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David Tai – Wong Lee

A Korean Indigenous Mission Organization 1987 – 2009

THE STORY OF GLOBAL MISSIONARY FELLOWSHIP

Introduction

Global Missionary Fellowship (GMF) was founded when the Korean missionary movement began to emerge in the 1980s. Although the Korean church sent out missionaries as early as 1907, until the 1980s only a handful of missionaries were engaged in cross-cultural missionary work. Most were ministering amongst Korean communities scattered around the world. The founders of GMF felt a deep need to establish a sending structure that would not only allow the Korean churches to send out cross-cultural Korean missionaries, but also to be able to cooperate with international mission organizations through networking and partnership.

The vision and the need

There were at least two immediate needs: obtaining government approval for issuing passports for the members, and creating an indigenous mission structure the Korean church could claim as its own. A plan formed to map out the implementation of the shared vision. Some existing entities, such as the Global Bible Translators (GBT), OMF Korea (they have since left to rejoin OMF International) and the Global Missionary Training Center (GMTC), became the basis for GMF, with the intention of developing it into a full functioning indigenous mission structure that would become interdenominational as well as international.

Three sending arms

The founders felt that following the

trend of typical sending organizations found in the West would lead to creating one infrastructure that served all of its members, regardless of their specialties. This would mean a loss of image that each entity had worked hard to create. Alternatively, they could retain the distinctiveness of each entity, yet remain one organization. Eventually, an organization with three sending arms was created. The three sending arms were: Global Bible Translators (that seconded its members to WBT/SIL); Global Mission Pioneers (GMP) (ministering mainly in the areas where missionary work has relatively easy access); and Helping Overseas Professionals Employment (HOPE) (a group created to reach less free areas, the so-called creative access areas).

GMP and HOPE were indigenous and begun from scratch; including recruitment, training, candidate selection, funding and placement on the mission field, and eventually the creation of an effective and inexpensive infrastructure that reflected their indigeneity. After some twenty years of struggle and hard work, there are somewhat stable fields in countries such as, Thailand, Japan, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, India, Cambodia, some parts of China, Central Asia, Turkey, Albania and some parts of Africa.

Supportive structures

There are six other entities that are engaged in a supportive role. Three are the training arms of the GMF: GMTC (Global Missionary Training Center),



GPTI (Global Professionals Training Institute, 1991) and GLfocus (Global Leadership Focus, 2007). Although it is not mandatory that GMF members be trained in one of these three organizations, most have been. For the last twenty-two years, GMTC alone has trained more than eleven hundred missionary candidates; more than 90% of graduates are still in service of some sort. About 40-45% of graduates joined one of the sending arms of the GMF.

Three more entities provide additional support. KRIM (Korea Research Institute for Mission, 1990) has grown to be one of the most prestigious mission related research institutions in Korea, whose statistics widely quoted within and without Korea. The Mk-Nest (1997) provides support and offers various consultations on the nurture, education, support and training of missionary kids. The Corporate Office oversees the legal affairs of the organization, as well as functions as a coordinator for the rest of the entities.

GMF International created GMF-North America in order to separately focus training for Korean Americans. It aims to mobilize, educate, train and send out the 1.5 (Koreans that have immigrated at an early age and have been acculturated, yet still retain some Korean identity) and the 2.0 (second generation Koreans) Korean American missionary candidates.

Each entity is responsible for raising its own finances for their members and operational costs.

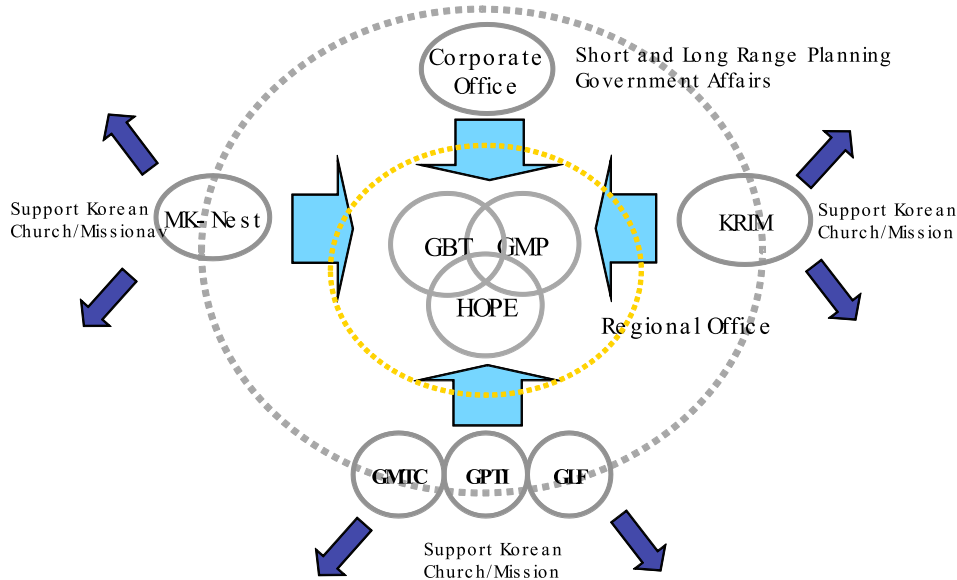
There is some flow of finances between entities, but this has been minimal. The founders made it possible for these supportive entities to redirect their surplus ministry capabilities to the rest of the Korean church and mission communities for the common goal of mission.

portrayed their oneness throughout GMF's twenty-two years. If there are other groups outside of the GMF organizational fold who offer better services, each entity is free to use those services. It is one organization legally, but has numerous networks in its operations.

