

Good Agency Practices: Lessons from ReMAP II

2004-02-09

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A large crowd of African believers is gathering before the thatch-roofed church to await for the arrival of the new missionary. Singing and dancing they praise God and look forward to the white faces going to live amongst them and teaching the Word of God. It had been so painful when their predecessors left on short notice because of repeated illnesses of the missionary wife; they had lived with them only for two years and just begun to know and love them. And the missionary family before that had moved on to a new ministry after 18 months. Is this white man's way of missions, always on the move on speedy feet while African village life goes on at a slow pace. When missionaries move on in such rapid succession, is it worthwhile to build relationships – and then suffer the pain of saying good-bye? Is it worth it to share your lives and inner feelings when they do not stay long enough to walk with you? These are some of the hidden feelings, hopes and fears, joy and memories of disappointments, as they await for the arrival of the 4WD-truck with the new missionaries.

Our modern world is moving on an express lane. Jobs and assignments are changing at an ever increasing pace. The same holds true for missions and each year some 20000 evangelical missionaries enter into a long-term assignment while 10000 evangelical missionaries are returning home. In addition to this countless missionaries move into a new assignment or change location. Many have completed their assignment and can happily move on; in other cases the aim has not yet been reached but other circumstances necessitate their reassignment or return.

What makes missionaries resilient, spiritually vibrant and strong to overcome crises? What helps them to grow into a fruitful ministry and to stay in service constantly adjusting to the changing circumstances and needs? Which organisational structures and practices provide effective support without strangling the missionaries' initiative or patronising the national church in the country of service? What builds missionaries up? What makes their ministry effective? These were some of the questions which led the WEA-Missions Commission to launch the comprehensive ReMAP II study¹ on missionary retention² and agency practices. In the following we consider the total retention rate (RRT)³, which served as the independent variable to which all organisational factors and practices were correlated. Mission executives, in general, gave relatively high ratings of organisational values (very few ratings 1 – 3) as they are convinced of the effectiveness of their agency's ethos. Therefore the agencies were grouped in three subgroups⁴ according to their retention: high (H), medium (M) and low (L). Separate analyses were run for old sending countries (OSC)⁵ and new sending countries

¹ ReMAP II was limited to long-term (expected to serve for more than 3 years), cross-cultural missionaries serving within or outside their National borders. In early 2003 a questionnaire was sent out to all known evangelical sending agencies in 22 countries around the globe asking for sociological and statistical data on their missionaries as well as for a self-assessment of their organisational practices (measured on a scale 1=very poorly done to 6=very well done). 598 agencies with some 39200 long-term missionaries participated in the study. In general, the questionnaire was filled out by a sending base director. The response rate was 30 – 95% of the total national evangelical mission force. The agency's response was multiplied by their number of active missionaries as so many missionaries are serving under these organisational and working conditions and under a leadership with these values and convictions.

² Retention R is the percentage of missionaries still in active ministry after i.e. 5 y or 10 y of service and the annual retention rate is defined as $RR = 10^{(\log R) / t}$, presuming a uniform probability of coming home. Extensive studies of the author have proved that this is a reasonable assumption. ReMAP II covered missionaries newly sent out in the years 1981-2000.

³ Harmonious transfer to another agency (while continuing with the ministry in the same culture) was not considered, as the global Kingdom of God was in focus and not the success of an individual agency.

⁴ 33% of the total number of missionaries each.

⁵ 323 agencies with 26200 long-term missionaries from Australia, Canada, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, South Africa, United Kingdom and USA.

(NSC) of Africa, Asia and Latin America⁶ to acknowledge the differences in their mission movements. For clarity only the subgroups (H) and (L) are depicted in the figures 1-13.

Candidate Selection

The analysis according to RRT⁷ shows that agencies from old (OSC) and new sending countries (NSC) gave very high rating to some candidate selection issues (figure 1), in particular *Clear calling to missionary service*⁸, *Agrees with the agency's doctrinal statement*, *Knows and is committed to the agency's principles and practices*, *Demonstrates mature Christian character and discipline, i.e. prayer and devotional life*, *Has good character references*, *Has committed endorsement from his/her pastor/local church for missionary service*, *Meets health criteria determined by a physical examination* (OSC), *Exhibits contentment with present marital status (single, married)* (OSC) and *Has firm prayer support* (OSC). The rating of high retaining agencies was some 10% higher, but even low retaining agencies apparently cover these essential areas reasonably well, so that there is little room for differentiation. Yet other issues like *Demonstrates mature Christian character and discipline, i.e. prayer and devotional life*, *Has the blessing of their family for mission service* (NSC), *Has ministry experience in a local church* (OSC), *Meets health criteria determined by a physical examination*, *Meets health criteria determined through a psychological assessment* (NSC), *Exhibits contentment with present marital status (single, married)* and *Firm prayer support* (OSC) received high attention in high retaining agencies only. These issues are expected to reduce attrition and thus need careful consideration. *Blessing by their family* is a very important issue in NSC and understood on their cultural background but apparently not so much in OSC with their individualistic society. Yet the low rating of *Has ministry experience in a local church*, *Has had previous cross-cultural experience* and *Has good potential for financial support*, *Has demonstrated ability to cope well with stress and negative events* and *Firm prayer support* (NSC) is unexpected as cross-cultural experience is considered as an excellent preparation for mission service; likewise prayer support proved to be central to missionaries' effectiveness in other sections of the survey. Do NSC churches give little ministry opportunity to young people as authority and respect belongs to the elders? Do they tend to be mono-ethnic and separated from others by language barriers? Is prayer support not considered as a prerequisite for the commencing of the application process as deputation and support raising often comes at a later stage of the pre-field preparation? These are some of the open questions, but in general, careful candidate selection proved to be one of the most decisive areas for mission longevity.

