PARTNER HANDBOOK



Networking & Equipping Frontline Workers for World Harvest

HARVESTNET INTERNATIONAL

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Welcome

This booklet is designed to inform partners or potential partners about HarvestNet International (HNI) and what it means to be a member of the HarvestNet International family. It describes the vision, values, and family life of HarvestNet International. HarvestNet International is a partnership of churches, ministries, and businesses that have chosen to work together in God's harvest field. Our partners are not centrally governed, but we experience many benefits through our relationships with each other.

If you connect with our family and find our vision and values a good fit for you or your organization, please consider formally partnering with us for the harvest. You can find an application at harvestnetinternational.com. Please contact us with any questions you may have or to discuss what involvement in HarvestNet International would look like for you or your ministry. You can reach us at 717.690.1334 or at harvestnetintl@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

The HNI Board Dr. Barry Wissler, President Kevin Eshleman, Vice-President Floyd Zook, Treasurer Dale Brubaker Dr. Desmond Frey

History of HarvestNet International

At an Ephrata Community Church retreat in 1990, God spoke very clearly through a prophetic word that said "in the fourth year, I will pour out my Spirit." The church had just chosen to model itself after the early church of Antioch and took on a call to prepare for harvest based on the four-year prediction. The elders of ECC, agreeing that this was from God, concluded that by 1994 they should begin to prepare for the harvest by planting a church.

In the spring of 1994, ECC planted its first sister congregation, and **HarvestNet International** was born to foster a partnering relationship between the two congregations. Barry Wissler, senior pastor of ECC, continued to provide guidance to the church plant's founding pastor, and ECC also provided other resources to strengthen the growing flock. In 1997, another prophetic word confirmed the role of ECC as a "resource church," and the next year two more congregations were planted, which is a trend that has continued. Therefore, **HarvestNet International** began as a church planting movement.

In addition to the churches planted, God connected us to others from a variety of ministries; and our tiny network grew. Outside churches asked to partner with us, and prophets and evangelists with Ephesians 4 ministries began to sense a call to partner for the sake of the harvest.

In 1999, the apostolic ministry of Alan Vincent confirmed the work of **HarvestNet International**. Alan began to assist Barry and the elders of ECC in refining their focus as a regional equipping church. Alan continues to provide apostolic input, not only into ECC, but also to **HarvestNet International**. Marc Dupont was also recognized as an advisor to **HarvestNet International** because of his prophetic ministry to the network. In 2013, Larry Kreider joined the oversight team for **HarvestNet International**, bringing wisdom from his experience in leading an international network of churches.

Because we value regional transformation, we also began several multi-church ministries under **HarvestNet International's** banner. The Kingdom Ministry School, originally known as the Equipping Institute, launched in the fall of 2005 to train leaders for ministry in the church and marketplace. KMS has served more than 1,400 people from 140 churches who have taken classes. Seeds of Hope was launched in 2009 to coordinate mission partnerships to minister to the poorest of the poor in India by caring for orphans, installing clean water systems, and feeding the hungry. In 2013, **HarvestNet International** launched HarvestSENT as a vehicle for supporting and empowering Ephesians 4 ministers and missionaries serving within **HarvestNet International** or its many partners. In May 2012, we changed our name from **HarvestNet** to **HarvestNet International** to reflect the growing interest in our network and its continued expansion globally. **HarvestNet International** continues to grow in countries around the world. Leadership teams are being developed in each continent where there are clusters of partner churches and ministries.

In 2020, the school in the USA was redesigned and named The **HarvestNet** School of Ministry in order to train workers for the harvest.

In 2022, **HarvestNet International** began to multiply the School of Ministry and started its first international school in the Czech Republic.

In 2023, **HarvestNet International** joined with Globe International to provide more in-depth care for its missionary partners.

Guiding Statements

Purpose or Mission

Networking and Equipping Frontline Workers for World Harvest

HarvestNet International is a family of partners who exist to advance the Kingdom of God by working together to fulfill the Great Commission.

Core Values

1. <u>The Presence of God</u>

HarvestNet International values the intimate presence of the living God. We believe God is a relational God who delights in meeting with us and loves when we spend time with Him.

We believe worship and prayer are integral to creating an atmosphere where the presence of God breathes forth power and reveals the glory of God on earth. We believe in the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit, but also that we are stewards of His presence when He chooses to meet with us in a significant way. In the Old Testament, King David paid worshipers to attend to God and to steward His presence. We simply believe that Jesus is worthy of our worship (Revelation 4:11).

We believe that Jesus invites us to join Him in His ministry of intercession. It is in being with Jesus that we catch His heart and are empowered to intercede and act so that His Kingdom will come on earth as it is in Heaven.

2. The Kingdom of God

HarvestNet International values the increase and expansion of the Kingdom of God. We honor Jesus Christ as the worthy King; and we seek to surrender to the governing laws, morals, principles, power, and values of the Kingdom of God. We seek to take the Kingdom of God from the secret place to every place.

The Kingdom of God is central to all of Christ's teachings that He taught His apostles and can be summed up in the following descriptions:

- Kingdom Character, Culture and Values: Love God. Love people. Live in faith. Live obediently. Live eternally focused.
- Kingdom Process: This is simply being with Jesus. Jesus taught His disciples to wait until they were endued with power from on high via the Holy Spirit's being poured out *before* they engaged in fulfilling their mandate—to take the Kingdom of God to

the nations through the preaching of the gospel. We can be with Jesus in living encounters with Him through time in prayer, worship, meditation on the Scriptures, and simply waiting until He releases fresh guidance from His Spirit and daily power on our hearts.

- Kingdom Power: This is the imparted effect and end result of being with Jesus. The apostles were taught to bring the Kingdom of God through the demonstration of the Holy Spirit's power. They were not permitted to testify of the Kingdom of God without the Holy Spirit's enablement. Good oratory skills are not a sufficient substitute for God's power to effectively establish the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in Heaven. At its heart, God's power manifests to minister to the oppressed, set captives free, and ultimately reveal a "kingdom not of this world."
- Kingdom Purpose: The Great Commission
 - Proclaiming the gospel of Christ through evangelism
 - Making disciples of the nations through teaching the Word of God and equipping the saints to do the work of the ministry
 - Contending for the faith through spiritual warfare and doctrinal purity
 - Influencing and impacting society in the gates of influence referred to as the Seven Mountains

3. The Word & Spirit

HarvestNet International values the Word of God as contained in the Scriptures and in the Scriptures' partnership with the Holy Spirit in all dynamics of ministry. Along with the Scriptures, God also leads us through the subjective voice of the Holy Spirit and practically ministers to us through His spiritual gifts.

