

MEMBER CARE BRIEFING

A Communiqué of Global Member Care Resources(MemCa)

February 2006 Number 16

GREETINGS: Welcome again to the *Member Care Network Briefing*. We are sending this communiqué to around 1700+ people who are actively involved in member care. Included are members of regional and national task forces, people who oversee member care related ministries, member care practitioners, and several mission/church leaders. The newsletter is a service of *Global Member Care Resources* (MemCa) which is part of the WEA Mission Commission. We send the *Briefing* three times a year, and include important updates and analyses regarding member care. It helps to further link us together as a growing, international member care community. We encourage you to save this *communiqué* for future reference and to share it with your colleagues. Please also feel free to submit material for us to include. Note that all of the *Briefings* are also available in pdf on our MemCa web site <www.membercare.org>.

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UPCOMING MEMBER CARE EVENTS

We begin this issue of the *Briefing* with the compelling member care *Declaration* from the October 2005 Philippine Missionary Care Congress. This is followed by a list of 10 distinctives that guide our MemCa group, then a brief summary of a special worker stress symposium in the UK, and then an update on some brief radio programmes for disaster response done by Brent Lindquist. In the Essential Resources section, we mention the coaching/counselling newsletter from Gary Collins, leadership some development books, two books on TCKs/adolescents, an extensive article on aid/aid workers in *National Geographic*, and an online trauma/stress course. We also include some longer pieces on disaster preparation and some sobering reflections on preserving religious liberties. The core of the member care field focuses on the nurture and support of mission/aid personnel, and surviving vs thriving as workers is reflected upon in the Future Directions section. We round things off as usual with a listing of some of the significant member care events in the coming months. We appreciate your suggestions to help us make the *Briefing* as useful and relevant as possible. The Lord bless you and your work.

DEVELOPING MEMBER CARE

PHILIPPINE MISSIONARY CARE CONGRESS – 2005 DECLARATION

Having been compelled by the reality of the love of God as expressed through the redemptive work of His Son, Jesus Christ, and the inseparability of the Great Commission with the Great Commandment;

Having been moved by the vision of Philippine churches sending career and bi-vocational to serve among the unreached people of the world;

Recognizing missionary care - a holy, honorable and holistic task – as vital to the preservation of the missionary on the field and consequently, the propagation of the gospel of Jesus Christ among the unreached peoples in the Philippines and other parts of the world;

We the participants of the Philippine Missionary Care Congress of 2005 by the grace of God do solemnly declare:

That, we will foster a culture of care among our churches and mission organizations compliant with the model and mandate of Christ to love and serve each other; we will endeavor to raise awareness about Member Care that would catalyze the Filipino church to harness capacities in order to ensure the flow of care towards those who were sent out;

That, we will share knowledge, resources, and personnel; cooperate in stewardship of God's resources with each other and with the global member care community so that potentials are maximized and excesses are minimized in serving cross-cultural Christian workers;

That, we will seek out good practice models of Member Care that are biblically founded, and harness the existing strength of the Filipino culture for missionary care; we endeavor for the cross-cultural Christian workers' personal growth that includes the nurture of each of their family members;

That, we will raise more church leaders and ministers particularly focused on Member Care, adequately equipped and tooled to serve the needs of the Filipino missionary including their families and home-based personnel;

That, we will personally engage in caring for Filipino cross-cultural Christian workers- celebrating their joys, sharing in their sorrows, supporting their needs and supplicating for their victory in seeing the unreached peoples coming to Christ.

Done on this 8th day of October, 2005 at the Word for the World Sanctuary, Makati City, Philippines.

CORE DISTINCTIVES FOR MEMCA

Here are 10 distinctives which guide our work as MemCa. These distinctives also represent our core values and our "MemCa mentality". They are not just abstract aspirations, but rather practical premises for our work. You will likely find many of these distinctives to be relevant for your work too.

- Identifying member care gaps and new directions
(commitment to help *shape/support* member care)
- Considering international issues/needs in addition to our own ministry areas
(commitment to a *globe-all* focus)
- Developing resources intentionally in addition to providing resources
(commitment to *provelop* resources)
- Contextualising knowledge/practices in light of the diversity of the mission/aid community
(commitment to *multicultural diversity*: national, linguistic, disciplinary, generational ,etc.)
- Working together and building relationships in Christian mission/aid
(commitment to *proactive/ongoing connections*)
- Connecting with sectors/resources outside of mainstream Evangelical missions
(commitment to *multi-sectoral connections*)
- Establishing good communication links/updates globally and regionally
(commitment to *knitting the net* of practitioners)
- Focusing on mission/aid workers from A4 regions and UPGs.
(commitment to the *underserved/at-risk groups*)
- Maintaining a passionate and visionary voice on behalf of mission/aid personnel
(commitment to *member care advocacy*)
- Seeking the Lord together in prayer and humility in all that we do
(commitment to Jesus Christ, the *Best Practitioner*).

