

MVAT: Startup Kit

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Missions: Vision and Action Teams

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In 1843, a hundred Missionaries -- recently freed slaves -- set out from Jamaica to West Africa with the gospel, and ever since, Caribbean Christians have gone out as missionaries all across the world.

How can we build on this solid heritage in our postmodern, globalised age?

First, we need to refocus our missionary vision. For, the enduring mission of the church in the Caribbean includes:

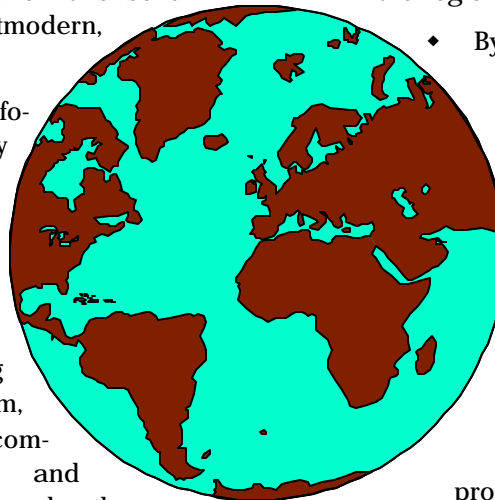
(a) The ongoing work of evangelism, discipleship and community blessing and transformation through the power of the gospel here in our region; and

(b) Our full participation in the global discipling work of the church: "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." [Matt 28:19 - 20.]

The *Missionary Vision and Action Team* [MVAT] Network will help us do

just that:

- ♦ By focusing attention on missions in and from the Caribbean in our globalised age, the MVAT Network will promote missions vision and action in and beyond the region.
- ♦ By bringing together a critical mass of Christians, churches, parachurch groups and missions organisations, it will promote collaboration on local, regional and global mission projects.
- ♦ By globalising our missionary vision, including helping us to understand other global "missions" by the secularists, neopagans and Islamists, it will help us respond to intellectual, apologetics and core cultural challenges to the church's ministry both here in the Caribbean and overseas.



So, let us now look at the following seven action steps.



MVAT, Step 1:

AWARENESS



Since you have requested this kit, you are aware of and concerned about the vast mission opportunities and challenges facing the church in the Caribbean:

- ♦ The opportunity for Caribbean Missionaries in the 10/40 window, from West Africa to Indonesia and the Philippines.
- ♦ The similar opportunities in North America and Europe, where many hearts cry out for God in the face of rising trends of cultural decay and collapse.
- ♦ The global and regional three way clash for the future: (1) secularism and its fellow travellers, neo-paganism and secularised, often apostate forms of Christianity, (2) Islam, especially through the *Dawah*, (3) the current wave of Christian Reformation sweeping the South of the planet.
- ♦ The regional challenge for the church to demonstrate the relevance and effectiveness of the gospel in response to many of our core cultural concerns.

However, the magnitude of these opportunities and challenges is such that one cannot simply act alone. So, our best approach is to find ways we can come together in local teams and regional networks.

For that to happen, a critical mass of believers in our various communities, churches, and organisations needs to grow in awareness and a sense of urgency that God is calling out to us with the Mordecai challenge:

"If not now, when? If not here, where? If not us, who?" [Cf. Esther Chs 3 - 4, esp. 4:12 - 14.]

To bring together such a critical mass in your local community, perhaps you could:

- 1] Study and pray, asking God to guide you to others whom he is stirring to think and act on our Mission in and beyond the region.
- 2] Note down these names, and pray for opportunities to share your heart, being sensitive to the right moment.
- 3] Share, but do not be so zealous that you force these thoughts down the throats of all and sundry!
- 4] As people respond, ask them to take steps 1 - 3 with you, and keep in touch over a few weeks or months. [You might even set up an online e-Group; it is easier to do than you think.]
- 5] When you have a small circle, suggest that you come together several times over a few weeks, to pray, share and discuss missions-related issues, challenges and opportunities in and beyond the Caribbean.
- 6] In these sessions, work your way through the *Antioch Timeline* Bible Study [p. 9], and then the *MVAN/MVAT Statement of Principles* [p. 10]. Also, read and discuss some current missions news and views materials, such as the NEST, Barnabas Fund, Wycliffe, YWAM or SIM materials.
- 7] What is the consensus of the group? To go further now? To keep on studying, discussing and praying?

