

Business Plan for West African Mercy Ministries

Introduction

Israel had all their ducks in a row when it came to worship. Or so it seemed. Isaiah 58 tells us that they sought God daily (vs. 2), delighted to know God's ways (vs. 2), sought his righteous judgments (vs. 2), delighted in drawing near to God (vs. 2), practiced fasting (vs. 3), humbled themselves before God (vs. 3) and even prostrated themselves before him (vs. 5). This sounds like a great recipe for worship that would be pleasing to God.

But God made it very clear that this was not the kind of worship he was seeking. So what was missing? According to verses 6 and 7 God intended worshippers *"to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke . . . to share [their] bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into [their] house; when [they] see the naked, to cover him. . ."* In other words, God desired worship that occurred in the context of extended mercy. In fact he delights in it so much that he promised to bless the evangelistic efforts of this kind of worshiper (verses 8 & 10).

West African Mercy Ministries (WAMM) was founded on this simple principle. It was started by people who desired to spend their lives worshiping God, who understand that this requires involvement in extending his mercy, and who believe evangelism will be a God-produced result of such worship. James reminds us that *"religion [i.e. worship] that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction"*. WAMM exists to extend God's mercy to those in need, specifically the orphaned and oppressed of West Africa.

Executive Summary

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Brief Organizational History

Have you ever heard anyone say bad things always come in threes? Some people swear by it while others realize it has more to do with expectations than reality. But it does serve as a useful illustration with two significant alterations. First, when talking about West African Mercy Ministries (WAMM) we are not discussing bad things, but good ones. Secondly, a quick look at WAMM's history shows that some good things instrumental in the formation of this ministry happened not in threes, but in twos:

Two Beginnings: Before West African Mercy Ministries was a thought in any human mind, two "unrelated" ministries began. In 1991, the McIntyre family became foster parents with the Evangelical Child and Family Agency of Milwaukee. This was in connection with a burden for the fatherless that God had placed in Debbie's heart. The second beginning occurred in 1995 when the Lord allowed Pastor Brian to be the church planting pastor for Kettle Moraine Community Church (KMCC) in North Prairie, WI. This experience provided hands on training later to be useful in the formulation of WAMM.

Two Burdens: In 1999 and 2000, KMCC participated in two short-term mission trips to West Africa, visiting with missionaries the church supported in Cote d' Ivoire. It was during these trips that the Lord placed a burden in Pastor Brian's heart for West Africa and West Africans. Over the next two years, God took Debbie's burden for orphaned children and Pastor Brian's burden for West Africa and melded them into one vision, which would ultimately become West African Mercy Ministries.

Two Set-backs: WAMM began in 2004 when a group of novices dared to believe that God had called them to start something new. But inexperience and naïveté would soon result in what seemed to be threats to the ministries continuance. The first of these involved inexperience in relation to WAMM's 501(c)(3) financial reporting to the IRS. The resulting interaction with the IRS caused the board to discontinue the reception of donations until these difficulties could be resolved. At the same time a partnership between WAMM and a church in Ghana was also proving troublesome. Naïvely WAMM had begun a joint effort with this Ghanaian congregation based on face-value information that was later discovered to be errant. Significant doctrinal differences became obvious which required WAMM's discontinuation of that partnership. Though these two setbacks provided an apparent threat God turned them into opportunities to enhance his ministry to West Africa

Two Partnerships: In 2006 and 2007 God used these "setbacks" to forge a partnership with Fellowship International Mission in keeping with Romans 8:28. Less than two years previous to this time, the first FIM missionary was sent to Ghana where he established FIM-Ghana as separate non-profit entity in West Africa. Shortly after this initial work God took Pastor John Kwao to heaven. But God was still at work as he took WAMM (who had leadership with no ministry) and FIM (who had FIM-Ghana, a ministry with no leadership) and partnered them together. This allowed WAMM to have its first presence in West Africa and allowed FIM continue its ministry as well.

Two Years: Thus, in 2007, the first two years of ministry began in Ghana for the McIntyre family and West African Mercy Ministries. Upon arrival in Accra, Pastor Brian assumed the responsibility of director of FIM-Ghana as an FIM-USA missionary working in partnership with WAMM. These first two years have proven to be a valuable time of acculturation and assessment highlighted by an opportunity to care for the first orphaned child, a little girl we refer to as Baby Karen.

To Be Continued: What is next for West African Mercy Ministries? Of course only God knows for sure but all indications seem to point toward the establishment of an infant foster home (see explanation on page 13). We covet your prayers and invite your involvement in extending the mercy of God to those in need in Ghana and throughout West Africa

Mission Statement

The mission of West African Mercy Ministries is *Glorifying God through Mercy-Based Worship!* When Moses asked God to show him his glory in Exodus 33, God promised to do so through the exercise of his grace and mercy (see *Program Goals* on pg. 8 for details). We believe that God was expressing that his “favorite” means of demonstrating his glory is by showing himself to be gracious and merciful. Therefore, since WAMM is first and foremost about God’s glory being recognized, it is reasonable that we would put a high priority on God’s mercy being seen.

But it is not God alone who benefits from demonstrated mercy. As was stated in the *Introduction* (see pg. 1), Isaiah 58 has much to say about mercy-based worship. The Israelites had the right form but were missing the very heart of what God was seeking from worshipers. Again, God intended worshippers “to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke . . . to share [their] bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into [their] house; when [they] see the naked, to cover him. . .”. For those involved in ministering mercy, God promises three benefits:

1. **A Benefit to His or Her Worship:** God makes it clear through Isaiah (chapter 58) that merciless worship is unacceptable to him when he states that he seeks worshipers involved in demonstrating his mercy to those in need. This is worship (religion) that James 1:27 insists is pure and undefiled before God. Mercy is the key to insuring that our worship pleases God.
2. **A Benefit to His or Her Witness:** Evangelism is not unimportant to WAMM and it is not excluded from our mission. In fact, the second benefit God promises to mercy-based worshipers is a promise of increased effectiveness in his or her evangelistic efforts. Jesus said that we are to let our evangelistic light shine by allowing our good works to be seen to God’s glory (Matthew 5:14-16), and Isaiah 58:8 & 10 shows us how. God promises our lights will shine as we demonstrate mercy. This then becomes our evangelistic strategy.
3. **A Benefit to His or Her Walk with Christ:** If Isaiah 58 is the foundational chapter for WAMM’s ministry, verse 9 is the cornerstone. God himself promises that those who involve themselves in extending his mercy will have the privilege of hearing him say to them, “*Here I am.*” In other words mercy ministers enjoy the assurance of God’s presence with them, and what could be more beneficial to one’s walk with Christ than to personally experience life in the presence of God?

Mercy-based worship provides a win/win situation. God is benefited as his mercy is extended because his glory is displayed. His worshipers benefit as he supernaturally blesses them because of their involvement in extending his mercy. This does not even mention the benefit to the orphaned and oppressed to whom the mercy is extended. Only God could design such a three-way symbiosis through which his children can seek first his kingdom, thereby storing up for themselves treasures in heaven.

Values and Operating Principles

Overriding Values of WAMM: What would motivate an individual or family to give up the comforts and conveniences of 21st century American life to move to West Africa or for such believers to take resources that could benefit their families and invest them in the lives of people they don't know? Something must be worth more to them than the things they are "sacrificing". WAMM consists of and is supported by people who share these values:

1. **We Value Extending God's Mercy for His Glory** not only because God is first and best of beings and is exclusively deserving so such Glory, but also because . . .
2. **We Value God-Pleasing Worship** promised to be true of those who minister mercy and
3. **We Value Effectiveness in Evangelism** also promised to those who minister mercy and
4. **We Value Intimacy with God** expressed to those who minister mercy.