⁶ 275 agencies with 13065 missionaries from Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ghana, Guatemala, Hong Kong, India, South Korea, Malaysia, Nigeria, Philippines and Singapore.

⁷ 228 OSC agencies with 23675 missionaries and 156 NSC agencies with 11556 missionaries provided sufficient retention records (at least 16 missionaries sent) to permit the calculation of RRT with reasonable accuracy and a reliable assignment to one of the subgroups: OSC H (RRT > 95.3 %; 82 agencies with 7995 missionaries); OSC L (RRT < 94.0 %; 120 agencies with 7645 missionaries); NSC H (RRT > 98.75 %; 27 agencies with 4587 missionaries); NSC L (RRT < 96.6 %; 92 agencies with 3841 missionaries).

⁸ Literal wording of questions from the ReMAP II questionnaire is given in italic.

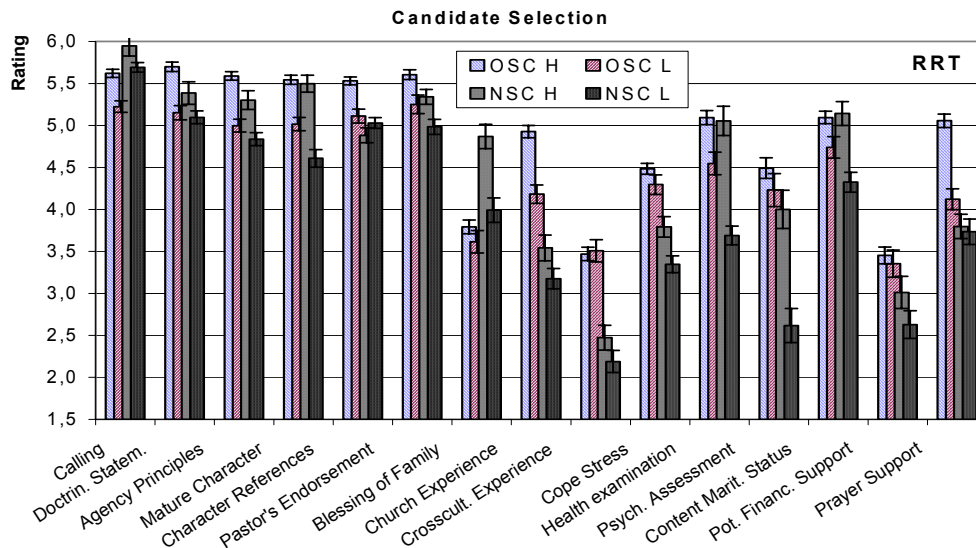


Figure 1: Executives' rating of their agency's candidate selection procedure. Agencies with high (H) and low (L) total missionary retention RRT in old (OSC) and new (NSC) sending countries. Rating on a scale 1 (= very poorly done) to 6 (= very well done); mean of the subgroup and standard error (confidence level of 68%; confidence level of 95% has the doubled length).

Pre-field Training Requirements

High retaining agencies expect twice as much theological training from their mission candidates and three times as much formal missiological training, on average, than low retaining agencies (figure 2). In fact, there is a remarkable similarity between OSC and NSC and underlining the significance of training for missionary retention. Unfortunately, new concepts of informal pre-field training are still to little in use that their effectiveness could be verified.

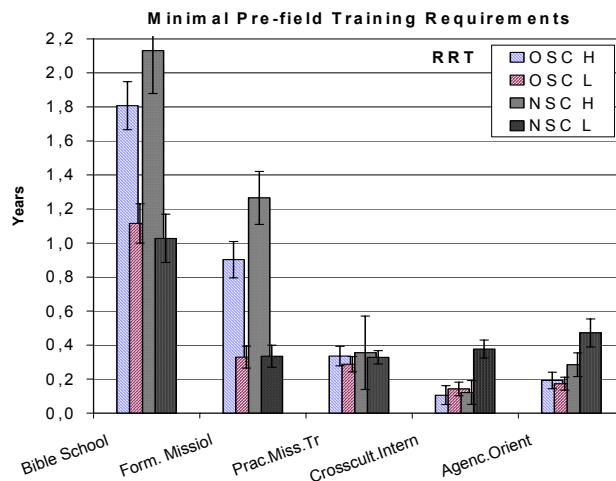


Figure 2: Pre-field training requirements of agencies with high (H) and low (L) total retention RRT in old (OSC) and new (NSC) sending countries that qualify candidates for ministry with this agency.

Vision and Communication

The section on vision and communication (figure 3) is marked by the high rating of NSC agencies often considerably higher than in OSC. This result is in contrast to general opinion considering vision, procedures and organisational structures as typically western concepts. The section is dominated by two issues with high rating: *A culture of prayer is actively promoted within the agency* and *Vision and purpose are shared and understood throughout the agency* (NSC). The spiritual foundation and a clear

sense of purpose, indeed, mark the two foci for successful ministry and are of great significance. High retaining agencies gave higher rating to *Vision and purpose*, *Communicate plans and job descriptions clearly*, *There is a free flow of communication to and from the leadership* (OSC), *There is effective communication between sending base and field*, *Policies are well understood and documented* and *A culture of prayer is actively promoted within the agency* (OSC), thus confirming the significance of effective communication on all levels for missionary longevity. Yet it is not clear why low-retaining NSC agencies gave much higher rating to *Missionaries are included in major decisions related to the field* than high retaining agencies – is this concept alien to their organisational culture or a felt need on part of mission leaders of low retaining agencies as they see an inappropriate number of their missionaries leaving?

