whether rich or poor, young or old, weak or strong—is exempt from taking responsibility. That's because responsibility makes reciprocity both possible and dependency beneficial.

Healthy Dependency

Taking our cues from the Bible, the kind of dependency expected from and commanded of Christians is characterized by reciprocity and responsibility. Thus, in a healthy relationship both partners recognize their responsibilities and work to fulfill them. Each enters the relationship with a clear picture of what each has to offer and what each stands to gain. Each maintains its independence and capacity to instruct, correct, and refuse the other. Each honors and upholds the unique and divine calling of the other. Each makes a distinctive and complementary contribution to the partnership. Each conducts itself in a manner that safeguards one another's integrity and honors Christ. Therefore, it is important in a partnership to not only give but to receive, to not only teach but to learn, and to not only lead but to follow. By contrast, the seeds of unhealthy dependency are planted when the only deal struck in a mission relationship is the one-way flow of resources, whether that be money or personnel.

Unhealthy Dependency

Unhealthy dependency occurs when reciprocity and responsibility are ignored, overruled, or undervalued. If the accent is on the exchange of money or personnel and not on the complementary contributions each partner makes, the importance of reciprocity is easily overlooked. If resources are shared more for the benefit of one partner than for the purpose of ministering more effectively to others, the receiving partner's responsibility is effectively sidelined. If one partner maintains control over the decision-making process, the other partner cannot exercise responsibility as a co-laborer. If one partner's contributions are valued more highly than the others', it is impossible to establish true reciprocity. In the end, if a partnership is not joining in a common purpose and sharing complementary resources, it cannot be reciprocal and it will not be responsible.

Five Sure Ways to Create Unhealthy Dependency

Several factors may coalesce into unhealthy dependency, but there are five starting points that almost guarantee it.

1. *Make an alliance with a lone ranger.*
   An independent ministry leader may be the next John Wesley, or he may be a very talented individual with a self-serving agenda. Unless you've known the individual for some time, it's difficult to discern real intentions. Bogus, questionable organizations that compete for mission dollars tend to by-pass local churches. If you're not working with a ministry that has a local board of directors or the equivalent, there's a chance you've been found by a fortune hunter.
2. *Send money directly to individuals.*
   Unless individuals are employees or contract laborers with whom you have a performance agreement and means of accountability, sending funds directly can put people in a precarious position. Individuals cannot vouch for themselves; they need others to verify their testimony. Even the Apostle Paul was not willing to convey funds without the involvement of trusted men from the contributing churches (1 Corinthians 16:3, 2 Corinthians 8:16-21). It takes a bona fide organization with a governing structure and accounting system to administer funds in an auditable and defensible manner.
3. *Finance pastors and local churches.*
   History has shown that foreign funding of pastors and churches has proven more often than not to hinder genuine indigenous growth. Foreign funding can easily stifle local initiative by creating the assumption that believers need only rely on distant benefactors rather than learn to give sacrificially. It can cause pastors to become preoccupied with raising foreign funds, and fail to be creative in maximizing local resources. Foreign funding of some pastors and not others creates jealousies, and frees them from accountability to the local Christian community. In the matter of funding pastors, the chances of creating unhealthy dependency are at their highest.
4. *Give resources based only on need.*
   A partnership that sets out to satisfy needs soon finds itself running a race with no end. That's because needs alone are insatiable. Giving based solely on need creates a pipeline of supply that in turn raises the expectation of future need satisfaction. Needs have to be defined and boundaries set so that you can actually see results. At a minimum, giving should be based on what will enhance
   - responsibility—each partner's ability to meet their obligations as Christians,
   - reciprocity—each partner's ability to make distinctive and complementary contributions, and
   - results—the ability to achieve specific ministry outcomes.

5. *Give resources based only on need.*
   Money is one form of power, and in international partnerships it has proven to be the most problematic. When one ministry relies solely on another for financial support, the balance of power leans heavily toward the funding source. This is a problem because unhealthy dependency thrives on the imbalance of power. The best antidote is to subsidize a strategic initiative or program rather than to fund the entire ministry.