Inclusiveness Values:

5. **We Value People** of all races, creeds, colors, medical conditions, levels of abilities or disabilities, etc. because they are image-bearers of the God who created us all.
6. **We Value Voluntary Responsibility.** Jesus could have said, "Why should I leave heaven for earth? I didn't sin, they did. It's not my problem." But he didn't. Instead, he voluntarily and unsolicitedly assumed the responsibility of investing his life in the lives of those who could not help themselves. And he asks his followers to do the same (e.g. the parable of the "Good Samaritan")
7. **We Value Cross-Cultural Ministry** in a world in which prejudice and bigotry remain too common and we desire for this kind of others-focused living to demonstrate the holiness of God through the lives of his children.
8. **We Value Indigenous Ministry.** We are standing on the threshold of a new wave of world missions. Most if not all of the countries of the world have now been reached with the gospel. This is a resource no previous generation has enjoyed. In the past the key question was, "What is the best way to get the gospel into unreached areas?" Today a new question faces us: "What is the best way to get the gospel to those who have still not heard in countries that have a gospel presence?" WAMM believes that it is through the utilization of national believers.
9. **We Value Networking** with other like-minded ministries in a spirit of cooperation rather than competition in keeping with Jesus insistence that his children will be identifiable by their love for one another.

Societal Value of WAMM: We believe that as WAMM is enabled and permitted to allow these nine values to motivate us in ministry to her orphaned and oppressed, West Africa will benefit as:

1. **Medical Services Are Provided to the Underserved.**
2. **Orphans and At-Risk Children Are Ensured a Loving Family Environment.**
3. **Churches Are Planted To Be Additional Conduits of Mercy.**

Vision of the Organization

What is it that makes WAMM distinct? How do we hope to be viewed by interested observers? What are the qualities by which we desire to be identified and understood? There are at least four distinctives that define what West African Mercy Ministries seeks to be:

1. **Our Focus:** It is our aim to establish and support mercy ministries throughout West Africa to the glory of God. Since God's favorite way to demonstrate his glory seems to be through expressions of his grace and mercy, it behooves us to give ourselves to being conduits of that mercy. But ministering mercy must always be but a means to a greater end—that being the glorifying of our Merciful God. (See goal #1 under *Program Goals*, pg. 8.)
2. **Our Foundation:** Every building needs a foundation upon which it is built, as does every ministry. WAMM is no exception. The four cornerstones which shape our foundation are the *Precepts* of God's Word, *Prayer*, the *People* he provides for our ministry and a *Pursuit of the Presence of God*. These four principles are what we believe God will use to direct and shape any ministry in which he allows us to be involved. (Appendix 5: *The Foundational Distinctives of West African Mercy Ministries*.)
3. **Our Fundraising:** Our strategy for fundraising is prayer. We believe prayer to be a dialogue between a heavenly Father and his earthly children. We are committed to talking to God about our financial needs, listening to him as we pray, and in offering opportunities for involvement in mercy ministry to others as God prompts us during these times of prayer (See *Fund Raising and Earned Revenue Goals*, pg. 11.)
4. **Our Field of Service:** The ministry of God's mercy to the orphaned and oppressed in West Africa is our field of service. While mercy ministry is a means to glorifying God, it is also a means of evangelism. We believe God's promise in Isaiah 58: 8 & 10 remains true today. As God's children get involved in mercy ministry, their evangelistic effectiveness increases. It is God who has tied the extension of his mercy very tightly together with effectiveness in evangelism.

Practically our field of service is in an ever changing environment. When WAMM first began its ministry in Ghana, orphan care was happening primarily through an institutional orphanage system. This has changed dramatically in recent years. Ghana's Department of Social Welfare is working very hard to establish a foster care system that will replace and provide better care than the traditional system.

WAMM applauds these changes and we believe that changing conditions in our ministry environment are in the hands of an omnipotent and sovereign God. He sets up governments and he operates through them. And God has established a government who desires to see children moved from institutional to family environments. WAMM not only plans to abide by such decisions, we intend to cooperate and assist their implementation through the establishment of foster homes, the establishment of a foster parent training program and the training of Ghanaian families to provide foster parents for this new system of orphan care as service to the Lord, to the Department of Social welfare and to the orphaned and at-risk children of Ghana.

GOALS

Program Goals

1. **To See God Glorified as He Extends His Mercy to Those In Need:** In Exodus 33 God had a conversation with Moses that gives one reason to believe that his “favorite” way to be glorified is through his grace and mercy. Moses asked God to show him his glory and God did not refuse. God told Moses, *“I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘The LORD.’ And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.”* It is true that he told Moses that he could not see a physical manifestation of his glory because that would kill him. But that did not keep God from allowing Moses to see his glory. He simply chose to make his glory visible through the display of his grace and mercy. It is for this reason that our top priority is to Glorify God through the extension of his mercy.
2. **To Be a Vehicle through Which God Extends His Mercy:** God jealously guards his glory. This is why God is adverse to allowing his glory to be shared by anyone else (Isaiah 42:8) and it is why he does not allow the activities of others to be accredited to him (hence our righteousness is like filthy rags). Paul seemed to understand this when he said, *“those who are in the flesh cannot please God”* (Romans 8:8). But our human condition does not preclude our involvement in ministry that pleases God. Paul also reminds us that if we have been crucified with Christ it is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us. It is this possibility of Christ living his life in us and through us that allow us to be vehicles through which God’ extends his mercy.
3. **To Give Others a Forum for Personal Involvement in Mercy Ministry:** Why is the existence of poverty part of God’s plan for this world? We know he could eradicate it at any time, yet he told Moses we would always have the poor with us (Deuteronomy 15:11) and Jesus told his disciples the same thing (Mark 14:7). Isaiah 58 gives us at least a partial answer to this question when it lists three benefits that God offers to his children as they are involved in alleviating poverty. God promises that as they involve themselves in such ministry their worship becomes pleasing to the him (verses 6-14), their evangelistic activity will have greater effectiveness (verses 8 & 10) and they will experience the personal presence of God himself (verse 9). God wants the poor to continue to exist so his children can be involved in extending his mercy to them so he, in turn, can be a blessing to both, allowing his glory to be seen. And West African Mercy Ministries wants to give every believer an opportunity to enjoy these blessings God promises those who extend his mercy.

