

REPORT OF THE MISSIONS STUDY COMMITTEE

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The Free Methodist Church in Canada
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REPORT OF THE STUDY TEAM ON MISSIONS

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1. MISSION OF THE GLOBAL MINISTRIES PROGRAM OF THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH IN CANADA

To contribute effectively and significantly to global evangelization by giving Canadian Free Methodists the motivation and opportunity to participate in overseas ministries through *praying, communicating, giving and (or) going*.

THINK GLOBALLY - ACT LOCALLY

2. DEFINITION

Missions is any endeavour aimed toward the goal of reaching beyond the needs of the local congregation for the purpose of fulfilling the great commission - by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, making disciples and relating to the whole need of mankind both physical and spiritual.

The FMCC supports a strong and growing overseas missions program consistent with our requirements and resources. We will develop and promote such a program. The local church facilitates the ministry of the missionary.

3. STUDY TEAM GOALS

This report is a direct response to the Canadian church for greater exposure of overseas missions.

Our goal as a study team is simple - to help you meet yours: To help empower the local church to be a sending church actively involved in recruitment, financially responsible and to consistently pray for those who answer the call and direction for missionary service.

Our direction is to maintain an excellent relationship with DWM, follow the agreed liaison with them in administration of the global ministries program of the FMCC and develop requisite expertise in administering the program.

THINK GLOBALLY - ACT LOCALLY

4. REGIONALLY APPOINTED GLOBAL MINISTRIES TEAM

4.1 Report

Fulfillment of the mission statement of the FMCC overseas missions program requires a vibrant missions-mindedness in every local congregation nation-wide and takes advantage of our connectional system to help foster this abiding involvement in world outreach. The local church facilitates the job of the missionary.

In January 1996, the personalized system of missions was launched. Personalization was accepted and agreed upon by the FMCC. This gives the Canadian churches direct responsibility for seven missionaries in active service (Vernon and Susan DeMille, Larry Miller, Lois Meredith, Linda Stryker, Debbie Hogeboom, Dan Sheffield - Muriel Teusink and Paul Dyer are on leave of absence). Each missionary was required to raise pledges of 430 shares at \$100. Our ability to support the sending of additional career missionaries or special approved projects will directly depend on the success of meeting our current commitments.

As an update, in the last quarter of 1995, churches were invited to opt for shares to show their commitment to individual missionaries. By June of 1996, only 72 of 140 churches had responded. Some churches opted not to make pledges toward any specific missionary but have been contributing nonetheless. Overall pledges for 1996 comprise only 64% of the year's commitment. Funds received up to August, 1996 represented 59.9% of the year's commitments to our missionaries. The local church is the sending church under the personalized system, responsible for both pledging and funding of our existing commitments and future increases.

4.2 Issues

Many missions-related responses in the Workbook for General Conference pointed to a sense of need for a clearer Strategic Plan for the national missions program. Under the new administrative structure of the FMCC, there remains the need for a similar mandate nation-wide, as previously provided by the Annual Conference Missions Committees. More than ever we need to increase the level and effectiveness of efforts to reach beyond our national boundaries, empowering and participating in Kingdom growth through Free Methodist world ministries. As well, under the new personalization system for career missionaries, and under our evolving relationship with the DWM, new responsibilities and accountabilities are arising for the National Ministry Centre of the FMCC.

The Director of Ministry Advancement (DMA) carries leadership functions in responding to administrative and promotional needs in missions programming across the Canadian church and in liaison with DWM and Canadian missionaries. The DMA cannot be solely expected to

develop and implement an effective strategic plan on a national scale. An array of gifts and expertise is required to offer support to the DMA in specialized areas.

4.3 Recommendation

The Global Ministries Team (GMT) will be established as a permanent committee of the FMCC to promote, facilitate and coordinate global missions across the Canadian Church.

The Director of Ministry Advancement will chair the GMT. In this capacity the DMA will delegate responsibilities to individual members and monitor performance, moderate communications among members, ensure a superior level of missions publicity and promotion, including regular and effective use of THE HERALD and EKG periodicals.