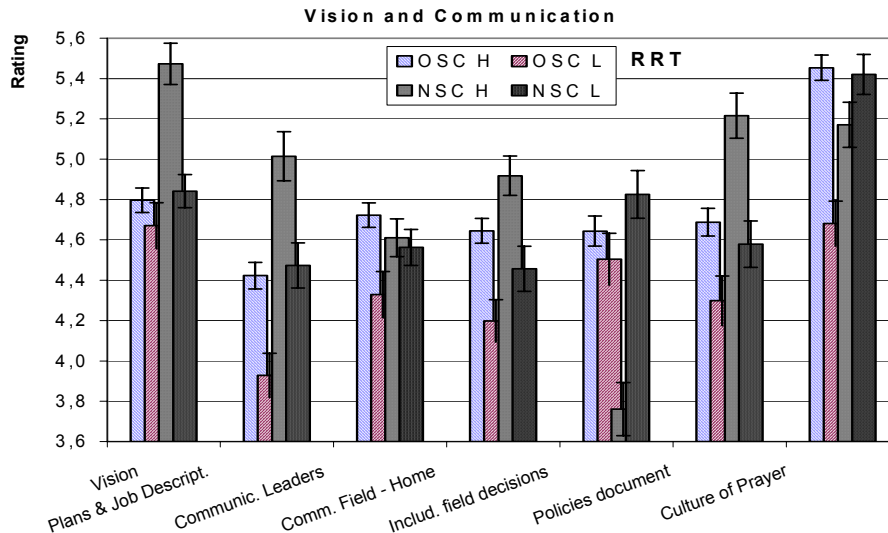


Figure 3: Executives' rating of their agency's vision and communication. Agencies with high (H) and low (L) total retention RRT in old (OSC) and new (NSC) sending countries; rating on a scale 1 (= very poorly done) to 6 (= very well done).

Leadership

The section on leadership issues ([figure 4](#)) is characterised by the high rating of *Most leaders are good examples of the agency's beliefs and values* in all agencies. The person and integrity of the leader appears to be of greatest importance and can even offset organisational deficits. High retaining agencies gave much higher rating to *Most leaders identify problems early and take appropriate action* (NSC), *Good on-field supervision in quantity and quality* and *There are documented procedures for handling complaints from missionaries* than low retaining agencies. These three issues will make a big difference and need careful consideration. In general, we see the significance of quality leadership for the success of the ministry, which is apparently even more important in NSC agencies.

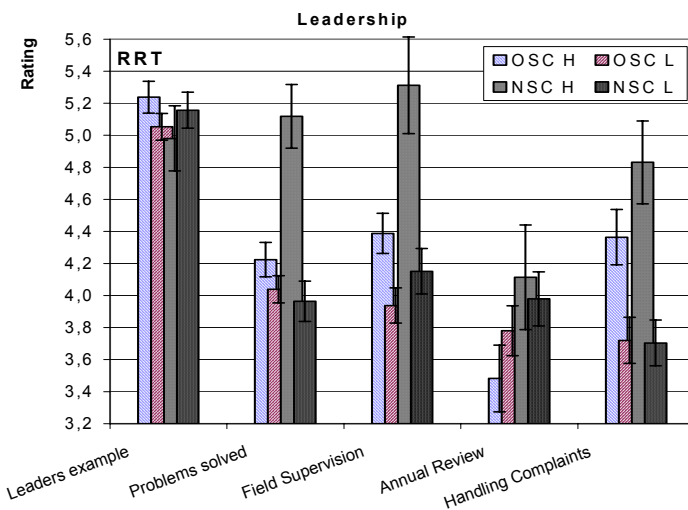


Figure 4: Mission executives' rating of their agency leadership. Agencies with high (H) and low (L) total retention RRT of old (OSC) and new sending countries (NSC); rating on a scale 1 (= very poorly done) to 6 (= very well done).

Orientation and Continuous Training

Regarding orientation of new missionaries and continuous training ([figure 5](#)) we find high rating of *Effective on-field orientation for new missionaries* (NSC), *Language learning arrangements for new missionaries to learn the local language* (OSC), *Ongoing language and culture training are actively encouraged* (OSC) and *Missionaries are provided with opportunities for continuous training of gifts and skills*, much higher rating than in low retaining agencies. These factors need careful attention in OSC and NSC. In NSC agencies we find an inverse correlation with *Language learning arrangements for new missionaries to learn the local language* and *Ongoing language and culture training are actively encouraged* as many NSC missionaries work in church planting in their own or a near culture so that cultural adjustment and language learning is not as critical as in OSC. In addition, these agencies suffer less attrition than mission service in a very different culture and thus leading to the inverse correlation. Yet in general, the significance of careful orientation of new missionaries and in particular continuous training of missionaries is demonstrated.

