

Southern Africa Mission Network Conference Notes

Monday, January 23, 2006

Introductions

Paul F Brown & Eric Markman – Presbytery of Northern New England with Amatola Presbytery

Kelly Fitzgerald – Florida Presbytery – Faith Presbyterian Church with Western Cape Presbytery

Kenneth & Barbara Overholt – Florida Presbytery with Western Cape Presbytery

Walt & Mary Reese – Pace Presbyterian Church – Florida Presbytery with Western Cape Presbytery

Bob Schminkey and Sara Holben – Presbyterian Church of Chestertown, MD

Rick Schmidt & Larry Moir – Donegal Presbytery (SE Pennsylvania) with Mthatha Presbytery

Gordon & Corliss Lentz – The Woodlands, TX – Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church with the United Church of Zambia

William Warlick – Orlando FL – Consultant Southern Africa for **Outreach Foundation**

Staff: Will Browne – WMD – Louisville, KY – Associate Director, Ecumenical Partnerships

Staff: Joy Raatz – WMD – HIV/AIDS Initiative Facilitator

Staff: Kathy Reeves – WMD – Louisville, KY – Staff Facilitator for International Partnership and Ecumenical Formation

Staff: Wes Wilkinson – WMD – Coordinator for Funds Development

Exchanging ideas

Florida Presbytery partnership with Western Cape Presbytery (UPCSA)

Kelly – Florida Presbytery - Faith Presbyterian Church has connection but is uncertain if the connection is a church or a presbytery connection. The presbytery interest in South Africa is for a youth connections. We are looking for better guidelines for starting such a partnerships so we don't have to reinvent the wheel. Travel to SA is important to raise personal interests and to further communication and understanding.

Walt – Marry Reese – Florida Presbytery- Pace Presbyterian Church – has 5 churches out of the Presbytery's 44 churches involved. While the Presbytery has given the partnership its blessing, it's the churches that make it go. There was/is a committee at the presbytery level but it's leveled out. Looking to start a presbytery partnership committee.

Tri relations between an American church, a former UPCSA (white) South African church and a former RPC (black) South African church. It offers the chance to get the white affluent churches in South Africa connected to poor black church. A question now being asked is how the SA churches can support Florida Presbytery churches.

Woodland Community Presbyterian Church in Texas partnership in Zambia

Gordy – Corliss – Woodland Community Presbyterian Church is an 800 member church in Texas that has connected to orphanages and other groups (seminary, church) in Zambia. There is no connection at the presbytery level. Communication is problematic. Zambia has experienced a drop in HIV infections (now 17%). Other major problems are orphans (630,000) and 70-80% unemployment.

A major part of the partnership success is involving Woodland youth. Four between 7 and 11 years old participated in the last trip. Bad communication with Zambia is being addressed by using local missionaries to forward information back and forth.

Outreach Foundation

Bill Warlick – Outreach Foundation in Malawi – Zimbabwe – Mozambique – Zambia – Madagascar. Validated mission supports 3 orphanages (see handout brochure) 11 mission trip - presbytery of Atlanta. Support of orphanages and seminaries is key.

Presbytery of Northern New England in partnership with Amatola Presbytery (Eastern Cape, South Africa)

Paul and Eric – covered both presbytery-wide and individual church partnerships. Much success has been made with youth (17 – 24 year olds) exchanges in 2003 to the USA, in 2004 to SA and in 2005 back to the USA. The program was made up of participation and leadership at youth camp, experiencing home stays, making church visits and touring. Paul will provide trip reports to Kelly. Plans are now being made by three key SA youth for conducting an Amatola Presbytery youth camp in 2007. Little assistance is expected from us because of the great experience and maturity gained by these three while in the USA. The next PNNE-wide program will be pastor “exchange” to the USA in the fall of 2007. A week of joint study followed by three weeks of home stays and working in PNNE churches is envisioned. It was mentioned that funding to bring pastors to the USA might be available through the MISSION TO THE USA PCUSA program (Ecumenical and Mission Partnerships- Worldwide Ministries (Rev. Angel Madden 1-888-728-7228 ext 5110).

