

Development Consultation

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Searcy, AR

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These are some of the responses of the forty participants to six questions that followed presentations by Drs. Hiebert, Cox, Black and Smith. The responses have been condensed to reduce repetition and similar comments have been grouped together.

Question 1: How would you characterize the balance between relief and development ministries in Churches of Christ at the moment?

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At least 80-90% of our efforts are relief, not development.

We are crisis-oriented and tend to give to things that touch our hearts (earthquakes, hurricanes, famine)-we are operating on emotions not with well thought-out intentionality.

We are doing a lot of relief with some movement toward development. But we lack a common language. It is difficult to communicate (between relief, development and other kinds of ministry) when we do not have a common language.

We have done lots of hospitals and schools, but most are "long term relief projects" rather than agents of preventative medicine.

We have been dedicated primarily to problem resolution rather than prevention.

Since we do not have a governing body, we do not stay abreast of the latest trends (such as development). Because of this lack of organization, we are slower to catch on.

We do relief really well. We are afraid to give up the control in order to do development. We can maintain the power in relief. Development is also more time consuming so we don't do it.

We tend to "hit and run."

We still maintain our American attitude that we are in control. We need to step back and ask ourselves if we are doing a good job. Are we creating dependency? We do not want to do things that will not help for the long term.

True development requires us to relinquish control and that is difficult.

Development requires us to trust natives and their capacities. Right now in El Salvador we are holding on to funds because we are not sure the Salvadorans can do the job like we want it done. On the other hand sometimes we "lay hands on" folks too quickly. If we help disciple true Christians we will be able to trust.

Development requires long-term workers, so we do little of it. Churches in America want fast results, just like in church planting.

We tend to measure our efforts quantitatively-how many teeth have we pulled, how many patients have we seen. That's relief, not development.

Large amounts of money are infused because of lack of developmental procedures in place.

Relief is dependent on money. Money-raising. Development is different-perhaps a bit more nebulous.

Inner-city ministries will be dependent on development in the future. We practice some relief, but we must be community-based.

Relief is a door opener. Once the door is open we work from the inside out at the grass-root level.

A church planting mentality of letting others do it for themselves can lead us to development.

Question 2: What steps could we take to educate our churches about development?

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Train the church to see and analyze good models of development projects.

Educate our church leaders to recognize that the church is more than local needs, but rather must be a "world vision".

Impact the preachers of the local churches, who are the mouthpieces, with the concepts of development ministries. Ministers are bridges of relationship, linking needs of people to resources. Must influence them first.

Educate our churches and leaders to be able to see that people have different needs, understand what development is and how those relate to evangelism.

We should learn from national organizations and groups, such as CCDA (Christian Community Development Association); next conference is in Dallas.

We must educate people who head our major organizations, both formal and informal power bases in our churches as well as our educational institutions. We must educate our missionaries before they go out. Most of the missionary education is happening through the universities.

If some of the schools could reach out to missions committees and elderships that would help. At weekend seminars. Maybe get one or two elderships and churches to be model communities regarding development.

Create a 13-week study of relief and development for Sunday school classes.

Get more involved in the workshops and lectureships for education.

Create a program like Echo in Florida, or SIFAT in Alabama (Methodist) that is tied to the university to learn water development, agriculture, etc. Start a Heifer Project-like program at Harding (on the school-owned farm). Require students to attend it as a course and set up special weekend and summer programs for deacons and elders.

Rotating a development ministry conference between our Christian colleges.

Educate the people in our missions department first. The missions teachers are probably more open to development humanitarian education rather than relief as it seems to dovetail more with indigenous principles.

Research to find out the best education programs for development. Let's not reinvent the wheel.

Newspapers and magazines can help educate our congregations. Key will be repetition of the subject of development. The way that things are reported affects the way we see the work overseas. Brotherhood papers are not being promoted like they once were.

Church bulletins might be a source of education.

Video presentations, power point presentations to help promote. Videographer in CA. might be willing to do a video. He has his own equipment. Ted Parks is the contact.

Address the trend toward short term missions, defining role, impact, and limitations and its relationship to long term mission and development.

Don't ignore the available cultural insights of those already with experience in the area.

Provide information on-line information.

We need to incorporate development in all of our missions classes.

Those involved in relief and development ministries must become ambassadors who preach, teach, take others to give testimonials, taking others to the inner city, mission field, etc. to observe.

Educate about funding. Set time limit on funds given to a project. Then slowly decrease funds and stick to it. Raise up new people with new mind-sets.

Missionaries are the primary people to educate. First educate missionaries, then let them educate the church.

The greatest untapped resource in the church are our businessmen. Many times they can accomplish with a few phone calls what we have no idea of how to do.

