

TEAM Japan Moving Forward: Our Strategic Operational Plan Explained

TEAM Japan is passionate about continually being forward-looking in our role as a mission. We are using the wisdom gained from many years of experience in Japan and building on this experience in an appropriate way to reach the Japanese of the 21st Century. We have formed our Strategic Operational Plan in an effort to be focused and unified in the direction we believe the Lord is leading us.

This document has been developed to give an overview of each element within our Strategic Operational Plan as a point of reference so we can move forward together in obedience to Christ, as follows:

- Chapter 1: Our Vision Statement
- Chapter 2: Our Goals
- Chapter 3: Our Core Value
- Chapter 4: Our Operational Values
- Chapter 5: Our Focus Areas
- Chapter 6: Our Purpose Statement

Chapter 1: Our Vision Statement

“TEAM Japan missionaries envision reproducing churches thriving and multiplying throughout Japan, passing on the Gospel in a culturally relevant way to future generations through Japanese believers.” (A.C. 09-21)

We love the Japanese and the Japanese Church and want more than almost anything to see multitudes of Japanese coming to know the Savior and believers growing in their faith. We see this vision occurring through:

Reproducing Churches

A reproducing church is one that seeks to plant daughter churches, with an end goal of multiple generations of churches being born from that original church as well as each of the daughter churches. While the only proof that a church is truly reproducing is when it actually plants a daughter church, there is a stage before that.

That stage is the development of reproducing disciples. The church is an organic, living entity, not an institutional, mechanistic one. As such, the church has a DNA at its very core. This DNA determines how the individuals in the church view God, itself, and the world around them.

The disciple’s heart to reproduce him or herself in others stands at the core of the church’s heart to reproduce itself in other geographical areas. Looking at the church and its disciples from this perspective, a lack of the “reproductive gene” in the overall DNA makeup is an unhealthy mutation that will, in the end, be the cause of death that the coroner puts on the death certificate.

Thriving and Multiplying Churches

Reproducing churches are actually a by-product of thriving and multiplying churches, made up of thriving and multiplying disciples. Reproduction of itself will become a natural (or rather, supernatural) outcome to the extent that the church is a healthy, vibrant, and Biblical community of

faith, focused in a balanced way on individual spiritual vitality and body life as the family of God, and its God-given mission to a dying world.

Thus, in practice, our day to day work as missionaries revolves around seeing individual lives transformed and Biblical churches established, out of which reproducing disciples will naturally flow to see churches thrive and multiply.

A Culturally Relevant Gospel Message Through Japanese Believers

The term culturally relevant means a representation of the gospel that is appropriately contextualized to the culture and worldview of the audience at both a societal level and a personal level.

Contextualization simply means, "...finding points of contact within other people's contexts and removing things from one's own context that might block communication in order to gain a hearing for the gospel." (*Missions in the Third Millennium*, by Stan Guthrie's view, p.102)

This concept opens the door to the gospel message being contextualized at a hearer-specific level, i.e., the specific group we are talking to. Much of what we do as missionaries is to lay the groundwork so we can empower Japanese believers to reach their own nation for Christ as they are the most effect contextualizes of the Gospel in their own culture. This part of our vision is, in effect, an exit plan where we believe that one-day missionaries will no longer be needed in Japan.

Chapter 2: Our Goals

We know that our vision for Japan is not the reality we face today so we have the following goals in our Strategic Operational Plan in order to work towards this vision:

"We empower Japanese, in conjunction with new church plants and existing churches, to evangelize Japanese, disciple Japanese, and develop Japanese leaders."

The word "empower" here means to equip, enable, and promote the self-actualization of someone. We endeavor to do this empowering so the Japanese have the confidence to evangelize and disciple their peers and to develop homegrown leaders, and thus, establish reproducing churches.

As a mission, we are committed to achieving these goals by:

Being Discipleship Focused

We do this by being, first and foremost, "disciples who make disciples", in whatever context our various ministries take us into. It also means being more relationally focused than program focused. Mike Breen, in his book *Building a Discipling Culture*, has two quotes that speak well to this concept. He says,

Leadership in the emerging (not emergent) church is no longer about focusing on strategies, core values, mission statements, or church-growth principles. It is about leaders first becoming disciples of Jesus with prayerful, missional hearts that are broken for the emerging culture.

