

Assemblies of God World Missions Board

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You may have noticed that at First Assembly of God in Fort Myers it is not an uncommon event to be given the opportunity to participate in an offering to raise funds for missionaries. So, you might be wondering:

Where does this money go; and

Who takes care of the administration of the money you give?

That responsibility falls to the Assemblies of God World Missions Department under the fine leadership of Executive Director John Bueno. For the past two years it has been my honor and privilege to serve on the Assemblies of God World Missions Board, so let me tell you a bit about them:

- ❖ The AGWM Board is chaired by AGWM Executive Director John Bueno.
- ❖ There are one pastor and one lay member from each of the 8 different Areas around the country. (First Assembly is in the Southeast Area.)
- ❖ There are 11 Regional Directors for the various International Regions, and
- ❖ One Executive Presbyter Representative.

We meet every six months in Springfield, Ms. for two days of presentations and Regional Directors' Reports about the status of missions and missionaries in each of their regions around the world, and to advise and review their plans for the next six months. Among the responsibilities_of the World Missions Board is to:

- ❖ Establish and evaluate policies;
- ❖ Offer guidance and counsel in the area of its supervision, and
- ❖ Establish and uphold standards for appointed world missionaries and candidates.

If you are a part of First Assembly in Fort Myers, you are already treated to a smorgasbord of missions' opportunities thanks to the passion of Pastor Betzer for missions. And you regularly experience the high quality of teaching and preaching about Missions that Pastor gives us.

Well, I want to tell you that your AG World Missions National and Regional Directors carry that same passion and pursuit of excellence in their mission to spread the Gospel around the World! We have always known that at First Assembly we are blessed with the highest quality teaching and preaching anywhere in the world. And while I have never been terribly fond of Administration,@ my experience serving on the AG World Missions Board has certainly changed that view as it relates to the Assemblies of God World Missions. These men and women bring to their ministries a passion as deep as our Pastor=s with an approach that is as fresh, innovative, and creative as anything going on in private enterprise! You can be confident in their application and administration of the funds that we donate!

Around the world, in every region, these Regional Directors are recruiting, training, equipping and encouraging missionaries and their families. And they are using every tool available from written tracts, booklets and brochures, to the most sophisticated electronic communications like the internet, podcasts and social networking media. For example, look at the Cuba Project: They're providing pastors in Cuba with an e-book reader like the Amazon Kindle, loaded with a virtual library of pastoral research and biblical materials and tools that will allow them to better learn and to more effectively minister to their own constituents in Cuba. That's indicative of the kind of innovation that you're seeing from these Regional Directors and their teams. As administrators they are not “bureaucrats” B they are innovators and pioneers! And as a member or adherent at First Assembly you can be proud to be part of such a distinguished tradition of spreading the Gospel message so effectively for nearly 100 years.

In closing, let me highlight a few statistics about where your donations go and how we compare on a national/international basis. This information comes from the Assemblies of God World Ministries Research Department and was current as of December, 2010. You can find it, along with other great resources, on www.worldmissions.ag.org/resources .

WHO ARE WE?

World Wide Assemblies of God Family: Our constituents total nearly 1% of the world population (over 63 million constituents), and between 2000-2008, outside the United States, the Assemblies of God fellowship grew by **57%**! The missionaries, pastors and students that are being reached are having a profoundly positive influence on their communities in their own countries and cultures.

HOW DO WE COMPARE?

<u>Last Decade:(2000-2009)</u>	<u>Average Annual Growth Rate</u>
Overall Population:	about 1.2%
Non-Evangelical Christians:	about 1.2%
Muslims:	about 1.9%
Evangelical Christians:	about 2.5%
<u>Assemblies of God:</u>	<u>about 5.0% !</u>

HOW MUCH ARE A/G Folks GIVING?

In 2010: \$203.3 million! This reverses a trend we've seen since 2005 when the economy began its slide. This is up \$7.5 million from 2009!

WHERE ARE WE?

We have 2,719 missionaries (2009 fig.) in 217 countries and territories of which 98 are considered **Un-reached or Least-reached Countries** - those areas which are most desolate and difficult to reach, or where it is most dangerous to spread the Gospel. You can probably identify a number of those countries based on news reports you have heard recently.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Comparison of the Percentage of Christians who give to Missions:

\$ US (over all denominations) 5%
\$ US (w/in the Assemblies of God) 7%
(I=m sure that at First Assembly the percentage is much higher!)

Comparison of the Percentage of Missions Funds and Missionaries focused on Least-reached / Unreached Countries (i.e., those areas that are most dangerous and desolate):

\$ US (for all denominations)..... about 1.6%
\$ US (**for the Assemblies of God**)..... 34%

That final statistic tells you that the missionaries going out from the Assemblies of God are not just going to the easiest to reach areas. Like Army Rangers, the Green Beret or Navy Seals, your missionaries are on the front lines, and are leading the charge into uncharted territories. So, when you wonder whether your missions giving makes a difference, Remember that you are the lifeline for this ASpecial Forces@ branch of overseas missions! You make a huge difference! Thank you on behalf of the AG World Missions Board and on behalf of all of our missionaries!