Look at an entire generation as our time-frame for educating.

Provide more apprenticeships, internships, short courses with hands-on training.

Question 3: How can we kindle a passion for Development Ministries and involve more Christians?

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GENERAL

Pray to the Lord of the Harvest!

Right now we have 3 long-term MDs and less than 20 nurses for 1 year or longer on the mission field.

Seeing, putting a face on, contact with those who have already shown that it can be done, and how it is possible. I.e. mentors.

Lack long-term deep commitment. That problem can't be separated from the question of commitment to long-term missions, in general. We consider a 5-year term missionary as "long-term."

We need to provide some positive examples. Opportunities for churches and individuals to see success. Look for successful models in development and missions in general.

We have been deluded by short-term syndrome. We think, "We've done our part but can still enjoy our creature comforts."

McMissions-short term involvement is defined as "missions." Participants may say, "I've done the mission thing."

The good should not be the enemy of the best. Must instill long-term mission.

Can we pick particular places for short-term efforts that will develop a vision for long-term vision?

Short-term missions is a key. It exposes people to other cultures and the seeds are planted. But a lot depends on how short-term mission trips are organized. Planning in advance and preparation make a big difference in the outcome of future missions. Need more orientation for short-term campaigns. Short-term missions should be redefined. They should not replace long-term.

Nothing fuels passion like a passionate person. We should talk about the passion more to others. We should share our stories.

CONGREGATIONAL

Congregations are a key to developing missionaries.

More peaching and teaching the biblical concept of emptying yourself.

Make it clear how evangelism and developmental ministries may be integrated.

Encourage the "pioneer spirit".

Encourage those in the church to utilize their own personal talents instead of relying only on "professional missionaries" to do the job. Recognize the value of a "lay person" to such ministries.

Encourage those in later life to dedicate themselves to changing their life styles to be involved in mission. (Like the fledgling "New Horizons" effort directed by Ira and June Hill).

Disseminate the information among the churches, not just in the universities.

We're not in competition with local ministry. If we are involved in meaningful ministries here, we can be challenged to work in similar ways abroad. Must develop passion at home in order to develop passion abroad.

Need to focus on those who are about to retire or to take early retirement. Instill passion in mid-life career people.

Start with children-kindergarten-instill a vision of mission.

Overseas experience for teens can become tourism for Jesus-there is much we can do to involve them locally. Teens need to earn the right to go. S. McArthur (Irving, TX) were only sending 7-8 teens who met the requisites.

Who are our heroes? What about the heroes and heroines of the faith? Our children are losing those models.

Our young people have a tremendous volunteer spirit. How can we channel it? There is a positive something to start with.

Establish a missions learning center in your local church. I.e. Two rooms that are converted to mission points. Starting with 5-year olds and teaching them culture and about the church. Egs. Webb Chapel (Dallas), Sixth and Izard (Little Rock), and Westover Hills (Austin). Remember that people make decisions about what they want to do in life early.

Missions camps.

UNIVERSITIES

We can now be more inclusive and include other disciplines in recruiting for development.

Train people in more than just preaching. Less specialization, more broad training.

Plant a seed by health care missions minor and vocational ministry major.

Don't expect the preacher/teacher to have all of the development skills. Our mission teams tend to comprise just preachers/teachers. We need to send all of the various skills and blend them on a mission team.

We need to communicate between our schools to find good visiting missionaries.

Perhaps this vocational training is at odds with our liberal arts schools. There might be a cooperation with other institutions.

Research! Research funding is weak among us. Universities do get some money for research. Also need release time from other duties to do research. New emphasis on would require indoctrination on wide scale. We could seek funding from individuals. Realize that people get turned off by the term "research."

Must involve people before they are caught in the money trap. Eg. the Mormon model of setting priorities for youth. Address the "traps" that keep people from going including educational debt, housing debt, etc.

Question 4: What are some practical ways we can encourage and assist those who have already decided to go to the field?

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Many missionaries caught in the quagmire of dependency and paternalism. How to undo some of these situations is a problem.

As part of a furlough send the missionary to a center where they can be educated.

Use internet courses or audio tape courses to teach our existing missionaries on the mission field.

Provide retirement for missionaries and university educational scholarships for missionary children.

Help develop some university-level training in developmental fields.

Question 5: What are some reasons for the successes and failures of the Haiti Christian Development Project (HCDP)?

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GENERAL REACTIONS

Need to rethink what is success and failure. Are we evaluating these things too soon?

What could actual evaluative research teach us? Lessons we could learn from it? (But don't fall into the trap of studying things to death.)

We need to move toward more parachurch organizations including research organizations (though research is difficult to fund).