And his more famous quote, "If you make disciples, you always get the church, but if you make a church, you rarely get disciples." Then he follows up with this question.

Are we just good at getting people together once a week and maybe into a small group, or are we actually good at producing the types of people we read about in the New Testament?

Thus as we go about making disciples, we will also seek to lay the groundwork to incorporate a less-structured, but a more relationally-centered generation of missionaries.

In being reproducing-disciples ourselves, we need three things:

1. someone who is discipling us. We never arrive; we're always on the way.
2. someone whom we are discipling. Otherwise, why bother going on the journey?
3. a simple and reproducible method that we can master and pass on to others.

There are many practical resources out there that have solid biblical foundations and proven track records. There are also many good resources on the principles and missiology behind disciple-making and church planting ministries.

The issue is not so much which method is best, but finding one that fits your gifting, being thoroughly trained in it and then using it faithfully and consistently in a way that is contextualized to your specific audience. However we accomplish it, we aim to become expert disciplers for ourselves, our churches, and the unsaved world around us.

Throughout this document, we assume that TEAM will make available, and encourage participation in, internal and external training opportunities so that we are equipped to accomplish our vision for discipleship and the establishment of reproducing churches. There is much we can learn and apply from those both inside and outside of Japan who have knowledge, experience, and expertise in these areas and who can impart those things to us to make us more effective.

The main point is that we want to operate by common principles that unify us and keep us focused in our purpose, empower one another by providing training and resources to accomplish that purpose, enable us to hold one another accountable for doing ministry in the most effective way possible, and care for one another based on a common experience.

It is said that more is caught than taught, and the catching element of discipleship is a very important part of effective disciple-making. Being on the journey of leading others to Christ and teaching them to obey all that Jesus commanded is a great path to walk but taking others along with you so they can watch and learn how to do it as well is even better. As David Garrison shares in his book *Church Planting Movements*, "Never do anything alone. Always take someone with you so that you can model for them the vision, skills, and values that shape your life."

As we apply a life-on-life discipleship focus within our mission, lest we begin to think that we are simply following new fads and buzzwords, let's remember that Jesus' final instructions in Matthew 28 say to go, to baptize, and to teach. The natural result of this will be a reproducing church.

Working in Partnership

"TEAM Japan is committed to forming teams for ministry and working in partnership with Japanese leaders and believers. When our missionaries form partnerships, they do so with one of the following:

- *individuals not connected with organizations*
- *individuals connected with organizations*
- *organizations*

In all cases, missionaries are encouraged to be Kingdom-minded as they form relationships to achieve our purpose of establishing reproducing churches in line with all sections of our Strategic Operational Plan.

While some TEAM Japan missionaries choose to partner with other TEAM Japan missionaries along with Japanese believers, our missionaries are welcome to seek out opportunities to partner with individuals who are not a part of TEAM Japan when there is a good match. We value partnerships with our legacy partners (Domei, JECA, and NDFK) and like-minded organizations.

Regardless of whether our missionaries are joining others in their ministry or others are joining a TEAM Japan ministry, our missionaries work together with our leadership to consider theological, methodological, philosophical and practical aspects of ministry and, if there appears to be a good fit, typically move ahead to form a partnership agreement through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). In all cases when another organization is involved, we will also include that organization in the MOU.” (MALT 19-4-1)

We particularly value TEAM Japan missionaries working in partnership with Japanese brothers and sisters in Christ within our ministry initiatives. This cooperation requires the following:

- seeking out Japanese partners with strong character, theological compatibility, and chemistry with our missionaries in both personality and vision.
- intentionally developing Japanese disciples and leaders to share the ministry’s DNA and thus be able to lead within that ministry context and beyond.

We may also cooperate with Japanese leaders and believers by helping to address issues that many Japanese churches face, such as small numbers of believers and isolation from the larger body of Christ. We believe that various types of ministries can be used by God to establish churches by providing resources, logistical help, joint training conferences, outreach activities, etc. We believe that missionaries who have a vision, passion, and required skill set that align with a particular ministry should be placed within their area of calling and gifting while working alongside Japanese leaders and believers of like vision.

