

Connecting – Facilitating – Developing

Mission Commission Global Member Care Network (GMCN)

Working internationally is a powerful experience; a privilege that is also motivating. The synergy potential is enormous as member care know-how is shared between experts, practitioners, counselors and mission pastors from other continents and regions.

The leadership team of the GMCN, a network under the WEA Mission Commission (WEA MC), met in Tucson, Arizona, US from March 17-21, 2008. We came together from India (Pramila Rajendran), Latin America (Carlos Pinto, Bertil Ekström), South Africa (Marina Prins), USA (Larrie Gardner, Brent Lindquist), Europe (Marion Knell) and East Asia (Harry Hoffmann), to transition the GMCN into a new level of global viability and effectiveness.

For many years, the GMCN functioned as an autonomous group connected by relationships and "docking" with the WEA MC. However, as we engage the future, we became aware that in order to enhance sustainability, we needed a better defined structure. We also perceived a need for greater accountability and oversight. And we wanted an organic connection to the WEA and the Mission Commission.

At the same time, the WEA MC expressed a desire for the GMCN to be more formally linked to them, and together with the MC Executive Director, Bertil Ekström, we formulated a proposal in Tucson to provide an appropriate structure for the GMCN future.

During one session, while talking about possible projects, our financial needs and funding options, a clear sense of excitement

arose among us. India has member care resources that Latin America would greatly benefit from. The US has a recognized and certified member care training programme which most other regions would be interested to evaluate and adapt to their realities.



Harry Hoffmann, Coordinator of GMCN

Europe has experience in hosting a number of continent-wide consultations on member care. The need for online access to member care articles and curriculum from and for different regions and languages was expressed. The desire was articulated to produce research-based material for new publications that will create member care awareness among mission movements, organizations and churches, and most of all for more connection within the Global Member Care community to share and learn from one another.

Our core values are expressed in this statement: **Member care is the ongoing preparation, equipping and empowering of missionaries for effective and sustainable life, ministry and work.** We want to integrate closely with the other networks of the WEA MC (such as. missionary training, and mobilization) so that member care takes a rightful place at the core of

all aspects of missionary life.

In Tucson we created a basic "skeleton," a frame and structure to facilitate the continued development of the Global Member Care Network. In preparation for the WEA MC

Consultation in Thailand this coming November, this structure will now be presented to different constituencies, national and regional mission movements, member care providers as well as among interdisciplinary member care connections. In Thailand, a larger gathering of the GMCN leaders will meet to put "meat on the skeleton."

Our website, www.globalmembercare.com "Connecting – Facilitating – Developing", is one part of the meat. As we move forward in 2008, this site will include an extensive database (GLOCC)

of qualified member care providers in different regions around the world, which form the platform for global member care connection. The website will also provide a listing of member care resources from different regions and in different languages.

The responsibility for member care rests with the primary mission stakeholders: the sending church, the sending agency, the receiving church, leadership (home/field), the missionary team, families, individual supporters, competent member care providers and the individual missionaries themselves. In light of the complexity of mission work, those involved must seek to develop competence in all those areas where they are working through ongoing learning, networking and resourcing.

That is what we are here for. That is why we exist. With that in mind, there are great days ahead. <<