

Assembly of World-Wide Partners
Wrap-Up Session
Sunday, June 10, 2007

Strategic Areas & Facilitators:

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|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| I. Christian Education | John DeJager |
| II. Church Planting | John Rozeboom |
| III. Community Development | Susan Van Lopik |
| IV. Peace and Reconciliation | Davis Omanyo |
| V. Justice Initiatives/Advocacy | Karen Bokma |
| VI. Leadership Development | Ida Mutoigo |
| VII. Economic Empowerment | Kohima Daring |
| VIII. Discipleship | Mary Crickmore |
| IX. Technology | Bob Heerspink |
| X. Constituency Engagement | Henrietta Hunse |

I. Christian Education

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Conclusions:

1. There is a felt need to facilitate the exchange of ideas relative to preparing Christian teachers for their teaching tasks in Christian schools.
2. There is a felt need to enable, build capacity in, Christian schools to do their task
3. Develop a global network of Christian school leaders who serve as resource for ideas and best practices
4. Develop a network to inform others about what is happening in Christian schools around the world
5. In some cases, certification requirements limit the availability of Christian teachers who are entering the profession
6. Christian schools in developing areas face a serious challenge in preventing the secularization of their programs and curriculum due to teachers being ill equipped to teach a biblical world-view in their disciplines
7. Government to support the building of "Christian" schools but they turn out to be secular
8. CRC agencies need to contribute more toward developing sustainable Christian education programs, help develop the fundraising capabilities of new Christian schools
9. Make sure that any partnership is a real partnership, mutual sharing of ideas particularly ideas gleaned from God's leading in the area of Christian schooling

II. CHURCH PLANTING

Motivation/Foundations

- A. Desire to reach “unchurched”
Canada – newcomers from around the world coming to our city
N.A. church planting is global in scope
- B. Gospel comes “cloaked” in the culture it comes to
 - Appreciate its beauty, assets, etc.
 - N.A. “inter-cultural planting” needs to be careful not to “impose” majority culture.
- C. Church planting is the best way to multiply; established churches have a harder time “including” new people
- D. Everyone is needed – using their gifts
- E. Missionaries from N.A. go home. Find a new way to interact and learn from each other (church planting from around the world) applying “cultural” principles.
- F. Church Planting is vital to be kept front and center – leads to justice, reconciliation, etc/
- G. Nationals asking for freedom to do well what they can do and invite “foreign” missionaries to come and fill “invited” needs.
- H. Church Planting is the best way to make disciples (Nationals are more church planting-oriented, missionaries are more “relief”).
Need more “strong” churches to support “relief” and “development”, schools, hospitals.
- I. Leading edge of support needs to be church planting. “Making disciples” is the heart.
- J. More need for on-going “financial” support for church planting movements
- K. Keep Jesus center to everything we are doing

Strategies

- A. Partnering church planting with each other across the world – link plants around the world for mutual learning, etc.
- B. Find “national” planters for N.A. church planting from fields around the world.
- C. Strengthen “assessment” processes to help us do point B. above.
- D. Learn from each cultural church plant – share church plant profiles (eg., Brazilian profile)
- E. “Cup of cold water” can prepare the way for bringing people together. Cambodian example worked the other way.
- F. Allow the newly planted churches to do community development
- G. Develop church planting among people with “resources” to help do sustainable community development work.
- H. Exegete the local culture to reach people: music, books, etc.
- I. N.A. – if we are not addressing “world issues” and physical needs of your community you will be irrelevant and aren’t being authentic.
- J. Integrate word/deed remembering the “gospel” is the only thing to meet the deepest need of people.
- K. Sustainable community development without planting churches that are strong won’t happen!
- L. Church planting without community development won’t last (needs to be wholistic)
- M. Local churches are the vital ingredient for lasting word and deep ministry in other areas.
- N. Learning from each other to become more “counter-culture”.

III. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Strategies

Collaboration between CRWRC and PWW and a National entity together in **partnership** in order to achieve Community Development

In order to “partner” there needs to be “relationship” based in trust, which can, if necessary say “no” or “wait”

Those partnerships should have a written understanding

Create “lifestyle” discussion and plans with volunteers engaging with partners/...