Resembling the New Testament Church

The book of Acts reveals the following characteristics of this church that are very instructive and convicting to us today as we compare their churches to ours and their lives with our lives:

- **Prayer** – There was much passionate, desperate prayer in that church (Acts 4:24-31; 12:12). We know we ought to pray more, but their lives and their God-given mission depended on it. It is also interesting to note that the will of God for mission was revealed as they were praying and fasting (Acts 13:2, 3). Garrison, in his book *Church Planting Movements*, calls this “extraordinary prayer.”
- **Community** – In line with prayer, the church was together in a true community (Acts 2:44-47). This is based on the impossibility of surviving as a Christian in that culture and accomplishing the task that Jesus had given them. In a word, they really needed each other. Their fellowship and community were not based on the pleasure of others’. Just as with their prayer lives, community was a matter of life and death.

- **Teamwork** – In line with prayer and community, the church of Acts was always ministering in teams, from the eleven who stood with Peter on the day of Pentecost, to those who accompanied Peter to Cornelius' house to Paul's constant companions. In fact, the times when they were alone are so exceptional that they are really the exception and this proves the rule. In 2 Timothy, Paul was left alone in his ministry of defending the gospel. He saw that as a negative circumstance. He asked Timothy to come as soon as possible. And, even then Paul was not alone. Luke was with him.
- **Witness** – There was clear, bold, convicting, Christ-centered, contextualized preaching and witness. This is seen in all of the messages preached by Peter, Paul, and Stephen, and in the personal witness of Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch. That New Testament contextualization did not so much involve a whole country or culture, but rather it happened in whatever specific group to whom they were speaking inside that culture or society, as the Holy Spirit led them.
- **Self-abandonment** – There was an expectation that this preaching and witness would create opposition, conflict, and persecution. This was okay with the believers in the New Testament because Jesus was Lord to them and His mission was a top priority (not their own agenda), as in the example of Paul in Acts 20:24. In fact, the second church mentioned in Acts was born out of that very persecution.
- **Empowerment** – There was an expectation that ministry must be done in the empowerment, filling, and guidance of the Holy Spirit (by the word of God and other means). This was the general experience of the believers (Acts 1:16-26; 2:4; 11:24; 13:52; 16:6-10; 19:1-7), not the purview of a privileged few.
- **Faith** – There was a willingness to take risks based on a firm belief in the sovereignty of God in salvation (Acts 13:48; 18:9-10) There was an expectation that there would be results from all this witnessing, preaching, and suffering, since it was God who was at work in and through them, AND in the lives of the hearers (Act 2:5, 37, 47; 11:21; 13:48; 16:14). It also appears that this trust in the sovereignty of God gave them peace as they went about sharing the gospel. They did not have to do everything, but rather could go wherever God sent them and leave the results to Him. This can be seen in Paul, as he bid farewell to the Ephesians.
- **Transformation** – There was an understanding that our witness includes both doctrine (as seen in the messages of Peter, Stephen, and Paul, and the witness of Philip to the eunuch) AND our own experience of and walk with Jesus. This is seen in the selection of Matthias to replace Judas, in Peter's personal testimony of the vision he had on the rooftop when he defended his actions in going to the Gentiles, and in Paul's various defenses of the faith later in Acts. In other words, witnessing in the New Testament church was a well-blended combination of doctrine and personal experience. In order to do this effectively, the believers were transformed by the gospel themselves before ministering to others (e.g. Acts 19:18,19). As a result, outsiders began to note them as being followers of Christ (Acts 11:26). This is not unlike the priests who marveled at Peter and John and recognized them as having been with Jesus (Acts 4:13, 14).
- **Missionality** – Because of being scattered, the believers went forth into the world around them witnessing and preaching the word (Acts 8:4). They did not have the luxury of a stable place to sit and wait for people to come to them. They took the Savior to the world. They also appear to have made use of every stop and every opportunity along the way, not just at their destinations, even as plans changed suddenly (Acts 28:1-11). And, although it's not totally clear, it appears that the main ministry on Malta was helping the people there (including Publius' father). Luke here focuses more on compassion ministry here than evangelism. But, whatever the focus of their time on Malta, they were out among those people, on their turf, meeting needs and sharing Christ where they lived.