The new wine skin for the new era
Two other factors were kept in mind

1. GMF will continually improve systems.
2. GMF will work in grow as an indigenous Korean mission agency as well as work in cooperation with international agencies.
3. GMF will cooperate with any doctrinally sound churches and denominations, while avoiding any exclusive relationship with particular churches or denominations.
4. GMF will always maintain a servant role of the sending churches (e.g., it will involve sending church leaders in important decisions).
5. GMF will create a flexible mission community where all diverse members are respected, while standing firm on biblical principles.
6. GMF will carefully consider new trends and issues in order to prepare its leadership and members to be aware of the changing context of the modern missionary movement globally.

The World of GMF
(GMF- Korea, GMF- North America)



Autonomous but interdependent

The GMF is known for its horizontal make-up, both externally and internally. The founders ordained that it must be one community—this was the government requirement—and that the identity already created by each entity would not be destroyed. Although there is only one organization, functionally, it operates almost like a network. There have been creative tensions between each entity, yet they have creatively

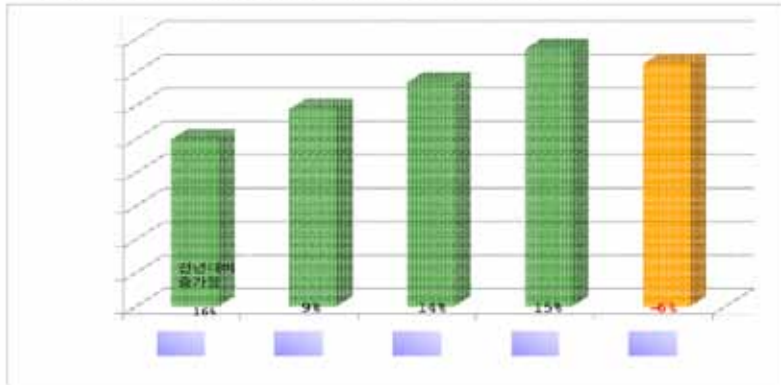
as the organization began to take its shape. One was that the values of the kingdom of God must be respected over the Korean traditional cultural norms; this value is incorporated into missionary training. The other factor was maintaining an indiginity while pursuing kingdom values and not to reproduce Western structures. The following principles were implemented to this end:

The founding board of directors and current status

GMF was incorporated in 1987 with the Korean Ministry of Culture and Communication. Founding members of the board of directors (Dr. Young Dug Lee, the former Prime Minister of Korea, and Pastors Jung Gil Hong, Han Huem Ok, Yong Jo Ha, and Drs. Linsu Kim (deceased), Kuen Oh Lee and David Tai Woong Lee) brought immediate trust and recognition from the Korean church as well as society in general. Small beginnings grew to be one of the largest interdenominational mission organizations membership-wise as well as its asset-wise. After twenty-two years, there are more than 100 home staff, 671 members and

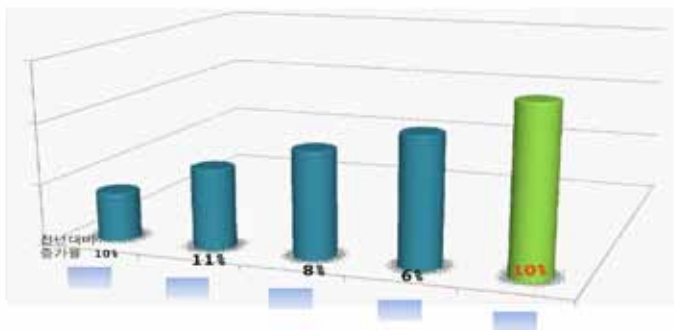
Total income for the last 5 years

Won (hundred million), annual increment rate



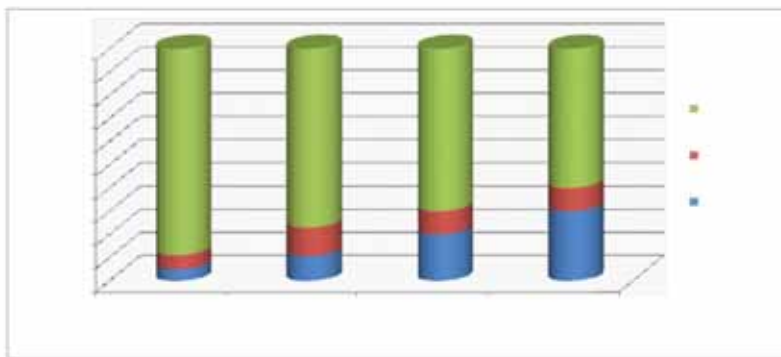
GMF –Growth patterns for the last 5 years

The number of missionaries and annual growth rate



Growth projection for the next 5 years and beyond

(Different age groups)



	2003	2008	2013	2018
Total number	435	671	1,032	1,448
Age 50- 54	27	83	104	145
55 beyond	21 (5%)	71 (11%)	206 (20%)	434 (30%)

a total annual budget of 11.1 million dollars. By the year 2013, it is projected that the membership will increase to 1032.