Many times churches that stress the work of the Holy Spirit neglect sound doctrine. Churches may also focus on sound doctrine but neglect the work and voice of the Holy Spirit in this present age.

We value the Scriptures as the final authority in all areas of life and practical living. The Scriptures are our "Kingdom textbook" and all doctrine (i.e. spiritual things we believe), prophecy, teaching, and prayer are both inspired by and held accountable to its standards.

4. Authentic Relationships

HarvestNet International values authentic relationships as the backbone of our network within the context of the rest of our values. This authenticity implies that we want to know one another in our weaknesses and our strengths, and to grow with one another as we advance the Kingdom of God together.

We believe organizational structure is valuable to the degree that it serves and facilitates these kingdom relationships. The idea is "form serving function," or the organization serving the organism. HarvestNet International will change or alter structure as needed to accommodate these authentic relationships.

At its heart, making disciples implies making spiritual family or "sons and daughters" through the gospel of Christ. Therefore, we value spiritual fathering and mothering as essential for healthy, kingdom-family growth.

5. <u>Team Ministry</u>

HarvestNet International values doing ministry as a team. No one individual has everything the body of Christ needs. We need one another's gifts. We simply are better together and work as a team in our ministries, in our regions, and across generations.

- Ministry Teamwork: We value all the ministry gifts as found in Ephesians 4 and the spiritual gifts described in 1 Corinthians 12 as being essential to the fulfillment of God's purpose for the church on earth. It is imperative these gifts work together honoring and valuing one another.
- Regional Teamwork: To see a region or nation discipled and transformed will require the body of Christ in that region or nation to work together as a team to advance the Kingdom of God. HarvestNet International is not a local church congregation but rather an international parachurch ministry that supports the work and mission of local congregations and their collective regional expression.
- Multigenerational Teamwork: In 1 John 2:12-14, three generations of spiritual maturity are described: fathers and mothers, young men and women, and children. We believe and value these seasons of life's spiritual journey and believe God intends for all three generations to work together in teamwork. We value the wisdom of those who have lived life and have gone before us as spiritual fathers and mothers. We value the creativity, energy, and zeal of the young men and women. We recognize the need to perpetuate the things God has taught us and seek to birth, train, and equip spiritual children.

6. <u>Health</u>

HarvestNet International believes the Kingdom of God is a place of health and vitality. Healthy leaders, healthy relationships, and healthy organizations reproduce healthy disciples.

• Personal Health: Healthy leaders make healthy ministries. This includes how leaders manage their time, finances, and physical body, as well as their work ethic and their "rest ethic." Personal health includes commitment to time with God in worship and prayer, study of the Scriptures, and input from others. Personal health includes

devotion to ongoing training and personal growth to help them to better serve those under their care.

- Relational Health: While we have mentioned the need for authentic relationships in a previous value, relationships—marriage, family, friends, and work relationships—need to be healthy. For relationships to thrive and grow, they must be free from one person's seeking to control or impose his/her will on another. For relationships to be healthy, there must be freedom of communication in order to clearly hear one another's honest perspective.
- Organizational Health: Clear vision, measurable goals, and an energized staff are all important to organizational health. Organizational health is not too dissimilar from the personal health category mentioned above. To be healthy, it matters how organizations manage their time, their finances, and their staff care. It is also imperative that healthy decision-making processes are implemented and carried out with diligence. Healthy organizations have good organizational structures that serve the mission, vision, and values of the organization.

7. Local Church

The local church is God's primary vehicle for advancing the Kingdom of God. Therefore, HarvestNet International values existing local churches and the continued establishment of new local churches as the primary means of Kingdom expansion.

All partners of HarvestNet International are required to demonstrate their support of local churches by being a practically committed, submitted, and serving member of a local congregation of believers. We accept any gathering of believers in Christ, whether in a house church, a mega-church, or any size in-between where there is definitive leadership of elders or pastors who give direction and oversight to the congregation. We do not recognize gatherings without defined leadership/eldership as a local church, although we affirm Jesus can be and is present in such gatherings.

Leadership and Governance of the Network

HarvestNet International is led by a Board of Directors. This is our corporate fiduciary board which oversees policy, staffing, planning, budget, and financial matters internationally. The Directors appoint leaders to various councils who oversee the work of HNI in their regions. Vision and decisions in each region are shaped by consensus within each team but are subject to the approval of the Board of Directors.

International Council: This is a representative council that is advisory to the Directors in setting and overseeing the international work of HNI. This group consists of our Board of Directors plus two representatives from each regional team (Europe, India, USA, etc.)

Regional Councils: In each continent or region where HNI gathers a cluster of churches and ministries, we maintain a representative council to oversee our operations in that area. This team of leaders is appointed by the Board of Directors in cooperation with each regional team. Each regional team has a leader and, at times, other staff to assist them. National leaders may be appointed as well to serve the partners in each nation when needed.

HNI Senior Partner: As the number of partners in a region or nation grows beyond 10 partners, HarvestNet International may designate one of the Partners as a Senior Partner to assist in the work of the network in their respective areas.

HarvestNet International does not function like a denomination with a central government over churches. We have built teams of leaders in each continent or nation where we have clusters of churches who lead our work in those regions. Each region then has representatives on our International Apostolic Council which serves the network as a vision and strategy team. We are building teams in Europe, India, Africa, Latin America and USA.



Qualifications and Responsibilities for Various Council Leadership Roles

All HNI Leaders must display a strong commitment to fulfilling the Great Commission, maintaining a high value for reaching the lost, with a willingness to do this in partnership with others.