GOALS

Personnel Goals

1. **To Be People Who Know God Experientially:** What does it mean to know God? It is an important question to answer. Paul said in Philippians 3 that he had turned his back on everything else in life to pursue this one goal: *"That I may know him . . ."*. Because this is such an important issue, the Bible does not leave us in the dark as to how we can pursue this kind of experiential knowledge of God. Hundreds of years earlier, Jeremiah gave us a very clear path to Paul's destination. He wrote, *"He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Is not this to know me? declares the LORD"* (Jeremiah 22:16). Paul gives us our goal: to know God (experientially), and Jeremiah tells us how to accomplish that goal: minister mercy to the poor and needy. What could be simpler?
2. **To Be People Who Love God Actively:** When Jesus summarized the law and the prophets into two great commands in Matthew 22:36-40, he simplified the entire teaching of the Old Testament for his followers. Rather than trying to remember all the jots and tittles of the law and prophets, Jesus' followers simply had to remember two things: Love God and Love People. Just a few chapters later, he makes it even simpler. In Matthew 25 :31-46, when Jesus said, *"as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me"*, he showed how these two can be combined into one. Jesus insisted that as we actively express love to our "brothers" we are actually expressing love to God. In other words, we love God by loving people. Herein lies, not only our goal (Actively Loving God), but also the means of accomplishing that goal (Loving People).
3. **To Be People Who Worship God Purely:** As was stated earlier, West African Mercy Ministries consists of those who want to spend their lives worshiping God. This is why Isaiah 58 and James 1:27 have always been such important passages of Scripture to this ministry. God tells us that pure and unadulterated worship is *"to visit orphans and widows in their affliction"*. He does not say pure worship simply involves or includes such extensions of mercy, He insists that it is in the act of mercy ministry that we are truly worshiping God. Mercy ministry then, becomes our means of accomplishing our goal of being pure worshipers of God.

GOALS

Public Relations and Promotional Goals

1. **To Be Eyewitnesses to What God Is Doing to His Glory:** We want to see first-hand what only God can do through mercy ministry. We want to be able to say with the apostle John, *“that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you”* (1 John 1:3). Jesus didn’t call his followers to be theologians but to be witnesses (Acts 1:8). This removes all stress from evangelism. In court it is not a witness’s job to convince or to judge or to sentence. His only job is to truthfully tell what he has seen. That is our goal and it is our prayer: *“God, please let us see you at work so we can share with others what you are doing for your glory”*
2. **To Testify to What God Is Doing to His Glory:** The story of the blind man in John 9 is a tremendous reminder to us of our responsibility as God’s witnesses. Like David of old, this man did not *“... occupy [himself] with things too great and too marvelous for [him]”* (Psalm 131:1), but simply shared what he knew to be true. After Jesus gave this man his sight, the Pharisees approached him demanding to know what this man thought of Jesus. But this attempt at intimidation did not seem to fluster him at all. He simply responded, *“Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”* God has not called us to settle the theological controversies that have raged for centuries. It is our goal to simply share with others what God allows us to see him do.
3. **To Let God Promote West African Mercy Ministries as We Glorify Him:** Why was Moses not allowed to enter the Promised Land? God said it was because Moses *“did not believe in [him], to uphold [him] as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel”* (Numbers 20:12). God’s holiness is the “otherness” of God, his uniqueness, his “peerlessness”. Moses let down his guard concerning the holy character of God when he asked the Israelites, *“... shall we bring water for you out of this rock?”* (verse 10). Moses carelessly encroached into the forbidden territory of God’s glory, accepting partial responsibility for what God alone had done. As a result—no entrance into the Promised Land. West African Mercy Ministries desperately wants to avoid this mistake. This is why we have purposed to use our “promotional” opportunities to highlight what God is doing and allow him to concern himself with providing whatever water from the rock that we might need. It is our goal to heed this advice by allowing God to promote what we are doing as we promote what he is doing. (See also the first two *Fund Raising and Earned Revenues Goals* on pg. 10.)

GOALS

Fund Raising and Earned Revenue Goals

Fund Raising Goals Concerning Our Ministries:

1. **To Bring the Needs of the Ministries to God Alone:** In the arena of fundraising, prayer glorifies God as we acknowledge our need and his ability to supply that need. We desire to go well beyond making prayer part of our fundraising strategy; West African Mercy Ministries has adopted prayer to be our entire fundraising strategy.
2. **To Bring Opportunities for Involvement to Others in Response to God's Prompting during Times of Prayer:** Our commitment to prayer does not preclude us from taking action in raising finances. Because we view prayer as a dialogue between a father and his children, we expect God to speak to us. As he does, we anticipate that he will prompt our minds with things for us to do, certain people or organizations for us to contact and for him to open doors of opportunity for us to invite more of his children to become involved in extending his mercy. When this happens it is our goal to respond obediently. It is our prayer that we may be useful to God as a means of including anyone he chooses in mercy-based worship.
3. **To Praise God for His Provision:** It is easy in fundraising to delight in the provision rather than the provider or to deflect the glory from God as the provider to the donors through whom he provides. We are committed to praising our God for the provisions he brings and to quickly correct any misconceptions concerning where the glory belongs.
4. **To Remain Above Reproach in All Fundraising Activities:** We strive to refrain from any questionable practices in fundraising. Therefore West African Mercy Ministries pledges to accept funding only in keeping with the laws of the countries and localities in which the funds are provided. WAMM does reserve the right to use any funds given to this organization at the discretion of the board of directors but will, whenever possible and practicable, use them for the purpose they were given (see *E. Financial Management Goals* below).

Fund Raising Goals Concerning Our Ministers:

5. **To Honor God's Sovereignty through Allowed Flexibility:** The raising of personal support is the responsibility of each of the missionaries associated with WAMM. We encourage each individual to rely on God alone through prayer for their support. As such it is our goal to allow for flexibility in God's provision in deference to his sovereignty. We expect to see him uniquely prompt of and provide for each individual or family he adds to the WAMM family.
6. **To Practice the Body Life Principles of Scripture:** We acknowledge that God has purposefully gifted every believer uniquely and incompletely (no one believer has all the spiritual gifts). It is therefore necessary for believers to rely on one another's giftedness in areas in which they have not been so gifted. This includes the arena of fundraising. While each missionary is ultimately responsible for his own support, we encourage a voluntary sharing of one another's burdens as a means of demonstrating God's glory as can be seen through the functioning of his body.

GOALS

Financial Management Goals

1. **To Be Prompt in Our Disbursement of Finances:** Our goal concerning the disbursement of finances is a simple one—pay what we owe on time. We believe this is one of the simplest things we can do to bring glory to the God who has commanded us to *“owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law”* (Romans 13:8).
2. **To Be Proper in Our Disbursement of Finances:** West African Mercy Ministries pledges to use the funds it is given for the purpose they were given as best we can. In the case where a need ceases to exist either because it is met or because time or other circumstances prevent it from being fulfilled, one of two things will occur: 1) We will try to contact the donor to ascertain whether they want WAMM to return the money or use it for other purposes, or 2) when that is not possible, surplus money will be transferred to the general fund of this mission and will be used to further its ongoing ministries at the discretion of the board of directors. In this way we hope to meet our goal of remaining above reproach.
3. **To Be Patient in Our Disbursement of Finances:** We are passionate about operating debt-free (Roman’s 13:8). We believe in God’s sovereign control over all we do. Operating debt-free is one way we can honor that sovereignty by allowing God to accomplish what he desires in his time and is a means of demonstrating that we are satisfied with God’s purposes and plans. We believe that one of the ways God desires to direct this ministry is through the resources he provides, including the timing of such provision.