The role of the executive committee

Since GMF is not a conventional structure with tightly knit checks and balances, the executive committee (EC) plays an important role in maintaining the integrity of the organization. The official members of the EC are the directors of each entity. They periodically meet to examine any new initiatives and to make administrative decisions that affect each other. The EC is also a tool used for cultivating new leaders and successors. Potential leaders, who are often assistants to the director, join the directors for expanded meetings.

The mode of operation for entities

Each entity operates as if it is an independent organization, with their own director and governing boards. If one entity is facing a crisis situation, only then will the EC and important board members be alerted of possible intervention, in case it becomes necessary.

The annual GMF conference—when all of the entities come together, including those members who are on home assignment—receives annual reports from all of the entities. Together, they celebrate what God has done in that given year as well as engage in corporate prayer for each entity as it presents its report.

Core values

GMF has focused on laying a solid foundation by strict control of the candidate process and thorough training prior to issuing a membership. The following expresses the sentiments of the founding board of directors succinctly: “Constantly improve your system and that will guarantee a better product. There is no better

advertisement than the worthy product; that product depends largely on the system you improve.”

Thus, the first core value GMF claims as its own, next to adhering to kingdom values, was “excellence.” Gradually, other values became evident. They include respect for all persons, egalitarianism, encouraging women in leadership, integrity, discipleship of junior leaders by senior leaders, and continuous learning through informal and non-formal education.

Evaluation and conclusion

God has been gracious to GMF and it has steadily grown, both qualitatively and quantitatively. The following are factors to be considered for the future:

1. GMF was founded by some of the most innovative and respected Korean church leaders. There was

automatic unity with them as a stabilizing agent and as vouchers for the organization to the Korean church. With the passing away of this founders’ group in the near future, there is some doubt whether the same stabilization would be guaranteed.

2. GMF has operated with the creative tension between maintaining unity and allowing diversity. Could this creative tension be kept intact even with growth in the next five-ten years? Introducing more stringent rules may kill the innovative posture it once enjoyed; however, more freedom for the entities may strain alignment efforts.

3. GMF constituencies will enter into the old-age syndrome, just as Western missions are now

facing. By 2018, the number of missionaries that are fifty-five and older will consist of 30% of the entire membership. There are still a number of new roads that it must pave; otherwise it will cave-in, unable to take care of its aging members.

The continuation of the story of GMF largely depends upon what the current leadership will do towards finding solutions for the challenges mentioned above in the next five to ten years. If it does, it could be one of the options the non-Western mission communities, particularly from Asia, could consider emulating.

GLOBAL DIALOGUE, Responses from leaders of agencies:

What funding patterns have you used in the past? What emerges for the future?

Reuben Ezemadu, CMF, Nigeria

CMF, as a faith-based mission, followed the Matthew 10:9-10 missions support pattern. As many of our missionary volunteers are professionals, some utilize their professions as means of entry into resistant areas as well as means of earning income for their own support. Also, individuals, local churches and mission support agencies adopt and support our missionaries. We hope to experience more funding from Nigerian Christian business people...

Silas Tostes, Antioch Mission, Brazil

We can only raise funds among Christians in Brazil due to Brazilian laws. Local churches send their missionaries, many times with help of other churches. Antioch Mission has its own specific supporters. Missionaries contribute with a US \$50.00

administrative fee.

David T. Lee, GMF, South Korea

Each entity in GMF has its own funding policies and responsibilities. There is some flow of funds between the entities (mutual expenditures, crisis, need). Usually, the churches provide funds for the mission. We hope to broaden funding structures to cover the business sectors as well as securing funds for retiring missionaries. ...

Detlef Blöcher, DMG, Germany

DMG practices a blend of personal support and team support. Each missionary needs to raise his/her own team of supporters (prayer, encouragement, finances). At the same time, “your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need” 2Cor 8:14.

...In recent years, our workers need twice as long to build up their support base. We are using alternative models of funding, too, e.g. missionaries taking on (part-time) secular work.

Paul Bendor-Samuel, Interserve Int. Malaysia

The core of our funding is personal support raised by the mission workers themselves.... Increasingly, workers gain at least part of their support through paid work in their country of service. In the past, some churches and individuals have supported the national organizations of Interserve, but this is changing. The growing number of Global South workers means that we must find new ways to fund central services. We are looking at a variety of funding approaches, including project based funding and endowment funding....

Richard Tiplady, ECM-UK, United Kingdom

Funding used to be to “the mission,” with shortfalls in missionary support made up from central funds. That is no longer possible. Restricted income (for missionary support and projects) has doubled in the last six years. Unrestricted/general income has remained steady, but highly resistant to growth, despite our best efforts.