- **Explosion** – There was an acceptance that when God moves, humans cannot stay in control of the progress. The purity of the Gospel message was not primarily a function of the hierarchal structure, but rather effective training up of new homegrown leaders and disciples who could ensure that the gospel was properly contextualized to their culture in their own language from generation to generation. This is closely related to the principle found in 2 Timothy 2:2, and can be seen as Paul set up local elders “in every church” in Acts 14:23, as well as his instructions to Titus to do the same (Titus 1:5). Even the Apostles in Jerusalem had to admit their inability to maintain control over the rapidly expanding church, as they saw God unexpectedly opening up the church to Gentile believers (Acts 11:18). One could wonder if there was just a tinge of “There goes the neighborhood” in their expression that begins, “Well then...”. In a word, when God gets to work, things get messy, and therefore messy is good.

Our desire is to see TEAM Japan move forward as a catalyst for seeing this ideal actualized in Japan.

Chapter 3: Our Core Value

Our Core Value is **God-Dependence**. Everything we do and every confidence we have is based on the fact that, while we do indeed energetically sow and water. God is the One who takes those meager offerings and blesses them with fruitfulness in a way that is “exceeding abundantly beyond all we can ask or think.” (1 Corinthians 3:6, 7)

We seek to consistently and constantly focus on the fact that we are on God’s mission. The mission given by Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20 is the only one that matters at all. Jesus is Lord, and His instructions and His lifestyle are what directs and drives us (1 John 2:4-6). His authority, His presence (Matt 28:18,20b), and His power (Acts 1:8) are what undergirds everything we have and do, driving us to our knees in dependence upon God.

Chapter 4: Our Operational Values

We desire to excel in modeling to the Japanese Church and each other our Operational Values of being:

- Together in purpose through
- Empowering one another,
- Holding one another **Accountable**, and
- Being a **Mutually** caring community.

As we model these things, the Japanese Church will be encouraged to be the body of Christ, inexorably knit together by “Missio-Dei” (the mission of God), as they watch us be the body of Christ, inexorably knit together by “Missio-Dei.”

Here are the definitions and Scriptural foundations of our Operational Values:

Together in Purpose means standing united under a common vision so that our impact in ministry is increased and our mutually held vision is accomplished.

“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ. Then... I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the Gospel.”
Philippians 1:27

Vision Driven

Empowerment means seeing every individual placed in a ministry setting that maximizes the utilization and development of their gifts and skills as faithful stewards of God's grace.

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10

Service Driven

Accountability means living transparently and willingly accepting our personal and corporate responsibility to submit to God and one another in love.

"So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man." Acts 24:16

Integrity Driven

Mutual Care means being and building the body of Christ through following Jesus' example of loving one another.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." John 13:34-35

Love Driven

Chapter 5: Our Focus Areas

Each of these Operational Values is used as we go about our ministries and service for the Lord within the framework of the following six focus areas:

Ministry Initiative Focus

Definition

*"A Ministry Initiative refers to the organizational unit in which missionaries and other colleagues work together in ministries essential for the strategic vision of the ministry area."
(TEAM's current definition)*

Purpose

To facilitate the creation and development of ministry initiatives in accordance with the above definition.

Vision

TEAM Japan envisions ministry initiatives moving ahead with a clear focus to see God's vision become a reality and many Japanese lives transformed.

Values

- Passion – expressed clearly through the ministry’s purpose, vision, and strategy.
- Alignment – to all sections of our SOP.
- Strategic thinking – from planning to execution.
- Flexibility – to choose ministry methods and activities within the broader framework of the SOP.
- Guidance – provided in a tangible form, coupled with empowerment and accountability.
- Resourcing – identification and method of finding/receiving resources.
- Evaluation – of progress to increase ministry effectiveness and identify areas requiring change.

How we do it...

Supporting Ministry Initiatives

We desire to see our missionaries flourish in ministry. We are, therefore, committed to working alongside the leader and team to support them so they can grow together and continue to develop the ministry initiative. The Ministry Initiative Coordinator will oversee this process by ensuring the principles contained in the SOP are applied appropriately to each ministry initiative.