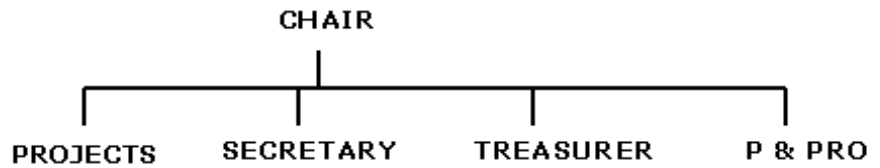
The Next Step . . .

When you are ready for the next step, you will want to develop a local *Missionary Vision and Action Team* [MVAT]. That begins with Step 2.



Step 2:

ORGANISING



Nehemiah shows us how to initiate, organise and successfully manage a major undertaking under God:

- Learning of the plight of God's people, he was concerned. So he prayed then obtained support, authorisation and resources from a key powerbroker, the king. [Ch 1.]
- On going to Jerusalem, he quietly surveyed the scene then called the people together, giving them hope and a vision of the way forward. [Ch 2.]
- He organised the work, delegating manageable tasks to specific groups and their leaders. [Ch 3.]
- As challenges, opposition and crises arose, he stood on his strengths and made sure he was not distracted from the main task in hand. [Chs 4 - 6.]
- When the project was finished -- very quickly -- time was set apart for celebration and worship, with the help of Ezra, a key spiritual leader. Revival broke out. [Ch 6:15 - 7:5, 8:1 - 11, & 8:13 - 9:38.]
- The project and revival then triggered waves of national renewal and reformation that continued for centuries. [Chs 8 - 13.]

This example is a powerful pattern: concern and prayer in the face of awesome challenges, then action guided by a godly vision on a project that meets a key need of the community, triggering a spiritual and national renewal and transformation.

Similarly, the recent *Conference on Islam, the Gospel and the Caribbean* [Barbados, July

2003] showed that awareness and action seminars can open our eyes to the full force of the church's missionary vision [cf. Eph 4:9 - 24!] and to the opportunities and challenges that we face. Then, action teams can be mobilised to undertake sustained action in the community.

To get such seminars off the ground in your community, a coordinating committee will be vital:

1] Chair: coordinates and is the public face and voice of the local MVAT initiative.

2] Projects Coordinator: organises and manages the seminars and other projects as they come online through the action teams. [Also, Vice-Chair.]

3] Secretary: correspondence, minutes of meetings, periodic reports on progress/gaps relative to plans; also sees to correct procedure, records and protocol.

4] Treasurer: manages and helps raise funds, providing transparency over finances.

5] Partners & Public Relations Officer: promotes good relations and collaboration with partners, and outreach to the church community and wider public. If a "one-stop missions shop" project [see note under *local projects*] is set up in say a local Christian bookstore, the P&PRO will also liaise with the bookshop staff delegated to this task.

Once such a committee is set up, and has the support of the MVAT group and key stakeholders, a series of seminars -- Step 3 -- can then be implemented. Suggested foci are: (1) The Islamic challenge and the heritage of Abraham, (2) the secularist-neopagan challenge, (3) the gospel, core cultural issues and the Caribbean, (4) global and regional missionary opportunities and challenges.



Step 3:

SEMINARS

AWARENESS AND ACTION SEMINARS, SUGGESTED FORMAT:

| | | | |
|------|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| MOR: | (TRAVEL & ARRIVAL, REGISTRATION) | 2: LEADERSHIP TRAINING SESSIONS : (build the knowledge base, skills and action plans for the Action Teams and church leaders, and also to draft and approve the <i>Declaration and Call for Action</i>) | 3: ONE-DAY GENERAL AWARENESS WORKSHOP |
| AFT: | | | |
| EVE: | 1: PUBLIC EVENING SESSIONS: KEYNOTE ADDRESS, PRESENTATIONS, PANELS, PUBLIC DECLARATION AND CALL TO ACTION | | |

Awareness and Action Seminars help create broad awareness of the missionary challenges and opportunities facing the church in the Caribbean. Thus, action teams can then be mobilised, to carry out projects that exploit the opportunities and take up the challenges.

