

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE WELS WORLD MISSION CONFERENCES
TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF WELS WORLD MISSION STRATEGY

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When the Wisconsin Synod began to get involved in foreign mission work, it knew relatively little about the subject. The Synod did, however, feel the urgency of the great commission and a desire to spread the gospel to all nations. And so that is what they began to do, in spite of their limited knowledge and experience in this field. Over the years Wisconsin Synod mission work has been greatly blessed and has seen a great deal of advancement in its goals, objectives, and strategy. There is, however, still much to be learned and much to be shared.

In 1979 one of our WELS missionaries, Gary Schroeder, wrote concerning the circumstances under which a new person enters the field: "He knows he is going to win souls for Christ and hopefully to start a new church, but the methods to use and the form the church and it's life will take are most likely less than clear."¹ He went on to state what he thought was one of the reasons for this: "The obvious reason for this seems to be that the Board for World Missions and the executive committee members, the executive secretary of the Board for World Missions and the missionaries are in a position where they have precious little time to sit down together, discuss, and plan."²

Writing in the same year, missionary Roger Sprain makes the same point and shows how this lack of communication can hinder our mission efforts:

We have to anticipate and learn to know the problems
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¹ Gary Schroeder, "Reviewing and Recovering From Policies and Procedures That Hinder the Development of Indigenous Churches" (1979 World Mission Conference), p. 2.

² Ibid., p. 3.

before we can solve them. Especially we should stress anticipating them for two reasons. First, if we know a problem will probably arise at a certain point in the mission work, we can plan either to avoid it completely or be ready to solve it when it does arise. Secondly, I would like to stress that such anticipation has been impossible in the past because we were ignorant of the problems due to lack of experience, or if we learned of them we didn't really pass them on to new missionaries, especially in other fields.³

Everyone connected with missions knows that it is our goal to plant indigenous national churches in the areas where we are working. Some questions that arise are: "What is the best way of doing that? What can we learn from what others are doing?" Over the years, as has been indicated, our missionaries have seen the need to share their ideas and programs and to learn from others. Another thing that these same missionaries observe is the need to continually take a look at the effectiveness of what they are doing.

Our own recurring questions and problems relating to the establishment of indigenous churches indicate a general lack of familiarity with the basic principles and policies as these have already been enunciated by our Board for World Missions. They point up the need for constant restudy and reapplication of these principles, particularly as we begin new fields and as new situations arise on existing fields. Mission work is never static. We have become very much aware of this in our work so far.⁴

One of the ways the Board for World Missions has attempted
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³ Roger Sprain, "Meeting the Problems Involved in Establishing Confessionally Sound National Churches Which Are Self-supporting As This Relates to the Training of a Competent Ministry" (1979 World Mission Conference), p. 3.

⁴ E. H. Wendland, "What Can We Learn From Ourselves And Others About Establishing Indigenous Churches?" (1979 World Mission Conference), p. 3.

to deal with these problems is by conducting periodic evaluations of the various field's use of manpower and resources. At least every three years the executive committee and the field staff make a thorough evaluation of their entire operation. According to the WELS World Mission Handbook, this is done on the basis of an established written field strategy. This evaluation includes discussions of the directions the work is taking, the organizational structure, and the use of fiscal and manpower resources. On the basis of these evaluations, the Board for World Missions gives a thorough evaluation and constructive critique of each world mission field.⁵

Another way of dealing with the problems of communication between mission fields and the sharing of information and strategy has been the World Mission Conferences which were begun in 1975. These conferences have attempted to fill some of the gaps that have been felt in the past. These conferences have been held in 1975, 1977, 1979, 1984, and 1988. At each of these conferences numerous papers were presented dealing with the various aspects involved in trying to establish indigenous churches. It has been my goal to look at the ideas, criticisms, evaluations, and suggestions presented in these papers and to see to what extent these concepts have been incorporated into the mission strategy and working of WELS missions. One way of doing this is by comparing what is found in the conference papers to what is found in the mission handbook.
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⁵ Duane Tomhave, ed. WELS World Mission Handbook p. 2p5.

As I stated earlier, the basic goal of our world mission program is to establish national churches that are indigenous. That is a term which we have been using for many years, but it is also a term which has become more clearly defined over the years. All of the topics discussed at the World Mission Conferences deal in one way or another with the idea of planting indigenous churches and how this can best be done. The definition of the term itself has undergone some changes.