To make this application, we use a Ministry Initiative Master Plan as a tool. This master plan is considered a living document, serving as a ministry growth plan which is reviewed and revised at least once a year to see ministry initiatives move forward. Doing so will also allow everyone to understand each ministry initiative’s purpose and needs (e.g. the MALT, Senior Director of Global Ministry, recruiters/mobilizers, sending churches and fellow missionaries).

There are two types of ministry initiatives, both of which require a Ministry Initiative Master Plan written by the TEAM Japan missionary:

- those formed by TEAM Japan missionaries, which are under the direction and responsibility of the MALT.
- those formed in partnership with individuals who are not a part of TEAM Japan, which are usually under the direction and responsibility of another organization (we recognize that there may be times when areas covered by this document cannot be applied e.g. evaluating the leader may not be possible if the leader is from another organization).

NOTE: As a transitional measure, we do not require a Ministry Initiative Master Plan to be completed by missionaries in existing partnership ministry initiatives as of July 2019 if they are nearing the end of that ministry and do not expect to recruit other missionaries in the future.

Assigning Missionaries to Existing Ministry Initiatives

In the case when a missionary joins an existing ministry initiative, the Ministry Initiative Coordinator will organize a third party to work with the ministry initiative team and missionary to assist in clarifying whether they would be a good fit. In this process we will use, or recommend the use of, resources such as the Theological and Philosophical Alignment document and Vetting Potential Teammates Checklist referred to in the Initial Formation section within the Team-Based Ministry Focus section of this document. If the missionary wishes to join a partnership ministry initiative where a TEAM Japan missionary is already assigned, the MOU formation process will take place for this missionary.

Helping to Create New Ministry Initiatives

We are keen to see visions for ministry transformed into reality. When this vision involves forming a

new ministry initiative, our Ministry Initiative Coordinator will put people in place to help in the process.

A ministry initiative can be formed through:

- an individual's dream/passion.
- a group of people sharing a dream/passion.
- joining a ministry outside TEAM Japan which shares an individual's or group's dream/passion.

In all cases, the missionaries with the dream/passion will be connected with a person to assist them to articulate their ideas and create a firmly grounded ministry proposal, as summarized in the Ministry Initiative Formation Flow Chart. At the end of this process, a Ministry Initiative Master Plan will result. This master plan will be reviewed by the MALT and Senior Director of Global Ministry for approval to form the ministry initiative. After approval is received, the people involved will be able to begin preparations to form the ministry initiative.

Some will already have a leader and/or team established which will enable them to start the ministry by using the principles outlined in their Ministry Initiative Master Plan. Others will need to search for a leader and/or a team before the ministry initiative can begin. In all cases, it is essential that the foundational elements of the Ministry Initiative Master Plan are in place before the ministry initiative officially begins operation, as well as the provisions under Initial Formation in the Team-Based Ministry Focus section of this document. Additionally, as mentioned in the Goals section of this document, TEAM Japan is committed to forming teams that include working in partnership with others. When our missionaries form partnerships, whether others are joining a TEAM Japan ministry or our missionaries are joining others in their ministry, our missionaries will work together with our leadership to consider theological, methodological, philosophical and practical aspects of ministry. If it appears to be a good fit, we will typically move ahead to form a partnership agreement through the MOU formation process. This process has been developed to ensure the missionary, TEAM Japan and the partnership organization are all on the same page in areas relating to the relationship, expectations, finances, etc. (see MALT 19-4-1)

Team-Based Ministry Focus

Definition

*A team is a group of at least three people with a common goal that compels them to work together and is characterized by unity in Christ, growing trust, open and robust communication, and commitment to one another and to the team as a whole.
(adapted from TEAM's official statement on teams)*

Purpose

To establish and maintain healthy, effective teams.

Vision

TEAM Japan envisions our teams well-resourced and equipped, operating in the unity of the Spirit as the Body of Christ, and pursuing their maximum potential as they work to establish churches in Japan.