PROVIDING MEMBER CARE

WORKER STRESS SYMPOSIUM - UK

In October 2005, People In Aid and InterHealth organised a successful one-day symposium on "Managing People Under Pressure". Nearly 100 people gathered to attend plenaries and workshops on topics related to the psychological well-being of mission/aid workers. Many issues were discussed, including heavy workloads, the role of organisational culture in decreasing stress, maintaining physical health and a good work-life balance, and stress for human resource specialists. Dr. Debbie Lovell-Hawker with MemCa, presented a workshop on "Supporting

National Staff Under Pressure.” The final plenary by Viola Mukassa (see her two cases at the end of chapter 27 in *Doing Member Care Well*) rounded the day off with suggestions for caring for local/national staff. *Briefing* readers are encouraged to get and review the 25 page symposium report which is available for free from: Christine@peopleinaid.org

RADIO PROGRAMMES IN DISASTER RESPONSE: GROWTH THROUGH HARDSHIP

Brent Lindquist, Link Care Center

In September 2005, Hurricane Katrina came ashore causing tremendous devastation throughout the gulf region of the United States. At that time, some Christian radio Stations inquired of Trans World Radio if they had any Crisis or Disaster response programs for broadcast. For the last two years Link Care Center and Trans World Radio have strategically partnered with providing mental health oriented programming throughout the eastern hemisphere, as well as crisis response and recovery resources via the internet to local production teams in the areas damaged by the December 2004 Tsunami. Scott Hollinger of Trans World Radio and myself teamed up to write, record, and produce 60 scripts that could be used as 60 or 90 second radio spots for the radio stations in their US TWR network. As the scripts were being written, Susan Hyde of the International Bible Society graciously provided the two books for listeners to receive: *When Your Whole World Changes*, and *The Survivors: For Kids in Tough Places*. Listeners were given website or phone information to get one of the free books.

The underlying philosophy of the scripts:

1. To present a clear Christian context throughout, indicating the love and care of God will under gird all recovery efforts.
2. The tone is light, and focusing on recovery and renewal, as opposed to trauma and pain.
3. The focus is on survivors (as opposed to victims) and on caregivers, those people who come alongside the survivors to help and care.
4. The direction is to find and give care in the community, to build each other up, as opposed to seeking the care of professionals. The desired outcome for the listener is to say “I could do that!” While certainly some people may need professional care, our concern here is for the majority of people who are needing the support and care of each other.

Here are the first four scripts. To read the entire document and all 60 scripts, go online at www.seasonsofcaring.org.

1. The Big Idea – Intro

The recovery from Katrina is going on throughout the gulf region. Our hearts and prayers are with everyone involved. I hope you can join me for a series of thoughts about “Growth Through Hardship.” Today I want to leave you with two pictures, if you will, of the story of Katrina, so far. This first picture is of the people yelling at the camera, rightly demanding for someone to do something for them right now. In the midst of our pain and crisis, we all can be like that, can’t we – overcome, overwrought, overwhelmed. Then, another picture – that of countless people standing quietly in front of the camera, and saying “I have lost everything, but I am grateful that I am alive. God is with me. I will survive.” God is with all of them, and all of us. Walk with me down the survivor’s path as we grow through hardship.

2. Victim or Survivor

What do we call the people who lived through Katrina? Does it matter? It matters to me, I guess. Calling someone a victim sort of puts them in a stuck place they will have difficulty getting out of. A place where they may be waiting for someone to do something for them. I am instead drawn to the word survivor. It seems to me that survivor describes someone who is moving on a journey to recovery. They can receive help from others, but they can also participate in their recovery. I don’t know about you, but if I had gone through Katrina, I think I would prefer to be a survivor. It makes me more hopeful. Waiting, but also moving.

3. What can one person do?

There is a cartoon I once saw about a crowd of people, and each one was thinking “but what can one person do?” It illustrated the idea that each of us wonders what difference we could make, but if each one does one thing, it all adds up. If one million people each did something tangible for the survivors of Katrina, those one million random acts of kindness would bless one million, or more, survivors. We would be writing our own versions of the movie “Pay it Forward!” Could it happen? God knows it could. It just takes me, and you, and you over there, and you with that quizzical look on your face, and you over there behind the tree...

