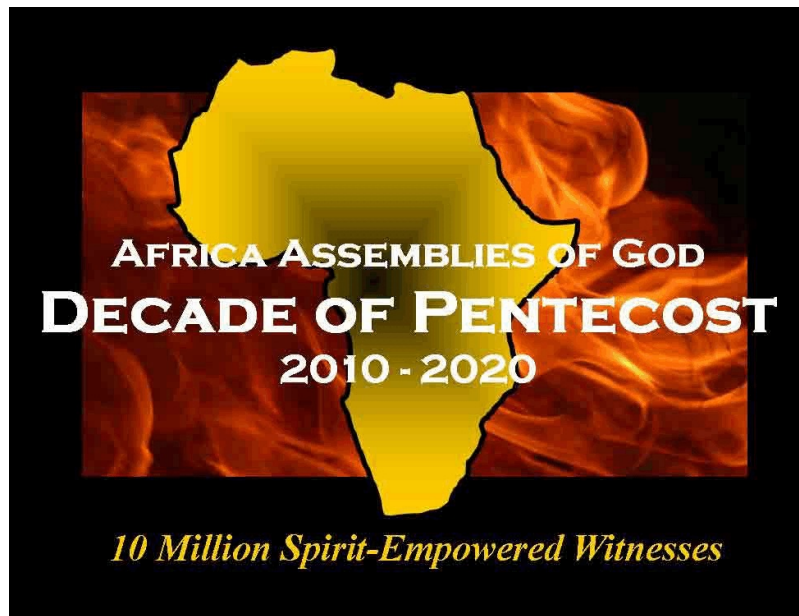


PLANNING GUIDE

Acts 1:8 Conference

April 10, 2013



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www.ActsinAfrica.org

INTRODUCTION

On the Day of Pentecost, 2010, the Africa Assemblies of God Alliance launched its Decade of Pentecost emphasis. During the Decade of Pentecost, 2010-2020, we are believing God for 10 million new believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and mobilized as Spirit-empowered witnesses, church planters, and missionaries. The Acts in Africa Initiative has been asked by the leadership of AAGA to help facilitate this continent-wide Pentecostal emphasis. One means we use to help mobilize national AG churches for the Decade of Pentecost is *Acts 1:8 Conferences on the Holy Spirit and Mission*.

We at the Acts in Africa Initiative (AIA) look forward to coming to your country to conduct an *Acts 1:8 Conference*. It has been our privilege to conduct these conferences throughout Africa. We have seen the Spirit of God move powerfully in the past and believe that He will do the same in our upcoming conference. We are believing with you that the conference will help to spark a Pentecostal outpouring in your country/area that will result in the greatest evangelistic and missionary outreach in your church's history.

An effective Acts 1:8 Conference is the result of intense prayer and effective planning on the part of the Acts in Africa team and the hosting national church and/or Area Assemblies of God leadership. This Planning Guide has been prepared to assist in our planning and preparation efforts. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at ActsInAfrica@agmd.org. We will get back to you as soon as possible with the answer. At AIA it is our sincere desire to be a blessing to you and the church(es) you serve. You can find more information about the Decade of Pentecost and the Acts in Africa Initiative on the following websites: www.DecadeofPentecost.org and www.ActsinAfrica.org.

Dr. Denny Miller
Director
Acts in Africa Initiative
Decade of Pentecost

BACKGROUND

To better understand the purpose and direction of Acts 1:Conferences it is important to understand a bit of the history of the Acts in Africa Initiative (AIA) and the Decade of Pentecost (DOP).

What is the Acts in Africa Initiative?

AIA is a ministry commissioned by the African Assemblies of God Alliance (AAGA) at its biennial meeting in Accra, Ghana, in October 2004. The mandate of the ministry reads:

AAGA throws the full weight of its support and resources behind the Acts in Africa initiative (AIA). The mandate of AIA will be to serve AAGA and the national churches working in relationship with AAGA in calling for a powerful Pentecostal outpouring in our churches.

Since that time AIA has worked in close harmony with the leadership of AAGA to achieve that goal.

Why was the Acts in Africa Initiative commissioned?