In 1965 our Board for World Missions presented its "Underlying Principles and Primary Objectives" for adoption by the Synod. Part three under "Primary Objectives" says: "The policy of planting indigenous churches, rather than long dependent missions is another objective which will be followed wherever the Board conducts mission work."⁶

Not that long ago we had a different definition of indigenous than we do now. For an earlier definition of an indigenous church we can look to a definition given by missionary Poetter in a 1975 mission conference paper: "It has been repeated over the years that our goal as a sending church is the development of an indigenous church, one that is self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating."⁷

This same kind of definition, including three "selfs," can be found in another 1975 paper presented by Theodore Sauer:
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⁶ Wendland, p. 1.

⁷ R. A. Poetter, "How Best Engage Nationals in the Work?" (1975 World Mission Conference), p. 2.

In no instance, however, is it our wish to perpetuate the mission in the area in which it is working. Our aim and goal from the very beginning is to establish a national church whose members are able to carry out the preaching and teaching of the Word, a church which is able to govern itself and administer its work, and which is also able to support that work through the gifts which its members bring.¹³

It is interesting to see how this definition expanded over the years. In 1979 pastor Richard Lauersdorf presented a paper entitled "Developing Indigenous Churches -- The Scriptural Principles Involved." In it he points out that not only are all nations to be reached, but all things are to be taught. This teaching is not to be a purely intellectual process. It is to be teaching them to keep, hold on to, guard, and preserve all things which Christ has commanded. Lauersdorf goes on to say:

What is involved in being a disciple? Hasn't Christ clearly shown us? To be a disciple means to know and follow Jesus, to learn from and live for that Savior. To be a disciple means also to be a learner in the school of Christ where the textbook is all whatsoever He has commanded. A disciple then is not just one who hears God's Word, but one who lives steadfastly in that Word, all of it. Once we realize what it means to be a disciple, Christ's command to make disciples of all nations looms before us as no small task. Very much necessary is His "all power" and "alway" if we are to carry out the divine commission which He has laid before us.¹⁴

Paul, Lauersdorf says, literally labored to supply as full amount of the Word as possible to those to whom he preached so that there might be maximum growth in knowledge, faith, and godly
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¹³ T. Sauer, "Transition From Mission to National Church" (1975 World Mission Conference), p. 1.

¹⁴ R. Lauersdorf, "Developing Indigenous Churches -- The Scriptural Principles Involved" (1979 World Mission Conference), p. 3.

living. From Paul also came the encouragement for the believers to keep the counsel of God pure. Based on these observations he makes this conclusion:

We have to ask, "Should not a fourth "self" be added to the indigenous formula? Indeed does not Scripture demand that we add a fourth? If we want to build indigenous churches as Scripture outlines, we must plant churches which will be not only self-governing, self-propagating, and self-supporting, but also self-disciplining. We must plant churches which know God's Word, which follow that Word in practice, and which can detect and correct departures from that Word. In short, we must sow the solid seed of the Word.¹⁰

A look at the mission handbook shows that this fourth "self" has become a part of our working definition. We find the four "selves" listed under the definition of indigenous churches:

Wherever the Board conducts mission work it will seek to plant national churches that will grow up into their own identity and stand with us doctrinally and confessionally. World missions have sometimes been established with the assumptions that the mother church would provide permanent funding and that the expatriate missionary would be indefinitely responsible for the pastoral, teaching, preaching and evangelism work. Strategies developed by missionaries and their parent bodies have more recently sought to establish independent national churches which are self-administering, self-disciplining, self-propagating, and self-supporting church bodies within their own culture. We are fully aware that no specific mission formula is mandated in the Scriptures. While methods themselves do not unite souls together in Christ's church, it is appropriate that each WELS world mission pastor work toward the same goals with similar aims.¹¹

More specifically, as the handbook discusses the application of the four indigenous concepts it says concerning self-discipline: "Missionaries strive to plant churches which know
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¹⁰ Ibid., p. 5.

¹¹ Tomhave, p. 4pl.

God's Word, which follow that Word in practice and which can detect and correct departures from the Word."¹²

Just as there has been some development in our concept of what an indigenous church should be, much time at the mission conferences is devoted to discussing developments in our strategies for establishing these indigenous churches. One area which is discussed deals with how we go about deciding where we are going to try to put these indigenous principles into practice. Should our missions be started on our own initiative or in response to appeals?