Qualifications for serving in any HNI Leadership Team Role

- 1. Those with godly and biblical character qualities that are evidenced by a loving heart and attitude toward others, submission to authority, ability to work with others in a team, and a willingness to walk in the light with accountability to other team members.
- 2. Those who have demonstrated they carry a truly Kingdom perspective and global awareness of the purposes of God, and are willing to lead without putting their own interests before those of the Kingdom and HNI.
- 3. Those with a commitment to HarvestNet International values, vision, and policies and are willing to maintain healthy relationships within the network.
- 4. Those with a commitment to the work of HarvestNet International evidenced in regular giving of time and financial resources to the network as they are able.
- 5. Those who are effective ambassadors of HNI, representing us well to others, demonstrating a welcoming attitude to all, willing to build relationships with new partners and to recruit and train additional HNI leaders when needed.
- 6. Those willing and able to make the necessary sacrifices to attend the needed leadership team meetings to fulfill their role.
- 7. Those who have demonstrated a willingness to participate in a consensus decisionmaking process, resolving differences in a Christ-honoring way for the benefit of the network.
- 8. Those who are willing to honor the current president and International Council of the network in matters within HNI, and related to its mission and work.
- 9. Those demonstrating an ability for wise governance of HNI and its mission, including its legal, financial, and ethical integrity.
- 10. Those who have a sense of calling to serve HNI on a panel, and having that call recognized by the International Council and others on their respective regional teams.

Responsibilities for members of the HarvestNet International Apostolic Council.

- 1. Select the President of HNI and other corporate officers each year.
- 2. Set the mission, vision, and agenda for HNI annually in consultation with regional teams.
- 3. Act as the legal governing board of HNI as a US Nonprofit Corporation.
- 4. Appoint other HNI partners to fill all critical roles within the network including all those on the Regional councils.
- 5. Oversee the hiring and dismissal of HNI staff at the network offices.
- 6. Oversee any HNI ministries like HNI School, Missions works, etc.
- 7. Oversee the budget and financial policies of HNI.
- 8. Provide leadership for HNI in a consultative manner considering the needs of HNI partners.
- 9. Assist with the leadership and oversight of local churches and ministries as requested by the autonomous local leadership teams of those churches and ministries.
- 10. Mediate or adjudicate any matters of dispute or need for discipline within HNI.
- 11. Attend team meetings, retreats, and HNI events and some HNI regional summits as able.
- 12. Personally support the work of HNI with time and financial resources as able.

Responsibilities for members of any HarvestNet Regional Council

- 1. Select their respective team leader in conjunction with the International Apostolic Council.
- 2. Set the mission, vision, and agenda for their region of HNI annually, in keeping with HNI vision and values and in a way that protects HNI DNA.
- 3. Act as the governing and planning team of HNI work within their region. (This does not include governing individual churches or ministries.)
- 4. Appoint other HNI partners to fill all critical roles within their region.
- 5. Oversee the hiring and dismissal of HNI staff in their region.
- 6. Oversee partnership and credential applications in their region.
- 7. Oversee the budget and financial policies of HNI in their region.
- 8. Provide leadership for their region in a consultative manner, considering the needs of HNI partners.
- 9. Select two of their members to represent their regional team to the HNI International Council.
- 10. Assist with the leadership and oversight of local churches and ministries as requested by the autonomous local leadership teams of those churches and ministries.

- 11. Mediate or adjudicate any matters of dispute or need for discipline within their region.
- 12. Attend any council meetings, retreats, or events for their region as well as the international HNI summit.
- 13. Plan the annual summit in their region with the International Council.
- 14. Personally support the work of HNI with time and financial resources as able.

Responsibilities of a HNI Senior Partner

- 1. Report directly to a designated HNI Director or staff member.
- 2. Aid in evaluating and approving partnership applications and support the onboarding process for new partners.
- 3. Collaborate with HNI Staff in planning for events or summits within their assigned nation or region.
- 4. Assist HNI staff in creating community and collaboration among partners within their region; keeping partners connected and informed.
- 5. Assist HNI leaders in communicating with partners who need care or in facilitating a connection with a HNI leader(s) who can provide needed support.
- 6. Maintain financial records of HNI's activities within the region.
- 7. Provide cultural insights to HNI leadership to facilitate positive relationships and understanding within the community.
- 8. HarvestNet International will offer operational expense support by a budget approved by the Board of Directors. Personal rewards may be given to the Senior Partners, such as invites with travel expenses paid to HNI Summits, and other exclusive perks.

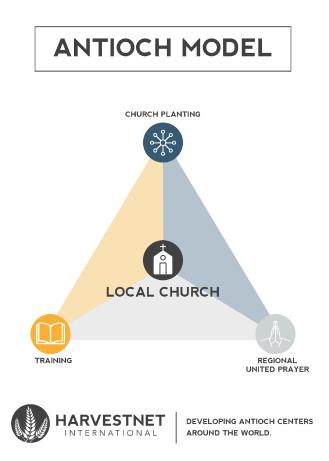
Oversight of HarvestNet International

HarvestNet International is committed to modeling the accountability and oversight expected of all HNI partners. Therefore, HarvestNet International has established a respected outside board of recognized spiritual advisors who have been invited and accepted the responsibility to speak into the direction and operation of HarvestNet International and its leaders. As of April 2023, the HNI oversight team includes: Marc Dupont (Mantle of Praise Ministries), and Larry Kreider (DOVE Christian Fellowship International).

Financial Integrity

HarvestNet International is fully committed to handling all finances with the highest level of integrity and modeling the financial commitments expected of all HNI partners. The HNI advisory board is involved in major financial decisions and partners are provided with an annual report of HNI finances. HarvestNet International is incorporated in the United States as a nonprofit religious organization-501(c)(3)-and all contributions are tax deductible under United States law.

Ministry Descriptions



The triad above pictures what a Kingdom Resource Center looks like with its Prayer Center, Training School, and Vision to plant churches. God is raising up these centers all over the world. We are excited to partner with any church wanting to establish these three aspects in their local church.

Scan the QR code below or visit the HNI YouTube page to hear Dr. Barry share on the Antioch Model that we work to see established around the world.