AIA was commissioned as an arm of AAGA to assist the fifty AAGA-affiliated national churches in Africa and the Indian Ocean Basin to mobilize for the greatest evangelistic, church planting, and missionary outreach in their almost 100-year history. AG leaders across the continent realize that this God-ordained mission can only be accomplished in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8). Surveys, however, indicate that the vast majority of our AG constituents have not been baptized in the Holy Spirit and spiritually equipped for the task. AAGA and the African leadership have thus called for a continent-wide Pentecostal outpouring resulting in millions of our members being baptized in the Holy Spirit and readied for the task. In 2000 the AAGA leadership called the Assemblies of God in Africa “Back to the Upper Room.” In 2004 the Acts in Africa Initiative was launched to address this critical need. Then in 2010 AAGA launched the most aggressive initiative in its history, the DECADE OF PENTECOST.

What is the Decade of Pentecost?

The Decade of Pentecost is a ten-year missionary emphasis of the Africa Assemblies of God Alliance. The goal of the Decade of Pentecost is to see 10 million new believers baptized in the Holy Spirit and mobilized as Spirit-empowered witnesses. This will result in thousands of new churches being planted, millions of people coming to Christ, hundreds of new missionaries being deployed, and the yet-to-be-reached tribes of sub-Saharan Africa being reached with the gospel. For the Decade of Pentecost to be a complete success, every one of our national and local Assemblies of God churches throughout Africa and the Indian Ocean Basin must wholeheartedly participate. You can find out more about the Decade of Pentecost on the Internet at www.DecadeofPentecost.org

A Decade of Pentecost planning guide, entitled, *The Decade of Pentecost: A Way Forward: Suggestions for Assemblies of God National Churches on How to Engage in the Decade of Pentecost*, is available for free download on the Internet at www.DecadeofPentecost.org/helps.htm.

What does the Acts in Africa Initiative believe?

AIA conducts its ministry and bases its strategies on five core beliefs:

- We believe that this world's one great hope is a truly Pentecostal church, moving boldly in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit.
- We believe that the African church has a great missionary destiny.
- We believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is perhaps the most neglected, and at the same time, the most needed experience in the Pentecostal church today.
- We believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit can be properly understood and validly received only in the context of mission.
- We believe that the Assemblies of God in Africa stands at a crossroads in the area of Pentecostal experience and practice.

Why does the Acts in Africa Initiative exist?

Acts in Africa exists for the following reasons:

- To *inspire* the church to seek God for powerful new Pentecostal outpouring on the African continent.
- To provide *training* in Pentecostal principles and practice.
- To help *mobilize* the church for world evangelization in Pentecostal power.
- To provide resources to church leaders seeking to lead their churches into Pentecostal experience and practice.

What services does the Acts in Africa Initiative provide?

AIA seeks to provide inspiration, training, and resources to leaders seeking to lead their churches into Pentecostal experience and practice. A full listing of services can be found on the AIA websites at www.ActsinAfrica.org.

ACTS 1:8 CONFERENCES

What is an Acts 1:8 Conference?

An *Acts 1:8 Conference on the Holy Spirit and Mission* is a dynamic six-day missions conference emphasizing the role of the empowering of the Holy Spirit in fulfilling the Great Commission of Christ. The purpose of an Acts 1:8 Conference is to inspire national churches and national church leaders in the areas of

- Pentecostal experience and practice,
- Spirit-empowered church planting, and
- Spirit-empowered missions.

The name of the conference tells it all. It is an *Acts 1:8* Conference, meaning it takes its inspiration and agenda from the last words of Jesus: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and to the ends of the earth.” All of the activities and teachings of an Acts 1:8 Conference are focused squarely on Christ’s call for Spirit-empowered missions.

What are the key elements of an Acts 1:8 Conference:

There are five key elements in an Acts 1:8 Conference:

1. *Intercessory prayer.* Each day of the conference begins with an hour of intercessory prayer. These intercessory prayer meetings focus on two topics: a call for Pentecostal outpouring in Africa and prayer for the lost and unreached peoples of the world, area, and country in which the conference is held. These intercessory prayer meetings are the spiritual foundation and key for a successful conference.

2. *Training.* Short, cogent lectures are given challenging the delegates to be empowered by the Spirit and to lead their churches and ministries into Pentecostal renewal in preparation for powerful evangelistic and missionary outreach. A time of spiritual commitment follows each lecture.

3. *Strategy.* In four strategy sessions individual national delegations are led through a process of evaluation, goal setting, planning, and commitment. The delegates prayerfully evaluate their churches in the areas of Pentecostal experience and practice, as well as church planting and missions involvement. In the final Commitment Service, a sacred “Commitment Statement” is drafted which is publically read and signed.

