

Next steps:

Brace yourself, this part is long but I want to explain it as best as I can because you are all faithfully supporting me and praying for me. You are just as much a part of this.

What God has been leading me toward has been a process over the last few years. I feel that it is now taking form and I have some direction on how to move forward. Our YWAM Montana base is one of the largest in the mission, I believe it may be the 4th largest out of over 200 locations. We are known for having a strong training focus, having great teachers and quality staff to train students. We send out many short term outreach teams, but there is no real coordination to move long term vision forward on the ground. We have 5 “Target Nations” (Thailand, India, Nepal, Taiwan and Ukraine) where we send teams more frequently. However, there has been no real long term coordinated efforts over the years into these Target Nations, or other nations we’re closely connected with.

I felt like God showed me through the Haiti Project back in 2010, that it is possible to coordinate missions from our base to be more effective for the long term workers and vision God has given them. The Haiti Project was a small scale version because it was a crisis situation and a very short term project. I feel like God wants to use the talents, giftings and solid training on our base to be more effective in helping the long term vision and missionaries on the field through coordinating our efforts. This would work best through those nations we already have great relationship with, meaning our “Target Nations” and a few other locations many of our outreach teams go to.

I believe God has been guiding me toward creating a new strategy our base could have to make more of an impact in the nations we’re already well connected to. This would involve praying as a team and asking God which nation He wants us to work with in this capacity, then asking the leaders of YWAM in that nation (for example: Taiwan) what vision God has given them to accomplish over the next 5 years. Then praying with them and seeing how YWAM Montana could partner with them in a much greater capacity over the next 3-5 years to help see God’s vision for that location come to pass. YWAM in Taiwan, for instance, has 3 cities they feel God has asked them to reach, including things such as church planting and even pioneering new YWAM bases in those cities. We could, as YWAM Montana, set clear goals (through prayer) alongside the long term workers, as well as clear expectations on both ends and then a clear start and end date. Then share what God is leading us to do with everyone on our Montana base and ask the school leaders and outreach leaders to be a part of a coordinated effort to make a longer term impact. We have many skilled teams that go out, as well as gifted staff on the base, who could meet specific needs to see the vision God has for YWAM in Taiwan move forward over 3-5 years. Our relationship with YWAM Taiwan wouldn’t end after the 3-5 years, we would just send less teams/staff. I think this kind of strategy would create more of a highway between our base and whichever nation we’re doing this with, making it so much easier for more people to go there long term. This approach of setting our goals according to the needs/vision of the long term workers will help empower them to do what God has called them to.

I believe this strategy will have many other benefits, including sparking more vision among our staff on base to use their giftings on the field (especially those who work in critical service areas on the base and do not go on outreach much). It would also encourage more unity among departments on our base; all working for a common cause. It's not that our staff aren't unified, but our base is very large and most of the departments function independently of each other. But I saw during the Haiti Project that it's possible to have several departments work together to achieve a goal. I'd love to see this on an even bigger scale over a longer period of time. Which requires a team, a lot of prayer, and coordination. We could possibly do this strategy with 1 to 2 locations/Target Nations at a time, depending on the goals that are being set. Because we are a volunteer organization, we cannot force our outreach teams or staff to go anywhere, so this will have to be something God leads us toward and then our part is to share the need and inspire people to go. I believe God can do this because it's His heart to reach the lost and see His Church disciplined.

I gave the proposal of this vision/new strategy idea to our leadership on the base a few weeks ago. They like the idea, but recognize that it is a big shift in how we have done things in the past and it will take major buy-in from everyone on base. So, I am in a process of figuring out how this will look and waiting on the buy-in I need from our leaders. In the mean time, I have moved into our Strategic Missions Mobilization department on the base and there are 4 of us on that team. This department has been on the base for almost 10 years and has been the major drive behind our base setting up Target Nations and keeping those relationships solid. Now there are a few new people in the department and it's clear that God has a lot more vision He wants to bring through this team. We are in the throws of creating this new team and putting a new face on this department because it has been dormant for the last few years as the leader was out of country. My vision fits best in this department and with this team, and I will also be helping this team train more students and staff to go onto the mission field longer term.

Setting up and leading this new strategy for our base will put me in more leadership here, as well as require me to make another 3-5 year commitment to staying on staff to see it get off of the ground. I really feel that God has even more He wants to accomplish through our base in the nations and I am humbled that He would use me to help bring some of this about. It's interesting to me to see how my 4 year degree in International Studies, which basically trained me to be a diplomat, is now coming to play as I will be relating with our contacts in these nations and playing the role of ambassador to some extent. I have always felt called to go into these nations and teach and train the nationals so that they can train others. But, I don't want to just stop there. I really feel God has gifted me with the ability to see a very big picture view and to coordinate many different people/teams to make a greater impact long term.

I am praying about and considering Taiwan and Cambodia as some of our first locations to start this new strategy with. We have great relationships with both YWAM locations and many people on our base have gone to one or even both locations before. Another opportunity, slightly different from my vision, has been presented to me to lead. Our

base has been looking for the right invitation to get involved in a Muslim majority nation, closer to the Middle East. We've been invited to work with the YWAM location in Azerbaijan, which is underground and functions above ground as an NGO. Myself and the Strategic Mission team are looking at taking a scouting trip there in January to see if this could be a good location for our base to send teams to, and what types of teams would be best. They have also asked for some help in setting goals as a leadership team. We're praying a lot and trusting God will make it clear what our role is to be or not be.

I need a lot of prayer for wisdom from God as I walk out implementing this vision/new strategy for our base, especially that I would do it in God's timing and His way. It is moving forward a little slower than I would like, but I don't want to run ahead of God.