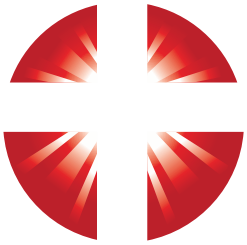


Forming a National Evangelical Alliance . . . Where do we start?

WORLD EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE

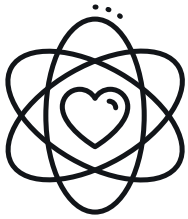
Forming a National Evangelical Alliance . . . . . where do we start?

First and foremost, let it be because there is a sense of the Holy Spirit's leading. Simply doing what other nations have done is not enough. A good idea is not always the same as God's idea, and there will be an optimum time in God's plan that needs to be discerned.

The WEA Alliance Engagement Department is a primary resource to help guide a newly forming Evangelical Alliance, or at any time in its development. The following are some practical steps (far from exhaustive) that might help guide the early days of a newly forming Evangelical Alliance:

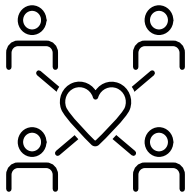
1. The power of an idea

The initiative to form a National Evangelical Alliance typically starts with one person who has a sense of the Lord's leading. Maybe they have heard about similar structures in other countries, or perhaps a growing awareness of the importance of the church working together in unity. The person with the idea invariably shares their conviction with one or two others, and they begin to pray. Any initiative to form an Evangelical Alliance needs to be bathed in prayer.



2. A Guiding coalition

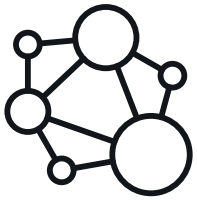
In any organization, new ideas invariably take form when a group of interested people start to meet, discuss and pray together. A guiding coalition (for change) might be a group of Christian leaders who are friends, or they may comprise a small group of strategic leaders across a city/nation who are invited to gather for a consultation. At this stage there may be a loose understanding of what a National Evangelical Alliance might look like, but together there is ongoing prayer and dialogue.



3. Early vision casting

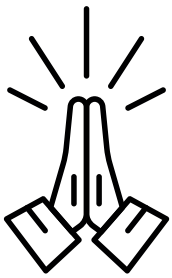
The initial group begins to draw up a list of key Christian leaders to whom the idea of a National Evangelical Alliance can be presented. Such people may be significant pastors of churches, denominational leaders, theological seminary leaders, and leaders of Christian NGOs and parachurch ministries. Presenting the early vision may occur one-on-one with such leaders, or in small or large groups. Resulting from this early vision casting, it will likely become obvious:

a) if there is interest in taking the idea further
b) who might be the most strategic person(s) to catalyze the idea to a wider group of people (i.e. there may be some people who immediately catch a vision because the "right" person(s) of credibility are promoting it.)



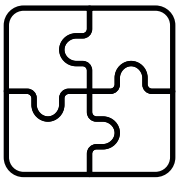
4. Launch!

At a strategic time and place (maybe a conference or special event) a presentation is made to a wide selection of Christian leaders about the forming of a National Evangelical Alliance, inviting their feedback and interest. Such a presentation would outline the core principles of unity and collaboration, and what an Alliance might look like and do. If a steering committee to get things off the ground has not already formed from the "early vision casting" stage, a launch gathering may be an opportunity for volunteers and nominations to be put forward.



5. Initial Steering Committee

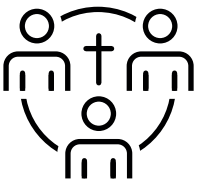
To get things off the ground, a small group of enthusiasts need to be appointed (or even to appoint themselves if no other appointment process exists). People on such a group may, or may not, be long-term governance people — but the Alliance needs to start somewhere. Perhaps they assume a leadership role for the inaugural year leading up to a catalytic event (like a conference or special meeting) where a formal structure and charter/constitution is presented for formal approval and nominations called for a governing board or council.



6. Initial tasks

In that first year of informal operation, the following may be considered tasks to be completed:

- Comprehensive database of evangelical entities and leaders
- Appointment of an interim Chair and other obligatory officers
- Formulation of a draft charter/constitution (inclusive of leadership structure, appointment processes and membership, etc.)
- Opening of a bank account
- Identification of special interest groups ("tables") that could gather expertise and engagement from across the nation
- Communication strategy (newsletters, website development, social media platforms, etc.)
- Application for registration with the government and obtaining of tax exemption status
- Schedule and rhythms of Alliance leadership meetings
- Nomination process for ongoing appointment of leaders (governance, CEO, key staff, etc.)
- Calling of an Annual General Meeting (AGM)



7. Inaugural AGM

Such a gathering is more than merely a business meeting. Let it be a significant event where a wide cross section of the church as possible is invited to gather in celebration of unity across the body of Christ. Include a special time of worship, multi-media presentation, and inspirational preaching. When it comes to business needing to be transacted, the following are important:

- Reporting on work done by initial steering committee
- Adoption of a charter/constitution
- Appointment of a governing board/council/executive committee
- Appointment of a CEO and key staff (paid or volunteer)
- Finalizing of initial special interest groups ("tables") that could gather expertise and engagement from across the nation
- Vision casting of initial Alliance initiatives and key future dates/events

Thereafter the National Evangelical Alliance gets on with the job and pursues the unfolding vision God gives them . . .

8. International Membership

Having started the ball rolling, a National Evangelical Alliance is invited to formally become a member of the World Evangelical Alliance and also the Regional Evangelical Alliance for their continental area.