

### Answers to questions were written by:

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*Please feel free to contact any of these individuals directly if you have further questions pertaining to their responses or other issues under their oversight.*

## Mission and Globalization

### 1. Could you please unpack the term "missional" a bit more in our mission statement?

**Dave:** This term refers to the perspective and practice of the church as being “on mission” with God; that is, participating in God’s plan to extend His Kingdom and bring reconciliation to a fallen world through the work of Christ and agency of His Church in the world, empowered by His Spirit. Such a local church does more than multiply (although that is undoubtedly the case). It makes disciples who individually and collectively bring the Gospel in word and deed to the various sectors of society into which God is sending it. In short, a missional church reflects the reality that God is on mission and His Church is to be on mission as well, participating in the *Missio Dei* (mission of God).

### 2. On what frontiers of the Kingdom will we be sharpening our focus? Does sharpening our focus on these frontiers mean easing out of other areas?

**Dave:** Recognizing that access to and understanding of the Gospel is not the same around the world and in any given location, we will seek to be used by God to bring the light of the Gospel into the spiritually dark places rather than simply adding more light to people and places where it already exists. It is more a disposition of how we see the relative need and respond to it, rather than a specific list of locations. The application of this principle will vary according to the context. In some cases, it might be defined in geographic terms, while in other cases, it might be defined in ethnolinguistic (people group) terms. It reflects the ambition of the Apostle Paul, who wrote, “I make it my ambition to preach the Gospel, not where Christ has already been named.” This godly ambition does not mean TEAM will necessarily ease out of other existing commitments. However, such a focus will increasingly shape our future thinking and planning, along with our global partners.

### 3. What is the "new invitation" to the North American Church, and how does that differ from our current invitation?

**Dave:** Since its founding in 1890, TEAM has offered a very missionary-centric focus to churches who want to engage with us, assuming it is a North American to be sent cross-culturally from our churches here to the rest of the world. That is TEAM's historical strength, one that God has used for decades of very fruitful ministry. However, this model is increasingly moving out of the center of global missions given various contemporary issues, not the least of which is the dramatic rise in a truly globalized missionary workforce. TEAM is challenged by the need to learn and offer new ways to serve the Church in North America in facilitating its meaningful engagement in what God is doing globally.

These emerging global realities are coupled with an increasing gap that exists between historic mission organizations (like TEAM) and many churches here in North America. This gap has been developing for years. In the perception of many churches, what TEAM is offering them is of decreasing relevance and importance. If we are to serve churches effectively, we need to understand better where they are and what the next steps are for them to meaningfully and fruitfully engage in global mission. Sending long-term cross-cultural workers will remain a relevant possibility, but it will represent only a part of the overall possibilities in the future.

### 4. As we move toward a model that elevates global believers in decision-making, ministry leadership, etc., to whom are we looking for guidance? Are we talking to other organizations that have done this before?

**Geoff:** Yes, indeed, we are talking to other mission agencies. Research has been done with seven like-minded agencies that have all successfully globalized, asking questions about how they went about it, what worked well, what mistakes were made that we can avoid and seeking general wisdom from them. Those organizations are OMF, Wycliffe, WEC, SIM, PMI, OM and Interserve. Two of them aligned particularly well with TEAM's vision and strategy — Wycliffe and SIM. Over the last year and a half, their leadership has served as consultants to TEAM as we built out the new pathways and a wide range of other updates to help TEAM be current with how God is moving in missions today. They continue to voluntarily help us, as they desire to see TEAM thriving in this area.

### 5. Are we creating different models everywhere, depending on the unique needs of the Church in that area?

**Geoff:** The guiding principle that we hold transcends cultures and context and is embedded in our mission statement: "*TEAM's mission is to **partner with the global Church...***" So, when it comes to the sending of missionaries, we follow these guiding principles:

- a. Our default preference is to find an existing partner sending entity in that country. So, for example, DMG is a German-founded and led sending agency that has sent out missionaries for decades, with excellence. Partnering with DMG is a win for everyone. DMG is blessed because it helps them be sustainable, with more missionaries being sent out and having more opportunities for their missionary candidates. TEAM is blessed because DMG's mobilizers are

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recruiting for TEAM, and we don't need to spend years learning how to send well from Germany. The outgoing missionaries are blessed because they have an experienced mission sending them (DMG) and an experienced mission receiving them (TEAM). This sets up the new missionaries to thrive, which is good for the Kingdom.

b. If no compatible sending partner exists, our next preference is to be a catalyst in helping a local sending entity come into existence to serve the church in that country for years to come. TEAM is doing this in Latvia. There are Latvian believers who are called into missions, and missional churches ready to send them, but no sending structure exists to serve the church. So, we are working with Latvian believers and their churches who desire to found a Latvian sending agency to service the nascent missions movement in Latvia.

c. Especially when no local partners can be found for options A and B, sometimes the best option for us is for TEAM to do the sending from that MA. While this is the most labor- and resource-intensive option for TEAM, if we have people on the ground willing and able to serve the local churches in this way, this can also be strategic in seeing more workers for the harvest.

