Member Care Update

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Ethnê-MC Update **Issue 2: March 2007**

Welcome again to the *Update*! This monthly report informs you about important member care resources, news, and topics. We especially want to further equip people with member care responsibilities who are focussing on mission/aid personnel in least-reached people groups (LPGs). Each report is archived on our web site: **www.ethne.net/membercare**. Please share the *Update* with others and feel free to submit materials for us to include. May the Lord bless you and your work!

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In this Issue:

SPECIAL NEWS: Events to help you connect/contribute to the member care field

- *Latin America: COMIBAM Congress, Retreat, Member Care;* **www.COMIBAM.org**

Check out the report on Latin American missions, including member care issues.

SPECIAL RESOURCES: Tools to further equip you for member care

- *Member Care, China;* **www.Chinamembercare.com**.

Announcing the latest audio resources in Mandarin.

- *Headington Institute: New Learning Center;* **www.Headington-Institute.org**

This site has been reorganised and also includes a free online Travel Stress Module.

- *Religious Liberty Trends 2006-200;* **www.Religious-Liberty@hub.xc.org**

There are clear trends towards greater freedom, yet consider three major concerns…

- *Inter-Agency Standing Committee, Human Resources Paper*

Have a look at the draft on support/safety for staff. Stay in touch with current thinking.

SPECIAL TOPICS: Current issues and approaches related to member care

- *Priority Time for Busy Couples*

Demands in our work/life require us to give special attention to marital relationships.

- *Marriage Potential Inventory*

Take and discuss this helpful tool, and strengthen your marriage!

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The *Update* is compiled on behalf of the *Ethnê-Member Care Network*. We are a core, growing *network of colleagues* who are involved in member care. We come from different nations and organisations. Our passion is to see the least-reached people groups (LPGs) experience the transforming love of Jesus Christ. We are committed to help provide and develop member care resources in order to support the diversity of people/senders who are working among LPGs. Our *Network* is part of the Ethnê to Ethnê Movement (**www.ethne.net**).

Email: mc@ethne.net
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SPECIAL NEWS

- *Latin America: COMIBAM Conference, November 2006 and Member Care Items*

What is happening these days with Latin American missions? Check out the 24 page report, *Strengths and Weaknesses of the Iberoamerican Missions Movement* from COMIBAM. This preliminary study was presented at the recent COMIBAM Congress in Spain, November 2006. It also includes a summary (Spanish) of the member care consultation and the retreat that took place there. Page 16 summarises the issues identified and discussed during the member care consultation (11 points). These are: local church involvement, pastoral field visits, reentry concerns, improved communication, realistic expectations, MK development, financial planning, help with visas and interpersonal relationships, use of short-terms mission/support teams, financial transparency, and ongoing training.
Contact: **www.COMIBAM.org** (*Reporte del Congreso*) **cespana@msn.com** (Retreat report/English)

SPECIAL RESOURCES

- *Member Care, China*

This web site now has 15 new audio files in Mandarin, based on the written articles on the site. The written materials are in Chinese and English, and include two books, five case studies, and 15 articles.
Contact: www.Chinamembercare.com

- *Headington Institute—Learning Center and Travel Stress Module*

The Headington Institute website has just launched its "Learning Center." It includes:
*Resources for humanitarian workers
*Resources for managers and human resource professionals
*Resources and continuing education for mental health professionals
*Resources for the families and children of humanitarian workers
*Research reports and articles online.

The third on-line training module (free) is also ready: *Understanding and Coping with Travel Stress*. Travel is a normal part of life for many humanitarian workers, but they are not protected from finding it stressful just because they are working for a good cause. Practical travel difficulties and distress at being separated from family and friends are often among the most stressful of work-related challenges that humanitarian workers face.
Contact: **www.headington-institute.org**

- *Religious Liberty Trends 2006-2007, WEA Religious Liberty Commission, Elizabeth Kendal*

As noted in the January 2006 WEA RLC News and Analysis posting "Religious Liberty from 2005-2006" the great global trend of this age is the trend toward openness. This unstoppable, irreversible global trend, brought on by advancements in information and communications technologies, brings with it a global demand for liberty—people with information inevitably will demand the right to make choices. Dictators and religious ideologies that are threatened by liberty are resisting openness and rejecting liberty. For a brief summary of this struggle for openness and liberty, please see the Global Overview on WEA's International Day of Prayer (IDOP) for the Persecuted Church 2006 website. Be sure to also see the latest (2007)Religious Liberty Trends posting . It focuses focus on three trends that emerged in 2006 which threaten to deeply and painfully impact Christians through 2007.
Contacts: www.idop.org/overview **www.Religious-Liberty@hub.xc.org**