Create three-tier approach to partnership (ex. NAMT) Entry phase, developing relations phase and core programming phase.

Advancing the Kingdom of God (wholistic approach)

Local church becomes the crucial agent of transformation of community.

Local church is trained wholistically to address all human needs.

Mission Principles

The assumption is “more money means better programs; better organization; better community development”. We need to rethink this, repent and realign ourselves in faith.

Partnership principles include understanding the relationship with the community as a “partner”. Partner exchange visits. They learn best from each other. (note from facilitator: this is a strategy, the principle would be CRWRC doesn’t have the corner on knowledge about good development practice. CRWRC partners can teach/learn from each other)

Restoration of relationship of all levels.

Listen local community and use local potential.

IV. Peace and Reconciliation

1. The church as to dissolve its walls so that it dissolves in the community to be able to talk about peace and reconciliation.
2. Peace and reconciliation is an important ministry that CRWRC and other agencies have to deliberately plan to facilitate in communities around the world but should recognize the limitations in capacity. Need for skill building is re-inventing the wheel, but learn from MCC.
3. There is always need for a third person that is neutral and not one with the attitude of “let bygones be bygones”.
4. Recognize the history of the people. Why there is conflict. This has to be addressed for people to own the past guilt. History should always be taken into consideration.
5. What families pass on to their children should be addressed since this perpetuates conflict for generations to come.
6. Peace and reconciliation should be part of people’s life style. We just need to live in peace as Christians and walk it.
7. People should stop and think of their own involvement in a conflict situation.
8. How can we get people, communities that are not at peace to face each other? Come face to face? We should explore this.
9. Come up with a standing committee in each community that is able to keep a peace diary for others to learn from. This will help the community understand how issues have been dealt with.
10. Define all the time – forgiveness. What is forgiveness?
11. Recognize where your parents went wrong from the history. Own it and ask for forgiveness.

V. Justice Initiatives/Advocacy

Strategies

using the church as the model of being agents of change, specifically in the area of justice networking within the community to strengthen our work (NGOs, churches, etc.)
approach government and politics with respect and integrity
think bigger than just the community – conceive of ideas on the national level
promote that churches make time in their agenda to talk about justice
training leaders in doing justice in their personal lives – this moves to create an affect at a higher level (i.e. training model in Nicaragua – personal, then institutional (businesses, churches), then community)
encourage Christians to be more actively engaged in politics

Mission Principles

basis for partnership and cooperation is equality
interdependence
justice being integral and integrated into all life (not dichotomizing justice from the spiritual)
do not let the complications of justice put us into a state of inaction
do action in sizes proportionate to your context and setting
the church, as part of the system, cannot remain isolated

VI. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Key Notes from Presentations:

A presentation by Nomer Bernardino on developing leadership could be summarized with the following points:

A leader's personal conviction needs to come from God—he gives the empowerment through his spirit
Leaders have personal credibility to serve God—they have integrity of heart and tragedy strikes when this credibility is not there

Leaders need to have a servant attitude—the key is that they are committed to serve the purpose of God

Leaders need to be shepherding on behalf of God

Leaders need to have skills in service—competence is required

How can leaders be developed around you?

Treat them as part of your life and family

Affirm their calling

Personally disciple them

Increase job leadership roles

Expose them to other leaders

Recommend them to boards

Give unconditional love

How Paul did this was highlighted in Acts 20:17-39 – “I was with you”

What made leaders successful in the Bible?

John 13:1 – Jesus showed them the full extent of his love

Acts 4:13 – even though disciples were unschooled, Jesus had developed their capacity and people were amazed

Good Leaders have a keen sense of God's grace!!

A presentation by Duane Kelderman emphasized the following points:

Definition of leadership could be: “Leadership is helping a group reduce the distance, the gap between what it aspires to be and what it actually is”

The four things that are going on in situations of effective leadership:

TRUST

VISION

CONTEXTUALIZATION

TRANSFORMATION

What are the key strategic leadership challenges?