4. *Empowering.* Each evening Holy Spirit Empowerment services are held in which delegates and church members throughout the hosting city are invited to come and experience a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit. These services provide an opportunity for the delegates to observe how the AIA team preaches on the baptism in the Holy Spirit and leads believers into Spirit baptism. They also seek to provide a spark for Pentecostal revival in the city and nation.

5. *Sunday Holy Spirit Services*. In addition to the above, on the Sunday following the conference it is hoped that Holy Spirit Receiving Services will be planned in all of the Assemblies of God churches in the hosting city. AIA Team members and conference delegates are scheduled into the churches to preach on the baptism in the Holy Spirit and pray with believers to be filled with the Spirit.

What is taught at an Acts 1:8 Conference?

Although the curriculum of each Acts 1:8 Conference may vary slightly based on local need, the following subjects are commonly taught in a conference:

- “The Holy Spirit and the Mission of God”
- “What it Means to Be Pentecostal”
- “Spirit Baptism Revisited”
- “The Pentecostal Bible School”
- “Pentecost and the Next Generation”
- “Women and Pentecostal Revival”
- “How to Preach on the Baptism in the Holy Spirit”
- “Leading Believers into Spirit Baptism”
- “Planting the Spirit-Empowered Missionary Church”
- “Planning and Conducting a Local Acts 1:8 Conference”
- “Effectively Engaging the Decade of Pentecost”
- “Leading a Church into Pentecostal Revival”

Who are the presenters in Acts 1:8 Conferences?

AIA team members serve as presenters in Acts 1:8 Conferences. These carefully selected Assemblies of God leaders and missionaries are deeply committed to seeing the church fulfil the mandate of Jesus Christ to reach the world in the power of the Holy Spirit. Presenters in the past have included Dr. Denny Miller, Dr. Enson Lwesya, Rev. Mark Turney, Sandy Miller, Rev. Jim Lemons, Rev. John Easter, Rev. Paul York, Rev. Ken Krucker, Rev. Uche Ama, and Rev. Dean Galyen. Local leaders and special guests may also participate in teaching and preaching in the conferences.

BEFORE THE CONFERENCE

In order to have the best conference possible, we suggest that you consider the following in planning your conference:

National Church Endorsement

AIA only works in cooperation with the Assemblies of God national churches in a country or area and with the national and area AGWM missionaries. It is essential that each Acts 1:8 Conference has the total support and backing of national leadership of the country involved. (If the conference is a area conference it must also have the blessing and full support of the area leadership, i.e., AAGA-East, CAAGA, WAAGA, SAAGA.) It is also important that the AGWM missionary partners be on board.

Important Considerations

In planning an Acts 1:8 Conference it is important to address the following issues:

1. *Get national church endorsement.* The Acts 1:8 Conference must have the endorsement and full support of the national Assemblies of God church and its leadership.

2. *Appoint a steering committee.* A successful Acts 1:8 Conference is a major undertaking and will require the active participation of many people if it is to be successful. The church leadership would be wise to appoint a steering committee to oversee the planning, implementation, and follow-up for the conference.

3. *Decide who will attend.* Acts 1:8 Conferences are aimed at church leaders. In a area conference select leaders will attend from each country. This could include national officers, district superintendents, departmental directors, Bible school teachers and administrators, and key pastors. The more key people a national church can bring to a area conference the greater the impact will be on the church. In national Acts :18 Conferences the following may be invited: national church leaders, district superintendents, pastors, departmental leaders, Bible school teachers and administrators, and key lay leaders. Again the more people who attend the greater the impact on the church. The hosting church leaders will make the decision who will attend.

4. *Choose an appropriate venue.* Some Acts 1:8 Conferences have been held on Bible School campuses, others in local churches. Other possibilities include hotels and conference centers. Each national church or area leadership will make this decision based on their own needs, costs, the expected number of delegates, etc. It has been our experience that it is better to take to pastors away from their daily duties to a Bible school or retreat center so they can fully focus their attention on seeking God and His will for their lives rather than dividing their attention between the conference and their daily pastoral duties.

5. *Determine financial arrangements.* There is no charge for the AIA team's services. No honorariums are expected. AIA will provide the transportation costs for its team members. Local costs such as venue rental, delegate room and board, delegate packet production, etc., will be covered locally.

