

**PC(USA) WMS Mission Network Conference**  
**Louisville Kentucky – Hampton Inn Downtown Louisville**  
**Thursday, July 13, 2006**

**What WMD is still doing/isn't doing Led by Will Browne**

Have you help us think about how networks work and how to tweak it to make the PCUSA better engaged with integrity cohesion & purpose

Do so in context of what's happening at the center, i.e. ecumenical & partnership (E & P) team no longer here – they were among the recent cut of personnel

- E & P team did the arranging
- 14 of 28 who lost their job from WMD & most directly worked with networks.
- They are the ones who invited you all to this conference

Despite this, the reports of WMD's demise are exaggerated

- All function were done are continuing for most part
- New parts picking up doing function of those who were eliminated

The word out that PCUSA has quit doing worldwide mission are not true

We are going forward but it's still in planning stage

Mission work plan – reorganize to increase the impact in 4 core areas

1. evangelism & witness
2. justice & compassion
3. vocation leadership
4. spirituality

Originally 44 different project areas identified to achieve that

At that time \$ was there for only 8 of them

WMD worked on those 8 areas in 2005

Then the new planning team began their work

All the work needed to be rethought around those 8 objectives & other things

Feb 06 mandate to identify everything we do: the answer 1700 areas & all needed to be analyzed to determine / prioritize in three categories:

- essential
- helpful
- don't need to do

It includes what needs to be done but better done in colleges / seminaries, by Presbyterian Women , at the presbytery level , etc.

A very difficult and tense time at the center because:

- if what the folk's job description made the third level their job would be gone as staff cuts were mandatory.
- Had to be done confidentially

Had to sift through with a goal to do all the list of essential things & most of the helpful ones

But the \$2.5 mil shortfall grew to \$5 mil and then to \$9.5 mil

Had to go back and make cuts of helpful & even some essential

Very difficult – as job description dictated the need of each individual – including the 77 people who came to lose their posts to be in the process

One of the most difficult days of Will's life was to tell 14 of 28 of his staff their positions were made redundant

Successes of the past

Most successful part is the development of national liaisons – e.g. Doug Tilton – Southern Africa  
Area offices were over burdened. They needed on the ground persons to help all Presbyterians coming to area

Task of regional liaisons – supervised by area coordinators – e.g. Doug Welsh - Africa

Their role is to help enable us to do our work not to control what we do

May have other tasks too, but job mainly job falls in 3 areas:

1. help us - groups – networks – in doing our work in country
2. Help to support missionaries in country - especially new folks – to help get them up to speed in all areas
3. to be the PCUSA's on the ground presence in country. To help the PCUSA – Louisville understand the on the ground happenings – To be a link to Louisville of all its in country work

What is a partnership – see pamphlet

Different layers of partnerships

- layer one – partner church
- layer two – organization & institutions (a lot by historical basis)
- layer three – multiple partners in country e.g., three in South Africa (UPCSA, EPCSA etc.)
- layer four – grass roots by need not by affiliation e.g. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Presbyterian Hunger Program, Self Development of People usually shorter term (typically goal oriented geared to self sufficiency)
- layer five – frontier areas – very different, work in partnership with organizations to help us work in that area

Note priority is layer one partner church

Mission networks are one of our grand successes

ecumenical staff (E & P) was the arm of WMD in contact with networks along with area coordinators & regional liaison

The decision was that there was a lot of overlap and the ecumenical staff (E & P) was redundant

Now the networks will work primarily through the regional liaison & area coordinator

This lifts up the priority of the work of area coordinator to focus more on networks

In the future networks will have to make more of their own arrangements

On the plus side for the networks, they can have a greater role in strategizing in their area / country through discussion with their area coordinator

Idea from the floor: Have a network conference of all networks at one time & one place maybe at GA in San Jose in 2 years – it could be a way to lift up networks to the church

Concern of WMD from bird's eye view

- There is a tendency to overwhelm partners in easily reached areas & not to even get involved in hard to reach and often neglected / abandoned area (often ones where PCUSA has had strong, historical ties – often a puzzle to these long-term and now neglected partners)  
Question; how do we minister to these hard to reach historical tie places
- There is a net to assert a role for mission personnel long-term, in country – commitment is very needed.  
Question: How can mission networks help us think about and encourage our on ground mission personnel & not make them have to tend mission trip folk

To meet the new budget situation, by attrition, mission personnel spots are going away without the need of terminating anyone. But, an accounting mistake made it such that more than the retiring folks needed to be cut. – \$2.5 million dollars needed

By God's grace a bequeath of woman became available allowing us not to cut mission personnel

While this is good, from Will's perspective, the crisis could have made the church take ownership in solving the problem and instead allowed us to defer the problem down the road.