The attendees provided some input on program content:

- program management skills
- time management skills
- delegation skills
- computer skills
- sabbatical programs
- training lay leaders

The health of the five individual church partnerships varies considerably, ranging from strong to dead. Efforts are underway to revive the several faltering partnerships. Problems are very typical with what other presbyteries have experienced, with communication difficulties, cultural differences and lack of church “champions” being major roadblocks. Visits to and from SA and the presence of an active (Heifer International and AIDS/HIV) projects mark the differences between PNNE churches.

Donegal Presbytery in partnership with Mthatha Presbytery (Eastern Cape, South Africa)

Donegal has had a partnership at the Presbytery level for several years (no black-white conflicts since all churches are Xhosa). Three trips to SA and two from SA have taken place so far (youth participation was a big success). Because of very limited resources, Donegal has paid for all of the travel for the South Africans. Experiencing day-to-day life in SA was important for fostering understanding. The original 5 year covenant agreement has expired, and a new three year agreement has been signed. It was cautioned that the Church of Scotland is extricating itself from Mthatha, and past promises are not been kept. “Only make promises that you can do”.

SA Mission Network Web Site

Web Master Rick Schmidt talked us through our SA Mission Network Web site.

<http://www.geocities.com/donegalpbyhunger/southernafriannetwork>

The site contains all sorts of good “stuff”:

- Calendar of Events
- Current News
- Partnerships
- Links
- Resources
- Contacts

Note that the minutes of our three SA Mission Network meetings in the Calendar of Events section.

And while you are on the web, check out the Malawi Mission Network web site at:

<http://www.malawinetwork.org/>

Health Issues – HIV/AIDS

Joy Raatz – PC(USA) coordinator for HIV-AIDS in Louisville. In Africa are Dorothy Hanson, Janet Guyer, and Shirley Hill (nurse in Cameroon) will be deployed in March. Also, there are Frank Dimmock, and Carol Winberg, the regional liaison on aids & women’s health issues

Aids issue is growing with no end in sight. Southern Africa has the highest rate, followed by India, Nigeria and China, with the problem also growing in Belarus.

Things are improving in some places in Africa, e.g., Senegal, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Factors – changes in sexual practice (use of condoms, reduction in casual partners), unified country, working with NGOs health system, strong church response. Strong government support is also a necessity.

Factors exacerbating the problem - trade roots, lack of health infrastructure, lack of unified government

Update on Malawi Aids Kits – the program has been stopped.....for good reason. It has been so successful that the Malawi Government is taking over.

Economic impact

Social impact - life expectancy in the 30s in some countries

The number of orphans will double in 10 years

Negative security impact will result if left unchecked

Major issues

- Women are 30% more likely to contract AIDS than men
- 15 – 24 year old youth are 3.4 time more likely
- Antiretroviral therapy hurts local area as people pulled to do program, but ART is no good without behavior modification, which often is lacking.
- A,B,C’s are still a focus

strategic plans for aids

- community development (holistic) – food security, water, poverty are strong factors
- behavior modification
- dealing with orphans
- home base care info on website

what you can do

1. pray
2. order: *It's a Matter of Faith* packet on AIDS information material (its free – PDS #74330-05-002)
3. lead a minute for mission
4. lead an aids worship service
5. become involved with local aids
6. give to aids crisis overseas
7. websites (<http://www.pcusa.org/health/international/aids/aids.htm> and <http://www.pcusa.org/aids-international/>)
 - a. *It's a Matter of Faith* is on the website
 - b. all new soon
 - c. contact info

Conference Call with Denver Presbytery – Zimbabwe Presbytery (UPCSA)

Conference call with Denver Presbytery – They have visitors so can't be here and will share with us over the phone

Tom Sheffield - Issues in Zimbabwe – a new partnership, but the relationship goes back 7 years

Julia Henderson – related the history of the relationship/partnership

- A couple in the presbytery traveled to southern Africa and heard about a school in Zimbabwe. They traveled there and saw a community that needed help. Worked on sewing project.
- They collected items to take there - sewing machines could be used to make school uniforms – 1997 first trip
- They sent a letter to the presbytery resulting in other churches starting to support their work.
- In January 2001 four churches founded the partnership with the Denver Presbytery
- Now there are eight churches that are associate members