- I*nter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) –Draft suggestions related to Human Resources*

Are you interested in knowing what other groups, faith-based and secular, are doing with regards to staff support and safety? If so, contact ISAC (with World Health Organisation) for their Action Sheet to *Prevent and Manage Mental Health and Psychosocial Problems in Staff and Volunteers.* Key actions points include: funded plans to protect and promote staff well-being; preparation for emergency contexts; healthy working environments; work-related stressors; access to mental, psychosocial, and physical health care; support for critical incident stress; and post-mission supports.
Contacts: **vanommerenm@who.int** or **mwessell@rmc.edu**

SPECIAL TOPICS

Priority Time for Busy Couples

Adapted from Barry Austin

The demands of work/family life place extra pressures on marriage relationships. This means we need to give our marital relationships special attention. Many couples find that unless they commit themselves to have a pre-arranged time of meeting together, communication gets neglected within the marriage and their relationship declines.

Priority time is a commitment made by a husband and wife to one another. They agree to spend a minimum of one—two hours a week specifically sharing their lives together. Priority time needs to be scheduled to avoid interruption: e.g., at a time when children are asleep or at school. It should be planned together to fit in with each other's schedules.

Some Suggestions for What You Could Do During Priority Time

- Read together and discuss a book about marriage or family.
- Go out for a walk, or go out for coffee and cake or a meal. Relax together.
- Ask each other, "What pressures do you feel you have been under recently?" Pray for each other. Don't counsel each other. Listen closely and pray!
- Pray for one another's work life, home life, and service for the Lord. Try to help each other identify your respective spiritual gifts and talents. Discuss how you can help one another be more effective in your service for the Lord.
- Discuss and pray about your financial needs and your giving to others.
- Discuss the needs of your children. Pray for them: for character growth, for their relationship with the Lord, for their relationship with their friends ,for their school activities, etc.
- Ask each other the question: "Have I hurt you by anything I've said or done recently?" Resolve any of these hurts that may have occurred by asking for forgiveness and forgiving one another.
- Each write down what you think your partner's main character strengths are, then share them with each other. Encourage one another.
- Each write down what you think are your own personal character weaknesses. Ask your partner to pray for God to strengthen you in these areas of weakness
- Play a game together.
- Other ideas:

Applications

Set time aside to discuss the above suggestions with your spouse. Decide on a time when you could meet regularly and begin to do some of the things suggested. Often work life and home life are very intertwined, with unclear "boundaries" between them. Nonetheless, purpose to make a special "boundary" for Priority Time!

Get together with another married couple on your in your area. Encourage each other to share some of the pressures that you feel in your marriage relationships. Help each other by sharing how you have handled these pressures. Partnering with another couple for mutual growth and accountability is often key to make sure that priority times are successful. If you have relational struggles and/or personal issues that just do not seem to improve, then get outside help. Don't wait! These include things like not taking to each other, yelling, hitting, sexual problems, internet pornography, and depression.

Notes: This material is adapted from Barry Austin's (1995) resource manual, *Personnel Development and pastoral Care for YWAM. Staff*. Used by permission. A similar version on it is also in chapter 30 in *Doing Member Care Well* (2002).

Marriage Potential Inventory

(adapted from *Doing Member Care Well*, 2002, chapter 30)

We like to encourage couples to start out their *priority time* (previously described) with a tool developed by the Maces (1977) in *How to Have A Happy Marriage.* This tool has been adapted slightly and it looks at how much marital *potential* a couple thinks they have already developed. Each of the items below are scored on a scale from 1--10. The higher the score, the more potential is felt to have been fulfilled. Feel free to write in some clarifying comments too. It is the marriage that is being scored, not the individuals. This is done individually and then scores are shared/compared with each other. A good discussion will usually ensue. Talk about your highest scores and your lowest scores. And anything else of course. Additional items can be added that are relevant to your situation.

Our common goals and values

Our communication skills

Our effectiveness in handling conflict

Our commitment to growth in our relationship

Our expressions of appreciation and affection

Our cooperation with family life and home life

Our agreement on gender roles

Our sexual fulfilment

Our money management

Our time management

Our decision-making

Our interaction with children

Our interaction with extended family

Our issues of health--exercise, nutrition, ageing, etc.

Our involvement with work or leisure activities

Our spiritual closeness/and fulfilment

Our working through unresolved areas

Other areas of our potential: