

Peter Tarantal leads WENSA, the World Evangelisation Network of South Africa. He also is involved in MANI, the Movement of African National Initiatives

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WENSA

In 1995, The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa (TEASA) was formed as an umbrella body to incorporate both the Evangelical Fellowship of South Africa (EFSA), previously predominantly white, and the Concerned Evangelicals (CE), previously predominantly black. It should have led to the integration and coordination of missions among the Evangelicals. However, this took much longer.

As the 1990s started, Love Southern Africa (LSA), was launched as an initiative under the umbrella of the AD2000 and Beyond Movement. LSA hoped for a church for every people and the Gospel for every person by the year 2000. TEASA also ran its own Missions Commission, with the purpose of mobilising the church in South Africa. It focussed primarily on the township (Black) churches, who had previously not been too involved in missions.

As the AD2000 Movement's man, the WorldDate was coming to an end, it was felt that an integrated National Initiative was needed. A step toward the goal of a National Missions Movement was taken in 1999, when a number of mission leaders came together at Kempton Park and agreed to launch the World Evangelisation Network of South Africa (WENSA). Over the next few years, the movement struggled to gain momentum. One of the main challenges was to find the resources needed for the process and people willing to commit themselves to it.

In 2003, I was asked by TEASA to play a leadership role in developing the new National Missions Movement. The next year, a strong delegation of mission leaders met in Pretoria to celebrate what God had been doing over the past decade and also to look at the challenges facing missions in and from South Africa. This meeting endorsed and committed itself to the vision and strategy of WENSA. A highlight of the Summit was the adoption of the WENSA Declaration. Further national Consultations took place over the next few years. The last national consultation was particularly special, with more than 150 national leaders meeting together, representing church leadership, missions executives, denominational leaders, younger leaders, and leaders from the market place.

This national consultation strategically committed to five Regional Consultations throughout 2009. One consultation, held in Piet Retief—a rural area located about a five hours drive away from Pretoria—boasted 120 attendees, 80% of whom were leaders from the Black community.

Another highlight for the WENSA movement was when eighty mission leaders from South Africa met in Nairobi in 2006 as part of the Movement of African National Initiatives (MANI). MANI is a significant network which facilitates research on the least evangelised people of Africa, encourages church planting and catalyzes African mission initiatives. Many leaders expressed that they felt again connected to



the continent of Africa through this important meeting.

WENSA is a national strategic network which facilitates and promotes the South African mission movement. Though not an official commission of TEASA, WENSA is nevertheless docked with TEASA—this to make sure that we remain as broad as possible to cater to the whole church of Jesus Christ in South Africa. However, the General Secretary of TEASA serves as one member of our leadership team.

Our network includes twenty-three denominations and many local churches. Most of the major mission agencies and training institutions also connect with WENSA, as well as sixteen national networks and more than 300 entities/leaders.

As mentioned previously, we realised that while national Consultations are great, we needed to take WENSA to the regions. Future plans include reaching the city/town level, so more leaders can be involved. 2010 will be a crucial year for us, as we look forward to our involvement with the Global Day of Prayer in May, the Soccer World Cup in June/July and the third Lausanne Congress to be held in Cape Town.

WENSA Strategic Objectives:

- Facilitate and coordinate mission networking in South Africa.

- Provide a platform where leaders gather to discern and celebrate what God is doing.
- Increase mission awareness and the involvement of the whole South African church.
- Stimulate research and data sharing within the mission movement.
- Identify and respond to the immediate mission challenge in South African society.
- Help the South African church fulfil a significant role in global missions ●