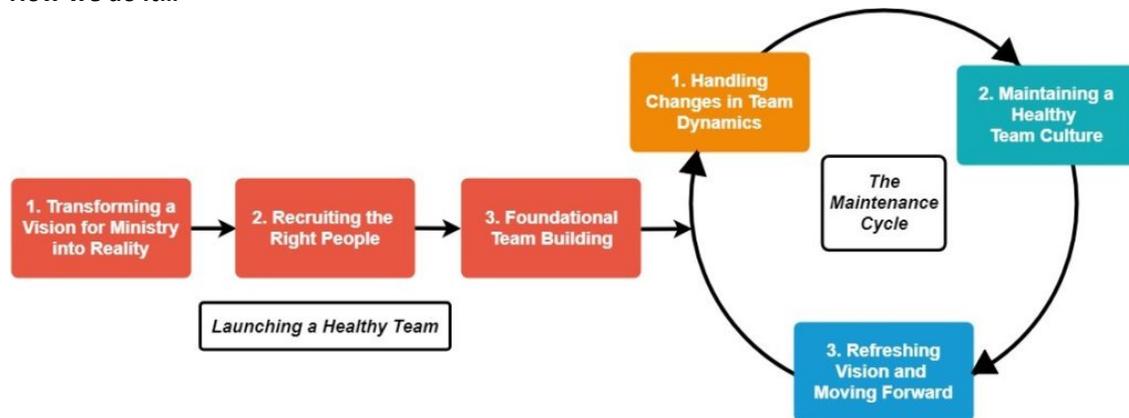
Values

TEAM is committed to team-based ministry. We are disciples of Christ who are called to live in community as members of His body, and we believe that healthy, effective teams make an invaluable contribution to our purpose of establishing reproducing churches. Therefore, we will provide resources and support to equip missionaries with skills to work effectively in teams so that they may thrive in the work God has called them to do.

We desire our teams to grow together in incarnating the following characteristics:

- Oneness in Christ – team members firmly rooted and united in Christ, displaying deep, mutual love as members of his body.
- Trust – team members confident in the good intentions of their teammates, and relationships characterized by mutual respect and care.
- Communication – team members listen and speak in order to understand one another. They engage in healthy conflict to arrive at best solutions and deal with relational conflict in a biblical culture of grace and truth.
- Commitment – team members committed to Christ, to one another, and to work as a team, taking responsibility for what they have agreed to do and expect their teammates to do the same.
- Purpose – team members readily articulate what the team is to do because there is a clearly defined purpose that compels them to work together. Furthermore, they set clear, challenging, and consequential goals that will bring them closer to accomplishing this purpose.

How we do it...



Launching a Healthy Team (Launching a Healthy Team Checklist)

- Transforming a Vision for Ministry into Reality: turning a passion into a Ministry Initiative proposal.
Create a Ministry Initiative Master Plan by following the Ministry Initiative Formation Flow Chart, in conjunction with the Ministry Initiative Coordinator.
- Recruiting the Right People: we can't accomplish the vision alone.
- Network: Pursue networking opportunities by attending events and setting up meetings in order to connect with those who have a similar vision.
- Pre-check: Use the Theological and Philosophical Alignment document to determine if there are any red flags signaling significant incompatibility.
- Vet potential teammates: Use the Vetting Potential Teammates document to evaluate whether to pursue working together.

- Foundational Team Building: laying the groundwork for working together. Organize a five-day team formation retreat in conjunction with the Ministry Initiative Coordinator. The retreat should be focused on the following:
- Create a Team Charter, facilitated by a third party.
- Read and discuss *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni to lay a firm foundation and common language for working together as a team.

The Maintenance Cycle (The Maintenance Cycle Checklist)