### **6. Can you give us an example of a country where TEAM has set up an office as a sending agency?**

**Geoff:** TEAM Canada is the only example that we have. That being said, at the “creative fringes” of TEAM, some ministry areas have sent out missionaries from their countries, both historically and more recently.

### **7. When you talk about strengthening the community of TEAM, can you please touch on what community structure you are considering?**

**Dave:** When I use this term, I use it in the simple layman's sense, not an academic or sociological sense. The Oxford Dictionary defines *community* as “a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests and goals.” While all of us in TEAM do not live in the same geographical space (far from it!), we could describe ourselves as a community according to this definition. We are bound together through common attitudes, interests and goals. As members of a Christian ministry, this is best articulated through our shared core theological beliefs, values and sense of mission, all rooted in Scripture. To strengthen this community, we desire to improve our systems of communication, finance, people development (continuing education in leadership and ministry skills, spiritual life, etc.), member care and more.

### **8. What are TEAM and the board doing to add voices from the global Church in Africa at the table since it is one of the largest segments of the global Church worldwide?**

**Dave:** To this point, the most obvious step taken is the recent addition of an Ethiopian mission leader to the board, Donek Tesfaye. She has years of experience in global missions, especially in the Ethiopian sending movement of SIM. However, her addition to the board is not enough. Hopefully, we will add other essential voices not just to the board but also at various levels of leadership throughout TEAM. Our efforts to effectively serve the advance of the Gospel in (and from) Africa will continue to grow as we have more godly African leaders speaking into our ministry planning and strategies at the grassroots level and above. This is where current and future TEAM leaders in the region will carry the responsibility to build relationships of trust and

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friendship in the ministry areas and localities, both where TEAM currently serves and also in new frontiers of ministry.

### **9. How central to the future direction of TEAM will Business as Mission (BAM)/Business 4 Transformation (B4T) be?**

**Geoff:** BAM or B4T, which involves the entrepreneurial initiative of founding a business for Kingdom purposes, is a strategic pathway in TEAM's portfolio of ministries. We hope to see this sphere grow within TEAM as we look to the future. With that in mind, we have set up a partnership with New Horizons, which services those desiring to start these types of businesses.

### **10. How do we see getting into closed access countries, especially Hindu or Muslim majority nations?**

**Geoff:** Various common paths are viable for TEAM, depending on which country is being considered. For those just entering a country, a student visa is often a good option initially. This allows the worker to study language and culture, settle into the new environment, develop a strategy, and then start a business or be hired by a local organization. Another good option is to be employed by an organization, from day one, in that country and move there via a business visa. Yet another possibility is to serve on the staff of an international church in such a country.

### **11. Does TEAM have any plans to recruit from or open offices to send workers from other countries such as in Europe or Latin America?**

**Geoff:** Yes, we hope to partner with sending entities throughout Europe and Latin America. To do so, we need the help of TEAM workers in the region to develop and maintain relationships of trust with those partners.

### **12. What is the future of the Therefore Alliance? What steps are we taking to continue the deep and generous collaboration?**

**Dave:** That is a question yet to be answered by the members of the Alliance as each organization listens to God and to the other members of the Alliance. Our long histories present challenges in going very deep in our collaboration. All too frequently, we find ourselves too deeply attached to our own unique internal systems and processes. We also differ in our needs and readiness to adopt common solutions. But there are signs we are learning to be more open and collaborative in our ventures.

Where we have seen the greatest advance has been in South America, where TEAM and South American Mission (SAM) workers are working closely together with blended leadership teams. Joint vision-casting is also happening regarding future ministry in that region. While not at the same place, significant relationship building and exploration along similar lines are taking place in the Asia-Pacific Region and in Europe. Deeper collaboration in our collective operations here in North America are not at the same place, although there is slowly increasing collaboration in limited areas. Such inter-organizational collaboration will increasingly be a strategic need for TEAM in coming years, both with Therefore Alliance members and other organizations with whom we share common values and callings.

