**Mission Directors Forum Summary**

**Free Methodist Headquarters**

**Indianapolis, Indiana**

**November 5-6, 2019**

Participants in this Forum were Gerry Coates(host) Free Methodist Church, Verne Ward Nazarene, Andrew Gale Church of God, Mark Surbrook and Paul Confer Church of God (Holiness), and Ron Duncan. The Missionary Church participants were not able to attend because David Mann’s wife Brenda is very ill and had been transferred to Cleveland Clinic. Tami Swymeler who is also with World Partners was picking up the responsibility and could not be gone.

The agenda had been sent to all participants. The questions for discussion had been generated from the group. We began with a time of devotion and prayer especially for Brenda Mann as well as requests generated by the group.

Each participant shared and updated the group on what was happening within their tribe. FMC USA is now 6% of the world membership and provide 95% of the budget for the 18 conferences across the globe. FMC is trying to keep up with the Spirit of God. India has doubled in the last ten years. Middle East the fastest growing field. Three years ago, had 1200 churches in the Middle East and now have 3500 house churches. IMPACT MIDDLE EAST emphasis is to train anyone in Church Planting. The largest church in Amman, Jordan is serving 180,000 refugees. Refugees are pouring into Greece and other places because of war, political strife, and economic instability.

Asians have passed the membership in Africa. They are autonomous and have their own Bishop and own budget. The world church has gifts to give the US church that we cannot get on our own.

Nazarenes have 8 Regional Conferences taking place around the world. God is working in difficult places and there is more talk of suffering yet there is deep joy in the conversation. Works are starting in Syria, Iraq, etc. God is way ahead of us and we need to take our hands off. Flatter organizational structure where people on the ground are contributing at the highest level of the organization.

Church of God Anderson has 27 career missionaries with a total of about 75 missionaries counting all categories. They are amid various transitional issues including national structure within US and looking at how to connect globally given the lack of ecclesia structure. All the regions in the world are autonomous and on their own. Each region has its own conferences and organizes themselves. The missionaries and regional directors work with the indigenous leaders but have no ecclesia authority. Another large question is how to partner with non-USA personnel? So, the big question is, how does each organization support national leaders? The question will be addressed later.

Mark and Paul of Church of God (Holiness) shared about the structure of their church. Mark is the Director of the World Missions Board. Mark provided each person a copy of “Passport to the World” a history of the Church of God (Holiness) World Mission Department. They have been involved in Missionary activity since 1905(Liberia, Africa). The first Mission Convention was held in October 1917 in Fort Scott, KS. The Home and Foreign Boards were combined in 1943 under one General Missionary Board then separated again in 1961. Most of the activity of sending and corresponding to foreign fields has been done through the World Mission Board. The church has been involved in India, Jamaica, Cayman Islands, Bolivia, Eastern Caribbean, England, Haiti, Mexico, Nigeria, immigrants from Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand, Cuba, Ukraine, Colombia, Myanmar, Ghana, Papua New Guinea, Asia, Albania

They have many issues they would like to discuss with the seasoned leadership of GWA and this did happen during the forum.

The six major questions sent with the agenda were addressed but not in the order presented:

1. Are any of the other organizations using learning management software for missionary in-servicing?  If so, recommendations?
2. How are other organizations navigating Totalization Agreements?  Do they have an international firm or lawyer to help them with expertise in this area? If so, recommendations?
3. Do any of the other organizations have “international” missionaries or “national” missionaries that could be perceived as employees by the mission’s organization?  If so, do they have an international firm or lawyer to help them with expertise in this area? If so, recommendations?
4. Are any of the other organizations using software designed specifically for Human Resources in their management of missionary data?  If so, recommendations?
5. IT security/Creative Access communication – special procedures, policies, etc.?
6. How does each organization support (financially, relationally, etc.)? national leaders globally?

**The discussion flow:**

How does each organization support national leaders?

Each of the groups have a different ecclesial structure which dictates how they connect to the rest of the world and develop their missional strategy. The Nazarenes have the most robust ecclesial structure where the entire world is divided up under the jurisdiction of General Superintendents. All operate within one book of Discipline, The Manual. The Free Methodist have 18 conferences across the globe. Some conferences have their own Bishop. The Church of God have regional directors all from the US which coordinate with indigenous leaders and work with them on projects. The Church of God (Holiness) have missionaries in various countries and each relationship is unique.

Fifty percent of Nazarene missionaries are from fifty-nine countries. How to pay non-USA missionaries is hard because of moving money around the world. The Nazarenes General Fund pays a portion of the cost, but all missionaries must raise support.

FMC has 10-12 non-USA personnel and do not consider them employees. An NGO is formed within the country they serve, and they are paid from the NGO.

Question 2-totalization Agreements-US and some developed countries have these agreements that if a US citizen is in the country for more than a specified period (5 years), then they will come off the US Social Security and pay into the host country’s plan. For some, you can leave for six months, most are for a year, and the cycle starts over. How to manage this and keep up with it is difficult.

Questions 1and 4: Canvas is being used by Church of God Anderson. Site Stacker for the Nazarenes, Razors Edge for donor resources. Some use ADP for HR and Payroll. Faith Life is developing plans for the Church of God Anderson. IT issues discussion around security and social media. Some groups leave the US with blank computer and wipe it when they return. 5G face recognition in China is pervasive. Venezuela is tracking via phones. This whole area needs a broad discussion and best practices.

**Additional Questions:**

1. How do you handle short term mission teams going for a project?

FMC and Nazarenes teams come at the invitation of the field with the team deciding what they will do. FMC requires insurance for liability reasons. Nazarenes sent out about 10,000 people per year. FMC sent 890 in 2018. Training is minimal for the teams but some train the leaders. The question of follow up was raised and very little at this time is done.

1. Do you participate in church building? Etc. FMC-In India the building gives you legitimacy; in the Middle East you become a target; in Latin America BYOC, bring your own chair; each situation is different, and the question of sustainability must be asked. Europe uses community centers for the FMC. Leadership development is the larger issue than buildings.
2. Three Pillars for Global Mission of FMC: Mobilize the global church; empower international leaders; establish transformational churches.
3. Does a missionary going out as community development have minimal Bible training?
4. How do you handle Internet international requests that we want to affiliate with your group?
5. How do you keep connectivity to the founding organization?

**Resources Mentioned during the Discussions:**

[Www.iml-latinoAmerican.org-16](http://Www.iml-latinoAmerican.org-16) modules of courses in Spanish used by FMC for ordination process.

[Www.whdl.org](http://Www.whdl.org) is the Wesleyan Holiness Digital Resource Library available to all. Developed by the Nazarenes.

Asbury has online training called First Fruits in many languages.

Stanley Mc Crystal’s book- “Team of Teams”

[Www.wesleyanalliance.com](http://Www.wesleyanalliance.com) lists many resources which have been created by the GWA

[Www.ASARB.org](http://Www.ASARB.org) is lots of religious data.

Bruce Bennett book is “Community Church Planting”

Steve Saint: The Missions Dilemma-Video curriculum for short term missionaries.

John Kotter’s book, Accelerate

**Prayer Concerns for the group for the next month:**

Gerry Coates-The discouragement his top leaders face; Mark Surbrook and Paul Confer-Global Conference 2020 in Bolivia and organizational improvements; Vern-Prayer for leaders; Ron-GWA Leaders meeting in December.

The group agreed the time together was beneficial and they would like to schedule another meeting. After discussion the date of April 20-21, 2021 was selected. No host was identified at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Duncan