A look at the history of WELS mission work shows us that what we really have is a practice that has developed into a policy. The first "foreign" mission to the Apache Indians was clearly one begun on our own initiative. This is also true of our mission to Central Africa. The same can be said of our entrance into Puerto Rico and South America.

On the other hand, there have also been responses to appeals in our mission history. Appeals have brought us into Hong Kong, India, Cameroon, and Brazil. There are special challenges when we respond to appeals, as Leonard Koeninger points out:

To be sure, entering areas in response to appeals poses problems not necessarily present when we open fields on our own initiative. The problem of supervising some of these fields, of indoctrination of the native clergy, of programing the work under our philosophy of missions has admittedly been more difficult than in areas where

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¹² Ibid., p. 4p3.

we have entered upon our own initiative.¹³

In spite of these difficulties, we have been blessed in mission work that was begun in response to an appeal. And so, Koeninger draws this conclusion from our mission history concerning the way in which we should begin missions: "This leads us to a simple conclusion. We ought not lock ourselves into any one or two rigid ways in the opening of new mission fields; we must remain flexible and follow where the Lord leads."¹⁴

Koeninger also points out the important advances that have been made in the way we evaluate prospective mission fields:

We as a synod and as a World Board are comparative newcomers in the field of world missions. In times past we may not have always interviewed appellants for our help as carefully as we might have, or evaluated their fields as carefully as we could or should have. If this was the case in the past, it was largely the result of inexperience. But I would submit that by trial and error, as well as by experience, we have evolved a procedure in evaluating new mission fields, whether it be on our own initiative or in response to appeals, which are in conformity with the Scriptural principle, our Board's objectives, and in the best interest of the Synod. The on-the-spot surveys made in South America, the careful planning of the program, the budget projection and the like, would surely bear this out.¹⁵

The procedures that Koeninger speaks of are evident in the mission handbook. The handbook includes a description of the ways in which we can identify new world mission fields. One is
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¹³ Leonard Koeninger, "Opening New Fields -- Response To Appeals Or On Our Own Initiative?" (1975 World Mission Conference), p. 3.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

to take the initiative; to look for places in which to do mission work. Another way is to expand from present mission bases. The requests for assistance from individuals or groups is also recognized as a legitimate way of identifying new fields. The practice has become a policy. No single method is used.¹⁶

The procedure involved in selecting new world mission fields utilizes criteria developed at the 1984 World Mission Conference. A list of nine criteria has been developed and each one is considered as contributing toward the overall picture of a potential field. The more criteria that can be applied, the better the opportunity.¹⁷

The handbook also points out that various people should be involved in the exploration and investigation of new fields. This includes the existing field staffs and national churches, the executive committees, the executive secretary, and the Committee for Interim Missions.¹⁸ All of this shows that many of the causes of problems in the past have been eliminated by the development of more specific procedures and strategies for identifying and investigating new fields.

Once we begin working in a field, one of the major concerns that we have is the question of how much of the mission effort should be subsidized by the Synod and how subsidy affects the ability of the national church to become self-supporting and
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¹⁶ Tomhave, p. 2p1.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 2p2.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 2p3.

jeopardizing indigenous church growth.²²² But it also warns against the influence of a background that looks to the Synod for a great deal of subsidy. This attitude can be harmful to the national church.

It seems to be agreed that too much subsidy can be detrimental to the development of the mission. On the other hand, it would also be detrimental if we suddenly cut off this subsidy to the national church.

There is a lesson here. If we become convinced that subsidy is hindering our work and preventing us from reaching the goals of our mission policy and strategy or if we feel that we have not used it effectively in the past, a precipitous change in policy or a hasty cutting off of subsidy may do even more harm than to continue at least for a time. A wiser procedure would be to seek to use the subsidy to advantage and institute a plan where withdrawal is indicated, which will do the least or no damage at all.²²³

The missionaries feel that subsidy reduction should be a gradual process. It is also the opinion of missionary Cox that salary subsidy reductions should come from representatives of the Board for World Missions and not the missionaries themselves.²²⁴

In conjunction with these sentiments, the handbook states that as the Lord gathers a national church, financial responsibility should be assumed in ratio to its ability. Support for church workers should also be assumed by the national church as soon as possible. In regard to a gradual reduction in
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²²² Ibid., p. 4p6.

