

MEMBER CARE NETWORK BRIEFING

A Communiqué of the Global Member Care Task Force (MemCa)

February 2004 Number 10

Greetings: Welcome to the *Member Care Network Briefing*. We are sending this communiqué to over 1200 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 *Briefing* is a service of Global Member Care Resources (MemCa) which is a task force of the WEA Missions Commission. We send it 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, print it out, and to share it with your colleagues. Note that the *Briefings* are also located on the MemCa website www.membercare.org

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DEVELOPING MEMBER CARE

Guidelines for Member Care Workers: 15 Commitments

by Kelly O'Donnell

Member care is a broad field with a wide range of practitioners. As this field continues to grow, we believe it is important to offer guidelines to further clarify and shape good practice. Any guidelines must carefully consider the fact of our field's diversity, and blend together the best interests of both OSC/NSC service receivers and OSC/NSC service providers.

This present document focuses on the training, character, and practices of member care workers (MCWs). It suggests 15 basic guidelines in the form of MCW *commitments*. Our desire in putting these guidelines together is to:

- support MCWs in their work
- emphasize quality of services
- encourage the ongoing development of character/competencies for MCWs
- educate organizations/individuals using/providing MCW services
- protect service receivers via safeguards.

[illegible]

Character, competence, and compassion are necessary to practice member care well. Compatibility with an agency's values/goals (especially for in-house MCWs) along with cross-cultural sensitivity/experience are also needed.

These suggested guidelines is that MSWs

1. Commitment to ongoing training, personal growth, and self care.
2. Commitment to ongoing accountability for personal areas and member care ministry.
3. Commitment to “doing no harm” and to providing quality services.
4. Commitment to recognising strengths/limits in one’s self/skills/services.
5. Commitment to understand and respect the felt needs of service receivers.
6. Commitment to work with others when possible, and make referrals when needed.

- ## Additional Notes

Specialists/Certified—Many MCWs can be considered “specialists” and have advanced degrees/certification in their respective disciplines. They are encouraged to:

- Non-Specialists/Non-Certified**—Many MCWs enter into this ministry through less academic or systematic training routes (e.g., taking workshops, lots of life experience.) They are encouraged to:

- Organisations**—Organisations that receive/solicit MCW services are responsible to carefully choose MCWs, both in-house and outside caregivers, based on these guidelines and other relevant criteria. They are encouraged to:

- ## PROVIDING MEMBER CARE

1. Organisational Profile One

Linking Hands: Linking Global Partnership in Medical Missions; Asia

Linking Hands was established four years ago as a medical mission networking organisation. It facilitates and connects Christian medical professionals to long/short opportunities world-wide. Linking Hands is a web-based virtual organisation run by a group of five volunteer doctors and a medical student. In addition to being web-based, there is personalised contact and service that Linking Hands provides through phone calls, email and actual meeting up. The other areas of networking include:

- * Students electives programmes with mission hospitals
- * Medical professionals /resources for crisis relief
- * Medical mission leaders and agencies to facilitate partnership.

In the course of networking medical missions, Linking Hands together with EMFI (Evangelical Mission Fellowship in India) initiated a project called *Vishranti* which seeks to serve the needs of medical missionaries especially those at the front line. Vishranti was initially set up to establish a getaway for Indian medical missionaries who needed a break. In a feasibility and exploratory survey done eight months ago, it was clear that the hardware (e.g., the rest-house) is not the problem, but the challenge lies in the software (i.e. the people manning the programmes as well as the participants).

The team found that many retreat centres in India were under-utilised and struggling. In India, the concept of member care has largely been confined to the rhetoric. The main obstacles in missionaries taking a break was the problem of actually going, especially the problem of getting leave, locum for replacement, and having an understanding mission board and hospital administration. Vishranti is evolving to be a facilitating body for rest.....to make it happen! Having a retreat of our own would be at a later phase.

Vishranti aims to facilitate and promote Sabbath rest and edifying leisure:

- * Level 1 - diversion providing opportunity to set aside normal work, break out of routine and experience a needed release.
- * Level 2 - relaxation and rest, refreshing us for all of life.
- * Level 3 - restoration, providing opportunity for creative thought and gaining perspective.
- * Level 4 - transformation, leading to continual maturity into childlike people who enjoy God and delight in God's creation.

Vishranti facilitates the process of rest by:

- * sourcing for suitable retreat centres/ guest houses.
- * getting replacement doctors/locum.
- * raising funds and resources for the missionaries for this purpose.
- * linking mentors/seniors to minister to the missionaries during their rest.
- * educating mission agencies and church boards regarding the importance of rest .