To maximise impact in a given community, the initial seminar should be held on a topical issue, perhaps one of:

- 1] Islam, the Gospel and the Caribbean (in an age of *Dawah* and renewed *Jihad*).
- 2] Globalisation, Secularism and the Gospel in the Postmodern Caribbean.
- 3] Is the Church relevant in the Postmodern Caribbean?
- 4] Revisioning: the Church's missionary/discipling mandate in a globalised, postmodern age.

Follow-up seminars over the next several months would then further develop the capacity of a critical mass of the church to undertake significant local, regional and global mission-related initiatives, through:

- I: Short, weekend, forms of the other topical seminars, and/or
- II: The GLI's Caribbean renewal and reformation course, *Why Not Now?*

The suggested format for the Seminar is based on three mutually supporting components:

1: Public, evening sessions: communicate the major themes, concerns and call to action to the church community and wider public through a major public/media event. The final evening session also issues the *Declaration and Call to Action*, which (with the *Statement of Principles*) is the charter for the ongoing work of the local MVAT and its project workgroups, the Action Teams.

2: Leadership Training sessions: equip potential Action Team members and general church leaders with key knowledge, information and skills to tackle the missions renewal agenda that will be highlighted through the *Declaration and Call to Action*.

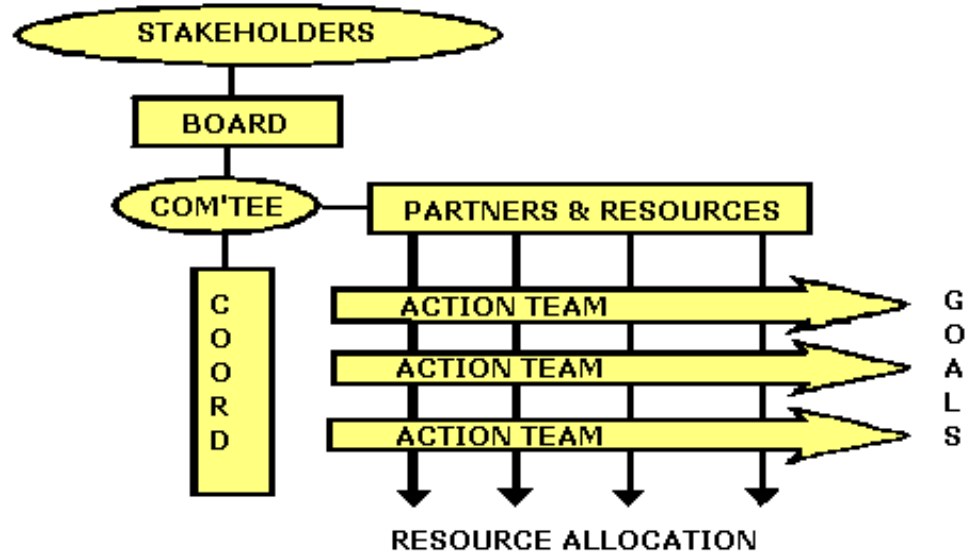
3: General Awareness Workshop: open to the general church membership and the interested public. As such it emphasises awareness, basic information and skills needed to tackle the renewal of the church's approach to its mission in and beyond the Caribbean in light of the concerns addressed in the Seminars.

(NB: If you do not already have it, request a *Seminars Manual* from GLI, which will give the more technical details. We are also available to help you identify and contact regional and international experts to serve as keynote speakers, main presenters and workshop facilitators.)

At this point, the MVAT and its Action Teams will be ready for further action. For, you will have in hand: a charter, a programme of follow-up seminars and a network of contacts to initiate practical mission-based projects locally, regionally and internationally.



Step 4:

GOVERNANCE & NETWORKING

Once Action Teams are in place, and are tasked to carry out projects, it makes sense to further develop the MVAT's organisation structure. As the diagram suggests, this is best done using a Project Team approach, with Action Teams now

reporting to the Coordinating Committee's designated *Projects Coordinator*. The *Declaration and Call to Action*, together with the *Statement of Principles* [p. 10] would set an initial framework for guiding decisions and activities, in light of accepted timelines.

(NB: At a later stage, there may be a need to draw up a constitution and bylaws, and to officially register under the appropriate laws. But for now, a relatively simple and flexible framework will be adequate until there has been enough time to see what more permanent arrangements would be appropriate.)

A Board of Reference will also be vital, to provide a link from the committee to the local church community and also to credibly represent the MVAN/MVAT Movement at the decision-maker levels in the wider community. This will become especially important when regional or international missions projects are to be carried out and people are to be selected, commended and sent overseas..