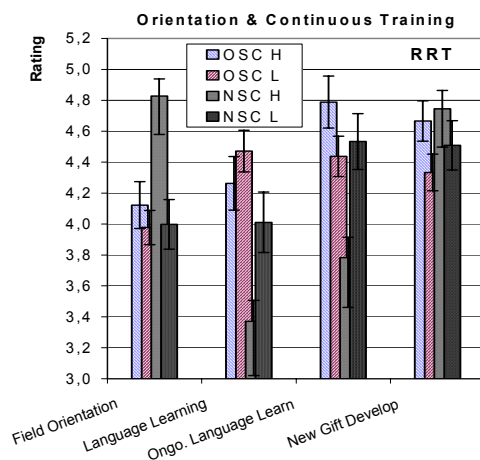


Figure 5: Mission executives' rating of their agency's orientation and continuous training of their missionaries. Agencies with high (H) and low (L) total retention RRT of old (OSC) and new sending countries (NSC); rating on a scale 1 (= very poorly done) to 6 (= very well done).

Ministry

Among the ministry related issues (figure 6) very high rating was given to *Missionaries are committed to their ministry* in all subgroups. This is the most decisive issue which keeps morale up. In addition high retaining agencies gave high rating to *Missionaries are committed to the agency* (NSC) and *Missionaries are given room to shape and develop their own ministry* but low rating to *Missionaries are generally not overworked in the amount of work they do* and *Missionaries regularly evaluate and seek to improve the agency's ministry* – and thus marking neglected areas.

Significant differences between high and low retaining agencies were found in respect to *Missionaries are given room to shape and develop their own ministry* (NSC), *Missionaries know to handle spiritual warfare*, *Missionaries are committed to their ministry*, *Missionaries are committed to the agency* (NSC and OSC!), *Missionaries are not overloaded with work*, *Opportunities are provided for a ministry/role of the spouse* (important to OSC!) and *Missionaries have adequate administrative and practical support on the field* (NSC) so that it is certainly beneficial to invest in these areas. Inverse correlation were found for *Missionaries are assigned roles according to their gifting and experience* (OSC) and *Missionaries regularly evaluate and seek to improve the agency's ministry* (NSC). While the later could be understood as alien to their organisational culture, an assignment to gifting is normally considered as a fundamental principle in modern missions and we do not have a satisfactory explanation for this unexpected result. Are OSC missionaries more flexible than their reputation and willing to adjust as long as they understand the need and receive support? The overall organisational culture may be more decisive than this specific factor, enabling workers to accept new challenges.

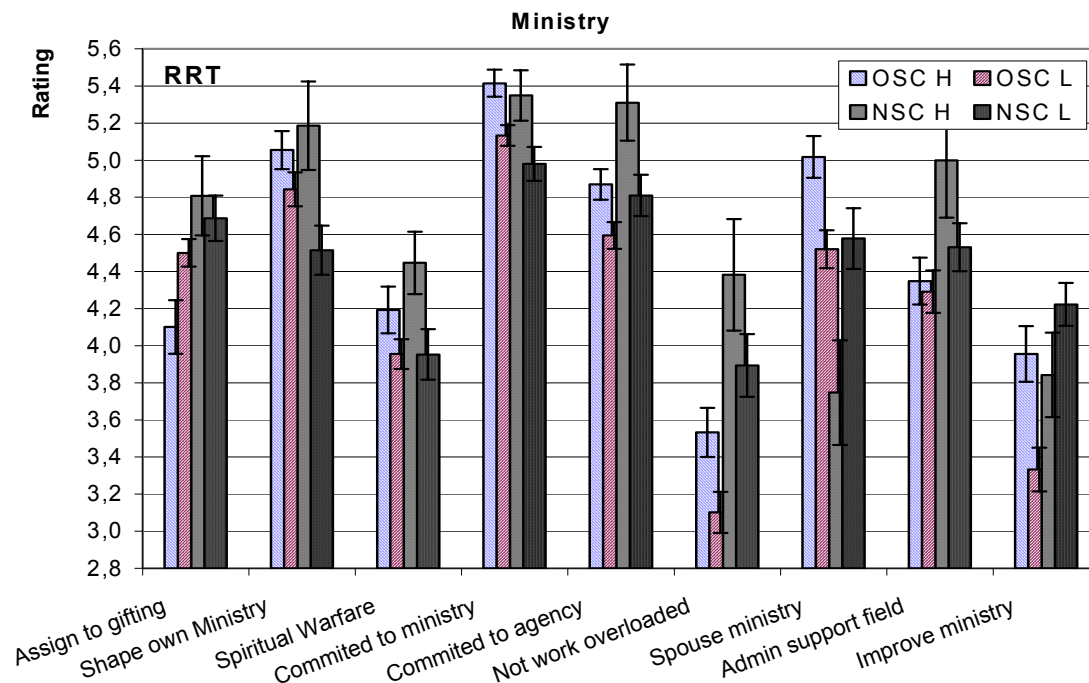


Figure 6: Mission executives' rating of their agency's ministry. Agencies with high (H) and low (L) total retention RRT of old (OSC) and new sending countries (NSC); rating on a scale 1 (= very poorly done) to 6 (= very well done).

Ministry outcomes

Ministry outcomes in general were rated very high (Figure 7) proving that the agencies have clear goals and expectations. In NSC agencies, very high rating was given to *Missionaries are developing good relationships with the people they serve*, *The people our missionaries serve are becoming followers of Christ* (NSC) and *Church on the field values the ministry of our missionaries*, proving the importance of personal relationships in NSC. In OSC agencies, highest rating was given to *Develop*

local leadership and Missionaries experience a sense of fulfilment in their ministry, while low rating was given to *The people are becoming followers of Christ*, especially in high retaining OSC agencies. Do OSC missionaries serve in resistant regions or have they lost their passion to see people meeting Christ? In NSC all mentioned ministry outcomes, including *Missionaries are actually achieving the agency's goals and expectation*, are correlated with high retention, but in OSC only for *Development of local leaders* and *Missionaries' personal sense of fulfilment*. Still the generally high rating of ministry outcomes shows the significance of these issues.