GOALS

Board Governance Goals

1. **To Seek God's Direction in His Word:** A familiar verse of scripture reminds us that [God's] *word is a lamp to [our] feet and a light to [our] path*" (Psalm 119:105). Because we long for this ministry to be for God's glory, we are committed to being directed by him. The first place that we can seek such direction is in the book given to us by he who has given us everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). It is therefore our first goal as a board responsible for decision making for this WAMM is to seek God' direction in the commands and principles of his word, the Bible.
2. **To Seek God's Direction through Prayer:** As was stated under *Fund Raising and Earned Revenue Goals* (pg. 11), we believe prayer to be a dialogue between a father and his children, not a monologue between a petitioner and a benefactor. In other words we believe that prayer involves talking and listening to God. David reminds us of the importance of being still so that we can know that God is God. We believe that as we give God opportunity o speak to us in prayer, he will prompt our hearts to action. And if we truly believe that God is God, we will respond quickly and expectantly to his promptings. This is our second goal in the arena of governance.
3. **To Seek God's Direction through Unity:** In John 17 Jesus prayed for unity among his followers and he tied it to two very powerful things. First, he said that observable unity will prove that Jesus truly was sent from God (vs. 21). Secondly he says that he passes on to us the glory God gave to him so we may experience the same kind of unity he enjoys with God (vs. 22). We desire to manifest such unity in our decision making within WAMM; the same kind of unity that the apostles experienced in Acts 15. Though not for profit corporations are ultimately governed according to *Robert's Rules of Order*, it is our desire to use this only as a last resort. (Israel's example at Kadesh Barnea stands as a sober reminder of what can happen when democratic governance is relied upon too heavily.) It is our goal to demonstrate our trust in God's sovereignty and omnipotence as well as our love for our fellow board members by patiently waiting until God brings us to one mind in decision making.
4. **To Seek God's Direction through Honoring the Governments He Establishes:** *"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment"* (Romans 13:1-2). We believe submission to God is an essential attitude for those seeking to glorify him. It is unavoidable, then, that we submit ourselves to the laws and governing authorities in the countries in which we operate. It is our goal, then to remain informed and to operate in keeping with the laws and policies pertinent to our ministries.

PROGRAMS

Infant Foster Home

God has a heart for orphans. *"Father of the fatherless . . . is God in his holy habitation"* (Psalm 68:5). Since sub-Saharan Africa is *"home to over 48 million orphans"* (UNICEF report Aug., 2006), it must be an area of the world for which God has great concern. West African Mercy Ministries was established as a conduit through which he can extend his mercy to children in need. Our initial planned venture into the arena of orphan care is through the development of an Infant Foster Home designed to provide Ghana's Department of Social Welfare with the following:

1. **A Receiving Home:** Children can come into care at any time, for any reason, and with any number of physical and emotional needs. We hope to be a facility that the Department of Social Welfare can use as a short-term housing option for emergencies in which immediate acceptance of children is necessary. We hope to provide initial basic care, and to assess and then begin to address any particular needs they present.
2. **A Hospice Home:** Ghana has a great need for facilities that will take very ill—often terminally ill—children into care. WAMM desires to provide a home for such infants and toddlers believing that even these children should experience the love of Christ as long as their little lives on earth may last.
3. **A Placement Home:** As Ghana's Department of Social Welfare moves away from institutional orphanages to a foster care/adoption system of caring for orphaned and at risk children, the need will exist for placement homes. These facilities will provide the child welfare system with short-term housing for children while their case studies are being done and their permanent placement is being assessed. We hope to fit into this system by providing such a transition for children needing loving families as they become part of new families or while their existing families are being prepared for the child's/children's return.

Because we applaud Ghana's decision to move away from traditional institutional care into a family-based foster care system, our future plans include the development and establishment of a foster care ministry. We desire to provide training and resources so that Ghanaian couples can involve themselves in the extension of God's mercy to children in need. It is our hope to partner these foster families with others interested in extending mercy to children but who either do not live in Ghana or cannot be involved in a full-time capacity themselves. This partnership would involve support (including financial assistance) to those that become foster parents.

PROGRAMS

Medical Outreach Ministry

Why was Jesus so interested in being seen as the Great Physician? Why did he think it worth his time to heal the sick, give sight to the blind and make the lame to walk? We believe that Jesus understood that meeting physical needs opened the door to addressing people's spiritual needs. Why does West African Mercy Ministries involve itself in medical ministry? Because *Meeting Medical Needs for the Great Physician* is one way we can follow Jesus Christ. He met physical needs with spiritual needs in sight. Medical Outreach is a prayerful attempt to emulate this strategy for truly helping people.

Many rural Ghanaians do not have access to basic medical services due either to location or lack of resources. So when someone comes along offering free vaccinations that help to keep their children healthy, this is good news. West African Mercy Ministries loves to bring good news. WAMM desires to support medical ministries that work in cooperation with the Department of Social Welfare and Medical services of Ghana to provide children and their families with basic medical services.

Medical services can make earthly life better. But the gospel insures that eternal life is available. WAMM supported Medical Outreach is about providing Eternal Good News through the gospel as we provide earthly good news with a syringe.

PROGRAMS

Church Planting

The third area of ministry in which West African Mercy Ministries' desires to be involved in Ghana is church planting. We believe the church exists for three distinctly biblical purposes all linked inseparably to mercy ministry:

1. **To Be Worshipers of God:** This fact is so well accepted that almost every church refers to their Sunday morning time for corporate gathering as a worship service. As has been stated repeatedly, pure and undefiled (James 1:27), God-pleasing (Isaiah 58) worship is tied very closely to the extension of God's mercy. Formally, Israel had it right, yet God said that their merciless worship was not what he was seeking (Isaiah 58). WAMM believes that the same holds true today. If we are to plant churches that are made up of true worshipers of God mercy ministry must be an integral part of those churches' ministries.
2. **To Be Witnesses for God:** Very few would argue with the fact evangelism should be an undeniable part of any church's mission. West African Mercy Ministries certainly holds this to be true. As Jesus was leaving earth to return to heaven he told his disciples, "... *you will be my witnesses*..." (Acts 1:8). Interestingly, he did not say you must be, but simply stated that you will be my witnesses. It is as if he was saying, there is no plan B—you are it! But God does not leave us unassisted. Isaiah 58:8 and 10 remind us that as we involve ourselves in ministering God's mercy, he will make our evangelism effective. WAMM desires to support planting churches who maintain mercy ministry as an integral part of their evangelism program.
3. **To Produce Worshipers of God:** Evangelism is the production of disciples. What has become known as the great commission bears this out clearly. Jesus told his disciples, "*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations*" (Matthew 28:19). In saying this, Jesus indicates that the end product of evangelism is a disciple, a follower of him. Since Jesus was the prototypical worshiper of God during his time on earth, it only makes sense that those who follow him, who walk the same way he walked, will also be worshipers of God. West African Mercy Ministries believes this is evangelism.

In addition to the inseparability of worship and mercy, we believe church planting is the most effective way to insure the longevity of the extension of God's mercy to the orphaned and oppressed of Ghana. It is through the establishment of mercy centers throughout the nation, mercy centers that are lead and operated by Ghanaians in service to other Ghanaians, that we see hope for sustainable ministry. West African Mercy Ministries believes that churches planted intentionally for the meeting of the needs of others will best serve as such centers of mercy.