The Board should therefore mainly comprise key, well respected young and established Christian leaders in the community, (1) as nominated by the stakeholders in the initial

Seminar, and (2) as they agree to serve. (Representatives of key partner bodies that provide resources to the projects should also serve on the Board to assure accountability.)

The Chairman and one other member of the Coordinating Committee should also sit on the Board, *ex officio*: by virtue of office.

To link the local efforts to the regional level, regular communication and contacts may be maintained through the GLI and the regional *Missionary Vision and Action Network* [MVAN] of similar MVATs, Missions Agencies and ministries engaged in mission-related efforts in and beyond the Caribbean.

Accordingly, we request that the Chairman of the Board and that of the Coordinating Committee sign the *MVAN/MVAT Statement of Principles* [p. 10], and communicate an original copy to the GLI, along with a similarly signed copy of the *Declaration and Call for Action*. If the MVAT is hosted in/through an office, e.g.. a local Christian Bookstore or the ISCF/UCCF office, this should also be communicated. Finally, the P&PRO's name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and email contact will also be vital for ongoing regular communication.



Step 5:

LOCAL PROJECTS



There is an almost endless variety of possible and profitable missions-linked projects!

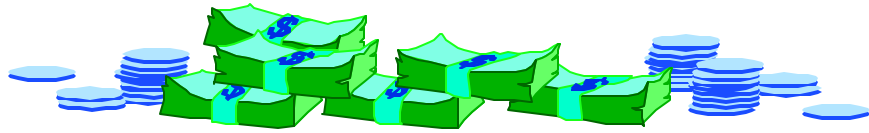
- Missions awareness, prayer, action and support workshops can be developed and held in churches and even schools and community centres.
- A study, prayer and action group for people considering the call to the missions field can be established, as a start-point for sending and supporting short- and long-term overseas missionaries.
- A "One-Stop Missions Shop" can be set up in a local Christian bookstore, as a permanent point of contact on missions activities, opportunities and information. ["Kit" available.]
- Training seminars on how the gospel speaks to core cultural issues and challenges can be used to spark specific projects that respond practically to such concerns. ["Kit" available.]
- Key apologetics issues -- especially those tied to Islam, secularism and neo-paganism in the postmodern globalised age -- can be studied and a series of articles developed and published in the press, to give a sound Christian alternative to the public.
- A mini-thinktank and advocacy group can be set up to study and respond to mission-relevant apologetics, development, public policy, law and international issues -- including how the Christian Faith promotes good government and good citizenship, current events, the Middle East situation, the Suffering Church. Position papers and policy proposals can then be published as a guide to local and regional decision makers. (The SRI group can help foster such initiatives, and can be contacted through the GLL.)
- A small business development workshop can help Christians enter into and shine a light in the business world, as well as developing a base for funding missions projects. [Training Programme available.]
- A Christian Community College can be launched, to address educational and skills needs in the church and wider community, based on the life- and community-transforming power and relevance of the Christian worldview. (Later on this might become affiliated with the emerging regional Christian University being developed on the basis of the established JTS/CGST in Jamaica.)
- An Arts ministry group can be developed, with foci on drama, dance, poetry, writing, the graphics arts and the Internet. Such a group can then address the range of cultural concerns, showing through Spirit-anointed art forms how the Christian Faith can bring blessing and transformation to the Caribbean.
- A Family Life Transformation ministry group can be started, to address the single biggest cluster of core concerns in the Caribbean.
- Gospel-based community upliftment initiatives can be launched. (Existing projects could be studied for startup ideas, such as the Eden Lodge and Ellerton projects in Barbados.)
- And many more . . .

In short, the issue is to envision what is possible under God, and to prayerfully seek to go about doing those good things that he has laid out in advance for us to do [Eph 2:8 - 10]. Fundraising is a critical issue in this process, and thus this is the subject of the next step.



Step 6:

FUNDRAISING



The total amount of wealth now available in the world -- or even just among the people of God -- is far more than any single person, project, institution or enterprise can profitably absorb.

Why then, do so many "worthwhile" ministry projects starve (or even never get off the ground) for "lack of funds"?