For more information:

Email--weileong@linkinghands.org

2. Organisational Profile Two

People in Aid, United Kingdom--update

People In Aid is a United Kingdom-based organisation, dedicated to promoting good practice in the management and support of aid personnel. They offer many wonderful resources that are also relevant for the Christian mission/aid community. Here is an update describing some highlights of the past year and what is coming up in 2004. This is now the third time we are profiling People In Aid in the *Briefing*, due to the cutting edge thinking and resources that it offers. Seriously consider joining!

2003 was a very successful year for People In Aid, with the very well received launch of the revised *Code of Good Practice* and many other valued outputs. We ran popular workshops on Competencies, Developing Your People, Effective Debriefing and Distance Management. Our catalogue of publications was enhanced with revisions to established reports, along with additions such as handbooks from the workshops mentioned, as well as Under Cover 2, which highlighted issues and offered tips on insurance cover in the sector. The positive feedback we received from the member survey we ran in October encouraged us to feel that we are offering the right services and level of support to those organisations demonstrating their commitment to supporting their staff, by being members of People In Aid.

This year we already have a report on NGO Partnerships which will be available later this month, along with new, free guidelines on creating a policy on Codes of Conduct, in our Policy Pot. Our first workshop this year, on 21st January, was on the all important issue of Work Life Balance, which offered expert advice to attendees on how to achieve the vital balance, essential to supporting and retaining staff. This will be followed in March by a workshop on Mentoring, during which participants will have the opportunity to consider how a mentoring scheme could be established, or strengthened and run successfully. If you are interested in attending a workshop, joining, or purchasing a publication, contact info@peopleinaid.org; www.peopleinaid.org; tel +44 (0)20 7520 2548

People In Aid, Regent's Wharf, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL UNITED KINGDOM

3. Organisational Profile Three

Bethany Ministries, Hong Kong

Bethany Ministries, based on Hong Kong's Cheung Chau island, is committed to supporting Christian workers, providing rest and retreat facilities, pastoral care, counselling and other member care services for those serving in Asia. The staff team is drawn from several countries and includes people who have experienced the kind of difficulties missionaries and others face. They are committed to serving, offering what is needed in each situation, including practical help, a listening ear, prayer, encouragement and counselling.

As an Affiliated Member of the Association of Christian Counsellors UK, Bethany Ministries is committed to promoting sound professional standards. Its confidential and professional Christian counselling service is available to individuals, couples and families and both self-referrals and referrals from churches, missions and other agencies are accepted. Counselling sessions can be undertaken on a residential basis at Bethany for a short or more extended period.

Bethany Ministries was incorporated as a charitable organisation in Hong Kong in 1990. Its retreat centre operates on a donation basis for individual reservations, depending solely on gifts left by guests to meet these running costs. A guideline figure is given and guests are asked to pray about the gift they should leave. A charge is made for group reservations. Fees for counselling are dependent on the household income of clients.

Cheung Chau, with its traffic free environment, is set apart from the hustle and bustle of Hong Kong, yet surprisingly accessible by fast train and ferry from Hong Kong International Airport. Bethany, located on a hill overlooking the South China Sea, is a haven of peace and tranquillity in a busy world. Consisting of several houses, it offers Western-style catering and accommodation with air-conditioned guest rooms, including some with private bath. Bethany is surrounded by peaceful coastal walks and is just five minutes to sandy beaches and 15 minutes from Cheung Chau's small fishing town.

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REGIONAL NEWS

1. Middle East Member Care Consultation Cyprus, October 2003

Thirty-four participants, mostly living in the Middle East, attended this consultation. It focussed on building relationships, sharing resources, identifying ways to work together and develop member care, and regrouping the Middle East Regional Member Care Affiliation (RIMA). It was noted that the first regional member care consultation took place on Cyprus, 10 years ago, and focussed on the Middle East. A new co-ordinating group was formed. The overall goal is to develop a network of caregivers that can provide supportive resources throughout the Middle East. Various books, web sites, and radio programmes (Trans World Radio's Member Care Radio) were mentioned as resources.

During the interactions, several suggestions were made for developing member care: mobile trainers; MemCare Training School; agencies identify MemCare personnel including TCK people; MemCare centres/groups in each country with resources; TCK issues to be highlighted; accountability/support structures for people on the field; retreats, mentoring and spiritual resourcing; a curriculum team to produce materials; debriefers; and translations of resources into Arabic. Another consultation is being considered in 12-15 months, adding a couple of days on for specific training track(s).