HarvestNet School of Ministry (HSM)

HSM exists to teach God's people to encounter God in their personal experience and empower them with the Holy Spirit in radical devotion to Jesus Christ. HSM emphasizes hands-on training, personal experience, and academic biblical understanding. We are a multigenerational school with students ranging from the ages of 17 to 75. Partners are invited to use HSM resources to equip people in their churches or ministries and to participate as HSM instructors.

HSM has undergone many changes in 2020 allowing multiple options that we are excited to share. The school moved to a modular format, allowing students to attend full time, part time or simply audit a class. In 2020 we also invested in streaming equipment to take the school international.

The most exciting part of the new School format is its design to be rapidly multipliable in the nations. As of 2021, our fist multiplication is underway in the Czech Republic.

Visit the HSM website at <u>www.harvestnetsm.com</u> or scan the QR code for more information!





Seeds of Hope (SOH)

Seeds of Hope (formerly called The Gift Intl) supports HarvestNet International's mission through kingdom ministry to the poor. We work through partnerships with other HarvestNet International ministries in developing nations.

In India, we currently provide for the daily needs of children in orphanages and have sponsored a number of clean drinking water systems and village wells. We have provided livestock to families and supported feeding programs, a school, a home for rescued young girls formerly living on the street, and job training programs such as two tailoring schools.

The current economical and political crisis in Ukraine has caused many to leave the country in search of a better life as they seek jobs and education. The biggest number of immigrants from Ukraine is in Poland. According to the official statistics, in Warsaw alone about 800,000 Ukrainians live, work, and study. Today, Poland is more open to the gospel than ever before. New conditions make Ukrainians and Russians more sensitive to God than they were at home. In Warsaw, SOH helps build a strong, influential church and plan to open a preparing school for sending missionaries to other Polish cities and other countries. In Kiev, SOH provides for the needs of a growing church with an emphasis on discipleship.

Your donation is so much more than a gift to those in need. When you donate to Seeds of Hope, you are sowing hope into the lives of others. Hope for a future through education. Hope for health through wells and clean water systems. Hope to earn a living by learning skills to earn a meaningful income. Hope for the gospel to spread as hearts and lives are touched.



Partnership Relationships

What does it mean to be a partner of HarvestNet International?

HarvestNet International is a family of individuals, churches, ministries, and marketplace businesses who are laboring together to reap a harvest for the Kingdom. In Luke 5, the fishermen followed Jesus' instruction on where to cast their nets, and they received such a large catch that their nets could not hold it. They called for help from other boats to bring in the catch of fish. In the same way, HNI partners believe that Christ has a great harvest prepared for the Kingdom of God, and we must work together in the power of the Holy Spirit in order to reap the harvest.

HarvestNet International is a relational network, but it is about much more than enjoying relationships with one another. We enter into relationship unto a common vision: to work together to bring in the harvest. HarvestNet International provides a way for partners to connect together to enhance and expand their effectiveness to advance the Kingdom through sharing resources and encouraging, equipping, protecting, and strengthening one another. HNI partners enter into relationship, not for what they can receive but to serve and become generous toward God. Partnership in HarvestNet International requires a commitment from each partner to sow resources into each other and into our cooperative work as partners. As we join together in obedience to the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom of God advances.

HarvestNet International also provides a place for accountability as a means of encouraging the health of its partners. We are supportive of those who desire to connect to HarvestNet International without its being the primary source of accountability. Therefore, while some partners relate to HarvestNet International as their primary (or only) accountability, some partners remain primarily accountable to their denomination or board of directors, supplementing that relationship by joining with HarvestNet International for relational or spiritual accountability. In those cases, HarvestNet International will serve as a secondary place of accountability and work collaboratively with a partner's primary accountability to encourage health in the life of the partner. HarvestNet International does require that all partners have clear oversight and outside accountability for them and/or their leadership team.

Types of Partnerships

Organizational Partnerships

Organizational partnership is for churches, businesses, and ministries (501c3) who are committed to relating to HarvestNet International as an entire community. When an organization joins HarvestNet International, it represents a commitment of its leaders and all its members (employees and/or congregational members) to other HNI partners.

- Church and Ministry Partnership: We believe churches and parachurch ministries (501c3) should be self-governed, but it is natural for healthy churches and ministries to want to be linked to others around a shared vision. We are committed to the "one church" in each region and encourage each HarvestNet International church or ministry to fully participate in what God is doing in its region. Through HNI partners around the world, we can impact nations in strategic ways with wise use of resources. When a local church or ministry joins HarvestNet International, their leadership (pastors, elders, board members, executive team, etc.) commits to relationship with other HNI leaders, investing personally in the vision of HarvestNet International, and involving their entire congregation or ministry staff in HarvestNet International for the purpose of mobilizing, empowering, and equipping the body of Christ to advance the Kingdom locally and globally.
- **Business Partnership:** We believe that the marketplace is one of the most significant places of Kingdom advancement. Marketplace and business leaders (and their businesses) partner with HarvestNet International to be equipped and strengthened as they provide a manifestation of the Kingdom in the world's marketplaces. They provide significant leadership to strategic partnerships that transform communities, regions, and entire nations. When a marketplace leader joins HarvestNet International, they commit to relationship with other HNI leaders and invest personally in the vision of HarvestNet International for the purpose of mobilizing, empowering, and equipping the body of Christ to advance the Kingdom locally and globally.

Individual Partnership

Individual partnership is for individuals who desire to connect with HarvestNet International; but their church, ministry, or marketplace business is *not* an organizational partner. HNI welcomes partnership with any individuals who are in ministry, missions, or the marketplace who desire to partner for harvest.