ADMINISTRATION

Personnel

One of the cornerstones of the foundation of this mission is the people God chooses through which to carry out his ministry. (See Appendix 5: *The Foundational Distinctives of West African Mercy Ministries*). We believe that God's sovereignty extends to the people he chooses to send us. We want to give God a free hand to direct this mission. We believe it to be more prudent to allow God to show us what programs and ministries he desires through the personnel he provides than to devise a plan for ministry and then ask God to fill the personnel needs of that program. We believe those people will fall into one of three categories

1. **Missionary Staff:** West African Mercy Ministries expects that some of the people God will provide to this ministry will be missionary staff, people who have raised support for their involvement through the donations of individuals and organizations. Their time will be donated to WAMM-supported ministries, with no expectation of compensation from that ministry. Presumably many of these will be expatriates though our commitment to indigenous ministry does not necessitate such. We plan that they will primarily be involved in the development of the ministry and will serve as models and mentors in our training of subsequent staff.
2. **Paid Staff:** West African Mercy Ministries expects that God will also provide staff members that need to be compensated for their services. Some of these may be indigenous directorial staff and others that carry on the day to day duties of the various ministry areas. The mission will assume the responsibility for raising the funds for the salaries of these people.
3. **Volunteer Staff:** Finally West African Mercy Ministries expects that God will provide staff members that serve voluntarily. Since we are committed to promoting mercy-based worship, we anticipate that God may bring to us people who, for various reasons, require no compensation for their ministry efforts. These people may include but are not limited to:
 - Retirees/Pensioners
 - Short-term Missionaries and Mission's Teams
 - College Students
 - Interns

Within these three classifications of personnel we are praying for God to provide the following:

1. **Directorial Staff:** These people may be expatriate or indigenous personnel. The directorial staff will work with the Mission Director and the appropriate board of directors to provide oversight and direction to the ministries under their care including the oversight of the operational staff.
2. **Operational Staff:** Again, these people may be expatriate or indigenous personnel. They will be those responsible for the day-to-day operations of the ministries of WAMM. We anticipate they will include church planters, child-care providers, nurses and other medical personnel, bookkeepers, secretaries, etc. They will be responsible for the work defined for them in a clearly defined job description by a member of the Directorial Staff to which they will be accountable.

For more information including our goals for personnel, please see the section entitled *Personnel Goals* on page 8 of this document.

ADMINISTRATION

Public Relations and Marketing

West African Mercy Ministries' marketing strategy may best be summed up in the following statement:

Let God Promote Us as We Promote Him!

The *Public Relations and Promotional Goals* (page 9) summarize the public relations and marketing strategy of this mission. Stated simply, 1) we desire to watch God do amazing things through the extension of his mercy, 2) to make much of what God is doing and 3) to leave up to God how much he desires to make of this ministry. It is the second part of this statement that most concerns what is commonly called marketing but what we prefer to call testifying. We have a message to communicate and that involves telling people what God has done. We want to be able to say with the Apostle John, "that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you" (1 John 1:3).

We desire to share what we see God accomplish through mercy ministry with anyone and everyone who will listen. It is our prayer that we can leave the promoting of the ministry in God's hand so that we can sincerely take any opportunity God brings our way to invite others to involve themselves in ministering God's mercy for his glory and for their benefit (see *Mission Statement*, page 4). We intend to do our solicitation before God so we can use public and private "marketing" opportunities to serve those to whom God would have us speak.

Strategically West African Mercy Ministries desires to use at least the following five means to encourage the involvement of his children in the extension of his mercy:

1. ***Here I Am!*** is a quarterly newsletter already in use to let people see what God is doing through the extension of his mercy in Ghana.
2. ***Mercy, Me?*** is a personal presentation resource we intend to develop to be used by members of the WAMM family in one-on-one conversations with interested individuals.
3. A **DVD Presentation** is also being planned that would be used as an invitation for involvement in mercy ministry either as an introduction or as a stand alone presentation.
4. **Public Speaking Engagements** are a fourth means we hope to use to offer interested individuals and churches an opportunity to become actively involved in mercy ministry.
5. **Short-Term Mission Trips** are perhaps the most effective means of helping people see what God is doing through the extension of his mercy to those in need. Nothing seems to work better than to bring people from other parts of the world to Ghana so they can be eyewitnesses to God's power at work through his compassion for the orphaned and oppressed.

ADMINISTRATION

Financial and Material Resource Development

In pursuit of our fundraising goals found on page 10 under the heading of *“Fund Raising and Earned Revenue Goals”*, West African Mercy Ministries hopes to implement the following strategies in its resource development efforts:

1. **Fundraising Strategy #1: Prayer:** The Bible keeps things simple, *“You do not have, because you do not ask”* (James 4:2). We are committed to talking to God about our financial needs, thereby removing this as a reason for a lack of funding. We desire to go well beyond making prayer part of our fundraising strategy by adopting it as our fundraising strategy (See Appendix # 5: *The Foundational Distinctives of West African Mercy Ministries*).
2. **Fundraising Strategy #2: Prompt Obedience:** Since we believe prayer to be two-way communication, we expect God to prompt our minds with opportunities he desires for us to pursue (See *Fund Raising and Earned Revenue Goals*, pg. 11). We desire to be immediately and joyfully obedient to such responses to our prayer.
3. **Fundraising Strategy #3: Praise:** God is a Jealous God (Exodus 20:5; Isaiah 42:8) who 1) expects to be credited with (praised for) things that he accomplishes and who 2) has no interest in being credited with what he has not done. We believe that as we allow his provision to be seen and are quick to praise him for it, he will be pleased to bless this ministry with continued provision.
4. **Fundraising Strategy #4: Purity:** WAMM seeks to always be in a position in which God is pleased to bless this ministry, Included in our strategy toward this end is to refrain from any questionable practices in fundraising, and to use donated funds, whenever possible, for the designated purpose for which they were given.
5. **Fundraising Strategy #5: Partnership:** When it comes to caring for orphans, West African Mercy Ministries desires:

To Partner with African Churches
To Mobilize African Believers
To Care for African Orphans
As a Solution to an African Problem (Crisis)
To the Glory of our Mutual God.

We believe that the Great Commission is a call from God to his children around the world to reach the lost of the world. Therefore, the resources God has given to his church should be viewed from a world-wide rather than local perspective. As believers in Jesus Christ, Paul reminds us that our citizenship has changed. We are now citizens of heaven who have been sent as ambassadors of Jesus Christ to earth. And the resources that God has given to the church, though largely entrusted to believers in America, have been given to his church to fulfill this world-wide commission. WAMM desires to be a conduit through which American believers and churches can be actively involved in mercy ministry in Ghana and throughout West Africa. It is our hope that WAMM’s partnering relationships can become a model that helps to promote a more world-wide view of Jesus great commission to his church.

ADMINISTRATION

Financial Management

West African Mercy Ministries is governed by a Board of Directors. One of those directors serves as the treasurer for the mission. Initially it is his or her responsibility to receive and deposit all funds in the depository institution or institutions selected by the Board of Directors. These funds can be withdrawn only by checks or orders executed in the name of the mission and signed by two members of the Board of Directors. The treasurer is responsible to account for all receipts, disbursements and balances on hand and to prepare reports of the financial activity of the mission when and as requested by the Board of Directors. The treasurer is expected to insure that WAMM complies with all laws governing 501(3)(c) corporations in the United States as well as all policies and procedures adopted by this mission.

In addition to the policies and procedures listed as goals in the *Financial and Earned Revenue Goals* (pg. 10) and *Financial Management Goals* (pg. 11), the following three practices will be maintained by FIM-Ghana:

1. **Financial Activity:** All checks, drafts, bills of exchange, and similar orders for the payment of money of West African Mercy Ministries shall be the responsibility of the board of directors and shall require endorsement as the board decides. All notes, bonds, deeds, mortgages, conveyances, and other written contracts, agreements and instruments to which the Corporation shall be a party, as well as all assignments or endorsements of stock certificates, registered bonds, or other securities owned by the Corporation must be signed by the president and another member of the Board of Directors.
2. **Loans:** No funded indebtedness shall be contracted on behalf of the Corporation and no evidence of such indebtedness shall be issued in its name.
3. **Deposits:** All funds of West African Mercy Ministries, not otherwise employed, or subject to immediate distribution, shall be deposited in the missions name in such banks, savings and loan associations, trust companies or other depositories as the Board of Directors may select.