There is a sixth way to create unhealthy dependency. It's not listed above because it teeters on the border between acceptable and unacceptable dependency. It's the hiring of local Christians to run Western programs. Unless you plan to establish a local branch of your church or mission, hiring local people can be the first step to unhealthy dependency. The reason is simple: *hiring local Christians is not partnership; it's employment*. There may be very good reasons to hire local people to administer programs of a foreign mission. But employment relationships should never be confused with partnership. When a Western agency hires local people, they assume all the responsibilities of an employer: fair and competitive wages, medical insurance, retirement benefits, direct management of performance, and compliance with local labor laws. Even then, Western employers have to cope with the potential of providing their employees with lifestyles far above their peers, making it possible for them to bypass local Christian authority, and creating jealousies locally and internationally.

Managing Dependency: A few Don'ts

If a healthy dependency is to be preserved, there are certain things partners in the work of the gospel should never do to each other. Here are seven taboos that must be observed:

1. *They don't define goals and methods unilaterally.*
   For Western partners especially this means don't assume you know what the task is and what the goals are. Don't first develop a plan, then merely invite non-Western partners to join in at a later stage. If you really want a partnership, ask your partners what God is inviting them to do, then build a plan together to achieve it.
2. *They don't base the relationship on a one-way flow of resources.*
   Complementarity, not assistance, lies at the heart of effective partnerships. *Assistance* is focused on meeting the needs and interests of one party. *Complementarity* concerns the accomplishment of mutual purposes and a shared vision, and includes each partner's needs and interests. A partnership moves beyond assistance to complementarity when each partner makes different but crucial contributions to a common goal.
3. *They don't allow money to become the most highly valued resource.*
   In the affluent West, where ministries rely on capital-intensive and technology-intensive strategies, making the claim that money will not be the driving force is fine in principle but difficult in practice. Unfortunately, this difficulty spills over into mission partnerships. We tend to put a premium on our own resources rather than on the resources of our non-Western counterparts. In most cases, non-Western partners may rely on Western partners for financial and technological resources, but Western partners are dependent on the human resources, linguistic skills, cultural insight, and relevant lifestyle of its non-Western partners. Who can estimate the value of such resources? If money becomes the driving force, the golden rule takes hold—the one with the gold rules. When that happens, reciprocity is broken and shared responsibility gives way to unbalanced control.
4. *They don't fund the full cost of a project without clear justification.*
   In the face of enormous economic inequities, there is inherent pressure on Western partners to be the "sugar daddy" of more "needy" partners. Favorable exchange rates and the relative access to money might make it easy to underwrite projects, but it doesn't make it right.

Healthy dependency flourishes on the foundation of shared responsibility. Funding decisions should be based as much on what fosters responsibility and reciprocity as on what might be accomplished. Matching grants, capital funds, one-time projects, and partial support are useful methods of shared responsibility.

5. *They don't interfere in the administration of the partner's organization.*
   It's one thing to give advise when you're asked for it, or even to admonish a partner in the case of serious misconduct. It's quite another thing to meddle in the internal affairs of the partner ministry. For example, Western agencies that provide support for workers tend to assume responsibility for deciding how much non-Western personnel get paid. But this is an area that should be clearly under the control of the local authority structure.
6. *They don't do for others what they can better do for themselves.*
   Doing so has two serious negative consequences. One, it retards the chances of growth and development. Organizations, like people, become strong and effective only when they make decisions, initiate action, and solve problems. Two, it lowers the ceiling on what you can accomplish. Mission partners must develop the right mix of contributions, that is, each of the complementary skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to accomplish the shared vision.
7. *They don't rely on "one-size-fits-all" policies.*
   Policies can make decisions easier, but they can also lead to bad decisions. For example, one mission agency tries to avoid unhealthy dependency by giving only very small amounts, such as 10% of the total need. That may be fine in some situations, but it is harmful in others. A better approach is to find out what is at stake, identify what is missing, and then to determine the best contribution you can make under the circumstances.

For some, dependency in mission relationships is regarded as a condition to be avoided rather than an essential quality. But for today's missions that are assessing the missing links in their ministry capacities and seeking collaboration with non-Western missions as peers, dependency is no longer a one-sided issue. It is the key to interdependence and mutuality.

The above article is adapted from *Building Strategic Relationships: A Practical Guide to Partnering with Non-Western Missions* by Daniel Rickett, Partners International, 2000.
To order the book in its entirety, call (800) 966-5515.