4. Caregivers and Survivors

If “they” are survivors, who are “we”—you and me? Each and every one of us has a role to play with all of these survivors. I will be calling us “caregivers.” A caregiver provides care of any kind. Anyone, old or young, can be a caregiver! And, many kinds of care can be given! Children are already selling lemonade to raise money. Others are collecting Teddy bears. Mothers and grandmothers are knitting blankets. Business people are giving office supplies. And each one of us can pray. Think about a specific way you could be an intentional caregiver today.

ESSENTIAL RESOURCES

COACHING AND COUNSELLING RESOURCES

Gary Collins sends an electronic newsletter with great tips on coaching and counselling. Here is an excerpt from a recent one. Check out his materials on his web site and subscribe for free to his newsletter at: www.garycollins.com

Why Visions Fade

“This week I read another article with the oft-stated message that visions fade or leak if they are not cultivated. Visions come to those who notice current trends, see what is going on, and trust God to show how their gifts, values, and passions can be directed in ways that challenge the status quo and inspire behaviour that makes a difference. Some organizations, churches and coaching clients never move forward because they have no clear vision. Others have vision or visionary leaders but the visions fade. Why does this happen? Visions fade when they are:

- Not stated clearly.* Concise, clear visions inspire and motivate. Fuzzy, poorly articulated visions fade fast.
- Never reinforced.* Good leaders and coaches keep restating the vision so it is not forgotten.
- Not owned.* If a coach or a leader has a vision for others, this is powerless unless and until the other people understand and embrace the vision for themselves.
- Not practical.* It is hard to pursue a vision when we don’t know what to do to reach it.
- Not modelled.* The vision caster must lead the way in action, not just in words. Think of the pastor who has a vision for reaching non-believers in the community. If the pastor never has contact with non-Christians, the vision is all talk and no action. Visionaries live out their visions. What does this say about coaching?”

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

The following five books and their descriptions are from Society for Human Resource Management www.shrm.org.

Facilitation at a Glance

For anyone who is on a team, leading a task force, heading a committee, or managing a department, this guide teaches you the facilitation skills you need to become a better leader and help your teams become more productive.

5-D Leadership

The authors offer self-assessment and planning tools to help current and aspiring leaders discover their dominant leadership dimension, identify and leverage their strengths, and apply their skills and talents to lead effectively.

Performance Management

This pocket manual provides supervisors, work groups, and human resource professionals with easy-to-use processes and forms for planning, appraising, and recognizing performance.

Project Management Memory Jogger

This easy access guide will ensure that your team's projects are completed on time, within budget, and with exceptional results. This is an indispensable tool for employees at all levels of the organization.

How to Run Seminars and Workshops

For seasoned pros, this is an invaluable tool for becoming a world-class seminar and workshop leader. For novices, it's a step-by-step self-teaching guide that provides the confidence and the techniques speakers need to survive and thrive in front of an audience.

TWO BOOKS ON TCK AND ADOLESCENCE

Third Culture Kids and Adolescence: Cultural Creations. Written in 2005 for adolescent TCKs, this 148-page book consists of 17 chapters divided into the following five parts: (1) Before Adolescence, (2) Adolescence Invented, (3) Identity Lost, (4) Sex Forbidden, and (5) Work Forbidden/School Required. Each chapter ends with a section, "What can adolescent TCKs do?" The chapters are short and each one takes only a few minutes to read. They are written

in non-technical language, so meant to be an "easy read." The chapters present basic facts simply and include practical applications for adolescent TCKs. Although the book is written specifically for adolescent TCKs, the information in it is applicable to other adolescents as well.

Understanding Adolescence. Written for parents of adolescents and published by Victor Books in 1987, this companion 179-page volume ends each chapter with a "2005 Update." It consists of the following twelve chapters: (1) You Don't Understand! (2) Adolescents are Adults, (3) Cultural and Community Identities, (4) Family and Sexual Identities, (5) Isn't God the Answer? (6) It's Not Fair! (7) Should I or Shouldn't I? (8) We're Getting Married! (9) Why Can't I Work? (10) A Calling, Some Cash, Some Credit, (11) Do I Have Go to School? and (12) You Can Do It! Chapters are written simply, include practical applications, and end with a section, "What can Parents do?"