2. India--Member Care for Mission CEOs: One Day Seminar in Seven Cities

Member care is for everyone, including CEOs! Mr. Ravi David, Dr. Theodore Srinivasagam, and Dr. Bijoy Koshy teamed up to take the lead in facilitating a seminar in seven cities in India. There was an average gathering of 12 CEOs. The seminar was organised by the Membercare Team of the India Mission Association. The first seminar began in Bangalore on 26th September and ended with the last seminar in Nagpur on 6th November. Madurai, Hyderabad, Chennai, Kolkata, and Delhi were the other cities.

Dr. Theodore Srinivasagam opened every seminar with Bible study on the subject of leadership. He focused on the exemplary leadership style of Moses and how he dealt with such issues related to personal, organisational, and family life. This was followed by a brief introduction of the CEOs. The group discussed and identified issues that were affecting them. They shared both negative and positive issues. Negative ones were in three categories: personal, organisation, and family. They were then divided into small groups to share and pray with each other. In the afternoon they played a small game to show that CEOs can also play as hard as they work.

The group was again divided into sub-groups and each group took one of the issues that were listed in the morning and identified solutions for the same. The solutions were shared in the plenary sessions. The participants found this exercise very helpful. The final emphasis and recommendation was that each CEO should find one or two close friends with whom they can meet to share and pray for the issue that affects them. It was felt by all CEOs that there should be another gathering of CEOs in 2004 but this time to come for two days along with their spouses. A firm action plan of the seminar is to send out a monthly paper to all CEOs on one particular issue and give possible solutions.

3. Latin America—COMIBAM Member Care Forum, El Salvador, November 2003

A one-day forum on member care was held on November 15, 2003 in San Salvador, El Salvador. There were 17 participants from 13 different Latin American countries. The forum followed the five-day II Assembly of COMIBAM International (Iberoamerican Missions Cooperation). The purpose of the forum was to bring together regional mission coordinators and sending agency leaders to reflect and dialogue on the importance of member care. The participants shared about the needs and successes in the implementation and follow through of their respective member care programs. There was discussion about raising awareness and equipping sending churches, sending agencies, and those who receive the workers on the field regarding the need for intentional care throughout each stage of mission life: recruitment, selection, preparation, orientation, departure, arrival, field life, reentry preparation, and ongoing support. Unfortunately, there is not much material in Spanish about these important areas.

In light of these needs, a plan was presented for the years 2004-2006 which emphasised the development of support materials for these areas. The plan includes a proposal for a resource CD with relevant information and links to various web sites useful for both mission personnel and their organisations. There was also a strong emphasis on offering the “Sharpening Your Interpersonal Skills” course, now translated into Spanish, and a very valuable tool for relationship training Christian workers in other countries. The email member care forum is to be adjusted to allow for greater communication among those involved in member care in this region (coordinated by Laura Greenman in Argentina). In addition, the COMIBAM web page will be used to list member care resources and key articles (comibam.org). Finally, some members of the forum were invited to be part of a revitalised member care working group. This group is coordinated by Gloria Bustamente, who is also the Coordinator of the Member Care Program for COMIBAM.

ESSENTIAL RESOURCES

1. Book Description

Strategies for Flourishing in Demanding Environments (World Vision, 2003)

edited by John Fawcett

Relief workers, missionaries, and other international aid workers respond to the call to help those plagued by hunger, poverty, disease and other tragedies. They routinely place their lives at risk. Hostile environments, chaos from organisational decisions, and the inability to cope with demands from increasingly dangerous situations all pose a threat to an aid workers personal well-being. And they need more than stress management skills to survive. An international team of researchers and practitioners has collaborated to explore how those working in demanding environments can not only survive but flourish.

World Vision, Fuller Seminary, and Youth With A Mission have collaborated to focus on the effects of stress on international aid workers. This particular population faces increasing amounts of stress as they work in politically and religiously charged areas of the world. The authors examine how we can move beyond "stress maintenance" to create an environment that promotes development and strong emotional health through strong relationships, knowledge, skills, and professional activities.

How does stress impact human functioning? What are the signs of burn-out? What steps can be taken to reduce the effect of stress and strain? How does this research affect the practicalities of everyday humanitarian work? What individual and organisational actions might be taken to reduce the impact of stress and strain in the field? The answer to these questions are presented along with real stories, a series of check lists, stress indicators and burn-out monitors to track the well-being of all workers. The focus is on finding a way to grow and thrive in these circumstances while continuing to work, build strong relationships and be proactive in life. The book can be ordered from World Vision International's web site: www.worldvisionresources.com

SPECIAL ISSUES

1. *Connecting with the Human Resource Field—Go Ahead, Jump*

by Kelly O'Donnell

"You might as well go ahead and jump", as one pop music group says. That is, take a chance, and try something different. And helpful. For me in this brief sub-section, I suggest that many of us jump into and explore some possibly new terrain: the human resource (HR) field. It is vast—and it is vastly helpful. Here's some background to orient us all some more before we jump.