Benefits of Partnership

- 1. Spiritual and relational accountability through HNI partners and leaders throughout HarvestNet International
 - These relationships create an atmosphere where spiritual, relational, and personal missions are fulfilled. HNI leaders are available to assist partners with their personal growth and development.
- 2. Opportunities to receive Ephesians 4 ministries, equipping, leadership development, organizational consulting, and other expertise as needed
- 3. Access to resources such as books, CDs, DVDs, podcasts, and other equipping materials
- 4. Access to vendors or organizations for services
 - Examples: insurance, publishing, legal counsel, accounting, financial planning, church planting, missiology, consulting, coaching, business development, etc.
- 5. Relationships and cooperation with other partners that offers the capacity for high-level impact in international outreach by providing opportunities to reach across cultures and impact nations with the gospel through strategic long-term initiatives and short-term missionary outreaches
- 6. Opportunities to participate in strategic Kingdom actions that would never be achievable without the joint resources and commitments of each other
- 7. Opportunities to utilize one's gifts, talents, and support services with other partners
- 8. Opportunities for personal ministry and healing prayer
- 9. Opportunities for training through The HarvestNet School of Ministry, and other conferences and events
- 10. The opportunity for licensure or ordination
 - Please view the Credentialing section for details or inquire with the HNI office.

General Commitments of Partners

- 1. To agree with and fully support the HNI statement of faith
- 2. To agree with and fully support the vision, purpose, and values of HarvestNet International
- 3. To serve as an ambassador for the vision and values of HarvestNet International and to be active in helping to establish and carry out the goals and strategies of the network
- 4. To build strong, robust relationships within the HNI family and to connect others from your church or ministry into the HNI family
- 5. To build relationships that assist in fulfilling the values and mission of the network

- 6. To seek relationship and cooperation with HNI partners for international outreach and missions
- 7. To establish and cultivate healthy relationships with other churches and ministries in the local region and partner with them in the harvest
- 8. To maintain an accountability relationship with an overseer within HarvestNet International and welcome accountability for ministry and life
- 9. To model servant leadership that is full of integrity in all areas of life
- 10. To adhere to biblical moral standards and standards of sound doctrine

Governance Commitments of Partners and Churches

Belonging to a family of churches and ministries does have responsibilities and requirements. In the early church we see that accountability and governance emerge very early in the life of the churches. In scripture we see that church governance was always approached with a plurality of leaders rather than just one leader in each church or ministry. Teams of leaders worked together under the leadership of a Sr. Leader. We also see Apostles and Prophets who provided guidance and perspective as builders and fathers. The key perspective of how HNI approaches governance is in relationship rather than a structure primarily on paper.

Below is a very brief description of what HNI considers principles of sound governance that will ensure health in any organization. While HNI does not govern its partners centrally like many denominations, we do require every organization to agree on and establish its own governance to maintain its health. HNI leaders are very happy to assist in this process if invited.

- 1. All individual partners must be active members of a local church where they submit to leadership, attend regularly as they are able, and tithe of their increase.
- 2. All connected churches are required to maintain a team of Elders who are selected by Biblical standards, installed publicly by the laying on of hands, and are empowered to assist the Sr. Leader in making the major decisions related to the vision, ministry, and operations of the church. New church plants may not be able to have a full board of Elders until leaders are identified and trained. However it is expected that at least 2 Elders will be appointed within roughly 3 years of the church launch or within 3 years of joining HNI. Apostolic leaders of HNI are available to assist in identifying and ordaining elders if invited to do so.
- 3. HNI churches are required to also invite a minimum of 2 outside overseers or advisors with experience in leading and governing churches to be available to advise the Pastor and Elders. The oversight team is charged to provide counsel as needed and to intervene in the event of a church or leadership crisis. Their advice is normally not binding as we encourage decisions to be made locally. But it is to the benefit of the Sr. Leader and Elders to seek their counsel while major decisions are being made.
- 4. While HNI does not centrally govern or control its partners it is assumed that HNI leadership can intervene in situations where immorality, theological heresy or

unresolved disagreement among the leadership team requires outside help. HNI also reserves the right to withdraw any credentials or leadership positions in the network on theological or moral grounds.

5. Each church should comply with the local laws and expectations from the government of their city and nation in terms of incorporation, registration, and compliance to financial laws.

Financial Commitments of Partners

The Bible says a surprisingly great deal about money and possessions. Our attitudes toward finances and our use of the resources God has given us reveal deeper heart issues that are the most important. HNI partners wholeheartedly commit to:

- 1. Stewarding all that God has entrusted to us and operating in a way that demonstrates godly integrity, providing a framework by which God can pour out even more blessings into His Kingdom through HarvestNet International
- 2. Conducting financial operations (and all operations) in a manner that reflects biblical truths and practices of integrity and accountability
- 3. Knowing, understanding, and complying with the fundraising standards outlined by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability at ecfa.org
 - Communication with truthfulness
 - Appeal for funds without creating unrealistic donor expectations of what a gift will accomplish
 - Honor all statements made in appeals about the use of the gift
 - Advise a donor appropriately of the fair market value of a gift given in exchange for a good or service
 - Abstain from using tax-deductible gifts to pass benefits to any individual for personal use
 - Acknowledge property or gifts in kind without a statement of the gift's value
- 4. Having financial oversight by a responsible board of independent participants, who review financial policies and procedures and provide objective guidelines for use of funds
- 5. Adhering to the biblical principle that a commitment to relate and work toward a common vision should be evidenced by a strong financial commitment, rooted in a spirit of generously honoring one another
- 6. Adhering to the biblical principle that it is healthy for each local church or ministry to be sustainable in its own local context and not dependent on outside resources for long-term health (local sustainability, local responsibility, and local accountability)
- 7. Adhering to the biblical principle that believers with an abundance of resources should share those resources generously with believers that lack resources

- 8. Adhering to the biblical principle of giving materially to those who care for us spiritually
- 9. Adhering to the biblical principles of sowing and reaping, generosity, and honoring spiritual leaders
- 10. Adhering to the tithe as a Biblical principle and encouraging one another to be diligent in the giving of tithes, both personally and as a ministry or business

Generosity toward the work of HNI

Belonging to any family comes with benefits and responsibilities. A family of churches and ministries is no different. HarvestNet International is not a denomination that centrally governs its churches and requires annual payments. Yet our ministry, which is always offered free, does depend on the generosity of its partners and donors to cover the expenses that ministry incurs. As Jesus says, where your treasure is there is your heart also. So, we assume that if your partnership with HNI is beneficial and important to you, then accepting some responsibility for the financial wellbeing of the network will also be important to you.