These two books, plus two other books, 40 brochures, and an 800-item database of member care materials are all available at no charge on www.missionarycare.com, and a more secularized version for people in creative access nations at www.crossculturalworkers.com

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC: HUMANITARIAN AID AND AID WORKERS

The December 2005 issue contains a 44-page article on the humanitarian response in five areas of human mass crises. The article is filled with moving pictures and accounts, and aptly called "Hope from Hell". Part one deals with Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast. Part two is called "When the World Forgets", and focuses on the tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia; the earthquake in Bam, Iran; the ongoing war in Afghanistan; and the protracted insurgency in Northern Uganda. This is a not-to miss issue which explores the struggles and realities of life for both survivors and aid workers.

COPING WITH STRESS AND TRAUMA FOR AID WORKERS

The Headington Institute is offering free online training modules in the area of stress and trauma. The first module is available now and focuses on recognising traumatic stress and self-care. Contact www.headington-institute.org, click on Learning Center and then Online Training.

SPECIAL MEMBER CARE ISSUES

Disaster Preparation for Churches and Missions

A Church and Mission Prepared for Disasters—Some Reflections and Ideas

Marg Pollon

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was And when he saw him, he had compassion on him and bandages his wounds pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him." Luke 10:33-34

As I ponder the Christian response to a global crisis, the familiar parable of the Good Samaritan comes to mind. This very familiar story we have heard since childhood has been a model to follow, yet the principles taught have often been ignored or taken a back seat with our busy lives. Will a world-wide and prolonged disaster such as an influenza pandemic (e.g., avian flu) re-ignite our church bodies to be the compassionate people that God desires? And how might this affect our mission operations and international/local staff? What will be our responsibility to them and those they serve?

Predictions of the impact that an influenza pandemic would cause range from two million to over 150 million deaths worldwide, over the course of several months. The associated social and economic impact would reach even further. The timing of such an upheaval cannot be predicted but it is considered to be very likely in the next five years. This will not be something happening "over there" or "to them." Our families, our churches, our organizations will all be affected, in whatever country or city in which we live. Governments are taking action and the business sector is taking this threat seriously. How will the church respond? How will we prepare?

The prospect of a 'pandemic' or any other wide-scale disaster is a very difficult topic to consider and given the expected magnitude we are treading in unfamiliar territory. Findings from a recent survey in our own country, Canada, for example, indicate that few denominations/ministries are in discussion or are not yet taking aggressive steps to prepare for an emergency of this magnitude. We truly have been fortunate, having had relative calm compared to many countries which have experienced severe devastation. Yes, we have suffered localized

emergencies such as floods, SARS, droughts, fires and ice storms; but compared to many other countries who have lived through horrific mass calamities, we really have no idea what it is to live through a “natural disaster” that could turn our lives upside down.

Biblical Response. During any crisis, many questions arise about God. As such, we need more than ever to be ready with a response for the *hope* that lies within us. We know that one of the main questions asked by people affected by tragedies is, “*Where is God in all this?*” Christians must be well-grounded in biblical truths to be prepared to answer hard questions that might come our way, and at the same time being able to offer a listening ear to a hurting soul for solace and comfort. What an opportunity to reach out and connect with people in need, whether back in one’s church or internationally in our mission settings.

Prayer. As Nehemiah prayed for God’s guidance and protection, we too should make prayer a priority and *first response* in any situation. No matter what a person’s spiritual leanings, when tragedy strikes, an offer of prayer can give great peace and assurance, to be affirmed that God is in control.

An inventory is helpful to assess what resources are already available, on a moment’s notice. For example, some churches are equipped with cots, bedding, and food; due to programs that already exist in their facility such as “community food banks”. These areas of ministry can usually be implemented readily since the structure is already in place.

Small groups can play an integral role in building neighbourhood mutual support groups, prayer gatherings, home churches, counselling and support, food preparation, delivery service, child care, communication, etc.... These task-orientated groups have service already built into their DNA and will be of great value in community outreach.

Education/Training/Equipping. The focus of a disaster preparedness plan should be to anticipate what is needed to respond to warnings and to take action during a disaster relief operation. The process will be most effective if those who are the ultimate beneficiaries know what to do in times of disasters and know what to expect. For this reason, an essential part of a disaster preparedness plan is the education of those who may be threatened by a disaster. This could be an important contribution of both the local church and the mission/aid community.