The first time I ever heard the term "member care" (MC) was at a two-day workshop offered by Missionary Internship (now Mission Training International). I flew in from our home in The Netherlands. It took place in 1988 in Michigan, USA, and was coordinated by Sam Rowen and Ken Harder (thanks so much you guys!). Later I wrote a bit more about this subject (smile) and in 1992 in the book *Missionary Care*, referred to member care as being roughly equivalent to the business world term "human resource development" (HRD), which is a core component of the HR. field. That association is still accurate, and still makes much sense to me, especially if we describe the central organising principle for both HRD and MC as being 'the ongoing commitment of resources and potential resources ...for the *development* of personnel' (*Missionary Care*, p. 10). Member care though, and of necessity, spills over the borders of traditional HRD, and encompasses other aspects of the broader HR field.

For example, Mathis and Jackson (*Human Resource Management*, 2003) describe HR Management as being composed of several groups of inter-linked activities taking place within the context of the organisation. These activities (or dimensions) include: HR planning and analysis; equal employment opportunity; staffing; compensation and benefits; health, safety and security; employee and labour/management relations; and for our purposes here, *HR Development (orientation, training,*

employee development, career planning, performance management). Member care, as currently conceptualised and practised, delves deeply into the various areas of HR, with HRD (and development—for the member care community, in terms of character, competencies, compassion) being at the core.

So here is my point. If the HR field is so similar to the MC field, as has been asserted, then could we not intentionally try to connect more, for mutual benefit? Or at least for our own benefit? Some have and some are. Bravo! I have met some personnel directors/personnel officers for example who know this field well. And some that have studied with Azusa Pacific University's Operation Impact programme. But by and large HR seems overlooked. Sure some in HR might see staff more in terms of being *resources* with strategic worth that accomplish objectives more than being *humans* with inherent worth who accomplish objectives. But this of course is not always the case. Would you agree? My bottom line then is that HR and HRD are key fields that can help inform, shape, upgrade, and yes, even *evaluate* many of our personnel practices in member care/missions.

So maybe we want to start out with just a small jump. And then perhaps a few longer ones. OK. Here's some suggestions.

- * Visit some of the HR web sites and also check out their related publications/periodicals and links: American Society for Training and Development (excellent magazine too) www.astd.org
Society for Human Resource Management www.shrm.org

- * Borrow or buy a book like this: *Human Resource Management* (2003, 10th edition, published by Thomson, available on Amazon.com, and reviewed in a recent *Briefing*). This book is a gem and a good way to overview this diverse field. Written in a North American context, it nonetheless is filled with many practical applications that can benefit other regions, and includes a CD, and many web sites. Combine your money with a colleague or two; or ask some one to buy it for you—about \$70 US dollars.

- * Attend some of the international or national human resource conferences (e.g., see web sites above).

- * Have HR specialists in missions do plenaries and workshops at our mission/member care conferences.

- * Encourage mission/member care personnel to do advanced degrees (masters) in human resource management/development, and encourage university students interested in missions/member care to consider studying this field.

Go ahead, jump.

2. *Supporting Workers and Caregivers in Isolated Places* (authors' names withheld)

My wife and I provide member care services to missionaries serving in a large region. I hold Masters degrees in counselling and psychology. My wife is a gifted lay counsellor. Working together as a team is vital to our effectiveness in providing for the worker community here. We have been providing member care in this region for the past four years. We travel the region offering counselling and seminars. Workers also receive personal counselling, phone, and email consultation from our home. This is a diverse group, coming from various mission organisations and denominations. Their issues range from singleness, to spiritual dryness, to the death of team mates.

The workers here have opened their hearts to us in a way that is very humbling and encouraging. Living in the region has opened many doors to ministry as they feel we are one of them in a way we would not be if we lived elsewhere and travelled into the area for visits. Living in the area has been a definite advantage for us.

It has been very important to develop positive relationships with the leaders in the region. Some leaders are wary of member care providers, fearful that workers will be side-tracked from focusing on ministry and instead focusing on self-care. Some also fear that therapists lack understanding of the sacrifice required of pioneer work, and will prematurely encourage workers to leave the field to recover from burnout or other stress related disorders. Rather, we have been able to encourage them with our view that healed and whole workers will be more effective in their calling for longer terms, and as we have helped several stay on the field rather than needing to go elsewhere for help. It has also been important for leaders to understand the application of our teaching to evangelism and discipling new believers. Member care then becomes something that helps them accomplish their goal, not thwart it. Many of the issues workers deal with are the same ones their local friends face. A worker that has victory over anger, or has a strong marriage, will be able to share that victory as a testimony to his neighbour, and lead new believers into the same victory. God's grace has given us favour in the eyes of the leaders here; we have gained valuable allies and friends among them and have been blessed by them.