The GMT will be composed of four or more members with geographical representation. (The GMT will meet via telecommunications). Starting at General Conference 1998, members will be elected with a maximum of 3 consecutive terms. The DMA will be consulted regarding any vacancies.

The Board of Administration (BOA) will appoint the first members of the GMT at the first sitting of the newly elected BOA. Preceding these appointments, the DMA will solicit input and present a report to the Global Evangelization Committee (GEC) of the BOA which includes:

- a statement identifying the responsibilities of the GMT, and how they will be effectively allocated among the membership of the GMT,
- a draft slate of nominations.

MISSIONS BALLOT 4.3

I vote to approve this recommendation.

☐ YES ☐ NO

5. THE FUTURE OF MISSIONS: CANADIAN DISTINCTIONS

5.1 Report

The FMCC has always had an excellent working relationship with the Department of World Missions (DWM). The FMCC operates through a written letter of agreement with DWM which

is being updated through work of the Study team. The FMCC and DWM have also agreed on Policy for collaboration in selecting career and VISA missionaries (see appendices). The FMCC has an elected representative with voice and vote on DWM at board meetings. A reserve is elected as an alternate.

It is to be expected that the DMA of the FMCC will continue to maintain an excellent relationship with DWM, undertake agreed liaison with DWM in administration of the Global Ministries program of the FMCC, and develop requisite expertise in administering those areas of responsibility held by the FMCC

Currently the FMCC is budgeting, through the Global Ministries Giving Stream, the full support for seven Canadian missionaries. The closeness of Canadian and American career missionary interests is demonstrated by the fact that the one spouse in the Sheffield, Miller, Teusink and Dyer families is American and are financially supported by US conferences. It should also be noted that services currently provided by DWM to the FMCC carry negligible administrative overhead.

5.2 Issues

While a strong bond remains between the missions programs of the Canadian and US churches, a stronger Canadian identity could enhance the FMCC missions program.

This Canadian identity promoted at the local church level, works at the very root and foundation of all harvest successes. The local church endeavours to be the sending agency that supports and loves the people under their care.

5.3 Recommendation

By mid 1997, the DMA and Missions Study Team Chairperson (1996 Conference) will solicit input and prepare a report to the GEC, which analyzes all reasonable options for effectively strengthening the Canadian identity of the missions program of the FMCC. The GEC will consider the policy implications of the options and establish a procedure for the preparation of any further plans and recommendations to be brought to General Conference in 1998.

MISSIONS BALLOT 5.3

I vote to approve this recommendation.

☐ YES ☐ NO

6. IMPLICATIONS OF PERSONALIZATION

6.1 Report

Financial obligations accompany the personalization process. The cost of each missionary is estimated at \$ 43,000 (Cdn). This includes salary, transportation, operational expenses, pension, insurance, children's education, deputation and DWM promotion. (10% of all Giving Streams is reserved for Canadian promotion). There will be an increase from \$ 43,000 to \$ 52,360¹ effective January 1997, bringing the goal for the Canadian church to \$ 366,520 - WE CAN DO IT !!!!!

According to our track record we can meet these goals. Please accept these challenges as a personal commitment. The Mission Study Team strongly endorses the setting of faith promise goals for the local church's "Our mission Beyond" program.

The missionary coordinates home assignments based on the pledged commitments of the local church. In addition, all missionaries reserve eight weeks to visit churches outside their support boundaries at the discretion of DWM.

6.2 Issues

Personalization means that missionaries are solely responsible for fund raising. The financial support base needs to be fully renewed or pledged each time a missionary returns for home assignment. During their term of service some missionaries may raise a surplus while others may experience a shortfall.

6.3 Recommendation

A missionary be entitled to raise up to 10% surplus for any given year which will be carried into the new year for the designated account.

Any surplus beyond that 10% be re-designated in equal shares to any missionaries requiring assistance with their support. Continued need to access the common fund (surplus from other missionaries) may necessitate the missionary returning home to raise more funds.