**13. Is all of this change leading towards some kind of organizational merger in the near future? Kind of like the Therefore Alliance, but all four organizations losing their independence and essentially just being one org?**

**Dave:** No, there is no plan at present to pursue an organizational merger in the future. However, neither is that something that should be ruled out indefinitely. Should God open the door and make it plain that such a move would greatly enhance and accelerate the advance of the Gospel, we would prayerfully consider it. At this point, the focus is on finding areas where we can combine efforts in certain areas while each organization can retain its history, culture and specific calling in global missions.

## Finance

**14. For what will proceeds from the sale of the Carol Stream Office (CSO) be used?**

**Vonna:** The funds from the sale have been set aside while we develop a couple of possibilities for the board to consider in its July meeting. Our strong desire is that the legacy of CSO not be absorbed into the general budget; instead that we use this money in a meaningful way to make a long-term impact on the mission and ministry of TEAM — as CSO did.

**15. When will the transition to the new accounting system be completed? When will we be able to view our donations and account activities without waiting for weekly or monthly reports?**

**Vonna:** We are operating daily in the new accounting system as the old system was shut down in November. The delay in reporting has been getting the activity between the donor system and the accounting system integrated and reconciled. That is nearly complete, and the plan is to begin getting others outside of accounting into the new system later next month. Once people are trained, they will be able to access dashboard reports on their own when they log in, which will provide their own financial information and that for which they are responsible, including MALs, SDs, etc.

**16. Are finance processes and reports ever going to be sorted out for a clear and simpler way to be up to date on things? It is very hard to know where things are, especially at an MA level.**

**Vonna:** Similar to the previous question, the new dashboard reports should make this much simpler. We recognize this has been difficult in the past and frustrating recently. The new dashboard reporting will provide summary information and allow you to drill down to see individual transactions. Additionally, we will be working this year to make sure we have a clear understanding of the numerous accounts held for various purposes. We want to clean up the organization-wide ones and work with MAs to make sure they are all necessary for your tracking. We can work to consolidate ones that are no longer needed or set up new ones if necessary.

**17. Concerning the financial sustainability of the organization, is TEAM still on track and progressing?**

**Vonna:** We are grateful for the Lord's provision on an ongoing basis and during this past year when some organizations have seen significant declines. We finished the fiscal year 2021 (ended

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March 31) ahead of budget. We have budgeted a general fund net loss of \$800,000 for the fiscal year 2022 with plans for a net loss of \$300,000 in the fiscal year 2023 and break even from that point forward. We have had prior reserves covering these losses, so they were planned and did not jeopardize TEAM's financial viability in any way.

### **18. At what new funding models and sources are we looking (new categories of workers, funds to subsidize workers, etc.)?**

**Geoff:** TEAM has created new pathways to allow for diverse funding models. In addition to the full donor-based model and the salaried staff model, people can now be salaried by another organization, either part-time or full-time, while serving with TEAM. We also now have the flexibility to accommodate a mixture of income streams, some coming from donors and some coming from other sources.

In addition, we have set up a partnership with another organization that allows our workers to receive donations from any country in the world; houses BAM/B4T companies and allows them to be capitalized; and can receive matching gifts from large corporations for ministry initiatives that have a humanitarian/development component.

Finally, we are increasing our engagement with foundations for another source of funding.

## Personnel

### **19. How many and which denominations are currently represented by TEAM missionaries/workers?**

**Jan:** Unfortunately, at this time, we do not track individual denominations represented by our workers' sending and supporting churches. We do have over 30,000 churches in our database, most of which are inactive at this time. Your question is timely as we are revamping most of our business processes regarding the standardization of data we should track. Denominations of sending/supporting churches could be tracked from the start of the mobilization process. The report of the 30,000+ churches shows a vast representation of evangelical denominations and independent-/community-/Bible-/fellowship-type non-denominational churches.

### **20. Is there any plan to assist those living in areas without access or access in a timely manner to a reliable COVID vaccine to obtain it?**

**Vonna:** COVID vaccine programs are run by national governments primarily. The U.S. (and likely the Canadian) government is not providing the vaccine to citizens abroad. We have researched and considered how other organizations are responding and discovered that they are bound by the same restrictions. Unfortunately, TEAM cannot obtain, distribute or administer vaccines.