The identification of “true north” which is what is truly according to God's will and that fits with his ideal reality, that is both contextual and transformative, and that is biblically-shaped and driven.

The spiritual formation of the person of the leader – because training leaders is not just a matter of teaching skills but also of forming a person's character

The capacity of leaders to be adequately responsive to the rate of change around them

The importance (and difficulty) of communication in the world today

From participants, some additional leadership challenges were identified:

Dependency of church leaders in developing countries – eg. Africa

Challenges of a leader being able to find shalom him/herself – need to focus on God and think more about leadership not about the leader. This is not about “us”!! We need to focus on God’s grace and truth at all times.

How do we balance our important traditions as leaders with the need to be nimble in a world that is continuously changing (eg. Leadership in an age of complexity). An example was shared regarding Neal Plantinga’s comment of leadership needing to be like a tree that has strong roots. If the roots are not strong, it is difficult to bend without breaking or falling down. This fits with the need to distinguish between key essential principles / values and practices

The ownership of development programs or ministry in communities is not high (eg. The health ministry in Sierra Leone needs to have greater ownership by the churches there. How do we encourage this more?)

Additional Things to Note:

Individual leadership is good but it is better to have or build an organizational leadership team

Leadership is cultivated by building an organizational culture that promotes discovery of gifts in leadership (ie. Building a “leaderful” organization)

Leadership needs to be “situational” or appropriate to the context (the culture, vision/task)

Leaders must love / appreciate and learn from history

There needs to be a readiness to pass on the role of leadership to others and openness to the contributions of others.

Leadership should be understood as a big responsibility – the importance of walking as a disciple and encouraging others to be a disciple

There is a need to counter the “lording it over” styles of leadership – are there ways to do this effectively?

Leaders need to develop the potential of other persons in their organization or team in light of how this fits with the person’s gifts, passion and calling that God has given him/her and not just according to the calling that the leader of the organization has.

Recommendations:

How do we get centers of leadership training throughout the world and not just in North America (consider matching of our investments to do leadership training in US with what we invest overseas)

How can we better encourage leaders (both new and mature from all organizational levels) who are facing high pressure situations or at a high vulnerability? How do we encourage them in ways that renew their sense of grace, spiritual energy, and shalom so that they can truly be the transformation that they wish to see in this world?

We need to create more forums at local and regional levels within each country we work in order to tap into diverse and complementary leadership talent.

We need to create a greater and more open space for listening in unlikely places and for identifying unlikely people for leadership growth

How can we strategize more deliberately for women in leadership? How do we distinguish between cultural bias and biblical principles?

How can we more intentionally break out of the standard approaches and turf (eg. Agency “x” does this only); consider bringing together more CRC agency and ecumenical agency networks to address key and common issues?

VII. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Key issues

1. We are not sure how to move forward in the context of justice.
2. Community control is important.
3. Economic empowerment is unattainable without an infrastructure, i.e., transportation without roads, market
4. Training is a key to developing quality\
5. Economic development needs to be a partnership
6. Organizations need to discover how to work with existing infrastructure, local government, markets

What are we missing?

1. We need to equip and educate the local communities to work with local government for a voice-all levels, and business markets
2. Does the partnership focus so much on community development that it ignores the larger context?
3. Lack of confidence between all partners...churches (local); NA churches/agencies

Recommendations

1. We need strategies for all levels of development
 - Community
 - Regional
 - National
 - Global
2. Develop partnerships/advocacy efforts for the above
3. Reinforce relationships/collaboration between:
 - Church to Church
 - In Country partner to partner
 - Community to Community

Build Trust!

VIII. DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship

No teaching going on after a person is baptised, is problematic. But unfortunately it happens a lot.

Start with discipleship in a new site. Not organizing worship.

Inner city US—people have church background but not reading God's word, getting guidance from it, put into practice. They have grown up in a family where church attendance and religious vocabulary are part of the culture. Why start a ministry that allows people to drop in to worship, when they already have the religious vocabulary, and there are storefront churches all over. Another venue to show up on Sunday is not what is needed. Teaching in Christian living is needed.

Strategy: gather team of leaders/pray-ers, a team that includes people of the local ethnicity.