As was stated above, the responsibility for financial management initially rests in the hands of the treasurer of the Board of Directors. As the ministry continues to develop it is desirable that each ministry area will have bookkeeping personnel. One of these individuals will be appointed to work with the treasurer, forming a financial management team. Along with normal accounting responsibilities, this team will examine the audited accounts of all ministries supported by West African Mercy Ministries. In addition this team will provide in-house auditing of the accounts of the accounts of West African Mercy Ministries. This in-house auditing will be in addition to the once annual checking of all the accounts of the ministry from an outside auditor.

ADMINISTRATION

Facilities and Other Assets

It is our goal to keep overhead expenses as low as possible in order to maximize the percentage of donated resources reaching those in need. For the foreseeable future, West African Mercy Ministries intends to operate out of donated office space, allowing capital funds to be spent where the ministry is happening. For the purposes of this business plan West African Mercy Ministries has adopted this list of capital “needs” from our partnering organization in Ghana. We recognize that these are needs only from a human perspective and reserve for God the right to redefine what we see as needs at any time. Having said that, we are praying for God to provide the facilities and the necessary furnishings that will accommodate the following ministry needs:

1. **Infant Foster Home** to serve as a Receiving Home, a Placement Home and as a Hospice Care Facility for seriously/terminally ill children between the ages of birth through 2 years.
2. **Model Foster Home** to serve as a receiving and placement home for older children and for the hands-on training of foster parents.
3. **Foster Parent Training Facility** for the formal education training of foster parents.
4. **Medical Clinic** to serve the children in our care as well as to serve as an office for the Medical Outreach Ministry
5. **Office Space for FIM-Ghana**, Children’s Services and Church Planting
6. **Library Space** for ministry resources
7. **Guest Housing** to be used to accommodate short-term mission teams and other visitors to FIM-Ghana and partnering ministries
8. **Transportation:**
 - a. A 15 passenger van for the transportation of children to medical facilities or recreational activities
 - b. A four-wheel drive vehicle for Medical Ministry use
 - c. A vehicle for use by the Church Planting Director

Our strategy for achieving these facility and transportation needs is a simple one: pray as we go and pay as we go. As we have stated throughout this document, prayer is our funding strategy and debt is not an option this ministry intends to exercise. And so we will wait on the Lord to provide in his time and in his way for the needs we are seeking from him.

Not only do facilities and other assets aid in ministry to those in need, but they also provide additional ministry opportunities. Many people have gifts and abilities in areas that enable them to invest their time and skills by assisting with the maintenance, renovation and upgrading of ministry facilities and vehicles. WAMM intends to invite and assist teams of people who want to use technical or mechanical abilities as a means of personal involvement in ministering God’s mercy in Ghana and throughout West Africa.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

West African Mercy Ministries (WAMM) is an independent 501(c)(3) corporation registered in the state of Wisconsin (September, 2004) under the IRS codes pertaining to such non-profit corporations. Accordingly, it is governed by a Board of Directors whose primary role is to provide direction and oversight to this mission. As covered in the *Board Governance Goals* (page 12) this direction is to come through the study of Scripture, prayer, the pursuit of unanimity and acknowledgement of and adherence to federal and state laws and policies governing 501(c)(3) corporations. In addition, the board is to abide by the policies established by this ministry for its organization and operation.

In addition to this general oversight, the Board of Directors is expected to model and promote personal involvement in mercy ministry through the unique gifts that each member has. This includes assisting in promoting and fund-raising in accordance with their individual skills and abilities given them by the Lord as members of the body of Christ. Further, the board is charged with the responsibility of establishing, maintaining and revising as necessary the policies and procedures for the ministry of WAMM.

The Current Board of Directors of West African Mercy Ministries is made up of the following members.

Chairman/President/Treasurer: Mr. James Ferwerda, 953 Meadowview Lane, Mukwonago, WI 53149

Vice Chairman/President: Mr. Thomas Gruennert, W299 S8436 Hwy 83, Mukwonago, WI 53149

Secretary: Miss Mollie Gruennert, W299 S8436 Hwy 83, Mukwonago, WI 53149

Board Member: Mr. Brian Hoepfner, N5 W29090 Venture Hill Rd., Waukesha, WI 53188

Board Member: Mrs. Martha Hoepfner, N5 W29090 Venture Hill Rd., Waukesha, WI 53188

Board Member: Mr. Stuart Hunter, 1617 Stardust Dr., Waukesha, WI 53186

Board Member/Director: Rev. Brian McIntyre, H. No. 11 Orange Loop, Christian Center, East Legon, Madina DTD 173, Accra, Ghana, West Africa

Additional members can be nominated and elected by the Board of Directors. It is suggested that such nominees should consist of people who have proven themselves to have a heart for the extension of God's Mercy through past involvement in mercy ministry. Training of board members shall be ongoing through communication during and outside board meeting times. The responsibility for necessary training lies in the hands of the Director and the Chairman of the Board.

Appendix #1: Projected Budget

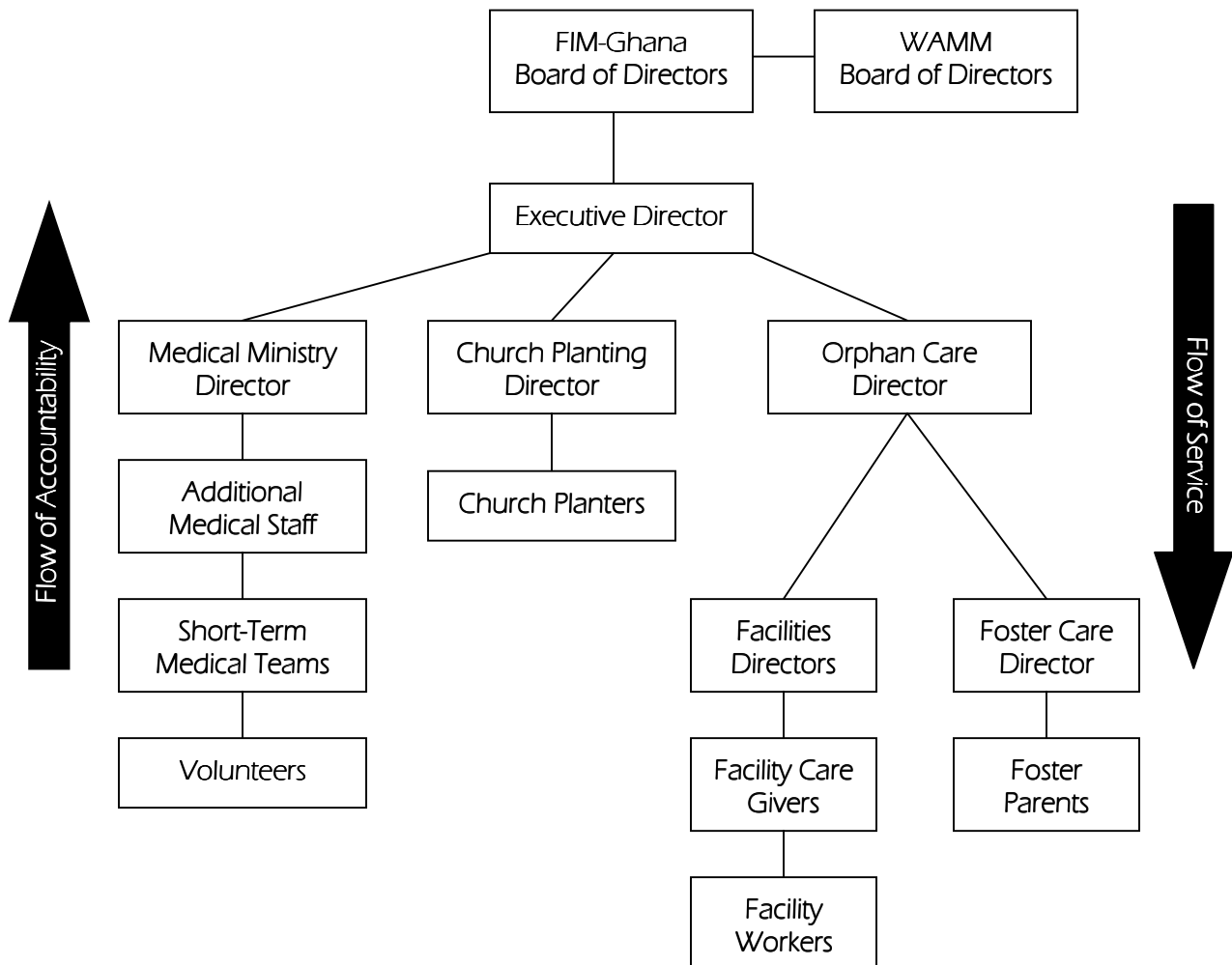
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Appendix # 2: Organizational Chart of the WAMM/FIM-Ghana Partnership