²²³ R. Eggert, "Learning From Others" (1975 World Missionary Conference), p. 2.

²²⁴ Cox, p. 5.

subsidy it is says: "In existing fields where subsidy to the national church workers and programs has been a practice, efforts shall be made toward limiting any new direct subsidy and establishing a phased reduction plan."²⁵

This concern regarding financial matters is so important from our point of view because it has such a great bearing on the viewpoint of the members of the national church. Whether or not they take responsibility and ownership of financial matters determines to a great extent their attitude toward ownership of the national church itself. This attitude has a great impact on whether or not they will strive for independence as a national church or be content to always rely on the mother church.

That is why it is so important that nationals be taught proper stewardship principles from the very outset. This point is made by several individuals. Leonard Koeninger says: "From the first believers and first small groups the goal of full pastor support must be inculcated."²⁶ Missionary Cox makes a similar point when he says:

It is with patience and love that we must thoroughly teach the full counsel of God. We are insistent upon this when it comes to Christian doctrines such as Inspiration, Baptism, the Lord's Supper and others. We must do the same when it comes to teaching self-support and other financial matters. Let us give guidance for the sanctified life of the converts.²⁷

The conference papers indicate that this financial
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²⁵ Tomhave, p. 4p8.

²⁶ Koeninger, p. 6.

²⁷ Cox, p. 7.

responsibility on the part of the national church is of particular importance when it comes to the support of national workers. As long as the mission is paying the salaries of the workers which the national church has called, the local congregations of the national church will not feel a proper sense of responsibility toward their workers. "If our national churches are going to continue to exercise their right to call workers into the public ministry, then they should realize that they obligate themselves to the responsibility of supporting those called workers."²⁸ Our mission in Africa is attempting to deal with this problem:

What can be done? The LCCA has made a step toward what we hope is a solution to this problem. The national church, that is the congregations in Zambia and Malawi, decided in convention that they will now individually set the salaries for their evangelists, vicars, and pastors. They will decide how much the salary should be. They will also determine how much of it they can raise. If they are unable to raise the full amount, only then will they request subsidy from the WELS in an amount not to exceed the subsidy they have been receiving. This puts the responsibility for the support of preachers of the Gospel into the hands of the local congregation. Will this plan work? Time will tell.²⁹

This concern is expressed, at least to a certain extent, in the mission handbook. It expresses an aim of awakening in the new converts an awareness, willingness, and joy in using the gifts which are given by the Holy Spirit, including financial gifts for the support of church work in their midst. This will
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²⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 3.

be done in part by encouraging "the early acceptance of partial and, as soon as possible, full support of the national church by its members."³⁰

One does get the feeling that the sentiments coming from the field in this regard are much more urgent and refined than those expressed in the handbook. Perhaps this is an area in which we will see more development in the future.

Another area which ties in closely with financial matters and which is equally as important when it comes to the impact that it has on the development of an independent indigenous national church is the involvement of nationals in the decision making processes within the mission. This too is important because it plays a great part in whether or not the nationals will assume ownership of their church.

This importance has not always been recognized. Pastor Sauer notes that in central Africa there was an early attempt, November, 1955, to bring our nationals into the decision making process, at times involving them in matters which they could not understand and which were really none of their concern (e.g. Should the homes at the Sala Mission Station have walk-in freezers or individual freezers? Should the Mission buy a heavy duty tractor or a lighter one?).³¹

However, this kind of inclusion was not always emphasized in this way in the past. Pastor Cox makes this observation, also
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³⁰ Tomhave, p. 4p2.

³¹ Sauer, p. 3.

about our mission in Africa:

About seventeen years ago the LCCA received her first national pastors. The church was young. The missionaries were doing their very best to guide the church. They set the amount of salary which was to be given to those national workers. At that time the national church was not brought into the decision making process of how much the salary of the national workers should be or where that salary should come from. Should they have been consulted? Could they have been? Those are difficult questions. In retrospect I would answer, Yes, the national church should have been brought into that decision concerning the setting of salaries. They were not. For a good many years afterward, it was the WELS through its mission representatives which set the amounts of the salaries given to the national workers and who provided almost all of the payroll.³²

Over the years a consensus has developed that nationals should be brought into the decision making process as soon as possible. Missionary Schroeder voices a widely held opinion when he says: "It may be easier to do things ourselves rather than spend the time transferring decision making ability or a skill to the national members. Lack of involvement in decision making can lead to a lack of involvement and commitment to the ministry cause."³³

The importance of involving nationals in the decision making process is now realized by our missionaries and they are finding ways to bring about this involvement:

It should be said that just because capital expenditures may be made by the Mission this does not mean that the national church will not be consulted. Even here, whenever possible, they should be brought into the decision making process.... Even when the
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³² Cox, p. 2.