Of particular note in the context of a pandemic is that we are *all* threatened. Staff may not be available to help, because they too may be stricken or even dead! Or some people may say, “Of course we’ll be able to respond; we’ll just do whatever our local health authorities ask of us.” This may all sound very well and proper, but the reality in many places is that health authorities are either not prepared themselves or else not available to help in a timely fashion. They won’t be able to come around and say, “Thanks for being on stand-by, here’s what you need to do.” Hence we ourselves, both church and mission, need to prepare in advance.....

Training of trainers, who could prepare local churches and mission organizations in areas of healthcare, social services, and church planting, should be a high priority. This may not make sense right now, but if you were a survivor of Hurricane Katrina, or your staff were severely injured by the recent earthquake in Pakistan, it certainly would be extremely relevant. Health care workers that have been retired or out of service for whatever reason, could be brought up to speed for support in those areas that fit their previous expertise. Others could be trained to assist in lesser roles but would be of great assistance to alleviate stress and offer rest to over-extended medical professionals. Churches (where they exist) may see their facility used as a base for emergency response courses and programs, with congregations engaging in active participation.

Partnerships with other churches/ministries as well as other health/social agencies/NGOs are a viable way of reducing omissions as well as duplications in disaster response (Ecclesiastics 4:12). We should welcome this opportunity to partner with others to walk in the steps of the Great Physician to be Christ’s hands and feet.

Communication. To keep information current and relevant, communication is an essential service to monitor the situation and interventions, as well as to relieve stress and anxiety or in some cases panic during a crisis. Churches and mission organizations could help gather data that would house valuable statistics on neighbourhood demographics, a list of church/mission/NGO members with specific medical qualifications and experience, keeping track of deaths, those living alone, lists of volunteers with non-medical skills such as electricians, drivers, etc. Many NGOs and missions have much experience in the areas of partnership and communication already.

New Sites for Services. Caring individuals that have been prepared to give sacrificially because they love the Lord will have an opportunity to step out and care for those in their churches and community. In times of crisis there is often much spiritual angst. In other emergencies people often seek a church for peace and comfort. As well, we could see a new healthcare landscape with the church leading the way in emergency response preparedness and community health education.

We are encouraging Christians globally to better *prepare* personally and corporately for mass disasters as Christ's ambassadors. If this virulent strain were to take hold and passes readily from human to human, there will be little time for preparation. As we see in the life of Nehemiah and other biblical personalities, good stewardship of our lives and resources includes preparation. Preparation involves not only how to care for ourselves and loved ones, but also for those in our sphere of service.

Questions or inquiries please contact the author at:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/church_emergency_preparedness

Links

www.christianemergencynetwork.org

www.namb.net--Church Ministering in Crisis

www.cdresponse.org --Christian Interactive Network

www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/pandemic/en/ WHO Pandemic Preparedness

www.ncm.org/min_ndr.aspx Nazarene Disaster Response...Local Church Plan

www.bmonesbittburns.com/economics/reports/20051011/dont_fear_fear.pdf Don't Fear or Pani—An economist's view of pandemic flu.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY UPDATES AND PERSPECTIVES 2005-2006

Elizabeth Kendal, WEA Religious Liberty Commission

[Editor's note: Is religious liberty a core part of member care, and vice versa? Absolutely, and one of the most compelling reasons is explained in John Amstutz's article in *Doing Member Care Well* called "Humanitarianism with a Point". His enlightening and provocative interpretation of the parable of the sheep and goats in Matthew 25, underscores the need to intentionally provide member care to church/mission personnel from all the nations who are persecuted for their faith, especially in the end-time scenario. For additional reasons see the article in the same book by Wilfred Wong on human rights advocacy in missions.

Recall that the freedom of religion is guaranteed and protected by Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 18 states; "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others or in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance." Member caregivers need to know that the cry for solace and safety, as well as the hunger for justice, are often core issues when such rights are flagrantly violated, as in the case of outright persecution.

In the words of Derek Summerfield in the "Social Experience of War" (*Rethinking the Trauma of War*, 1998, p. 34): "A key challenge is whether agencies are prepared to stake their reputation on an analysis which puts at centre stage survivors' concerns about rights and justice, which may crucially shape outcomes." Is this concern for rights and justice not also a key challenge for many of us in the member care field, who live in regions and work with colleagues subject to human rights violations, ranging from subtle discrimination all the way to physical hostilities? What does intentional and prudent member care look like in these situations?]

The Centrality of Liberty

Just as the industrial revolution brought changes that made the world a smaller place, the changes being brought by the revolution in communications and information technology are making the world a more open place.