As this ministry has grown so has our need to be refilled as we give out. As appreciative as the worker community has been of our ministry, we realise we cannot look to them for support. Their task is to reach the locals for Christ, not to support member care people, and rightly so. I am the only professionally trained member care provider in this region. There also is a lack of Christian therapists serving the general population in any of the other countries in our region. We work here without therapeutic peer support. We have looked to member care providers outside this region for a model of serving in isolated places. We have not been able to find any serving long-term in a similar situation to ours. Recognising that we need to take full responsibility for our own needs we are exploring the best way to maintain ourselves spiritually professionally, emotionally and in order to remain healthy and therapeutically relevant here for the long-term.

To stay spiritually healthy we vigilantly maintain quiet times with the Lord and import teaching tapes and books to keep us challenged and enriched. Affirming our dependence on the Lord and His faithful provision is our mainstay.

It has been crucial that we understand and monitor our motives for service. There are more needs here than we can meet. The worker community is generally very task-focused and sometimes guilt-driven. It is easy to fall into the trap of just responding to needs ourselves, rather than at the direction of the Holy Spirit. We have to keep the focus that we are responsible to do all that the Lord calls us to do for the workers, but must not take on tasks or responsibilities the Lord has not placed upon us. There will be time and energy to fulfil all that He calls us to, but not necessarily for all that others would ask of us. This is critical for any therapist to understand, especially one working in areas of great need and very limited resources.

Professionally, it is our goal to attend conferences or other training opportunities for member care providers twice annually. Case-consultation and debriefing, whether on a routine basis or after covering a significant crisis, are two other key needs to ensure long-term health. In our experience, it is best to meet with someone for these purposes three times a year, possibly in conjunction with training events. Diversity in ministry has been helpful. We are involved in both individual counselling and teaching seminars and retreats. In addition to working with workers I provide a limited amount of professional counselling for the expatriate community in our city. For our emotional health it has been important to take regular days off and time off after an intense ministry time. In addition, longer, out of the region from the member care provider role and from the spiritually and physically harsh conditions of this region are needed at least annually.

The ideal, as we envision it, is a small team of professionals working together rather than in isolation. We continue to look for and pray for other member care providers to join us here. In the meantime, though it sometimes seems like we are walking upstream on very slippery rocks, we trust the Lord to empower us to do that which He has called us to do. He does enable us to stand on the riverbed and not slip away, and even to support others as they traverse the waters themselves. To Him be the glory!

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 something to think about--and get behind.

1. A Network of Teambuilders

by Leta Van Meter

An interest group, focusing on team building, convened during the Mental Health and Missions conference in Angola, Indiana, Nov 21-23, 2003. Facilitated by Leta Van Meter of *Paraclete*, the group represented mental health professionals, graduate students, field missionaries, mission agency member care providers, human resource practitioners and trainers. Each person shared their experience and background in team building. Here are some thoughts that came from the exchange of ideas:

* The need for team building within the missions community is widespread and multicultural. It needs to be thought of as a process and not just an event or activity.

* The need to develop a diagnostic questionnaire/needs assessment that could be used as a consulting tool by practitioners when team building is needed. This could serve to inform the design and shape of team building events, and would explore goals, focus and desired outcomes as well as ascertain any differences between expressed needs and real needs.

* While generic team building can be done in a limited way in the formation of new teams, the need for on-going "just in time" training was emphasised. i.e. "We learn best when we realise we need to learn."

* Would it be helpful to develop a "tool kit" of team building resources? i.e. DISC, MBTI, Sharpening Your Interpersonal Skills workshop, Berkman, Missionary Care International materials, spiritual gift inventories, Lianne Roembke's Multicultural Teams workshop.

* Could a network of team builders and team building ideas be formed, developed and move forward through a web based connection?

In summary, there was a wealth of ideas and an expressed desire for a team building network within the missions community where mutual learning could take place. While there is potential in sustaining relationships and sharing knowledge and experiences on the web, it seems that a formative step would be to gather together interested, experienced folks in a two to three day setting where relationships could be built and knowledge and experience shared. Are you interested? Contact: letajvanmeter@earthlink.net

UPCOMING MEMBER CARE EVENTS

MemCa Website: <http://www.membercare.org>

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