

Dear YWAM leaders and YWAM Board members,

Recently one of our YWAM legal entities, a non-profit in the state of California, commissioned a review of its legal documents. That review, which was performed by a firm that acts on behalf of scores of other non-profits, concluded that YWAM was at some risk due to the fact that there was no clear basis for any legal entity other than the one holding the registered trademark to call itself YWAM. There is ambiguity regarding the legal right for any other base or mission to use that name.

The report recommended that we should develop a licensing agreement between every YWAM legal entity and the original YWAM Corporation. That first YWAM non-profit corporation holds the trademark and therefore the right to use the name of Youth With A Mission and its acronym, YWAM.

That recommendation resonated with many of us because our former International Administrator, Wally Wenge, had worked with a legal team to develop a licensing agreement in the 1980s, but during the course of the 1990s and intervening years that licensing agreement became outdated and fell into disuse.

Now we request that all YWAM Boards enter into agreement with the original Youth With A Mission Corporation for the use of the name. By this means we can maintain our current freedoms and decentralised structure without being exposed to unnecessary liability.

The contract is straightforward and reasonably simple. The part that addresses the dissolution of a YWAM entity, I think, needs an explanation. YWAM values strong relationships of mutual trust. The relationships are always much more important than assets. The assets we hold, however, are held in trust on behalf of YWAM staff and students, both past and present. We have a continuing duty to donors who have contributed towards the purchase and development of assets in the name of Youth With A Mission. Any efforts to transfer those assets to a ministry under another name and authority would amount to a violation of that trust. That is why we stipulated that the assets of a dissolved YWAM entity should be transferred to another YWAM entity. If there is a very strong case for the assets going in another direction, then the appropriate YWAM leaders can discuss the subject and make decisions together with the outgoing leadership of the dissolved entity.

The attached licensing agreement is the fruit of thorough legal scrutiny and I recommend its adoption as it stands. We will review it from time to time and if YWAM leaders or Board members would like to introduce changes, we will consider those changes for adoption as the contract develops in coming years. We realise that it would probably be renewed about every five years and could be adapted along the way. Thank you for your cooperation and participation in this process.

In His Peace,

Lynn Green