- ◆ Some projects are simply bad ideas, or are poorly presented.
- ◆ The would-be implementers may lack the required capabilities and/or credibility.
- ◆ Too often, the church has so often over-promised and under-delivered, and/or appears to be so irrelevant, that no-one is listening.
- ◆ Sometimes, we just do not know who to approach; or, major donors may simply be worn out with a constant stream of divergent requests from too many directions.
- ◆ Many of us are caught up in the worldly consumer-debt spiral, and have little time or money to "spare" for God's work.
- ◆ In happily rare cases, some have been "burned" by self-promoting hucksters and their greedy schemes. [Cf. 1 Tim 6:3 - 21.]

Happily, this pattern is suggestive of an effective way forward for MVAT/MVAN projects: first of all, start small, with high-concept, low-budget initiatives that respond in fresh ways to widely felt needs. Thus, the MVATs would create a track record of success, good stewardship and integrity. This approach builds credibility with an ever-widening pool of potential large and small supporters.

"Supporters" rather than "donors" is deliberate. For, too often, even in the face of widespread

unemployment, we discount those who volunteer time and skills and/or give in-kind support rather than cash. But, quite often we could not afford the calibre of help that committed volunteers give, or what we get as in-kind contributions.

Equally, though -- especially when it comes to sending and supporting numbers of missionaries in the field -- significant pools of funds need to be raised, creating an endowment and a steady flow of income that forms a sustainable financial basis for the work:

1] Some projects e.g.. conferences and courses) can be partly or wholly self-funding through fees and sponsorships (including voluntary or subsidised services and in-kind donations).

2] Income-generating projects e.g.. in crafts or construction or even cash crops) can be undertaken to fund the work. (A successful project can then be developed as a small business!)

3] The Tentmaking model of Acs 18 - 19 shows how such a small business (or a profession) can be used as an economic base for ministry. (Indeed, all believers should view their employment as a base for proportionate giving to/investment in God's work; i.e.. evangelism and life-transforming discipleship naturally build a skills, manpower and financial base for further ministry.)

4] Regular individual/group subscriptions, pledged sponsorships and matching donation challenges can be used, especially for long-term initiatives such as training and fielding missionaries.

5] A portion of the income to the MVAT/MVAN should be consistently set aside to build a long term endowment. Prudent investment then yields a steady income base for further work.



Step 7:

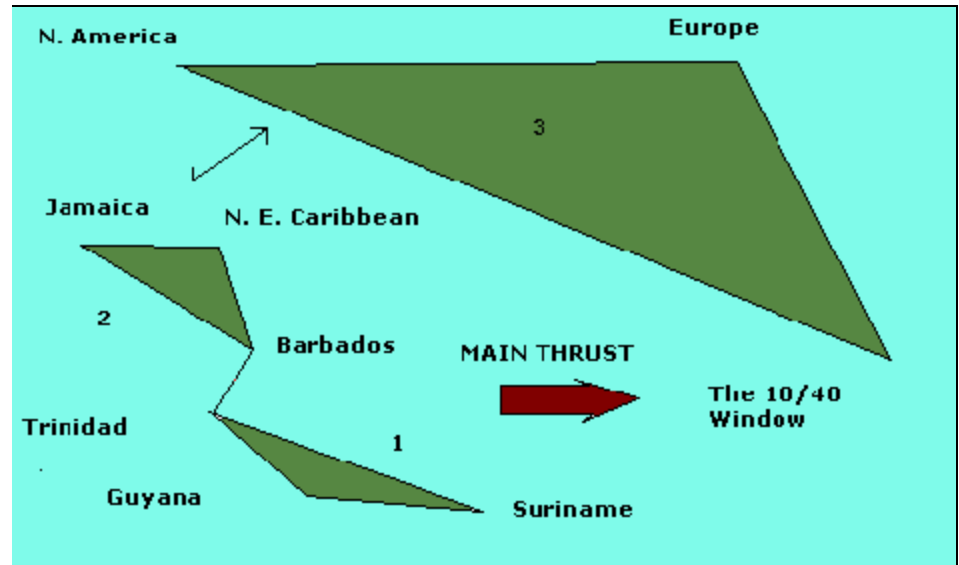
INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

Caribbean people are perhaps the best situated in the world to reach out with the gospel to much of the 10/40 Window. And, due to the Caribbean Diaspora in North America and Europe and the historical links with these metropolitan countries, we are also well positioned to reach out to the ever more secularised peoples of the North.

