

Member Care for Christian Workers

Working Group, MANI Continental Consultation, 2 March 2006
Facilitators: Kelly O'Donnell, Marina Prins, Dan Germe

50 people, including 10 from the francophone region, attended this 3.5 hour working group. We had three purposes:

- to discuss issues of worker care/development—struggles, successes, and strategies
- to share/exchange information, updates, and resources
- to discuss some good ways forward for further developing member care in Africa, our regions, nations, and sending groups (churches and agencies).

We used brief teaching, small groups, and case studies to discuss the following questions: What is happening in Africa regarding the care of Christian workers? How is “member care” being practiced in the international mission community? What are some pressing issues and important resources? How can we network together? How can we help our workers be healthy and effective? What is our responsibility to provide/develop member care?

Outcomes and Suggestions (with a few additions by the facilitators)

1. There is now a compendium of short readings and case studies for MANI called *Member Care Flows—Africa*. These will be made available on the MANI web site and also in the Africa “regional” section at Global Member Care (MemCa) web site: www.membercare.org
2. We will strengthen the current Member Care Communication Network for Africa (an email communiqué). We will do this by adding MANI participants to the list, and encouraging people to send information, updates, and resources to the Communication Coordinator, Marina Prins. Email: mcsa@xsinet.co.za
3. We will send to people via the email communiqué (point one) an article on the ministry of the household of Stephanas to Paul (I Cor. 16). This is a short and helpful study on member care for Paul, and it can be used to help leaders understand the role of Biblical member care.
4. We identified some of the main inter-agency member care groups/hubs in Africa. We want to encourage them as they continue to inform the mission community about training, resources, etc. Examples include the Mobile Member Care Team in Accra, Ghana; Tumaini Counselling Centre in Nairobi Kenya; Member Care Southern Africa in South Africa; and the growing group of caregivers in Dakar, Senegal. Others TBD!
5. There was the general desire to see people provide member care workshops and interest groups at various conferences (mission, church etc.). No specific plan for this though.
6. There was the general desire to teach member care-related areas in our training institutions/seminaries, during missionary orientation, and for mission boards and leaders. No specific plan for this though.
7. Pastors and their spouses/families need special support too. Especially challenging are those leaders with minimal emotional/spiritual support in their lives, who often feel lonely and who give so much to others. Web sites to help www.saape.co.za and also for mission personnel www.missionarycare.com
8. Continue to write, translate, and disseminate a variety of quality member care materials.
9. Send the Francophone participants the member care materials in French!
10. Work towards a continental and regional member care networks. MANI could be a key part of this along with other groups.