Things they are doing

- send 25 cargo containers through the Department of Defense. These currently are on delay due to Tsunami & Hurricane Katrina. They collect throw away furniture from schools – desks, chairs etc. – and send them. They would otherwise go to a landfill. Member churches donate the containers.
- grant writing
- outside sources buy crafts from folks in Zimbabwe. They buy them at the highest prices the crafts people would have receive before run-away inflation start, ship them to Denver, mark items up to cover shipping cost and then sell them.
- fundraise to fund orphans. They feed and cloth the kids living at homes with orphan care givers
- redefining partnership from mission (Project) terms to relational. Both have approved a joint “understanding”. It is felt by Denver Presbytery that both project and relationships are important, they just were heavy on the “project” to start.
- Waiting for presbytery-to-presbytery partnership to grow stronger before starting individual church partnerships.

Given the 600% inflation rate, timing of shipments is crucial. Funds are kept until the last minute and are sent as needed.

Communication is by email – exchange minutes. View as one partnership committee.

Helping folks in Zimbabwe helps Denver communities too. The struggle is to get the churches to see the partnership not only in mission terms but relational terms.

In 2004 the first delegation from Zimbabwe visited. The current trip from Zimbabwe is the second. Soon there will be a group from Denver Presbytery going to Zimbabwe.

Jonah & Norah from Zimbabwe are both grateful to have entered in partnership. It is well received and appreciated by Zimbabwe Presbytery

They are looking for new ways to strengthen relationship by bringing the relationship down to the congregation level. In August of 2005 the presbytery to presbytery agreement was signed with Jonah on a conference line. Both sides are learning a lot. The relationship grew out of a specific project. Now they are looking to build a fuller partnership

Questions & Answer

Rick asked for more details on the shipping crates – There is no shipping cost. 800 – 1000 lb. crates. They create walls in the crate. The last wall is one foot from the end to insure no one can take anything of importance from the crate. Pictures are taken before the crate is sent, and when they are opened at the other end. The U.S. Department of Defense guarantees duty free. The rest the ministry covers.

How to improve the network

- How can we be more inclusive of others outside of South Africa (Malawi, Zambia, etc.)?
- How do we make use of problems, best practices and opportunities?
- How can we inspire each other?
- Have focused topics such as AID/HIV
- Seek not so much an overarching framework as a network of information.
- Set up Nexus of information set up ahead of time for a future meeting
- Building into the registration cost a fee to bring someone over from Southern Africa , e.g. AIDS expert
- Highlight a common topic of interest such as AIDS/HIV or agriculture
- Better communication for conferences
 - Registration
 - Information on what has gone on and what will be going on
 - More timely
 - Mailing list

We must use a convoluted registration process, i.e., money must go to Pittsburg for registration. If we decide to hold the conference outside of Louisville, we can use the host church to collect the registration fee otherwise we must use the current system

How to broaden our list

Use GA booth, handout

Use webpage

How to take advantage of GA

Have Jon bring someone from Southern Africa – have meal with him at GA

Maybe he/she can travel to some of the partner Presbyteries after GA.

Southern Africa Mission Network Conference Notes

Tuesday, January 24, 2006

The Network is:

- A nexus (connecting link) of information
- Catalyst in offering a place for us to come together, learn and work with each other in our projects
- We will not have any joint (SA Mission Network) project for the time being
- Coordinate partnerships in Southern Africa and the USA to meet on a topic in common
- Maybe we can serve as a catalyst for our partners coordinating their activities
- Invite other partnerships to join us in the future
- The next meeting dates could be used as a way to bring folks from our partnerships in SA to join us and make the gathering more than we are at present. Perhaps we can use GA budget to help pull this off
- Other groups are meeting that may be of interest to us, e.g., on HIV/AIDS. Maybe we need to be consulted by GA about these meetings, i.e., we need to be put in the loop.
- Set up an e-group that includes regional liaisons, Janet Guyer, Ken Jones, Doug Tilton, the Wrights etc.
- **Next meeting date will be in Louisville Feb 5th and 6th in 2007.** The date was selected to accommodate next year's Zimbabwe Presbytery guests of Denver Presbytery. Having the meeting in Louisville will enable us to have ready access to PCUSA staff and to use the fine Witherspoon facilities. Getting a hotel in Louisville itself (closer to the office) would be desirable if the cost was not prohibitive. Possible topics are:
 - AIDS/HIV
 - Agriculture projects
 - Church versus Presbytery-wide partnership (or both)
 - Tips on travel
 - Communications with SA
 - What's happening with staff and missionaries

Leadership team for next meeting

- Kelly (also our brochure designer)
- Gordy
- Eric
- Rick (also our webmaster)
- Bob
- Someone from Denver Presbytery

Follow up team that will contact those Presbyteries not presently at the table. Kathy gave the group a printout of all participants over the last three SA Partnership meetings to review, update and use in making contacts.