³³ Schroeder, p. 4.

parent body pays the bills, it is wise to let the "child" know some of the costs and the blood, sweat, and tears which go into these things.³⁴

An attempt to put these beliefs into practice in Central Africa is being made by having the nationals set the salaries for their national workers and determining how it will be paid.

To what extent have these principles been incorporated into the policies and practices of our missions? Included in the handbook's goals for developing indigenous churches is "increasingly active participation by the converts to decide on the basis of God's Word who is to be baptized, admitted to the Lord's Table and entrusted with teaching and preaching responsibilities." Another goal is "the early inclusion of the converts as elected representatives in the administrative body of the emerging national church."³⁵

The fact that the handbook also indicates that the new church should administer its funds as soon as possible and that every effort should be made to let the national church determine and support its own salary schedule seems to indicate that the need for involving nationals in the decision making process is recognized both in the fields and has become a part of the policies and strategy of our world missions.

When talking about involving nationals in decisions, it will often be the national church workers who will first become involved and who will have the greatest involvement. And so it
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³⁴ Cox, p.3.

³⁵ Tomhave, p. 4p2.

is most important that the national workers take an ever increasing role in the affairs of the national church. The relationship between national workers and missionaries is also an important factor in the development of an indigenous church.

It is necessary that the national workers and the missionaries work together in harmony. Mark Krueger, writing in "The Role And Relationship Of Expatriate and National Workers," says:

The missionary cannot fulfill his role independent of the national nor can the national worker function - at least at first - without the missionary. They must learn to live and work together. They must come to an understanding of their respective roles, their different points of view and priorities and how they function independently and together for the good and welfare of the church.³⁶

Pastor Sauer makes the same observation when he says: "From the very beginning national pastors should work alongside expatriate pastors, receiving such help and guidance from the expatriates as is needed, but having full status as pastors."³⁷

An important part of this partnership is the transfer of authority and responsibility to the national workers. It is not always easy to know when this should be done, but it is agreed that it needs to be done. One missionary gave timing as a crucial factor: "Both premature and delayed action were extremely detrimental to a smooth transition. On this point nationals invariably were of the opinion that missionaries were inclined to
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³⁶ Mark Krueger, "The Role and Relationship of Expatriate and National Workers" (1984 World Mission Conference), p. 4.

³⁷ Sauer, p. 2.

cling to their power too long."³⁸ It was further pointed out that missions ought to be thinking more seriously about training nationals not only in preaching and teaching duties, but in administrative tasks, anticipating a complete changeover rather than a partial one.

It is apparent that these concerns have become an underlying basis for the policies of our mission board. The handbook discusses the stages of development of a mission under four headings: guardianship, partnership, advisorship, and declaration of fellowship. The first stage is one in which the work is basically done by those sent out by the Synod. In the second stage, that of partnership, we see some of the concerns expressed in the conference papers finding their place.

For example, under its discussion of the developing national church, the handbook says that as the national church grows and organizes, "authority and responsibility are gradually delegated by the mission staff to the national church." It also points out that members of the national church should serve as representatives on all boards and committees, and the missionaries should "strive to play an ever-decreasing role in administering national church operations."³⁹

In connection with this, it is interesting to note the similar wording of pastor Sauer's conference paper and the mission handbook in regard to the mutual trust which must be a
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³⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

³⁹ Tomhave, p. 4p9.

part of this transfer of responsibility. Pastor Sauer writes:

Four out of five of the veteran missionaries who have with some success effected a transfer of their leadership roles to nationals gave mutual trust as the crucial factor in their transaction. The right man had to be found, first of all, who could work hand in hand with the missionary in a spirit of mutual confidence. A real partnership, in other words, had to precede. Nationals were quite frank in stating that this happy exchange of ideas was often lacking, and that the fault lay with the haughty and aloof attitude of missionaries, who were never quite ready to accept this spirit of equality.⁴⁰

The handbook states: "The passing on of responsible roles often hinges on a relationship of mutual trust established during the partnership stage."⁴¹ It seems that the World Mission Conferences have indeed had an impact on what has become our working handbook.