- Handling Inevitable Changes in Team Dynamics: thriving in transition and evolving together.
- Follow the guidelines in the Transitions document to celebrate and recalibrate as a team whenever a new member joins the team, or a current member leaves the team, temporarily or permanently.
- Create, execute and continually update an orientation process for new team members, covering all relevant team integration topics and procedures.
- Reevaluate the makeup of your team.
- Decide on a timeframe for each member's current commitment to the team. At the end of each commitment period, the leader and member should evaluate together how they are fitting into the team, any changes that need to be made, and whether they should recommit to each other for another period of time.
- Reevaluate the potential need for new team members. Maintain a continual posture of networking and seek to fill roles that are lacking (see Launching a Healthy Team, Recruiting the Right People above).
- Maintaining a Healthy Team Culture: proactive avenues for feedback to enhance team climate.
- Use the Health Check for Ongoing Teams and *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* book by Patrick Lencioni on a regular basis to facilitate good communication, proactively deal with conflict, and evaluate areas in need of improvement.
- Conduct an Evaluation of the leader every year in conjunction with the Ministry Initiative Coordinator.
- Check-In. The team leader schedules regular, meaningful check-ins with individual team members at least twice a year.
- Monitor how well the team is handling conflict, both reactively and proactively, together with advice from a third party organized by the Ministry Initiative Coordinator.
- Refreshing Vision and Moving Forward: celebrating how far we've come and charting our next steps.
- Review the Team Charter as a team every 6 months for a full day. This time is to be used to refresh vision, evaluate the previous six months' goals, set new six-month goals, and make adjustments based on the team's self-evaluation. This time will be facilitated by a third party organized by the Ministry Initiative Coordinator.
- Retreat for a minimum of three days every 12 months, incorporating one of the six-monthly reviews of the Team Charter and concentrating on specific topics related to team building (e.g. evaluating trust, conflict management, enhancing communication, etc.).
- Complete Annual Reviews and Growth Plans in reference to relevant parts of the Team Charter (e.g. team members make individual goals in light of their role on the team).

Member Care Focus

Definition

Member Care is the ongoing encouraging, equipping and empowering of missionaries for effective and sustainable life, and productive ministry in Japan.

Member Care addresses all aspects of well-being for missionaries, taking into consideration the needs of single people, couples, families, and children. Member Care includes spiritual, emotional, relational, and physical matters. It is a key element in seeing the other five focus areas of our Strategic Operational Plan successfully implemented so that we are better poised to accomplish our purpose and vision.

TEAM Japan acknowledges that Member Care is integral to all aspects of the mission including leadership, logistics, spiritual formation, and church life. Member Care begins with a missionary's arrival in Japan and continues throughout the missionary life cycle to re-entry or retirement and beyond. As a part of empowering and equipping missionaries to make healthy choices, TEAM Japan offers opportunities for ongoing training and resourcing.

Embracing the values of Master Care, Self-Care, Mutual Care and accountability, TEAM Japan affirms that the responsibility for Member Care lies primarily with the individual missionaries themselves (Self Care) and their relationship with the Lord (Master Care). Additionally, each of these parties plays an important role in member care (Mutual Care): TEAM International, the sending church (or agency), Ministry Area Leadership Team (MALT), the ministry team or supervisor, families here and abroad, and the TEAM Japan Member Care Facilitator (MCF) in conjunction with competent member care providers.

Onboarding Focus

Definition

"TEAM Japan's Onboarding Program is designed for our new missionaries as a time of intentional preparation for and integration into life and ministry in Japan so they may become as effective as possible. Beyond initial orientation to their new lives, we actively walk with our missionaries through their first years in Japan, guiding them through cultural adjustments, language acquisition, ministry training, and involvement in and understanding of TEAM Japan as an organization." (MALT 19-5-1) (see MALT 19-5-1 for further details, including the three phases within the Onboarding Program.)

Resource Management Focus

Definition

Resource Management relates to our responsibility to see that the resources God has provided us, and will continue to provide, are effectively overseen and employed for the expansion of His Church and the glory of His Name in Japan. Resources include capital assets, cash assets, people, and information technology, each of which is a key element in seeing the other five focus areas successfully implemented so that we are better poised to accomplish our purpose and vision.

We acknowledge God as the provider of all we have. It was He who led our forebears to give generously and invest wisely and ultimately all the glory and thanks go to Him.

We believe that the God who provided so richly in the past will continue to do so without fail so that His work can continue to progress in Japan. This means that we can, with confidence in God, strategically use our resources without any sense of need to hoard them for the future. This does not mean that assets can be used flippantly, but rather that they can be invested for Kingdom returns, even if there are no financial returns.

We recognize that God's provision does not negate our responsibility before God to be prayerfully visionary, strategic, and wise with the things He provides. This is a trust given by God to each one of us.