The *Three Triangles Strategy* therefore seeks to take advantage of this opportunity over the next decade, through:

- ♦ Awareness and mobilisation of a critical mass of the church through the MVAT/MVAN initiative and associated Awareness and Action Seminars.
- ♦ Addressing core cultural challenges through prophetic intellectual and cultural leadership in the region and beyond.
- ♦ Identification, development and implementation of strategic local, regional and international mission-based projects that promote the transformation of lives, communities and nations through the regenerating and renewing power of the gospel.

Such an ambitious agenda can only be effectively carried out through regional collaboration, as individuals, churches, ministries and Missions groups and agencies come together in a regional network towards fulfilling our Discipling Mandate. Thus also, we see why something like the MVAT/MVAN initiative is potentially quite important to the work of the



church in the region, through:

- 1] An ongoing Seminars programme, with a focus on the three dominant forces in the postmodern globalised era: Secularism and Neo-paganism, Islam, and the growing Christian Reformation across the South of the planet.
- 2] Preparation of a critical mass of Christians for engagement in missions in and from the region, through the MVAT/MVAN network, and including participation in a regional Missions Fest slated for Summer 2005 in Jamaica.
- 3] A regional programme of projects as discussed under Local Projects, which will also serve to help us develop capacity as a region to support long term missions initiatives.
- 4] A well conceived, well supported programme of missionary initiatives in the 10/40 Window and in the lands of the Caribbean Diaspora, backed up by institutionalised research, project development, community upliftment consultancies and world class training capacity.

In conclusion, we come back to the Mordecai challenge:

If not now, when? If not here, where? If not us, who?

THE ANTIOCH TIMELINE

A MISSIONS WORK-SHEET/BIBLE STUDY

OWNING AND SUPPORTING THE MISSIONARY VISION:

1. The Antioch Time-Line:

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| A | B | C | D | E | F |
| Church Planted Ac. 11:19 - 21 | Church Strengthened 11:22 - 26 | Relief Effort 11:27 - 30 12:25 | Missionaries Sent out 13:1 - 3 | Missionaries Report 14:26 - 28 | Further Ministry 15:1-6 ff.. 15:35, 40 |

(NB: 11:26 - B to D took about a year; please prayerfully cf. Heb. 5:11 - 6:3)

2. Let us reflect . . .

The churches in our community are at Stages: **A B C D E F**

To make further progress, we need to . . .

3. Messengers of the Good News need "Feet":

Rom. 10:14, 15 shows that gospel messengers must be trained, briefed, sent, supported, and eventually replaced. When daughter churches have been planted, they need strengthening to become strong, vibrant, and missions-minded in turn.

How can we raise up those who can be sent?

How can we support them and their work?

How will we help to strengthen daughter churches?

What are some "ripe fields" [cf. Lk. 10:1 - 16] to send out labourers to in the next 3 - 5 years?

How will we raise the required resources?

Caribbean MVAN/MVAT Statement of Principles

MVAN/MVAT Statement of Principles

Recognising the Missionary Mandate given us by our Lord, to make disciples of all nations [Matt 28:18 - 20], and being aware of the many missionary opportunities and challenges facing the Caribbean in a globalised, postmodern world, we the members of the Caribbean *Missionary Vision and Action Network* [MVAN] and associated *Missionary Vision and Action Teams* [MVATs] do hereby joyfully and solemnly agree to work together under God towards fulfilling our Mandate, through the power of the Spirit given to empower us in life and witness [Jn 7:37 - 39, Ac 1:4 - 8, Eph 1:11 - 14, Rom 8:1 - 39], and in light of the God-inspired biblical principles, examples and teaching [2 Tim 3:10 - 17].