### **21. What is being done to retain U.S. support/mobilization staff, which seems to be a bit of a revolving door situation?**

**Jan:** The current mobilization department is a fourth or fifth of the department's size when it was at its peak in 2012 to 2016. At that time, we had regional hubs of mobilizers around the country and a tiered leadership structure. By 2019, the regional structure was dismantling, and those who

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left TEAM were not replaced. Most of the current missions coaches have significant tenure, with three moving into engagement roles with churches. Anna Price, the director of mobilization, is working diligently to create opportunities for leadership development and career growth within the department. This year, she has created a senior manager position from within and a project manager (from an administrative role). These growth opportunities are essential for us to keep the capable and dedicated coaches we have. The philosophy of mobilization has shifted away from responding to a high volume of search engine-generated web leads to a more targeted, relational and vocational focus.

### **22. What do you envision our mobilization efforts looking like in the coming months/years?**

**Jan:** While the nature of North American sending within missions is changing, God is still calling His people to serve cross-culturally. While the internet will continue to connect prospects to TEAM (and be a vital source of communication), our recruitment focus will be cultivating relationships with partners and networks where the next generation of Kingdom workers are being nurtured and prepared. Our missions coaches will shift from filling opportunities in ministry areas to helping pre-applicants and applicants discern God's calling on their lives, inviting the church into these formational conversations. The mobilization process will become more formational and less transactional, believing that God is preparing His children to extend His Kingdom in many ways through a spiritual journey toward placement and departure. TEAM will grow its mobilization of non-North Americans to work cross-culturally, sent by their local churches.

While in the early stages of development, strides are being made in establishing agreements with global partners to facilitate this sending. We can receive these workers within our current MA structure and within innovative 21st-century pathways to ministry. In five years, we envision welcoming a growing number of non-North American workers as colleagues and leaders within our traditional ministry areas and beyond.

## Communication

### **23. How will we be communicating these strategic changes in TEAM's mission and vision to churches and donors?**

**Jan:** This is a very important question and we are in the process of planning and implementing an integrated and comprehensive marketing (external) and communication (internal) strategy. Here is a snapshot of marketing/communications strategies that we are implementing or soon will be implementing over the next 12 months or so:

- We have developed a communications theme for FY 22 that will focus on “the Global Church” phrase of our mission statement. We will be defining it, writing articles, blog posts, white papers, etc., with stories that support this theme. All of our communications will flow from this theme—from the newsletters, to appeals, to acknowledgments, to website and social media. It will take all year for this to begin to flow seamlessly through our communication matrix. Next year we will focus on the next priority (most likely from our mission statement).

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- Our new database refresh will allow us to nimbly manage our donor acknowledgments and our donors will hear a small update on our missional priorities on each thank you note and receipt.
- Our mailing system is now integrated with our databases and our mailings will be focused at unique audiences with unique messages. This will allow us to segment our churches etc., and send them communications pertinent to them. Anna Price is working to coordinate new direction and focus through mobilization and church engagement communications.
- Our appeals for general fund giving will also carry the theme. We are readying an appeal to go out in June about partnering with the Global church and includes interviews with three global mobilizers.
- Messaging on the website, as well as a new lead form, qualifies all new leads, so we are only cultivating those who meet a four-point criteria.
- The Global Leadership Group is developing 3-5 ministry priorities that will focus on uniting ministry focus toward a common vision (through a variety of ministries).

These are just a few of the ways we will begin to move the focus of TEAM forward. If you would like further information, would like to chat with me, or would like to see integrated plans, please contact me.

### **24. What is being done to improve red zone communication in a manner that will be viable, long-term, and not detract from time and energy committed to service?**

**Terri:** We are continually working to improve our red zone communication and exploring alternative channels and solutions. In an effort to bring red zone, security, and communications together under one umbrella, there are plans to have a global security director on staff later this year. The critical area of red zone communication and security will transition to this new role. Watch for more information in the coming months.

### **25. Would it be possible to find synonyms for some sensitive words such as mission and missionaries so that we can speak more openly with people working in closed countries?**

**Geoff:** The term “worker” is a preferred synonym and will start to be used more frequently in future communications. TEAM strives to use appropriate terminology when communicating with those serving in red zone areas and when sharing about what God is doing in those areas. We have processes and practices in place accordingly. Mission-wide, it is difficult to move away entirely from words like mission and missionaries because we also work in many areas in the world where believers and churches commonly use those words to describe TEAM’s type of work.

### **26. How can we pray for you? for the challenges TEAM/each leader faces at this time? For the work we're trusting Him to do in the TEAM world?**

**Ray:** Pray for discernment to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, sensitive to each other and sensitive to the context of the world around us (but not necessarily driven by it).