Must have the humility to evaluate both negative and positive, and to eliminate approaches that do more harm than good in the long-run.

An over-concern for what we are going to report moves us from what we really need to be accomplishing. How will it look to our donors? How should we measure success? Are we using the wrong yard-stick?

Sometimes we value the product more than the process. Process is important. We need to learn to suffer with the poor rather than handing them a solution in terms of money. In the process, relationships are developed, world views are changed.

We can't let our "failures" make us negative or deter us from proceeding with our projects. Perseverance can become a model that dispels fatalism.

Success is hard to measure in western terms.

Too often, we (foreigners) define the problem. We offer solutions. But we don't deal with real needs in a credible process involving the people.

We tend to quantify in order to give the impression of success.

We need to examine the reasons we do things. We need to control our emotions and not just work off impulses.

We tend to analyze problems and do problem-solving. We are results-oriented and that has positive and negative sides.

We need to build on the idea of community. Redefine success as you succeeding and then helping others to succeed.

SUCSESSES

The training Pacius received at SIFAT

Emmanuel is a good local leader with integrity, even though Emmanuel was chosen by Americans, not by the local church.

David (Smith) was intentional about moving from relief to development and the process is continuing.

David and company are in it for the long-term.

There is a good connection between the short-term model and the long-term project. Local ownership of the school. School is independent.

David has learned to say no.

It has survived because it is theirs---ownership concept.

Cooperative funding; eg. road building project, etc. in which some funds are foreign and some are local.

Persistence and flexibility of supporters.

Relationship-building concepts.

FAILURES (AND QUESTIONS)

Farm, as it was presented, has impacted community, but it seems like secular development, or simply social development.

Need to address spiritual warfare (since the farm is located in a voodoo stronghold).

Financial partnership is important to ownership. Giving is the key. There must be American money coupled with local resources. What is HCDP giving now? A bridge has been built, funded from Little Rock with the labor being Haitian.

Accountability is the key? How was the money handled? we must trust the local accountability structures.

One problem is the lack of an American who can speak their language and know their culture. This is not a model that we want to imitate due to this.

Need to allow the locals to initiate projects based on their concept of what might be valuable. Needs to be more local empowerment.

Question 6: What are some good models of development?

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GENERAL COMMENTS

We need a relief and development network for sharing resources. How about Missions Resource Network? They could help assemble a group of people. Do they have a section for development information?

Development is not something that happens through an agency. It happens on the local grass roots level.

Any good church planting can be seen as development in that redemption and lift occurs and life skills are taught.

There seem to be little focus on urban (not "inner city") development

MODELS LISTED

Predisan (Guatemala). health wellness outreach. If a village wants a clinic they must build a church facility, etc. Training for health care,

Jellico, TN (Drs. Bruce and Dale Woodall and friends).

Central Dallas Ministries does good development, but church connection seems weak. Full community development cannot be done without the church being in the middle of the entire process transforming lives at the world view level.

Memphis Urban Ministry has affected 1000-1500 on the outside with 100 in the church. Development seen in the way the inner-city members themselves organized a recent clothing effort. One big difference in Memphis inner city is that the missionaries are there full-time serving as a bridge between the donors and the local population. Some guys

buying up lots in the inner city and grow crops and selling. Also micro-enterprises--second home-based jobs to add income.

In Shakawe, Botswana a basket project was established then handed off to another organization. The women were empowered to sell baskets and therefore had money for clothing and shoes, bus fares, etc.

Joseph Langat in Kipsigis (Kenya) to grow plantain bananas and passed it on to the members of his church. Preached and prayed and planted plantains.

Agricultural models in the Giriama of Kenya.

Well-drilling in Ghana (Traverse City, Michigan). Started well-drilling project in 1987; raised the money for drilling; World Vision did the first 15 wells, then Traverse City bought their own equipment. The training from WV was so much more elaborate and expensive. Church turned the work over and the oversight to the large eldership of a local church in Ghana. This is "focused development" that expanded to a larger base. Traverse City supports six church planters who work with 200 congregations.

Ghana --primary health care training each year. The students then establish clinic in their villages and become self-sufficient.

Jos, Nigeria, a preacher training program where preachers spend half days in training and half days in vocational apprenticeship.

Eastleigh, Nairobi, Kenya, ministry to street children which takes in street kids, give them a shower, tea, lunch and teach them Bible and also skills in various areas.

Impact, Houston, inner-city megachurch model (whereas PUMP in Portland and MUM in Memphis are more neighborhood based).

Micro-loans projects among women in Uganda; Oneal Tankersley in Eldoret (Kenya); David Johnson at Faulkner University.