Accordingly, we commit ourselves to:

- 1] Christ, His Church and its Global Mission: faithful witness to the Gospel, leading to salvation of souls and biblically based discipleship; thus resulting in God-blessed transformation of lives, families, communities, institutions and nations/peoples under the Lordship of Jesus the Son of God.
- 2] The Historic, Apostolic, New Testament, gospel-based Christian Faith "once for all delivered unto the saints." [Jude v. 3, cf. 1 Cor 15:1 - 11, Ac 17:16 - 31, 2 Cor 10:3 - 5, Col. 1:3 - 29, Jn 3:14 - 21 (& 17:3), 5:17 - 47, 1 Jn 1:1 - 2:11, 2:18 - 27, 4:1 - 16 & 5:1 - 15, 2 Peter 1:16 - 2:3 & 3:1 - 18, 2 Tim. 3:10 - 4:5.]
- 3] The enduring Mission of the Church in the Caribbean, especially the evangelising and discipling of Caribbean peoples, with the associated application of the gospel to address our region's core intellectual and cultural issues, concerns and challenges; through Spirit-led, Bible-based, prophetic -- thus visionary, renewing, God-empowered and transformational -- intellectual and cultural leadership. [Cf. Mt 28:18 - 20, Ac 1:8, Eph 1:3 - 14 & 4:9 - 5:21, Gal. 3:1 - 14 & 26 - 29, Col. 3:1 - 17, Titus 2:11 - 14, 2 Peter 1:2 - 11.]
- 4] Support, inform ourselves about, pray for and participate in the global, gospel-based missionary outreach of the Church, with a particular focus on the 10/40 Window (from which many of our ancestors came, and with which we share many ethnic and cultural affinities); and also on those lands in which the Caribbean Diaspora is concentrated.
- 5] Praying for, promoting, and helping to develop, field and support a strengthened Caribbean Missions Force, especially in the lands of the 10/40 Window.
- 6] Collaborate and cordially cooperate in these tasks, making decisions, working together, resolving differences and disagreements in light of the truth in love and purity, godly wisdom [cf. James 3:13 - 4:12] and applicable biblical instructions, principles and examples.
- 7] Mutual Support towards these ends, through prayer, encouragement, consistent regular communication, transparency and sharing of skills, knowledge and tangible resources as appropriate and needed.

In the Name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified, risen and glorified Christ.

Amen and Amen.

FURTHER READING AND CONTACTS

The following references, links and contacts should prove very useful in getting your MVAT started, and in keeping it going.

1. The Kairos Focus reference Web site: <http://www.angelfire.com/pro/kairosfocus>

This site is dedicated to the Fulness of Christ Vision as a basis for promoting renewal, revival, reformation and God-blessed transformation of the Caribbean. Through it you will be able to find many other contacts for further information and collaboration.

The Resources page [http://www.angelfire.com/pro/kairosfocus/Resources_and_References.htm] is a treasure-trove of useful Internet materials.

2. Carter McNamara's micro eMBA for Not For Profits: http://www.mapnp.org/library/np_progs/org_dev.htm

This site contains a complete online course (with copious resources), on how to start up and develop a community-based action group. As such it serves as a wonderful complement to this kit.

3. SD Concept paper: http://www.angelfire.com/pro/kairosfocus/resources/SD_concept.htm

This provides a survey on creating sustainable development initiatives in a Christian frame of thought. The Lecture on Ethics and Development [http://www.angelfire.com/pro/kairosfocus/resources/Ethics_and_development.htm], and the course, Why Not Now [http://www.angelfire.com/pro/kairosfocus/resources/Why_not_Now/Why_Not_Now.htm], are also quite relevant to the task of engaging core intellectual and cultural challenges in our region.

4. The Apologetics Primer: http://www.angelfire.com/pro/kairosfocus/resources/Mars_Hill_Web/apologetics.htm

A survey of intellectual challenges to the Christian Faith in our region, that serves as a useful first look at key issues, including secularism, postmodernism and Islam. The JIS *Introduction to Philosophy* course [http://www.angelfire.com/pro/kairosfocus/resources/Intro_phil/intro_and_schedule.htm] provides more details on responding to the secularisation of the West. Two papers from the Barbados conference, on the Afroz thesis [http://www.angelfire.com/pro/kairosfocus/resources/On_Afroz_Thesis.pdf] and on the Abrahamic heritage [http://www.angelfire.com/pro/kairosfocus/resources/Abrahams_faith.htm] are also helpful in assessing the Islamic challenge to the gospel in the Caribbean and wider world. So is the Declaration from that conference: http://www.angelfire.com/pro/kairosfocus/resources/Bds_decl_03.pdf .

5. Why Not Now? http://www.angelfire.com/pro/kairosfocus/resources/Why_not_Now/Why_Not_Now.htm

This course is highly relevant to the work of MVATs across the region, and it is suggested that MVATs implement short courses based on the online materials, as a follow-up to the seminars.

NOTICES

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