West African Mercy Ministries believes in the value of working through people indigenous to the recipient culture (see Values on page 5). Initially this belief is bringing WAMM into a partnering relationship with FIM-Ghana, an independently and indigenously run NGO (Not for Profit Corporation) in Ghana. The manner in which we intend to operate is illustrated in the organizational chart below.

WAMM appreciates FIM-Ghana's recognition of servant leadership. Mark 10:45 reminds us that Jesus "came not to be served but to serve" and FIM-Ghana is committed to emulating that style of leadership. The black arrows below show our mutual belief that it is the responsibility of leadership to serve those under them organizationally, helping them to succeed as best they can through enabling, equipping, and encouragement.

Though this was Jesus style of leadership, it did not preclude him from holding those under his care accountable for the tasks he gave them. Consequently, WAMM and FIM-Ghana believe that those under the care of a particular leader owe to that leader the respect due his office as well as a sense of submission and accountability to the decisions that are made above them on the organizational chart. As we focus on both the flow of accountability and the flow of service, we believe we can best follow the example of the ultimate leader, the Lord Jesus Christ.



Appendix #3: Outline of Programs of the WAMM/FIM-Ghana Partnership

- I. **Church Planting** (Creating Centers of Mercy Ministry)
 - A. Recruitment of Church Planting Pastors
 - B. Training of Church Planting Recruits
 - C. Church to Church Partnership
- II. **Medical Outreach Ministry**
 - A. Provision of Basic Medical Services in Cooperation with Medical Services of Ghana
 - B. Evangelism within Community Being Served
 - C. Preliminary Bible Study Established as Seed for Church Plant
- III. **Children's Services**
 - A. Residential Services
 - 1. Infant Foster Home
 - a. Placement Home
 - b. Receiving Home
 - c. Hospice Care Facility
 - 2. Intake Home for Older Children (Serving as a Receiving and Placement Facility)
 - 3. Model Foster Home (To Use in Hands On Training of Foster Parent Training Program)
 - B. Foster Care Services
 - 1. Foster Parent Training
 - 2. Foster Home Sponsorship Program

Appendix # 4: The Foundational Distinctives of West African Mercy Ministries

What is it that makes West African Mercy Ministries distinct? How do we hope to be viewed by interested observers? What are the qualities by which we desire to be identified and understood? Since its formulation in 2004, West African Mercy Ministries has desired to be built upon four cornerstone commitments that would not only shape our foundation but provide structure for whatever God desired to build upon that foundation. WAMM continues to desire that the following commitments identify us today:

- I. **A COMMITMENT TO GOD'S PRECEPTS**—Foundational to any attempt to glorify God are the precepts found in His Word. This is in keeping with the very definition of the English word “precept” which finds its origin in a compound Latin word meaning “take before”. Precepts, then, are by definition foundational truths that precede everything else—they are the things that we establish first. And this is good and proper since God is glorified in and through His Word.
 - A. **Doctrine**—If we hope to glorify God effectively it is necessary for us to have a correct understanding of how glorious he is. Jesus said that it is through the Scriptures that we get this understanding (John 5:39). West African Mercy Ministries strives to maintain a proper understanding of God as we hold to a doctrinal statement we believe to be true to the Word of God. It will serve as a framework for what we believe and what we teach in all areas of ministry we establish and support. In this way we hope to reflect a proper image of who God is throughout this mission.
 - B. **Doing**—But our goal goes beyond just believing the right things. As a mission we desire to glorify God as best we can in all we do. This means we need to let what we know be seen by those around us. What better way is there for that to happen than through putting what we believe into practice? If we do not, James 1:22 warns us that we are self-deceived, because we don't really believe what we claim. Another word for that is hypocrisy, perhaps one of the greatest detriments to God's glory being observed.
 - C. **Direction**—Finally, it is through God's Word that we receive direction. Psalm 119:105 promises that God's word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our paths. As we strive to glorify God as best we can in all we do, it behooves us to walk how and where God would have us walk. The Bible calls that walking carefully (circumspectly in the KJV), not as fools but as those that are wise (Eph. 5:15), and it promises the necessary wisdom to those who keep God's precepts (Psalm 119:99-100). May God glorify himself through those involved in WAMM as he did through Peter and John making it undeniable that we have been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).
- II. **A COMMITMENT TO PRAYER**—What does it mean to glorify God? As his children we do not make God glorious, he already is that. Glorifying God is the activity of making that glory known. Simply put it means giving credit where credit is due. This means we must give God full credit for what he does (unlike Moses and his unwise use of the word “we” in Numbers 20:10) and to refrain from giving God credit for what we do in our own strength and wisdom (Remember Uzzah's attempt to protect God's glory?). This is why we believe prayer is foundational to this ministry. We believe mercy ministry is work God wants to do through those who make up the WAMM family. And we want to make sure that we don't take credit for what He is doing nor do we want to be so presumptuous as to give him credit for something we have done.

A. **Provision**—Many years ago, George Muller made the following statement:

*We still, as from the beginning of the institution, never go in debt for anything. The reason we refrain from doing so is because it would otherwise appear as if God were too poor to pay for His own work. If our work is indeed the **work of God**; and if indeed **we** are the individuals to do this work for Him; and if, lastly, **His time** is come, when we shall do this work for Him, He will surely make it manifest that we are not mistaken by supplying us with the needed means. (The George Muller Treasury, Edited by Roger Steer, Crossway Books, Westchester, Illinois, pg. 143)*

George Muller understood something significant about financing a ministry—it provides a great opportunity for God’s glory to either be magnified or marred. Unfortunately we live in a time in which fundraising for charitable causes has become big business. So much attention is given to fundraising campaigns and programs and the people that drive them that God is often overlooked, or when not overlooked, his name is often associated with questionable (if not downright dishonest) practices.