While our material assets are important, our most valuable resource is our people. God's choice servants are His means to reach the nations and everything else is just a tool for those servants to use as they serve Him.

We aim to employ "our" resources in the best way to see the other five focus areas within our Strategic Operational Plan implemented and bearing fruit, i.e. developing strategic ministry initiatives, working more effectively in teams (being the body of Christ while building the body of Christ), developing leaders at every level of the organization, caring even better for one another, and recruiting the generation of missionaries who will replace us.

The wise and responsible use of what God has provided is not primarily for the improvement of TEAM as an end in itself. We do indeed want to invest in ourselves so that our axes can be as sharp as possible as we serve in Japan, but the ultimate goal is that the Japanese Church be strengthened and established to reach its own people for Christ to the glory of God.

Leadership Development Focus

Definition

Leadership Development is the process through which we provide opportunities for our missionaries to grow more effective as leaders who "empower people to pursue a common purpose." (David Sedlacek)

Purpose

To develop leaders that will help to establish reproducing churches in Japan to the glory of God.

Vision

TEAM Japan envisions our missionaries leading in the most effective way to help in establishing reproducing churches in Japan to the glory of God.

Values

- Strongly encouraging our leaders toward deepening spiritual character – a growing relationship with the Lord is at the core of effective leadership for spiritual growth and personal integrity.
- Developing all our missionaries as leaders – within their sphere of ministry (e.g. Bible studies, children's programs, mentoring, outreach events, etc.).
- Empowering our missionaries to reach their potential – since they are individually at various levels of development, they can intentionally develop their leadership skills to enhance their work for the Kingdom of God.

- Raising up missionaries to take the challenge of leadership at all levels within TEAM Japan – we need team leaders who will empower individual team members, strengthen their team’s collective skills, and guide the team toward accomplishing their collective goals.

How we do it...

TEAM Japan is committed to providing encouragement, challenge, and support in the leadership development for all our missionaries. The Learning and Development Ministry Initiative (LDMI) will consult with our missionaries to help them choose and begin at least one of the following options:

- Leadership mentoring, connecting with mentors, creating a safe environment to share at a deep level about areas involving leadership, and learn from those with experience.
- Leadership relationships where leaders learn from other leaders in a variety of ways, including formal and informal gatherings, to encourage, challenge, and talk through specific issues together.
- Tapping into leadership potential, providing both preparation and opportunities for developing leaders to enhance their skills and experience in leadership.
- Cohorts, a group of people meeting regularly to enhance leadership development and promote accountability.
- Spiritual health development, challenging the leader to keep a godly perspective within leadership.
- Interaction with TEAM International leadership, other ministry areas, and other mission agencies to discuss leadership related issues.
- Leadership training programs geared toward the unique work of establishing churches in the context of Japan using professionals or experienced people already in Japan and our own missionaries who receive training in a specific area of leadership and then pass that on to others via a seminar/workshop format.
- Resources to help us understand and work in a Japanese context.
- Leadership coaching to assist in achieving goals and growing in effectiveness.
- Teaching provided by other groups (e.g. JEMA, other missions, other organizations, etc.).
- Online leadership resources including forums and courses.
- Other options in consultation with an LDMI representative.

Team Leader Support

We will support our team leaders by providing:

- Spiritual health development, challenging the leader to keep a godly perspective within leadership.
- Leadership mentoring, creating a safe environment to share at a deep level about areas involving leadership, and learn from those with experience.
- Evaluation on a yearly basis.
- Leader meetings, gathering TEAM Japan leaders for fellowship, accountability and sharing ideas related to leadership within TEAM Japan.
- The Ministry Initiative Coordinator will oversee the development of ministry initiative leaders, with LDMI providing resources to the whole mission.

Chapter 6: Our Purpose Statement

“TEAM Japan exists to establish reproducing churches in Japan to the glory of God.” (A.C. 09-19)

The church of Jesus Christ is the thing against which the gates of hell cannot stand and it is the best environment in the world for disciples to be made, nurtured, and reproduced. We establish the church in a variety of ways but those ways will always have the goal of seeing the Japanese church established.