- Paul
- Larry
- Corliss
- Walt

Will – Regional Liaisons are a work in progress. They should be told about groups visiting and be given information news about the partnerships. They are not for making policy or direct mission personnel. They

are to be more about listening. Doug Tilton and the Wrights are the regional liaisons for our southern Africa network area.

Problems/ Opportunities / Best Practices

Problems

- Paying pastors of Black Congregations in SA (some are leaving for the business world because of low pay)
- Funding our work in our own presbyteries
- Black churches leaving UPCSA
- Communication problems: email & faxes
 - “Westerners have watches, Southern Africans have time, but we both have calendars”
- In USA, money for projects vs. developing relationships and vice versa
- Poverty
- HIV/AIDS
- Crime
- Transferring money to SA “cheaply and reliably”.

Opportunities

- Home stays in SA
- Transform our congregations in these relationships
 - Involving people in our churches in partnerships can be a great growth experience for all
- Pastor exchange
- Mission to USA
- Computers and other technical skills
- HIV/AIDS testing campaigns
 - Mark Plum – *The One Campaign*
 - Joy Raatz - *It's a Matter of Faith* packet is the result of an overture to GA that lost. However, it can be used by partners as a ready made packet of what to do
 - Health training conferences – help our partners attend these conferences through funding

Best Practices

- Develop joint partnership committees not separate ones (Denver Presbytery). It is difficult to meet and communicate but the benefits are worth it.
- Getting presbytery staff involved
- Florida Presbytery's tripartite church connection between black and white churches in South Africa and their USA partners
- Assist in improving the wages of SA pastors
- Having guests stay in homes in the USA or in SA (strive for a variety of homes, not all upscale)
- Outreach Foundation (Zambia) shows we don't have to do it all. There are others out there we can connect to.
- Get insurance so if there are health problems during trips they will be handled
- Department of Defense containers
- Mission trips for youth transforms lives and enriches the trip experience for all
- Fund transfers – set up system through Louisville to presbytery or denomination level. Could also set up and fund bank card in US, send card to SA (watch accountability)
- Leadership team from the twenty plus PC(USA) networks (8 in Africa) will meet together on Wednesday July 12 through July 14. Rick will go.

Funding – Wes Wilkerson x5349

- Core budget are spoken for. Can't fund mission work as in the past
- All mission funding now going through mission imitative not through core budgets
- Mission workers therefore have to assist is arranging for their funds.
- We can help by Assisting them do that by raising funds
- How WMD can help us
 - We need to identify what we need
 - WMD can then tie us to grant sources on a data base, e.g., plug in Lesotho – aids, WMD can find out what's out there
- Money for evangelism is not easy
- Grant writing software is available
- Money for health issue, development such as water wells is available
- Suggestion for Presbyterians on the board on a potential funding source, e.g. plug in Presbyterian
- Find out which missionaries are in the area, country or region. They will tell us who we can support
- Mission Connections on website from which you can find out who's out there

There is a Mission Connections web page that provides much information on our PCUSA missionaries:

<http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/>

- the [Web pages of all Presbyterian missionaries.](#)
- runs a [mission speakers service.](#)
- publishes dozens of [missionary newsletters](#) every month.
- helps churches connect to Presbyterian missionaries.
- answers [questions about Presbyterian missionaries.](#)
- is a program of the [Worldwide Ministries](#)

Bob – what is the overriding strategy for Southern Africa and how can we funnel into it? Future “thing” we need to talk to Jon about. Leadership team should set that agenda. We need to try to have Jon at the next meeting

Should there be some overriding body to help us look at the big picture and can WMD be such a body?

or

Should churches go out and make connections overseas, see a need and fill it, without thinking about the big picture?

Those two are in conflicts in the current pictures. The WMD is living through that. The Mission Networks are beginning to bridge the divide.