6. *Conference schedule.* A proposed conference schedule will be sent to you by another e-mail. If you have not received yours please request one, and it will be sent to you immediately. Changes can be made to the schedule which reflect your local situation. For instance, you may want to change (or eliminate) breakfast time; you may want to change starting time and break time. We highly recommend that you do not shorten the conference since the effect of the teaching sessions are cumulative, that is, the impact on the delegates increases day by day. Examples of previous conference schedules are available upon request.

7. *Delegate packet.* AIA has prepared a delegate packet which may be reproduced and given to each delegate. (Packets are available in English and French.) Although the packet is optional, having the packet will greatly enhance each delegate's experience at the conference. The cost of the packet can be covered by either selling it to the delegates or by including it's cost in the registration fee for each delegate.

Arrangements for AIA Team

The local conference organizers can help the AIA team immensely by making the following arrangements:

1. *Obtaining visas.* AIA Team members often need help in obtaining visas to enter the country where the conference is taking place. This may require help from local church leaders. This could include official letters of invitation from the national church hosting the conference.

2. *Entry information needed.* AIA will need pertinent information concerning the requirements for entering the host country. This includes the address of the venue, the place where the team will be housed, telephone numbers of local church leaders, and telephone numbers of resident AGWM missionaries. It is also helpful to know the exchange rate between the local currency and the US dollar.

Our AIA Team will, of course need to be accommodated during the conference. The following guidelines will help you in making these arrangements:

1. *Housing.* We request that the accommodations for the AIA team be modest but clean. We are happy to stay in the same housing as do the other delegates if the conference is held in a Bible school or retreat center. The nearer the housing is to the venue the better.

2. *Meals.* The AIA team is happy to take their meals with the rest of the delegates. No special arrangement for meals are expected.

3. *Transportation.* The AIA team will need someone to pick them at the airport and deliver them back to the airport at the end of the conference. They will also need help reconfirming their return tickets during the week of the conference. If they are housed away from the conference venue, they will need transportation to and from the meetings. On occasions they will need transportation to and from other places such as shops, travel agencies, etc.

Prayer, Teaching and Strategy Sessions

The following arrangements will need to be made in order to best facilitate the prayer, teaching, and strategy sessions:

1. *Chalkboard/white board.* A large chalkboard (or whiteboard) with chalk (or dry erase markers) and eraser will be needed.
2. *Projection screen.* A large screen will be needed for PowerPoint projections. This could even be a sheet or a white wall. If a reliable video projector is available this will be helpful. If not, AIA will bring its own video projector.
3. *Special furniture arrangements.* AIA will need three tables set up for the conference. AIA teachers will stand behind one table to teach their lessons. This table should be large enough to hold their teaching materials as well as the video projector. Another table will be used by the AIA team in order that they might perform their work duties during the conference. This table could be set up at the side (preferred) or back of the conference room. (This table should be approximately 1 x 2½ meters.) A third table may be need to display and sell book.

Communications

It is important the AIA and the local conference planners remain in very close contact during the planning stages of the conference. It is a essential that e-mail and other communications be answered promptly. AIA stands ready to answer any questions the local planners may have.

Books

If possible AIA seeks to bring books to the conference dealing with Pentecostal doctrine, experience, and practice. These books are sold to the delegates at modest prices. Our greatest challenge is getting the books to the venue. If you know of any container shipment that may be coming to your country, please let us know so we can include some of our books in the shipment. In some instances permission may be given to print the books locally in advance of the conference.