We realize that each church, nation, and culture is different in its ability to give. So, while the amount that our partners can contribute may vary, we can all be generous proportional to what God has entrusted to us. If HNI is really a true partnership, then all can share in the expenses in some way. We suggest a contribution of 2-3% of your ministry's annual income or budget. This should be given to the account of the regional network you belong to. For example, those in Europe can give into the HNI account in Europe. Those funds will remain in Europe and will be used to cover ministry expenses in Europe (church planting, leadership development, etc.)

Health and Accountability of Partners

Healthy familial and ministerial relationships require appropriate accountability to one another within the context of biblical boundaries. When those boundaries are violated, the HNI board will engage in the redemptive process provided by God in the Bible (Matthew 18:15-20, Galatians 6:1, Luke 17:3, 1 Corinthians 5:1-5), seeking to restore persons to their appropriate function within the Kingdom of God.

• **Divorce:** HarvestNet International affirms that healthy marriages and families of leaders are essential to healthy churches and ministries. To that end, HarvestNet International promotes and encourages healthy marriages and families. Divorce is a great evil that not only destroys marriages and families but also ministries, churches, and businesses, because it denies the redemptive power of Jesus to heal

broken persons and relationships. Initiating divorce for grounds other than infidelity (Mathew 19:3-10) and abandonment (1 Corinthians 7:10-16) is a serious moral failure. Partners who are victims of divorce should inform the HNI board who will seek to act redemptively on a case-by-case basis, giving due consideration to the counsel of the church elders or ministry board.

- Guidelines for personal rest and sabbaticals: Pastors and Ministry leaders are encouraged to take a weekly day off in observance of the Sabbath. In addition to weekly rest, an annual family vacation or holiday is important to give extended time to disengage from the work of ministry and spend quality time with your spouse and family. We also encourage each leader to take extended sabbaticals every few years. A sabbatical is different from a vacation in many ways. It should include rest and reflection on your call and vision and should also include some type of learning or study, either by reading, attending conferences, or visiting a place of ministry for the purpose of learning. Sabbaticals can range from a couple of months if taken every seven years to only a few weeks if taken more often. Usually, a church leadership team will agree to cover the salary and support for the leader over this time if the time away has a clear purpose and goals for more effective ministry after the Sabbatical time. HNI has several written guides on how to plan a sabbatical break. Planning should be done months in advance if possible so that the plan is clear and proper preparations can be made to cover the leader's work while they are away.
- Organizational Oversight: The New Testament modeled corporate accountability of one church to another (Acts 15) and of churches to apostles (1 Corinthians 4:14-21) while recognizing the responsibility and integrity of each church to arrange its own oversight and governance (Acts 20:28-35). Such principles promote healthy churches and ministries, healthy businesses, and healthy relationships. HarvestNet International expects each partner organization (church, ministry, or marketplace partner) to arrange clearly defined oversight and outside accountability. Although HarvestNet International does not exercise central government over its various partners, by entering into partner relationships, HarvestNet International accepts some responsibility for the health of its partners. In light of this, HarvestNet International expects partners to inform their oversight teams and the HNI board of any serious issues and to invite their oversight and HNI leadership into a place of discernment to make recommendations regarding those issues. Such issues include but are not limited to the following:
 - Serious moral failure within the leadership team, the elders, or the board
 - Heresy or false doctrine within the leadership team, the elders, or the board
 - Misappropriation of funds

- Intractable conflict between the primary leader(s) and the leadership team, the elders, or the board
- Intractable conflict amongst the leadership team, the elders, or the board
- Persistent failure of the primary leader(s) to fulfill the responsibilities of their office
- Dissolution of the church, ministry, or business
- Involvement in activities that could damage the integrity of the partner or HarvestNet International
- Withdrawing of the partner from HarvestNet International

In these or similar situations, the HNI board (or its representatives) would work alongside the partner to resolve the issue redemptively and legally as required. In situations where leadership is functioning in a healthy manner, the HNI board would only need to be informed. In rare situations and at its own discretion, the HNI board would request involvement in the resolution of the issues. In such situations, partners should receive and cooperate with the HNI board (or its representatives) in a spirit of godly submission for the benefit of the organization (Hebrews 13:17). In all situations, HarvestNet International will honor the biblical principles described above.

• **Guidelines for Transitioning Senior Leader Positions**: Every leader and every church or ministry will at some time face the need to pass the leadership of the organization on to a successor. While every transition is different, we encourage leaders and leadership teams to begin discussing and planning for the transition long before the time has come. If the topic is avoided until there is an emergency or until the time comes, there is no opportunity to plan effectively for a smooth transition. There are always many conversations to be approached with potential successors and with the church leadership team, etc, even before the new leader is chosen. There is a process that must be walked out with all those involved.

Most transitions that go poorly can be blamed on poor planning and preparation. HarvestNet International stands ready to help churches in this planning process or can recommend those who have helped churches transition successfully. We also suggest that leadership teams read the book "NEXT". Other resources can be suggested upon request. We also encourage those looking to transition to bring their oversight team or advisors into the process early.

Credentialing of Partners

Because of the variations of national law and requirements for religious ordination, HarvestNet USA does not credential internationally. If credentials are needed, they should be sought with the HNI Regional Team that covers your nation of residence. Each regional council will have different criteria and processes.

In the USA for example, HarvestNet International will credential primarily senior pastors and senior ministry leaders. The application process includes a theological questionnaire and an interview with a panel of three or more HNI leaders. Often there is a requirement of at least some Biblical education. Also, as HNI does not carry insurance for each credentialed leader, there is always the requirement for each candidate to maintain a malpractice insurance policy of their own in order to remain credentialed.

Those desiring to transfer ordination credentials to HarvestNet International from another organization may apply to do so, providing that they are in agreement with the basic requirements of HarvestNet International.

Acceptance is subject to approval and recommendation by an Interview Panel.

HarvestNet International believes that credentialing an individual is a significant commitment of both the individual and HNI leadership and should not be entered into lightly.