But change rarely comes easily. Change can generate tension and conflict between new competitors, as well between those who benefit from and endorse it, and those who are threatened by and reject it. As the world opens up, people find they have choices. But choices cannot be appreciated without liberty. While multitudes of people do or could benefit from liberty and therefore endorse it, dictators and false ideologies are threatened by it and therefore reject it. These days it is liberty, not territory or even resources, that is central to most conflicts.

The Power of Openness

In the past, isolation has been a powerful weapon with which to control and basically imprison and subjugate entire populations. But for isolation to be an effective controller of the people it must be absolute. In the past isolation was achieved (with various degrees of success) through sealing off the outside world – thus imprisoning the nation – and then frequently purging the population. In this age of globalisation and information technology, isolation is increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to achieve or maintain.

Openness, whether overt or covert, breaches prison walls. It lets light and fresh air in; cries and odour out. Thanks to openness, the free can see in and the prisoners can see out. Openness presents people with choices. As people faced with real choices demand real liberty, pressure builds – eventually reaching breaking point. The length of time this takes depends on the depth of darkness, the strength of the fortifications, and the nature of the breaches (overt or covert).... [Certain countries in Asia] now monitor and control internal pressure: minimising it through state repression, and defusing it through persistent persecution, primarily incarceration and violent intimidation. But these days, the power of openness is such that isolation is like virginity – once lost, it simply cannot be regained.

Protecting Failing Systems

In this increasingly open world, information, knowledge, and ideology are on trial like never before. Only truth is strong enough to withstand scrutiny, which is why Christianity is not, and never has been, threatened by openness or liberty. Truth defends itself. Regimes and ideologies that cover-up or falsify history and use deception, repression and persecution to hold on to power, should see their dependence upon those means as evidence of their inherent weakness. The prison, which is built on a foundation of power-lust, protects the dictator, the regime, or the ideology, not the masses....

Tribalism, Nationalism, and Now Anti-NGOism!

In recent years, tribalism and religious nationalism have been employed to resist change. While these have led to an increase in persecution, they have not been able to resist openness and prevent the flow of information.

Those who hope to keep "their people" in some degree of isolation and ignorance for the purpose of wielding power over them find non-government organisations (NGOs) a real nuisance. The NGOs educate or enlighten the people, thus generating (often inadvertently) internal pressure. They also report to the outside world (possibly only to their international headquarters) thus generating external pressure. Christian NGOs also expose people to sacrificial, non-sectarian humanitarianism, something modeled by Christ and integral to true Christianity but not generally found in Empire building, warrior, self-serving or fatalist religions. This generates extreme religious tension and jealousy in those religious dictators who find the hearts of "their people" gravitating towards those who sacrificially love and serve them....

But need does not quieten all dictators, religious or otherwise. Many would sooner see "their people" homeless, drug addicted, and dying of preventable disease than risk losing their influence over them.... During 2005, [four nations in particular] all advanced their isolationist policies and enacted laws that severely restrict the activities of NGOs. In each case the stated aim is to rid the nation of "Western spies" and "subversive elements" and "cultural imperialists" for the sake of "national security" and "social harmony" and "cultural integrity". In this age of openness via radio, satellite, mass media, Internet and mobile phone, it may be possible to restrict, minimise and slow down the flow of information, but it is impossible to stop it. Vain attempts to stop the flow of information can only heighten suspicion, and exacerbate internal unrest, repression, persecution and conflict.

Dictators Extend Fortifications by Forming Alliances

Dictators are forming alliances to bolster themselves against the forces of openness and liberty. This strategy of forming alliances to remove the leverage of open, free, reform-advocating nations has existed within the United Nations for some time and is beginning now to function openly in the relationships between nation states. Because of these alliances, advocates of religious liberty (and liberty in general) will increasingly find their voices drowned and their actions frustrated....

Choosing, Resisting, and Preserving

The revolution in information technology is bringing us into a whole new era in world history. It is now very easy to imagine the 21st Century being the century when the gospel will reach into every corner of the world via indigenous church planter, foreign humanitarian, radio, film, CD, DVD, MP3, television, satellite, mass media, literature, Internet, and mobile phone.

The enemies of liberty have a vested interest in resistance. They will continue to purge their ranks, silence opposition, crush dissent, terrorise the masses and plug the breaches. This is already happening in [many] states where dictatorial regimes are stepping up the fight against openness and liberty through systematic repression and persecution....