The reality is that today there are only 235 mission personnel around the world. This is down from 1,000 not that long ago. (From the floor, in 1959 – PCUSA had 2063 mission personnel around the world)

Networks have a role in help change this downward trend through extra commitment opportunity accounts for mission personnel #132192

From floor

- Networks need more info on the \$ crisis
- mission funding dried up because of lack of confidence as to if the money given is going to where they want

Will's response : He agrees the system is broke. We need a more simple, direct & accountable system

### **What have we learned – Led by Doug Welch**

- Need for information on all the relationships going on in the country
- Informal partnership unknown need to discover them & draw them in
- Money changes ownership of projects
- Hands on project are still popular
- The importance of communication
- Partnerships are more complicated than anyone anticipated
- Good to have network meetings with partners involved
- There are benefits to sharing good & bad practices
- Perceptions & truth is complicated & changes how we look at things
- The flow of information between the WMD staff & folks in country is very important
  
- Important to keep networks vital and important
- There is a need to raise consciousness for advocacy
- Multiplication of / spreading of information
- Partners often helps our networks groups to “slow down” develop patience and to look at big picture
- There is a need to get more people to the network meetings
- Balancing time & location of meetings
  
- Personnel in network are often folks already spread thin
- The continuity of network problematic – and there is a need for follow up
- networks are more than just presbytery partnerships. They are very diverse
- How many people know about [www.pcusamission.org](http://www.pcusamission.org) none or very few did
  1. Website posting ability about stories going on in your network
  2. Yahoo group available and a good way of communicating
  3. Space for all mission networks to have a place
  4. Contact person Pat Cole

- Trust is critical because of varying interest
- Withholding information is dangerous
- Social justice consciousness important but difficult due to funding problems
- Training indigenous church leaders – how can seminaries help fund this
- Email groups valuable
- Sharing together allows figuring out the pit falls of things in country and helps clarify things so no surprises occur, especial financial ones
- Bring speakers to broaden perspectives
- Need for communication within the network
- Helps us find out who else is doing the same thing in the country

### **Highlights of Above**

- Money changes ownership of project
- Hands on projects still popular
- Withholding information is dangerous
- Perspective changes how we look at things
- Slowing down
- Trust within the network important
- Financial accountability
- Balancing perspectives

### **Questions & Concerns – Emanating from the Networks**

- Do we need to create a database of networks?
- Moving forward: what types of communications can we expect from WMD in the future?
- How can all the networks get connected to each others
- How do networks handle money questions? Is it common for them to have a bank account?
- Is there any WMD money available to pay for mailings, booths at GA.
- What kind of near future promotions from GA can we expect?
- Can we obtain an organizational structure from GA
- What do we do about the unevenness of the various networks?
- What do we do about the organizations involved in the network that are not Presbyterian
- Training knowledge about being missionaries
- What is the role of networks in the whole working of the church, i.e, is it for Support, communication, command & control.... Just what?
- How do networks work?
- Is it always necessary for networks to get together
- Regional Liaisons, how do we relate to them? Do we pay to get them to our meetings?
- How to “deal” with groups who work out of sync with our partners
- How do we bring in more potential partners?
- How do we link better?
- How do we recruit new network members?
- What is the size of the network?
- Non Profit creation within networks?
- Will or should there be a similar on the ground network of your partners in their country?

### **What do we hope for? Led by Jon Chapman**

- What is the purpose of a network?
- Networks need to find an identity
- We need to be democratic with partners and resources
- The chaos of the spirit?
- Resources financial costs of operating a network – concerns on burden on individuals participating
  
- We need to step out in faith
- Network needing a common project or focus
- Broaden participation of task force meeting not always the same 5 or 6 people
- How to deal with Global Fellowship type groups like Peachtree Church in Atlanta GA
- Better communication within the networks between the network and PCUSA
- There needs to be a national network gathering. Meet separately and then together in conjunction with another conference
- Hope networks will grow both in number of and number within networks
- Hope for ongoing network leadership training like is going on here
  
- Clearer understanding of what we are as networks
- New networks can learn from networks that have been around for a while
  