In order to provide suitable accountability, HarvestNet International maintains the prerogative to revoke a license or ordination credential at any time at the sole discretion of the HNI board. Before doing so, the HNI board will normally seek and consider the counsel of the church elders and/or oversight board as part of the discernment and decision-making process. Matters such as but not limited to the following may constitute grounds for the revocation of license or credential:

- Serious moral failure
- Intransigent insubordination
- Heresy or false doctrine
- Inability to fulfill the requirements of one's office
- Dismissal from one's office based on suitable biblical grounds
- Inappropriate ministry activities that damage the integrity of the partner
- Leaving or renouncing the network

When leaving a church, ministry, or network, HNI partners may hold or transfer their credentials to another church, ministry, or network at the sole discretion of the HNI board only when in good standing with HarvestNet International.

Policy on Liability and Professional Boundaries

Protecting Your Organization

- 1. HNI advises each ministry or organization to adopt a policy on professional boundaries that provides for real accountability for the leader(s) as well as anyone who ministers to people in vulnerable, emotional, or suggestible situations.
- 2. HNI partners with itinerant ministries or who do not work as part of a larger ministry or organization must adopt a policy on professional boundaries that will establish clear oversight and accountability for themselves and their families.
- 3. HNI encourages people in governance positions in any HNI-related organization to ask direct and difficult questions to ensure that all leaders and those ministering to potentially vulnerable people maintain the highest standards of professional ethics. HNI encourages those in governance to take the refusal to answer questions or evasive answers to legitimate questions as indicators of possible problems.
- 4. Each organization partnering with HNI must carry its own liability insurance policy. HNI does not assume responsibility for the behavior of partners and partnering organizations. Partners of HNI are not considered "members" in any ecclesiastical or legal sense of that word. HNI does not carry a common insurance policy that covers partners or partner organizations.
- 5. Every HNI partner must comply with the requirements of background/criminal checks required by the governing authorities of their state or nation. These checks must be kept on file and be kept current as required by law. HNI advises partners and partner organizations to take criminal records or records of professional misconduct seriously, even if in their personal opinion that caution is no longer necessary.
- 6. HNI leaders, partners, and partner organizations must always respect the authority of a parent or legal guardian when ministering to minors. They must secure and file written permission for all travel or overnight events. They must ensure clear communication with the parents and guardians.

7. All HNI leaders and partners must maintain an active membership in a local church where they submit to the care and authority of that church's leadership.

Protecting Yourself and Those You Lead

- HNI leaders and partners must ensure that any counseling, mentoring, prayer ministry, or other forms of ministry with anyone of the opposite sex done by themselves or those under their supervision is conducted with the highest standards of personal and professional ethics with full and open accountability. HNI advises that men generally minister to men and women to women, or that people minister in multi-gender teams, in order to avoid any form of intimate relationship with someone of the opposite sex contrary to the Bible.
- 2. HNI leaders and partners must take proactive steps to ensure that inappropriate relationships with people, including but not limited to sexual relationships, do not develop in their lives. These steps may include such things as avoiding all counseling, mentoring, prayer ministry, or any long intimate discussion behind closed doors with someone of the opposite sex, having office doors with windows for transparency, or having others present in the building during ministry appointments just to name a few.
- 3. For HNI leaders and partners, traveling alone (short or overnight) with someone of the opposite sex (except one's spouse or family) is not permitted.
- 4. HNI advises its leaders and partners not to share private information such as personal secrets or sexual, family, or employment concerns with those to whom they minister. HNI encourages people to process these matters with those who give them pastoral care and oversight.
- 5. HNI leaders and partners must take care to avoid any touch, affection, jokes, electronic communication, or comments that could be misinterpreted to be sexual in motivation.
- 6. HNI leaders and partners should not arrange meetings with someone from the opposite sex alone in a home and should avoid public appearances of a similar nature. HNI advises that appointments be done in a professional place where people will see that the discussion is ministry related and not intimate or secret. HNI encourages leaders and partners to hold private conversations at an office or place

of ministry rather than a restaurant, park, or similar place where inappropriate intimacy might develop.

For HNI employees or those serving in official HNI positions of leadership, violation of these standards will be considered as grounds for immediate dismissal.

Planting New Churches

- Church planters wanting to connect with HarvestNet International should have a clear call from God to plant a church in a geographic area or within a people group, to reach them and bring the Kingdom among them. We suggest taking a church planter assessment to determine your gift mix and suitability as a church planter. While the vision of each church will be different, it should include both care for those God has already placed in the group and continually reaching others with the gospel.
- 2. To be a HarvestNet International partner church, the emerging group is required to agree on a leadership structure that includes both a senior leader and a plurality. Leadership must be done by a team with a leader. HarvestNet International does credential (ordain or license) church planters in the USA but not internationally. Applications are available from our office.
- 3. Leadership of the new church should have shown a proven faithfulness in attendance and serving at a previous local church. They should have a healthy attitude toward authority in their local church and leave with the pastors' blessing as much as is reasonably possible.
- 4. While we believe local churches should be self-governed and HarvestNet International does not govern partner churches and ministries, we do feel that it is beneficial for a new church if the pastor and leadership team agree to receive input and guidance from a more experienced HNI pastor and other Eph. 4 ministers as needed (apostles, prophets, etc.). HNI can provide a launch coach. We also recommend the Association of Related Churches because of their experience and success in church planting.
- 5. HarvestNet International does not require any formal degrees for pastors or elders but does strongly suggest a willingness to use either HarvestNet School of Ministry or another school of ministry to acquire a basic biblical education to ensure sound doctrine. This is to ensure that the flock will receive a good diet from the word through the preaching of the word.
- 6. HarvestNet International asks that the leaders of the new church and the initial core of members leave any other churches they may belong to in a way that honors their former leaders where possible. It is also expected that a strict policy of never "stealing sheep" without regard for their previous shepherd or the flock they belong to. While it is understood that people will leave churches to join the new church plant, we encourage our planters to refrain from soliciting or enticing people to do so.

- 7. HarvestNet International partner churches are expected to have representatives from their leadership team at HNI monthly meetings if possible and make the annual leadership conference a priority.
- 8. The leadership team must agree to abide by all legal and ethical guidelines for handling of church finances. HarvestNet International is happy to help in setting up policies and accounts if desired and assisting in securing the needed legal documents.