The only way to defeat darkness is with light and the only way to defeat error is with truth. Yet we see Christians and Western leaders surrendering, in the name of political correctness and tolerance, to the demands of religious dictators to keep religious criticism or the gospel of Jesus Christ out of earshot of "their people" allegedly because it offends their religious sensitivities or infringes their right not to hear it. This is both a disaster and gross abuse of the fundamental human right of religious liberty.

So too is surrendering to the dictate that we indiscriminately and uncritically tolerate, even respect, all cultural practices. But Western multicultural societies have already judged and rejected many foreign cultural practices, religious and otherwise. Cannibalism, hallucinogenic drug taking, caste and untouchability, suttee (the Hindu practice of burning a widow on her husband's funeral pyre), FGM (female genital mutilation), honour killing, forced marriage, as well as many other barbarous or abusive practices are not respected and not tolerated. They are banned so rights and liberties can be preserved....

Truth does not need to be protected behind a fortification of repression and persecution. Religious liberty does not deny anyone the right to reject the message. But religious liberty emphatically denies that anyone has the right to enslave and imprison another through the removal or denial of their fundamental liberties.

2006

Advancing openness and liberty is the most important thing we can do – not simply liberty to vote, but liberty to write and read, to preach and hear, to think and learn, and to believe.... And so as we enter 2006, the exhortation is to "stand by God" who declares that his salvation is free (Isaiah 55). And let's faithfully, courageously, energetically, passionately, sacrificially and expectantly persist in prayer-empowered advocacy and mission, and scripture-inspired prayer for the preserving, empowering and expansion of the Church of Jesus Christ and for religious liberty everywhere.

"Let these false prophets tell their dreams, but let my true messengers faithfully proclaim my every word. There is a difference between chaff and wheat! Does not my word burn like fire?" asks the LORD. "Is it not like a mighty hammer that smashes rock to pieces?"

(Jeremiah 23:28,29. NIV)

For the full version of this article, or to subscribe for Religious Liberty News & Analysis, please send your request to Elizabeth Kendal <eliz@alphalink.com.au>.

Please include your name and country or state of residence.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Where are you heading in member care? And where is the member care field heading? There are so many ways to contribute, to get involved, and to find a good fit between ones call/gifts and the many needs/opportunities. Here is a brief piece that can help us deal more realistically with the current and upcoming challenges of our work. May hard times refine our character, hone our competencies, stimulate our creativity, and deepen our compassion. Don't give up!

SURVIVING AND THRIVING AS MISSION/AID WORKERS

In my experience, both surviving and thriving are realities—my regular “companions” in life. I try not to feel too guilty if I am in more of a “surviving” mode—as if something is wrong with me. Nor do I try to presumptuously relax in a state of overconfidence if I am going through a season of “thriving”. I just try to be grateful. There is an uneven flow to life, and we do not know what tomorrow brings. The ability to thrive is developed through hard times. And hard times never end in this life. May our many ups and downs encourage us to stay close to God and to reach out to each other for mutual support.

I want to share a brief quote that gets into the surviving and thriving mix for mission/aid workers. It comes from an excellent book, *Stress and Trauma Handbook: Strategies for Flourishing in Demanding Environments* (published by World Vision, 2003). The quote is from the chapter by Dr Cynthia Eriksson et al p. 95, summarising her research on the adjustment of World Vision aid workers from over 30 countries:

"...for each of the mental health risk adjustment measures (depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and burnout) 30-50 percent of staff scored in the moderate to high-risk range. This is a significant number of people who are working and 'surviving' while experiencing considerable emotional distress. These staff may not be incapacitated by these symptoms presently, but we cannot deny the effects that depression, burnout, and PTSD can have on relationships, work, and personal health. An NGO's commitment to people includes the welfare of beneficiaries around the world, but it also includes the well-being of staff who commit their lives to serving and saving others." [Editor's note: Also carefully consider the impact of the increasing emotional distress and behavioural dysfunction that lead up to the development of these three disorders!]