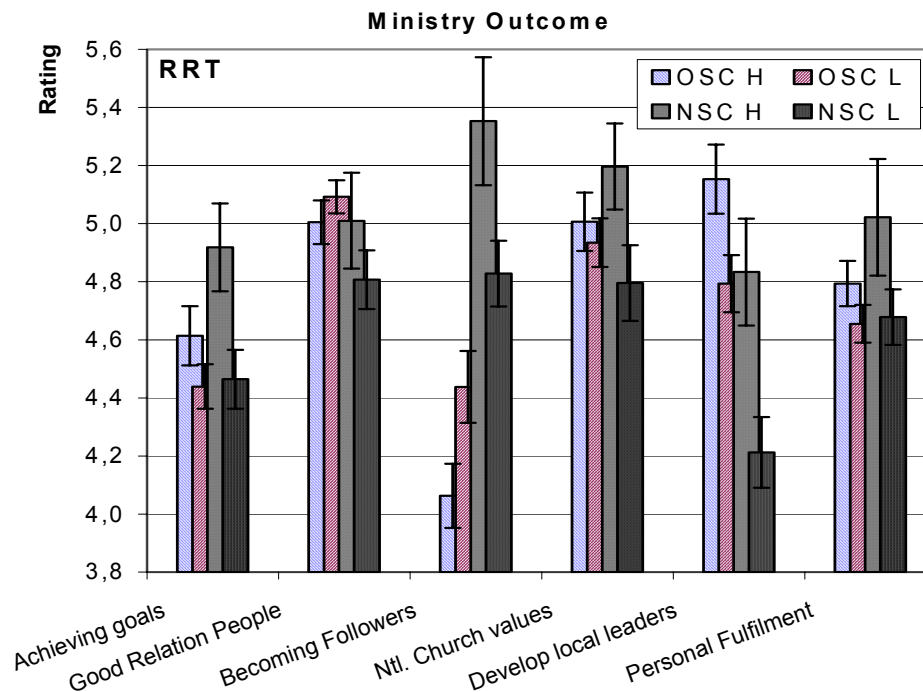
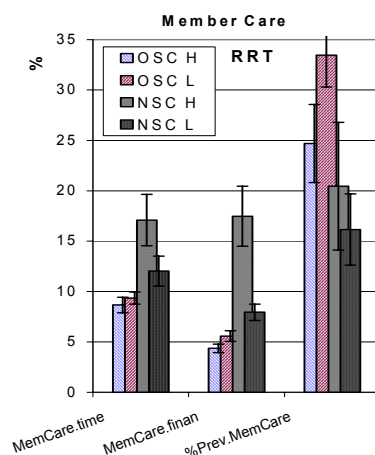


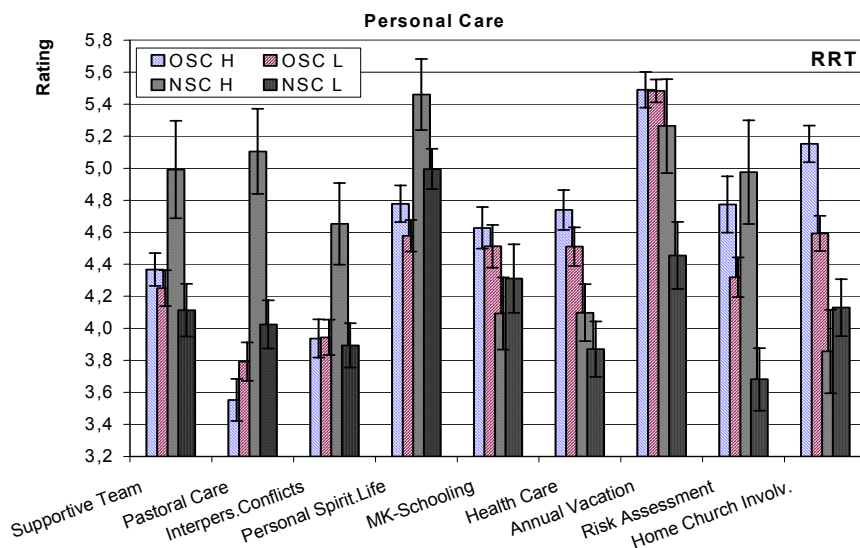
Figure 7: Mission executives' rating of their agency's ministry outcomes. Agencies with high (H) and low (L) total retention RRT of old (OSC) and new sending countries (NSC); rating on a scale 1 (= very poorly done) to 6 (= very well done).

Personal Care and Family Support



NSC agencies invest twice as much of their total staff time and finances on member care as OSC agencies (figure 8) and high retaining NSC agencies much more than low retaining NSC agencies. Yet high retaining OSC agencies do not invest more on preventative member care than low retaining. Apparently not only the quantity but also its quality counts. **Figure 8:** Percentage of agencies' total staff time and finances invested in member care and percentage of preventative member care on

overall member care (in contrast to responsive crisis resolution). Agencies with high (H) and low (L) total retention RRT of old (OSC) and new sending countries (NSC).



This difference is clearly seen in the assessment of various factors of personal care (figure 9) where highest priority was given to *Time for annual vacation or holiday is provided* and *Emphasis is placed on the maintenance and growth of personal spiritual life*. The balance between work and rest, ministry and personal walk with the Lord and the growth of the own spiritual life are central to the missionary's life and both factors are correlated with retention. In NSC agencies retention is also correlated with *Missionary teams are effective in providing each other with mutual support*, *Effective pastoral care exists at the field level preventative and in crises*, *Interpersonal conflicts are solved in a timely and appropriate manner* and *Risk assessment and contingency planning is in place for all fields* are correlated to retention, and in OSC *Home churches are encouraged to be involved in the life of their missionaries*, a current missiological paradigm in Western countries. These issues appear to be critical and require careful consideration. The correlation is much stronger in NSC than in OSC, in line with their investment on member care (figure 8). Figure 9: Mission executives' rating of their agency's Personal Care. Agencies with high (H) and low (L) total retention (RRT) of old (OSC) and new sending countries (NSC); rating on a scale 1 (= very poorly done) to 6 (= very well done).

Finances

Among the financial issues (figure 10) top rating was given to *Agency finances are transparent to the missionaries and donors* and *Project finances are used effectively* and *Missionaries receive sustained financial support that is adequate for their needs* (OSC). These three factors are correlated with retention in OSC. In NSC, *Financial back-up for missionaries with low or irregular support* proved to be the decisive issue, reminding of painful experience of broken promises of sustained support. These results demonstrate the significance of financial issues for missionary longevity, and indeed, it is difficult to concentrate on the ministry when you do not know how to feed your family.

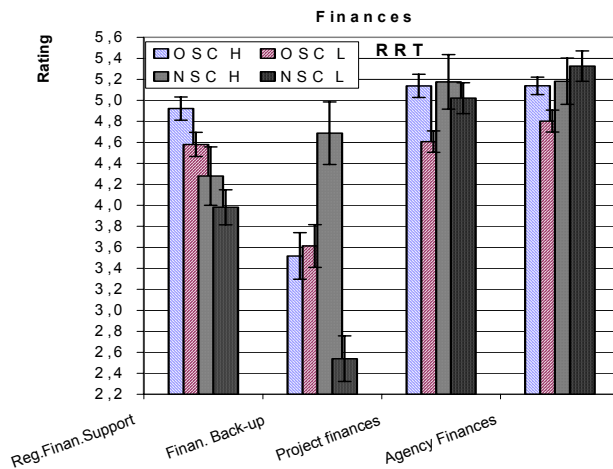
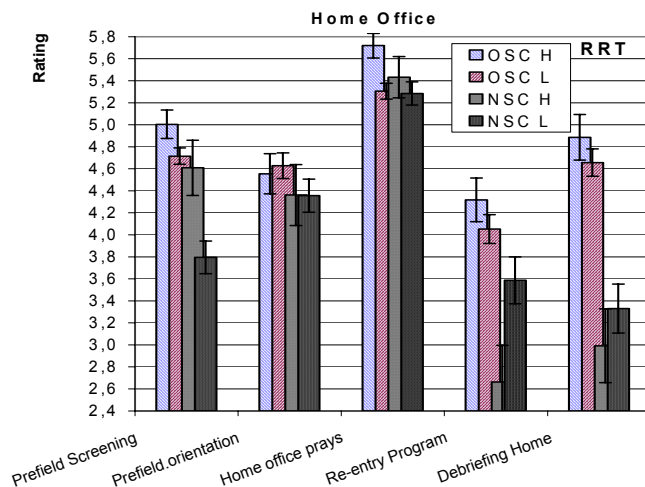


Figure 10: Mission executives' rating of their agency's financial system. Agencies with high (H) and low (L) total retention (RRT) of old (OSC) and new sending countries (NSC); rating on a scale 1 (= very poorly done) to 6 (= very well done).

Home office

The home office operations also received very high rating ([figure 11](#)) from the mission executives, in particular *Home office staff prays regularly for their missionaries* and *Pre-field screening prevents unsuitable persons proceeding to the field* (OSC) and *Formal debriefing during home leave* (OSC). *Pre-field screening* and *Home office prays* (OSC) were correlated with high retention, while *Re-entry arrangements are provided for missionaries commencing home leave* and *Debriefing during Home assignment* are still underdeveloped in the young NSC mission movement. [Figure 11](#): Mission executives' rating of their agency's home office operations. Agencies with high (H) and low (L) total retention (RRT) of old (OSC) and new sending countries (NSC); rating on a scale 1 (= very poorly done) to 6 (= very well done).



Retention Rates

The retention rates of the four subgroups are given in [figure 12](#). The total retention rates are very different between the high and low retention subgroups by definition. While high retaining OSC agencies retain 97.10 ± 0.06 % of their missionaries per year (corresponding to 2.90 ± 0.06 % total attrition) low retaining agencies keep only 89.95 ± 0.18 %. When the actual performance of the high retaining subgroup (comprising of a massive one third of all the missionaries) is taken as a standard then 52% of the attrition cases could have been avoided. In high retaining NSC agencies the total

retention rate is $99.12 \pm 0.04\%$ (2% higher than in OSC H), while low retaining NSC agencies preserve only $93.00 \pm 0.23\%$ (corresponding to 7 % loss per year). On the basis of the actual performance of the high retaining subgroup 72 % of all NSC attrition could have been avoided.

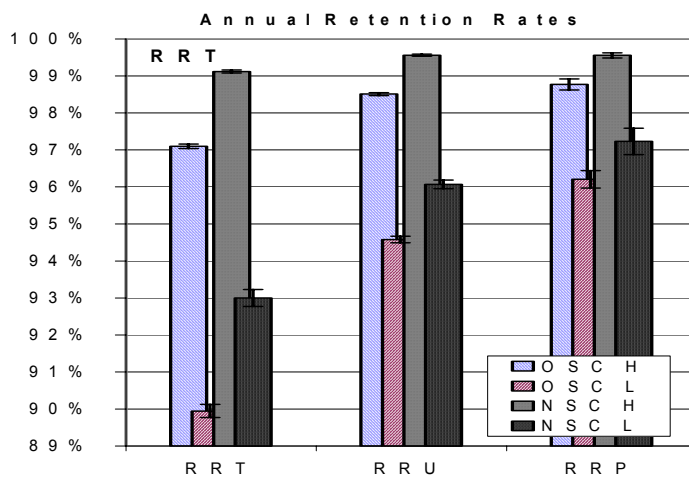


Figure 12: Retention rates of the subgroups of agencies with high (H) and low (L) total retention (RRT) of old (OSC) and new sending countries (NSC). Retention Rate considering unpreventable attrition only (RRU); Retention Rate considering potentially preventable attrition only (RRP).

These retention rates look impressive but we need to keep in mind that after 10 years of service only $0.9710^{10} = 74\%$ of the missionaries from high retaining OSC agencies are still in active service and every fourth missionary left the field, compared to $0.8995^{10} = 35\%$ in low retaining OSC. In high retaining NSC $0.9912^{10} = 91\%$ are kept in service, compared to $0.9300^{10} = 48\%$ in low retaining NSC agencies. Thus a considerable fraction of workers left the field for various reasons.

Considering only unpreventable attrition⁹ we obtain the retention rate for unpreventable attrition (RRU) of $98.51 \pm 0.04\%$ (OSC H) and $94.58 \pm 0.09\%$ (OSC L) for high and low retaining OSC agencies. On the basis of the actual performance of the high retaining subgroup (comprising of one third of all the missionaries) even 55% of the unpreventable attrition could have in fact been avoided by reassignment of missionaries. In NSC agencies RRU amounted to $99.56 \pm 0.03\%$ (NSC H), respectively $96.07 \pm 0.12\%$ (NSC L), so that 75 % of unpreventable attrition could have been avoided. High retaining OSC agencies lose three times more workers through unpreventable attrition than NSC which are not yet facing regular retirement and completion of projects to the same extent as OSC.

When only potentially preventable reasons for attrition¹⁰ are considered we obtain the annual retention rate for preventable attrition (RRP) of $98.77 \pm 0.15\%$ (OSC H) respectively $96.20 \pm 0.23\%$ (OSC L)¹¹. When the actual performance of the high retaining subgroup (of one third of all missionaries) is taken as standard then 45% of the potentially preventable attrition could have been avoided. In NSC we obtain a retention rate RRP = $99.56 \pm 0.07\%$ (NSC H), respectively $97.23 \pm 0.36\%$ (NSC L)¹², so that 65% of the preventable attrition could actually be avoided. Thus high retaining OSC agencies lose 1.2 % of their work force per year for potentially preventable reasons, compared to 0.4 % in high retaining NSC agencies. Family responsibilities, educational needs of the children, personal reasons or the feeling of God calling them to a new type of ministry is much more prevalent in OSC,

⁹ E.g. normal retirement, illness, loss of visa, expulsion, appointment to leadership in agency's home office, end of project, completion of a pre-determined limited length of assignment, death in service.

¹⁰ I.e. all personal, family, work, team, agency related reasons or dismissal by the agency.

¹¹ corresponding to 88% respectively 68% after 10 years of service

¹² corresponding to 96% and 76% retention after 10 years of service

where organisational commitment was rated much lower than in NSC. Still we see the large difference between the high and low retaining subgroups in OSC and NSC of 2.5% each.

Figure 13 shows the development of RRP over the past twenty years and low retaining OSC and NSC agencies are indeed hit by the current trend for regular job changes in modern society and leading to a decline in RRP; the corresponding preventable attrition rate increased by 54% (OSC L) respectively 80 % (NSC L). In contrast, high retaining OSC agencies have been able to withstand this global trend and maintain their missionaries commitment and organisational loyalty. They are rewarded by very high retention rates RRP of 98.8 %. Yet high retaining NSC agencies are faced with a decline of their extremely high RRP values from 99.54 % (1981-85) to 99.2 % (1996-2000), as the founding years with the initial passion, commitment and extraordinary sacrifices are coming to an end. Their corresponding preventable attrition rate increased from 0.46 % to 0.79 % and are now approaching that of OSC H of 1.2 % per year (plus 1.5 % for unpreventable attrition, OSC H), which appears to be optimal value.