Statement of Faith

- 1. WE BELIEVE that only the 66 books of the Christian Bible are the inspired, inerrant, and authoritative Word of God. Therefore, the Bible is the final authority for all that we believe and how we are to live (Matthew 5:18; John 10:35 and 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).
- 2. WE BELIEVE in the one true God who has revealed Himself, distinguishable but indivisible, as existing eternally in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These, being one God, are equal in deity, power, and glory (Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:21-22).
- 3. WE BELIEVE that God created the world and also now upholds, sustains, governs, and providentially allows or directs all that exists. He will bring all things to their proper consummation in Christ Jesus to the glory of His name.
- 4. WE BELIEVE that Satan, originally the great and good angel Lucifer, rebelled against God, taking a multitude of angels with him. He was cast out of God's presence and is at work with his demonic hosts to establish his counter-kingdom of darkness, evil, and unrest on earth. Satan was judged and defeated at the cross of Christ and will, at the end of the age, be cast forever into the lake of fire which has been prepared for him and his angels (Isaiah 14:10-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 12:25-29, 25:41; John 12:31 and 16:11; Ephesians 6:10-20; Colossians 2:15; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 12:7-9, 20:10).
- 5. WE BELIEVE that the human race was originally created by God in His image, righteous and without sin, until sin entered by disobedience and rebellion, leaving humanity totally incapable of saving itself. In consequence of his disobedience, Adam's posterity are born subject to both imputed and inherent sin and are therefore by nature and choice the children of wrath, justly condemned in the sight of God and wholly unable to save themselves or to contribute in any way to their acceptance by God (Genesis 1-3; Psalm 51:5; Isaiah 53:5; Romans 3:9-18, 5:12-21; Ephesians 2:1-3).
- 6. WE BELIEVE that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man; that He was conceived and born of a virgin; lived a sinless life; and offered Himself as a legal, sacrificial substitution for sinners. By His blood shed at the cross, He obtained for us eternal redemption, the forgiveness of sins, and life everlasting. He was raised bodily on the third day and ascended to the right hand of the Father, there to forever make intercession for the saints (Matthew 1:18-25; John 1:1-18; Romans 8:34; 1 Corinthians

15:1-28; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:10-14; Ephesians 1:7; Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 1:15-23; Hebrews 7:25, 9:13-15 and 10:19; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 1 John 2:1-2).

- 7. WE BELIEVE that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. No ordinance, ritual, work, or any other activity on the part of man is required or accepted in order to be saved. This saving grace of God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, also sanctifies us by enabling us to do what is pleasing in God's sight in order that we might be progressively conformed to the image of Christ (John 1:12-13, 6:37-44, 10:25-30; Acts 16:30-31; Romans 3-4 and 8:1-17, 31-39, 10:8-10; Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 2:12-13; Titus 3:3-7; 1 John 1:7, 9).
- 8. WE BELIEVE that the Lord Jesus Christ baptizes believers in the Holy Spirit, in whom we are also sealed for the day of redemption. The Holy Spirit regenerates, forever indwells, and graciously equips the Christian for godly living and service. Subsequent to conversion, the Spirit desires to fill, empower, and anoint believers for ministry and witness. We also believe that signs and wonders, as well as all the gifts of the Spirit described in the New Testament, are operative today and are designed to testify to the presence of the Kingdom and to empower and edify the church to fulfill its calling and mission (Matthew 3:11; John 1:12-13, 3:1-15; Acts 4:29-30; Romans 8:9, 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Galatians 3:1-5; Ephesians 1:13-14, 5:18).
- 9. WE BELIEVE that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances of the church to be observed until the time of Christ's return. They are not a means of salvation but are channels of God's sanctifying grace and blessing to the faithful in Christ Jesus (Matthew 26:26-29, 28:19; Romans 6:3-11; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34; 1 Peter 3:21).
- 10. WE BELIEVE that the church is God's primary instrument through which He is fulfilling His redemptive purposes in the earth. To equip the saints for the work of ministry, God has given the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. We also affirm the priesthood of all believers and the importance of every Christian being joined with and actively involved in a local community of the saints. We believe that women, no less than men, are called and gifted to proclaim the gospel and do all the works of the Kingdom (Matthew 16:17-19; Acts 2:17-18, 42; Ephesians 3:14-21, 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 2:11-15; Hebrews 10:23-25; 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9-10).
- 11. WE BELIEVE that God has called the church to preach the gospel of Christ and make disciples of all nations. The church is especially called to remember the poor and to minister to their needs through sacrificial giving and practical service. This ministry

is an expression of the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ and is an essential part of the Kingdom of God (Isaiah 58:6-12, 61:1; Matthew 5-7, 28:18-20; Luke 4:18, 21:1-4; Galatians 2:10; 1 Timothy 6:8).

- 12. WE BELIEVE in the literal second coming of Christ at the end of the age when He will return to earth personally and visibly to consummate His Kingdom. We also believe in and are praying for a great end-time harvest of souls and the emergence of a victorious church that will experience an unprecedented unity, purity, and power in the Holy Spirit (Psalms 2:7-9, 22:27-28; John 14:12, 17:20-26; Romans 11:25-32; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28, 50-58; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12; Revelation 7:9-14).
- 13. WE BELIEVE that when the Christian dies, he or she passes immediately into the blessed presence of Christ, there to enjoy conscious fellowship with the Savior until the day of the resurrection and glorious transformation of the body. The saved will then forever dwell in blissful fellowship with their great triune God. We also believe that when the unbeliever dies, he or she is consigned to await the Day of Judgment when he or she shall be punished with eternal, conscious, and tormented separation from the presence of God in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:46; Luke 16:19-31; John 5:25-29; 1 Corinthians 15:35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10; Philippians 1:19-26, 3:20-21; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 20:11-15, 21:1-22:15).

Come Be a Part of HarvestNet International!

If you sense the need to connect with others who have the same goals and values that we have discussed here, then HarvestNet International may be a good fit for you. We invite you to explore partnering with us by attending any of our events or by giving us a call to discuss what a connection with HarvestNet International would look like for you. If you are ready now to partner with HarvestNet International, please visit harvestnetinternational.com to complete an application online. We'd love to welcome you to the family.

Dr. Barry Wissler

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