The DMA will not promote special projects in any fiscal year until all missionaries are fully funded.

¹ This increase is due to a required adjustment to the original estimate and the addition of a disability provision.

MISSIONS BALLOT 6.3

I vote to approve this recommendation.

☐ YES ☐ NO

7. RETIRED MISSIONARIES

The study team affirms retired missionaries and acknowledges their sacrificial service to the church.

8. VOLUNTEERS IN SERVICE ABROAD (VISA)

The Missions Study team affirms the program of **Volunteers In Service Abroad (VISA)**. Individuals and churches are encouraged to take advantage of the tremendous range of opportunities for short-term ministry.

Many Canadians have participated in VISA Action Teams. While such teams are often construction teams, they may also be medical or educational in nature. Yet others are evangelistic and have public ministry as their focus. This ministry is a growing one. Team members are responsible for travel, food, lodging, and other expenses. These teams encourage and support the ministry of the overseas church. Local churches usually become more involved in missions as a result of being the senders of an action team. Churches have enjoyed maximizing the potential of these teams through networking with each other.

The study team acknowledges BOA's carefully considered decision which requires VISA funding to be raised through personal contacts. (see VISA application process in appendix)

9. CONCLUSION

We are a connectional church - issues presented here suggest that churches work together. We must get past the "do it by ourselves mentality" and move on to greater things ahead. Please communicate with the missionaries. Our mission is only as good as the projects we serve. Our institution is only as good as the people in it. We have quality people with a vision and concern for world wide ministries. Our advice to you, the Canadian General Conference, is "give it all you've got" - Jesus did!!!

Our passion is that global ministries, missions, overseas work, whatever you want to call it, be the best that it has ever been. We are so emotionally moved when we see hunger in Africa or Haiti. We are distressed when we discover people actually live on garbage. We see things on TV and our heart strings are pulled again and again.

Children in Rwanda and Burundi are left as orphans because of senseless killings. A church lost three thousand members because of genocide and we say this cannot go on. God is also moved in a holy moment when we pause and thank Him for salvation. Have you done that lately? God's saving grace is and was the greatest moment of our lives.

This is a time of unprecedented challenge and change. The Canadian Free Methodist Church is founded upon principles that matter. We will make a difference. THINK GLOBALLY - ACT LOCALLY. We will reach out and touch lives. We will be the church that cares. We will be all that He intended us to be.

We don't ever want to lose our compassion for the lost, the dying, the lonely. There is something about understanding missions that makes us want to promote it, even die for it. In fact some missionaries have even been put to that test.

We have to give high marks to Mary-Elsie Fletcher and the ministries centre for their interest and love for the church and the missions program. Special thanks to our current representative Ian Van Norman who has given sacrificially of his time and committed to supporting Canadian missionaries and the work that they do, as well as making numerous work related trips.

My personal thanks to each committee member who has carried heavy burdens for the efforts that have been put into this paper. We also would thank the DWM for their love shown to the Canadian church.

God will have the nations for His inheritance. We will do our part to make it happen. We want to cause you to do the same.

Missionaries are wonderful people who have the privilege of carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth...

The Best is Yet to Come

Listen to the voice of the Canadian missionaries: This is what they said.

Prayer support:

- We are in days of spiritual warfare. We want to hear that you are praying for us. We know that you are but seeing it in print gives tremendous encouragement.
- We appreciate the contacts and interaction from the ministries centre. The EKG report and the contacts from staff let us know your concerns.
- Personal attention to individuals gives a lift: birthdays, anniversaries, Canadian Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc...from the Mississauga office.
- Our missionaries would like visits from the Canadian Ministry Centre. How long has it been since anyone has gone overseas? The ones in Equatorial Africa have not had a Canadian VIP visit since 1984. Too long folks.
- The missionaries welcome anything that would help them with expectations of the Canadian church.
- The furloughing missionary needs a period of orientation upon arrival in Canada. A debriefing as it were. Our recommendation is to have the missionary contacted as soon as possible upon arrival in the country. Know the travel plans. This is a two way street and the missionary must let the office know of their plans and ETA.
- When we get a letter and funding has been allocated and signed, The Free Methodist Church, Canada, whom do we thank?
- We don't want the FMC Canada to disassociate itself in the area of global ministries from the US church. We work along side many Americans and have made life long friendships.