It's worth it to invest in building relationships and trust. Don't shy away because it is slow and costly to do this.

Caution against the NA tendency to want to see fast results and be cost-effective. (Focus on owning buildings is costly.)

Cell groups are very helpful. The principle of multiplication; cell groups are wholistic (visit the sick, practical care for one another) and leaders always being trained to go on and foster a new group. House church movement is growing too.

Principle: there is always a leader and apprentice leader. Either apprentice takes over after leader goes on to start another group.

A methodology for leadership training is DISCIPLESHIP. Formal higher education is not sufficient by itself. Train lay people not just pastors.

Sponsoring people in the South to go study (higher education) in the West: have seen them stay in West, or become unable to relate to their own people. People coming from a culture in which women are devalued and animistic practices aren't helped by Greek and Hebrew. When they go back some want to have high leadership positions and live at a high economic standard.

The West can be educators, coming to a country...When ethnic minorities come to be trained at predominantly white seminary, when they go back, they may not fit in their home community. There are some unique people who have the higher education and the humble spirit who take the time to go back and train lay leaders.

Leadership development for lay leaders may be viewed as radical but is ESSENTIAL; how can we disciple theologically sound, Biblically faithful lay leaders? They will be equipped to lead among their people.

The choice of where to begin is important and needs to be made with prayer and discernment.

Those who disciple have fewer barriers when living at an economic level close to their community.

Situation in the South: where every convert aspires to a good salary employed with an NGO. This is not possible and does not contribute to spiritual growth.

The cost of discipleship: If converts are pampered, become celebrities visiting Westerners, and experience no suffering—unhealthy! Some become proud, unteachable, they can market themselves to competing mission groups, they can also become hostile. One case in which a convert was abusing his wife, they tried to confront him, and he turned on the mission.

X. Constituency Engagement

What did we learn from the various sessions we attended?

There is a high desire within our constituents to do justice and advocacy. To do this, they want to hear from CRWRC, because CRWRC is a trusted source. Want practical suggestions as to what they can do.

Reaffirmed partnership between CRWRC and CRWM, with involvement from field staff as well as partners.

For visitors to the field, need good orientation, and follow up for “What next?”

Learning how to receive stood out.

We need to keep Christ central. Prayer, God’s word, need to be kept central. We need to keep secondary other things that are side issues.

Re use of the Internet: It is easy to put anything on the internet, but hard to really get it to the persons who we want as our audience.

Young people told us that the word “mission” has a negative connotation. We need to be careful about wording. E.g., instead of “missionary” use “staff person”

We need clear definitions, e.g. for “partnership”

We need integrity when we use the word partnership.

Now what?

We need a task force to move this forward, with representation from various agencies, to take this material to the next level.

We need to look for opportunities to keep the momentum going.

There should be some follow-up to conference participants. What did you implement after the conference? Share best practices.

We need to tell stories.

How about having the “Today” written by international authors?

One of our discussion group shared about his work in Romania, with *Christian Endeavours*.

A key challenge they face is that in general, the Hungarian Christians in Romania place a very strong value and allegiance to maintaining their Hungarian identity above all else. Thus in practice, there is little theological difference between Roman Catholic and Reformed Hungarian Christians, and there is resistance to opening up the church and programs to Romanians (for fear the latter become dominant).

Their organization run a large number of youth camps in the summer, and also invite youth from abroad to participate in an “English” camp, where there are English lessons, in addition to evangelism activities. Implications for constituency development:

Young people from different countries like to hear the testimonies of each other, what their everyday lives are about, etc.

It would be difficult to arrange for an exchange visit where Hungarian young people would go to England, because there would be so much desire to go, and would be hard to select participants in a fair way. A possibility would be to select young people who are in leadership positions.

Preparation for visitor from the west should be:

Must be open

Willing to listen

Do not have a superior attitude – the relationship should genuinely be equal.

How can we redirect the North American desire to **do** things, to a learning and listening attitude? Perhaps we need to package opportunities differently, so that a learning tour is like taking a course, or participants take on the activity called “Prayer Walks.”