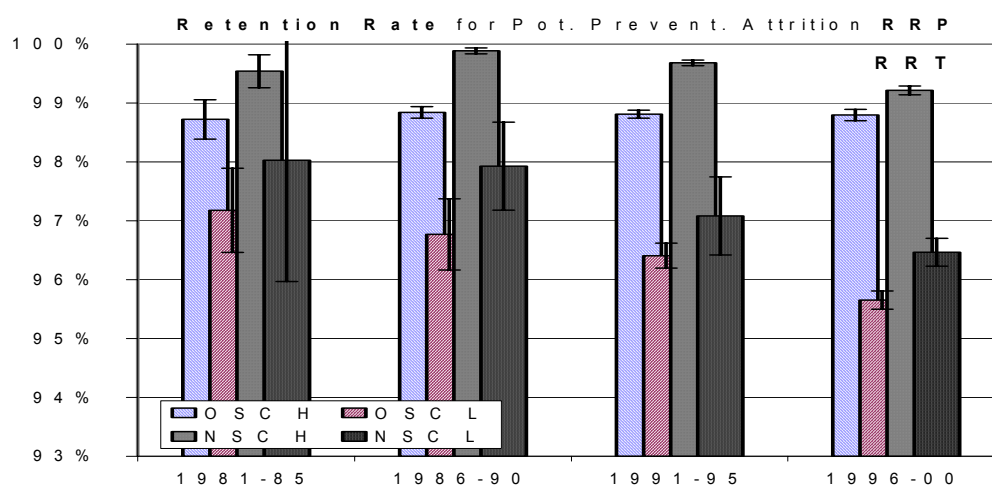


Figure 13: Change of retention rate for potentially preventable attrition (RRP) during the past 20 years in the subgroups of agencies with high (H) and low (L) total retention RRT of old (OSC) and new sending countries (NSC).

Discussion

The analysis shows a strong correlation between missionary retention and agency practices. Forty specific factors have been identified. While earlier studies like ReMAP I¹³ mainly concentrated on personal reasons for a premature return of missionaries, ReMAP II focused on missionary retention – what keeps them in ministry and which organisational factors contribute to this. These factors include candidate selection, vision and purpose, leadership, communication, personal support, member care, ministry, ministry outcomes, continuous training, finances and home office operations. ReMAP II results show that retention involves a complex web of factors. It is the organizational triad of ethos, values and purpose that determines to a large extent, the agency's practices and procedures and permeates all aspects of agency's operations. This web of factors for both old and new sending countries reflects their history, culture and ecclesiastic tradition, and the expectations of their supporting churches.

The organisational performance of the high retaining subgroup (of one third of the agencies - which is an impressive number, not just a few extraordinary agencies) has reduced the potentially preventable attrition by 45 % in OSC and 65% in NSC. In addition it has reduce the unpreventable attrition (RRU) by even a larger percentage, namely 55% in OSC and 75% in NSC. At the first glance a reduction of unpreventable attrition appears a contradiction in terms, but by definition, RRU it includes health reasons, loss of visa, end of pre-determined period of service and completion of project—factors

¹³ William Taylor, Too valuable to lose. William Carey Library, Pasadena, 1997.

which are not necessarily inflexible per se. Thus the return of the majority of missionaries appears to be avoidable based not on our idealistic theories, but on the demonstrated performance of the best third of mission agencies.

Good practice agencies expect well-trained mission candidates and apply careful candidate selection. They have effective leadership with good interaction with their missionaries, a lean quality administration with a servant attitude and flexible structures. They provide their missionaries opportunities for continuous training and development of new gifts. They encourage their missionaries to actively work towards the continuous improvement of their ministries and their agency's operations and structures. This is even more important as many mission agencies are presently undergoing extensive structural changes to become fit for the future.

Good practice agencies do not impose these changes from the top, driven by external advice. They utilise the expertise and insight of their missionaries. These agencies understand and value synergy and work in partnership with other agencies to maximize resources. They do not look at their own success but for the global kingdom of God. These factors are even more important in our modern, rapidly changing times. The missionary's role and agency's way of operating is constantly changing in response to needs in the country of service as the National church develops. Pressure from the home front also demand change as expectations from home churches are changing at an ever increasing pace¹⁴.

While missionary retention has in general dropped over the past twenty years, it has not decreased in the subgroup of high retaining agencies, which have been able to maintain their missionaries' commitment, loyalty and vision granting them new challenges within their agency – and thus are blessed with experienced workers and extremely high retention rates¹⁵.

We do not consider longevity of missionaries as an end in itself, unless the missionaries are really productive in a vital ministry.¹⁶ Work among unreached peoples and other hard assignments will only be achieved through dedicated, committed missionaries enabled and supported by dynamic, effective mission structures that create a stimulating environment and empower their missionaries to a strategic and productive ministry. The core of the Great Commission calls us "to make disciples of all nations", not just to visit and proclaim the Gospel at random. The central focus is on making followers of Christ, not only young converts, and this requires a human life model, godly character lived out in humility and grace over an extended period of time.

This biblical concept is opposite to the current trend for short assignments and quick solutions. Lives and fundamental values change slowly. It requires perseverance and humility of the ambassador for Christ—learning the language, understanding the culture and walking alongside the new believers, as our Jesus Christ did. He didn't visit earth just for a short term assignment, but he walked and lived with us for over 30 years – and his whole life, not just his last three years of ministry, changed the lives of his disciples. Likewise it requires this long-term commitment and sacrifice that Christ will not only be Saviour but also Lord in the lives of Christians, gathered in culturally relevant, mature fellowships that are a blessing to their community and in their turn, to the nations.

¹⁴ James F. Engel and William A. Dyrness, *Changing the mind of missions. Where have we gone wrong?* Intersity Press, 2000.

¹⁵ Detlef Bloecher, *What makes missionaries resilient – lessons from ReMAP II*, 2003

¹⁶ More missionaries can also stay for too long and hinder the development of local leadership instead of moving on to a new ministry possibly within the same people group. Mission agencies thus need to develop specific criteria for completion of a project and a clear exit-strategy before even starting with a project in the first place. Missionaries who got wounded or become ineffective need to be restored and/or brought home with grace and compassion.