It is our intention to avoid this by maintaining prayer as our means of fundraising. As we pray we are asking God to provide for the needs of this ministry in such a way as to insure that no one can question from whom the resources come. But our commitment to prayer does not preclude us from taking action in raising finances. Prayer is a dialogue between a father and his children. As we pray we expect God to speak to us—to prompt our minds with things for us to do, certain people or organizations for us to contact and to open doors of opportunity for us to pursue. When this happens it is our intention to obediently follow his direction. But we desire any communication regarding ministry needs to others to only be in response to God’s promptings during such times of prayer.

B. **Planning**—Back to George Muller—one of the things he insisted was necessary in order to enjoy God’s provision was to insure that the work was indeed God’s work. Psalm 127:1 warns us that *unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain*. In other words, it is possible to do a lot of work and have it amount to nothing if it is not the Lord who is truly doing the work. God never promises to work in us to do what we decide (our will) but what he has willed (Philippians 2:13). This is why prayer must be the means by which we make our plans for this ministry. Jeremiah 29:11 states: *I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope*. No, we are not Israel, but we do serve the same God that the Israelites served. And though His plans for us are not the same as for Israel, we believe that God has plans for us too. And that is why prayer is foundational to this ministry. We don’t want to waste our time strategizing to accomplish what we desire to do. Rather, through prayer it is our goal to gain God’s vision for this ministry, and his strategy for what he desires to accomplish through us in his time.

C. **Power**—Since we desire to glorify God through the establishment and support of evangelistic mercy ministries in Ghana, it should not surprise us that God would call us to be involved in something we cannot do on our own. If the project were achievable by human efforts, humans would gain the glory. But, since it is God we seek to glorify, it is reasonable to assume that the work is going to be something only he can do. Prayer gives us access to the power necessary to accomplish what only God can do for it gives us access to the God who promises to work in us, not only to establish the agenda for this ministry, but to carry it out (Philippians 2:13). And as He does so, we are committed to returning all the glory back to God as He so richly deserves.

III. **A COMMITMENT TO PEOPLE**—The God we seek to glorify is a Sovereign God. One way we can help his glory to be seen is to live in happy subjection to that sovereignty. Our commitment to people is an extension of our delight in the Sovereignty of God and our desire to glorify Him by living in happy subjection to Him. This happy submission will be manifested in at least three areas:

A. **Programs**—When God set about to establish the church, something very interesting occurred. In Acts 1 we find the Apostles and others meeting after Jesus ascended back to heaven. While they were waiting for the promised Holy Spirit, they engaged in some preliminary work that had to be done. This preliminary work had nothing to do with brainstorming a strategic plan for developing this impending organization or developing the right program for the task. It had to do with selecting a replacement for Judas Iscariot to fill out the “staffing” needs. Unlike the tendencies of today, these followers of Jesus used the time to make sure they had the right people in place for whatever God was going to bring their way.

Later in the book of Acts we see a similar phenomenon when the church was about to be extended. Acts 13 records the formulation of the first missionary endeavor. Again we read nothing of a strategy being communicated by God to this church. Rather, God made it very clear who was to be involved in this work and they were sent to get it done.

West African Mercy Ministries’ leadership believes that God’s sovereignty extends to the people he chooses to knit into the WAMM family. We believe God will direct program-matically through the abilities and giftedness of the people he provides. Rather than devise a plan for ministry asking God to fill the personnel needs of that program, we intend to allow God to show us what programs and ministries he desires through the people he gives to us.

B. **Policies**—God’s sovereignty over His choices of the people he gives to West African Mercy Ministries also includes the challenges they may bring to our ministry. Working with people includes having to deal with problems inherent too our sin-affected (even though redeemed) condition. And God has his hand in both allowing and preventing such challenges to come our way. Some of the reasons God chooses to allow such difficulties may include:

1. His desire to help us grow.
2. His desire to use us to help others grow.
3. His desire for mercy to be manifested through WAMM in such circumstances (God’s favorite way to glorify Himself).

An all too common means of dealing with difficult circumstances and people is to quickly pen a policy in hopes of preventing a reoccurrence so that we don’t have to deal with this “mess” again. But this is often ineffective for two reasons:

1. Such policies may prevent good people from joining with us or
2. Subsequent difficulties aren’t addressed in the policy it was designed to prevent.

Walking with people through the “messes” they bring with them is a great way for us to express our love for and commitment to them. It is our hope that they will sense this love and commitment and that it will build within them a sense of confidence and loyalty in return. Therefore it is our intention to avoid trying to deal with such difficulties through “preventative policy writing”. Rather, we hope to reflect our faith in a sovereign God by working with whatever people he desires to include in the WAMM family, understanding this will mean that we will have to work through the personal challenges they may bring.

C. **Partnership**—We also believe that God is glorified when his children work together in unity, especially in cross cultural contexts. We are in a new era in world missions. For the first time in history, the church exists in virtually every nation of the world. West African Mercy Ministries believes that it is crucial that we not only acknowledge this, but that we should seek take advantage of what has never been available before. It is time for missions to sever its centuries-long ties to western colonialism and its resulting attitudes of dependency. We are brothers and sisters with believers in West Africa and we seek to develop relationships that truly reflect this. This is why we desire to work in partnership with indigenous ministries and personnel utilizing their language skills and cultural proficiency to maximize the effectiveness of the mercy God has called us to minister.

IV. **A COMMITMENT TO PURSUE THE PRESENCE OF GOD**—West African Mercy Ministries values God supremely and believes that enjoyment of his relational presence is a recognizable evidence of that valuation. Paul shared this value and he told the Philippians it caused everything else in life to seem as a pile of manure compared to knowing Christ. It motivated him to make an experiential intimacy with Jesus his life's pursuit. Even more amazingly, Paul recognized that Jesus first pursued him for this same purpose. WAMM shares Paul's passion for personally experiencing fellowship with our God.

A. **Institutionally**—WAMM exists as a pursuit of the presence of God. Isaiah 58:9 says that as we involve ourselves in Mercy Ministry, we can here God say to us, "Here I Am!" We have always intended for the extension of God's mercy to be a means to this greater end. We understand that mercy doesn't cause God to befriend us but puts us in a position to experience the friendship he already offers to us. What prevents this from becoming exploitive is God's ability to create a symbiotic system by which people's needs are met, God is glorified and we are benefited simultaneously as his mercy is extended!

B. **Individually**—WAMM desires to be a means whereby others can hear God say to them, "*Here I Am!*" It is our prayer that as God continues to grow the WAMM family, he will do so by adding to our numbers those who are passionate about this pursuit. Mercy ministry is a good thing to be involved in when it is motivated by putting others before ourselves (Phil. 2:4). But mercy ministry becomes an excellent thing when it is motivated by a desire to enjoy God's presence. In the latter case, not only are the needs of the orphaned and oppressed met, but God is glorified as a group of people demonstrate an eagerness to divest themselves of worldly pursuits because they value Him so much more.

To those who make up the leadership of West African Mercy Ministries now and in the future, I appeal to you, please don't let this go! Casting no dispersions on any particular ministry or mission, I implore you, let us not become just another business with "Mission" as part of our name. May we always practice passionately what this document proclaims! Please never let this become a statement of truths that sound spiritual, meant only to impress readers or to solicit donors. May the cornerstones of the precepts of God's word, prayer as our means of fundraising and vision casting, a commitment to God's sovereign choice of the people he desires to be part of the WAMM Family and our pursuit of the presence of God always be the passion for who we are and what we do. And may we always be about bringing glory to our Gracious and Merciful God

Pastor Brian McIntyre
West African Mercy Ministries