- Repository of info from many sources
- Funding source for missionaries in their area
- Doing projects together
- Networks to become part of the culture of the PCUSA
- Intentionally for purpose of the network meeting – not just a bull session
- Place to strategize on how to get folks involved in doing mission

### **Best Practices (Nuts & Bolts of a Network Conference)**

- Registration fees should include all expenses and for funding future meetings
- Pay for part time coordinator
- At our Meetings have a mission minded speaker
- Make sure the agenda leaves time for prayer & discernment
- Should have an educational format
- Maybe use a church to facilitate event to minimize costs
- Streamline arrangement in different geographical location at churches
- Leave arrangements to individuals as to place & costs etc
- Rate venues for future ideas and share this information among the networks
- In-depth introduction time is good & not lost time and can be a way to build and inform
- In larger groups sub groups are important
- Involve core group to plan meeting
- Invite variety of people to meeting folks working in the area, missionaries on home leave. Folks in the area you are working

### **Other needs and thoughts of Will & Area Coordinators**

- Security
- When a crisis hits what is the role of the network e.g., Tsunami
- How can networks contribute to strategy

- Role of - does it change the dynamics of the meeting – good / bad
  - partner representatives
  - immigrants
  - mission personnel
- public statements by networks how do you make them in ways that doesn't counter GA policy
- Location/timing/duration of network meetings
- Role of network in finding mission personnel, e.g. Louisville is looking for and has money for mission projects
- Regional liaisons travel home once a year. Consider having meeting then

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**What's Next – Led by Will Browne**

- Total email list of network people to AC & Will's office
  - Get to the same list of leadership team/convener(s)
- Listing of network Website addresses, link them also to PCUSA site (Louisville will do) and make sure there is a reverse link (your site can get them back to PCUSA)
- List of contact resources but beware of "liability"
- Ongoing project should be to develop a list of church/presbyteries working in various countries Perhaps listed on GA annuals statistical report request of churches with networks then following up on it.
- Visibility of networks
  - with tables, articles etc
  - Also collect stories and send to Pat Cole for [www.pcusamission.org](http://www.pcusamission.org) site
  - Bulletin inserts / mission yearbook
  - Create a network brochure and put on the website
- Distinguish definition of network / partnership
- List of Missiological speakers for use as speakers at network meetings
- Place for missiological training
- List of which churches are supporting mission personnel (MP) and attempt to draw them in.
  - Bring to Presbytery & market to get churches to support MP – Synods – Presbytery Communicators Network
  - Letter of introduction to pastors / executives
- Revise Guidelines / make them user friendly
- Think about level of meeting
- WMD Louisville develop a Common Mission Fair display for networks to borrow & use – create a display to send out
- Communicate with partners about what/how/when ditto for mission personnel & retired mission personnel
- Cross pollinate,
  - make known other networks at our mission network meeting – handouts etc
  - Develop a vehicle for sharing good & bad between networks
- Seminaries are a good resource to use as venues – connect up with them – can be source of students seeking a mission experience
- News release from this meeting get out & article of Presbyterian Outlook

- Data base support for Meeting Planning
- Missional Church Movement
- Annotated Bibliography of resources
- IPEN consult for educational issues – looking for a name link from each network to connect with IPEN
  - Request to IPEN to develop a list of education area experts
- Educator's Resource Website – Jeanie will follow up on
- Dream of Roger Shoemaker (Czech Network): National Conference – goal 1 country rep & 20 network folk attend = 1,000 people at conference
  - Take back to your network this dream
- Job for WMD – Louisville connect up with other denominations and their work in our network countries. Will's caution: the tendency of we northerners to be paternalistic & our division of denominations can be a good thing as a result

### **Immigrants**

Presbyterians for Just Immigration [pfji@yahooogroups.com](mailto:pfji@yahooogroups.com) contact Dana Dages

- deals with legal issues faced by immigrants

### **Presbyterian Global Fellowship:**

Initiative by 6 churches Peachtree in Atlanta

Focused on alternative ways to engage in world mission

Language of concern homosexuality issue: tends to be a filter over all they do

To date they have not communicated with Louisville

Will has concerns as to their motives as a result

Conference in mid August at Peachtree with many PCUSA folk, including

Will, attending to see what's going on and to listen to the concerns they have

These congregation evangelical conservatives. To date these folk gather around what they are against and this is an attempt to gather together around something they are for, but note, through a filter that is the homosexual issue