So is this figure similar for other organisations? Probably a resounding “yes” for many organisations with staff serving in more volatile areas. One word in particular that catches my attention in the quote above is “surviving.” This study and other research, along with our consolidated member care experience, suggest that many workers may indeed be “surviving” rather than flourishing, due to the demands of their work and the experience of chronic or extreme stressors. Interpersonal friction and poor management practices are key contributors. For Christian workers and other people of faith, this experience of “surviving” is not so much about God’s character or His ability to help us. Rather it has everything to do with the realities (consequences) of our following Him into difficult places, plus our being human and responding as normal humans, And it has implications of course for our organisational responsibility to support our workers. For more on the area of organisational responsibilities, see the *Code of Good Practice for Managing and Supporting Personnel* by People in Aid (2003), available at www.peopleinaid.org

I close this brief piece now with one more quote and perspective on surviving and thriving. It is from Paula O’Keefe’s moving article, *Surviving War as a Caregiver*, in *Doing Member Care Well* (2002), p. 226.

“There are many things that the Lord has taught me in the past few years in working in a war zone. He has taught me the importance of spending quality time with Him, of worshipping, of taking adequate rest and looking after myself, of taking breaks and having some fun. He has shown me that I can’t do everything alone and that I need other people with whom I can be vulnerable and share my heart. I also need to have adequate support from my home church, along with a good covering. He has done much healing and refining and is teaching me to enjoy just being His [child]. I am learning to get my self-worth from who I am in Him, not from what I do.”

UPCOMING MEMBER CARE EVENTS

February 13-19, 2006: COMIBAM Southern Cone Retreat for Latino and Brazilian mission personnel myron.loss@sim.org	February 20-24, 2006, United Kingdom Human Social Functioning Training Course Edinburgh International Health Centre (formerly Care for Mission) Email: info@eihc.org	February 27-March 3, 2006: MANI Conference, special member care track, Nairobi, Kenya, and special mc informal consultation afterwards on 4 March mcsa@xsinet.co.za
March 6-10, 2006: Budapest, Hungary Family Education Conference SHARE; Web: www.shareeducation.org	7th - 9th March 2006, UK CRISIS RESPONSE SEMINAR Edinburgh International Health Centre (formerly Care for Mission) Email: <info@eihc.org>	16-18 March 2006, Budapest, THE FIRST CENTRAL EUROPEAN MEMBER CARE CONSULATATION - Hungary Email: Charley Warner <warner@barnabas.org>
March-May, 2006 Austria; Barnabas Zent. Family Retreat: March 12-24 Couples/Singles: April 1-8; April 9-15; April 23-May 5; May 14-20 www.netlifemin.org/ministries/bzentrum	April 9-13, 2006, Nairobi, Kenya Singles and Marriage Retreat will run concurrently, Tumaini Counselling tumaini.ac@aimint.net	April 19-22, British Columbia, Canada CARES member care training www.cares.ca/Restoration/MCTraining.htm
April 24-29, 2006: Member Care While Managing Crises, Mobile Member Care Team, Dakar, Senegal www.mmct.org	2.-6. May 2006, UK MULTICULTURAL TEAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS Workshop for Memcare providers and Team Leaders Contact: <cmuzzi@oval.com>	22.-26. May 2006, Florida, US MULTICULTURAL TEAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS Workshop for Memcare providers and Team Leaders Contact: <Bob.Auer@ccci.org>
May 29-June 1, 2006: Amsterdam, the Netherlands Coaching and Training in the CernySmith Adjustment Inventory, Len@cernysmith.com	June 18-26 MemCa Consultation/Collegium, Cape Town, RSA (by invitation: for regional and speciality reps in MemCa)	July 16-21, 2006, United Kingdom Refresh Mission Course refresh@allnations.ac.uk
October 30-November 3, 2006, ME Multicultural Teams and Partnerships, Lianne Roembke jbns@comego.org	Nov 5-11, 2006, Germany SHARPENING YOUR INTERPERSONAL SKILLS WORKSHOP <pmckown@GEMission.com>	Various training events in the UK for the humanitarian aid sector www.peopleinaid.org
Sharpening Your Interpersonal Skills For 2006 schedule and locations: www.itpartners.org		

The *MemCa Briefing* is compiled and edited by Kelly O'Donnell on behalf of Global Member Care Resources (MemCa). MemCa is an affiliation of 20 international colleagues committed to help develop member care resources within the mission/aid community. Our members come from different organisations and churches, and represent various geographic and speciality networks in member care. We are a "partnership of networks" and the networks connect to MemCa via their leaders/liaisons who are part of MemCa. Our special emphasis is on working together and with others to support personnel from the A4 regions (Asia, Africa, Arabic-Turkic, America-Latina), and those working among UPGs (unreached people groups). Members are also committed to provide personal and work-related support for each other as needed. Our growing friendship and Christian fellowship provide the foundation for our joint work. MemCa is part of the Mission Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA).

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