Expectations of the missionaries of Global Ministries in Canada:

- I would like things clarified. What is the Canadian programme? Who is at the helm? Who is involved? What are we doing?
- I would like a contact person.
- We want to be kept up to date with what is happening in Canadian Free Methodism.
- We have questions about the personalization process. Any help that can be offered on that line would be helpful? We want the higher ranks of the church to keep in touch with us as they do pastors.

(conveyed through the listening ears of Doris Meredith)

Let the Canadian Church call the missionaries by name and know who they are. We have zone meetings for pastors. What are we doing for missionaries? After giving thirty or forty years to the church, they need more than a paycheck. What about those in retirement? These people are professionals and their drive and determination to win souls is unrivalled. They did not go the mission field to get rich. They went because a God of love tapped them on the shoulder and said, "I need you". And they depend on our prayers.

These people are our people. They are counting on us. We pray and give and the missionary has the wonderful privilege of serving. If you would ask to trade places with them, it would be an emphatic no. Do keep praying and giving so that their work can be effective.

The missionaries are suggesting a mediator or representative between the local congregation and themselves. Up front contacts. Front line information.

(editorial paragraphs by D. Meredith with summary impressions)

September 1996

The Free Methodist Church in Canada

Policy on the Canadian Selection Process for VISA

Under 6 Months:

All shorter term candidates will need a recommendation from their local church.

An application will proceed based on this recommendation.

The application process will begin in Canada through the National Ministry Centre of the FMCC and be forwarded to DWM for direct contact with the field regarding the candidate's placement.

The budget building process and the completion of release forms will be with the involvement of DWM and the Ministry Centre.

The missionary will be released to the field when fund raising is completed.

6 Months or more:

Longer term candidates will require three references including the local church. (References will be kept on file at the Ministry Centre.) Their application will proceed based on these references.

The MEG Committee of the FMCC will be notified of an application, and interviews will be scheduled at the Committee's discretion should the nature of the assignment require MEG approval.

The application process will begin in Canada through the National Ministry Centre and be forwarded to DWM for direct contact with the field regarding the candidate's placement.

The budget building process and the completion of release forms will be with the involvement of DWM and the Ministry Centre.

The missionary will be released to the field when fund raising is completed.

NOTES:

An application and reference form will be revised locally through the Department of Ministry Advancement with sensitivity to any Canadian church distinctives.

dated September 1996

The Free Methodist Church in Canada

Policy on the Canadian Missionary Selection Process

The FMC in Canada affirms the DWM's "personalization programme".

The Canadian MEG Committee will serve as the initial screening agent for a candidate on issues like doctrinal integrity, character and confirmation of suitability for Free Methodist Ministry.

DWM is notified of a candidate for the continued screening process.

DWM will administer psychological testing, and complete other administrative responsibilities to explore suitability for candidacy.

DWM will coordinate with the fields for a suitable placement through consultation with the area directors, FMC Canada, and the candidate.

The candidate proceeds to the Commission on Missions of the FMC of North America for appointment.

The missionary is released to the Canadian churches for the purpose of raising sufficient funds to leave for the field.

Through the Department of Ministry Advancement, the Canadian Conference will assist missionaries in developing a support base by encouraging Canadian congregations to support the Canadian missionaries, and offer an opinion from time to time to the DWM regarding any candidate's ability to raise support.

The Director of Church Relations (DWM) acts as a consultant in assisting the missionary with church visits.

The Department of Ministry Advancement resources the missionary with up-to-date reporting of financial commitments submitted by the churches.

The missionary will be commissioned in Canada. The Global Evangelization Committee of the Board of Administration will release the missionary to the field when the raising of prayer and financial support is completed.

dated September 1996