Typical Acts 1:8 Conference

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Dates

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6:30-7:15 (45 min)		Breakfast				
7:15-7:30 (15 min)		Opening Session	Opening Session	Opening Session	Opening Session	
7:30-8:30 (1hr)		<i>Prayer Session 1:</i> Prayer for the Spirit: "Empower Us Today" Prayer for the Nations: "The Least-Reached"	<i>Prayer Session 2:</i> Prayer for the Spirit: "Empower Our Churches" Prayer for the Nations: "Unreached of Africa"	<i>Prayer Session 3:</i> Prayer for the Spirit: "Empower Our Leaders" Prayer for the Nations: "The World of Islam"	<i>Prayer Session 4:</i> Prayer for the Spirit: "Empower Our Bible School(s)" Prayer for the Nations: "Oh, Lord, Send Us!"	
8:30-9:30 (1 hr)		<i>Teaching Session 1:</i> "The Holy Spirit and the Mission of God"	<i>Teaching Session 4:</i> "The Pentecostal Bible School"	<i>Teaching Session 7:</i> "Planting the Spirit-Empowered Missionary Church"	<i>Teaching Session 10:</i> "Pentecost and the Next Generation"	
9:30-10:00 (30 min)		Break				
10:00-11:00 (1 hr)		<i>Teaching Session 2:</i> "Spirit Baptism Revisited"	<i>Teaching Session 5:</i> "How to Preach on the Baptism in the Holy Spirit"	<i>Teaching Session 8:</i> "Leading a Church Into Pentecostal Revival"	<i>Teaching Session 11:</i> "Women and Pentecostal Revival"	
11:00-12:00 (1 hr)		<i>Teaching Session 3:</i> "What it Means to Be Pentecostal"	<i>Teaching Session 6:</i> "Helping Believers Receive the Spirit"	<i>Teaching Session 9:</i> "Conducting a Local Acts 1:8 Conference"	<i>Teaching Session 12:</i> "Engaging with the Decade of Pentecost"	<i>Holy Spirit Ministry in Local Churches</i>
12:10-1:00 pm (1 hr)		<i>Strategy Session 1:</i> "Assessment: Where Are We Now?"	<i>Strategy Session 2:</i> "Goals: Does God Want Us To Be?"	<i>Strategy Session 3:</i> "Strategy: How Do We Get There from Here?"	<i>Strategy Session 4:</i> "Commitment Statement Development"	
1:00-2:00 (1 hr)		Lunch				
2:00-5:30 (3 ½ hrs)	Welcome and Orientation 4:30-5:30	Free Time				
5:30-7:00 (1½ hrs)		Supper				
7:00-8:30 (1½ hrs)	Director's Keynote Rally	Holy Spirit Rally	Holy Spirit Rally	Holy Spirit Rally	Decade of Pentecost Commitment Rally	

DURING THE CONFERENCE

Attendance

Organizers and delegates should plan to attend all of the sessions, including the morning prayer sessions, teaching sessions, strategy sessions, and the evening Holy Spirit receiving services. Each session is carefully planned to add to the spiritual impact on the delegates. If delegates and leaders are not faithful to all of the sessions a great opportunity is lost.

Keeping time

Although delays and glitches are to be expected, it is important that each day's activities be kept on schedule as much as possible. Sessions are sometimes delayed because of poorly-planned breaks and meals. The kitchen staff and servers should have all break snacks (if you choose to have these) and meals ready promptly at the appointed times. A plan for quickly distributing the food should be devised.

Evening Holy Spirit Receiving Services

The evening Holy Spirit receiving services are an important element of an Acts 1:8 Conference. These services should be well planned for maximum impact. All delegates should attend these services. Sometimes delegates will be asked to help in praying for believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Preliminaries and singing should be kept short (20-30 minutes) so there will be plenty of time for the preaching of the Word (30-45 min.) and prayer for seekers to receive the Holy Spirit (30 min.-1 hr.). Songs for the conference should be carefully selected and should deal with the persona and work of the Holy Spirit.

AFTER THE CONFERENCE

The real work begins after the conference ends. This is when the national church(es) mobilize and go to work to fulfill the commitments they made during the conference. These commitments will be in the areas of Pentecostal revival, church planting, and missions.

Testimonies

AIA needs testimonies for promotional and fund-raising purposes. We also need testimonies for publication in the *Africa Azusa Report*, an e-newspaper sent out to subscribers throughout Africa and the USA. Please send your testimonies of people being filled with, or used by, the Holy Spirit to ActsInAfrica@agmd.org. These testimonies could be of any sort. They could be of great revivals and movings of the Holy Spirit in a country or church. They could also be of a single child being filled with the Spirit.

Fulfilling conference goals

Each church delegation will want to begin immediately implementing the plans and strategies developed at the Acts 1:8 Conference. Some national churches have developed a national *Acts 1:8 Committee* whose mandate is to promote and monitor Pentecostal revival, church planting, and missions efforts in their countries. If you do create such a committee please let us at AIA know. We need the e-mail addresses of the chairman and committee members of this committee so we can keep in touch with them and provide the help and resources they may need to perform their duties.