One more area in which I believe we can see this value of the Mission Conferences is in the concern for developing various phases of the mission at a rate which the national church will be able to support. This concern is expressed in different areas. Missionary Poetter, for example, points out that buildings and properties must be kept within the financial means of the potential independent national church.⁴²

This is also expressed in the handbook when it says that buildings should not be provided too soon, but preferably rented or constructed as needed by the national congregations. This
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⁴⁰ Sauer, p. 4.

⁴¹ Tomhave, p. 4p9.

⁴² Poetter, p. 7.

procedure is encouraged to help a church "to develop ownership of its own facilities."¹³

Pastor Sauer makes a similar observation in regard to organizational development:

Do not organize beyond the abilities of those who are going to take part. Be sure that you can satisfactorily fill whatever offices and boards you have set up. For the first you may need no more than a simple council arrangement with from three to five men, chaired perhaps by an expatriate.¹⁴

This need for cautious advancement is expressed in the handbook in this way: "The missionary and the executive committee make it a matter of duty to... exercise restraint in keeping the program from developing beyond the ability of the national church to carry it on independently."¹⁵

Many of the observations and concerns I have found expressed in the mission conference papers are summed up in this quote from the mission handbook:

In granting direct subsidy, every effort should be made to let the national church determine and support its own salary schedule and to build structures and programs according to local standards that can be operated and supported by the national church.¹⁶

In some areas one can see that the views of the missionaries made in mission conference papers are also a part of the mission handbook. It is, however, difficult to know if their inclusion
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¹³ Tomhave, p. 4p5.

¹⁴ Sauer, p. 4.

¹⁵ Tomhave, p. 4p2.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 4p7.

in the handbook is a direct result of the world mission conferences. Would they have found their way into the handbook even if there had been no conferences?

It seems that the world mission conferences have become part of a process -- a process by which the experience and views of the field are shared with the executive committees and the Mission Board. The fact that many of the ideas found in these conference papers are also found in the mission handbook indicates that the mission conferences are an important part of this process.

It is a continuing process. One example of the ongoing nature of the process can be seen in regard to the use of part-time national workers. John Chworowsky makes this observation:

A trend has been developing in Hong Kong and other World mission areas which ought to attract our serious attention. Seminaries of Christian churches are switching from the arrangement of enrolling only full-time students to one which enrolls only part-time students who are already employed at another job. Of these part-time students, many who graduate also become part-time pastors. What about this trend? Is it wise? Is it capable of producing a quality ministry? What are its strengths and weaknesses, especially when compared to the full-time clergy of which we are accustomed to think? Before either disregarding or condemning a practice which many are finding useful, should we not examine this arrangement to see whether the Lord might be indicating to us a practical way to carry on disciple winning work in our field, or whether he is telling us to be on guard against a dangerous trend?⁴⁷

Chworowsky also points out that a number of churches have a growing number of tent-making ministers, especially in countries
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⁴⁷ John Chworowsky, "Will a Tent-making Ministry Work In Our Day?" (1977 World Mission Conference), p. 1.

outside America. He does not draw any conclusions at this point. He simply asks some questions. This is also what the handbook does:

The amount of salary and provisions for the new worker are decisions of the national church he will serve. Should his housing and wages be on a par with its members? Could he be paid in food, farmland, or is the best arrangement a part-time job (tent or bi-vocational ministry)?^{4e}

There are obviously still some questions regarding the value of tent-making ministries. These questions will only be answered through a process of trial, experience, learning, and sharing.

Like the questions of part-time ministry, our missions have many other questions in many different areas. In time some of these questions will also be answered through experience and learning on the part of one or another of our missions. Because there is this constant progress and advance in policies and procedures, it is important that the lines of communication between our missions, the executive committees, and the Mission Board remain open. It is important to share the valuable lessons learned in one field with others. The World Mission Conferences of the past have helped to do this. Under the guidance and blessing of God they will continue to do so in the future.

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^{4e} Tomhave, p. 4p6.

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