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# FOMenter – November 2007

## Email Newsletter from the FELLOWSHIP OF MISSIONS

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### 2007 Annual Conference of FOM

The 38th Annual Conference is now history. The messages by Dr. David Doran on Discernment and each of the workshop presentations were very practical in that they challenged us to examine both ourselves and our ministries. (*A complete report will soon be available in Focus on Missions.*)

While we regret the resignation of our president Dr. Gerald Webber we certainly can understand the Lord's leading as he considers his responsibilities as Senior Pastor of Maranatha Baptist Church in Sebring. (Scroll down to see “Priorities” -- President's Report). We are grateful that he will remain active in FOM as a member of our Executive Committee.

Please join with us in prayer for the search committee as they seek candidates to lead our Fellowship. I am sure they would welcome any suggestions from member agencies. In the interval, both Dr. David Little, Chairman of the Executive Committee, and I will be doing our best to advance the work of our fellowship.

The 2008 FOM Annual Conference will focus on “Tools for the Trade” -- the impact of technology in missions, publishing of books and articles and a workshop for women. This meeting will be September 15-17 and hosted by Baptist Church Planters -- Elyria, Ohio. Plan now to include this important meeting on your 2008 calendar.

-- Leigh E. Adams, Director of Publications

### Mission Agencies and Local Churches – Dr. Kevin Bauder

The pastor who wants to lead his church wisely in the area of missions will find that he is confronted with a bit of a conundrum. On the one hand, the work of missions grows out of the local church, and each missionary is ultimately accountable to his sending church. On the other hand, few local churches are in the position to supervise closely the work of any particular missionary on any particular field.

The New Testament resolves this conundrum by showing that church-planting missionaries organized to work together, even when they were sent out by different churches. While their ultimate accountability was to their sending churches, their pressing, operational decisions were made together. They had little or no direct supervision from their churches. Their immediate accountability was to their field organization and its leadership.

The New Testament pattern anticipates the missionary agency and particularly the field council. The question is not whether such organizations are biblically authorized, for they clearly are. The question is how to balance the authority and function of the agency with the authority and function of the church. How should the agency and the church support one another in the work of missions?

From a practical perspective, the agency is equipped to handle many issues with which most local churches are completely unfamiliar. Most churches do not know how to convert currency, transfer funds across international borders, or calculate a reasonable level of support for a missionary who lives in a foreign culture. They are not able to navigate the diplomatic problems related to securing permanent residency in a distant country. They are not prepared to render emergency help when it is urgently needed, especially evacuating missionaries when their lives depend upon it. They cannot mentor their missionaries through the process of enculturation, and they cannot advise their missionaries through economic and political instability.

The better mission agencies, however, are very experienced at addressing these and similar issues. By specializing in such knowledge, the agencies are in a position to offer valuable help and assistance to local churches and to their missionaries. More than that, the use of an agency's name allows the missionary appointee to assure potential supporters that his theology and abilities have been thoroughly reviewed and approved by competent individuals, whereas the competence of individual local congregations varies widely.

For these and other reasons, most missionaries and churches do well to take advantage of the services of a mission agency. The services of the agency are not without cost, however. The agency must maintain a competent staff and an office, and that takes funding. Churches should make a point of supporting the agency of each missionary whom they support. Typically, if all churches would give ten percent to the agency beyond the support that they give to the missionary, the needs of the agency would be covered.

But back to the question—what should be the relationship between the mission agency and the local church while the missionary is on the field? If the pattern in the book of Acts is followed, then the missionary is ultimately accountable to his commissioning church, but he will answer immediately to the other missionaries with whom he is organized. In short, some entity like a field council must bear the responsibility for the immediate supervision of the missionary's work.

Answering to a field council not only copies a New Testament practice, it is also eminently practical. With rare exceptions, the missionary's sending church will not be well acquainted with the conditions and needs of the field. Nor will the sending church be in a position to evaluate a missionary's adjustment to the field or to his co-workers. Missionaries who are far from home may find it difficult to communicate with their commissioning church about their personal struggles, but they cannot hide these from their fellow missionaries. Both biblical and practical considerations suggest that a missionary's immediate accountability should be to his field council.

Field councils and mission agencies are sometimes viewed as usurpers. One popular perception is that the agencies always displace the authority of the local church. Frankly, that perception is correct some of the time and with some agencies. Other agencies, however, work hard to maintain their position as auxiliary organizations whose job is to assist the local church. The agencies that understand their function and that do not overreach their authority are a great blessing to local churches, and they do not deserve the hostility that they sometimes receive.

Answering to the field council—and, secondarily, to the mission agency—does not replace the missionary's accountability to his local church. Nevertheless, the local church can only exercise its authority in proportion to its involvement with its missionaries and their ministries. The pastor of the sending church must do whatever it takes in order to know the realities that the missionary is facing, and the pastors of supporting churches should also take an active interest.

Communication between the church and the missionary is essential, but communication between the church and the mission agency (including the field council) is also important. The pastor should get to know the people in the office of the agency. He should also get to know something about the other missionaries who are on the field. The ongoing interest of the pastor and church will prevent misunderstandings with both the missionary and the agency. If a problem arises with a missionary, the church and the agency should be prepared to work through the problem together.

As a rule of thumb, the agency and field council are responsible to counsel the missionary about operational decisions, and for those decisions, the missionary is under their authority. The local church is responsible to help the missionary with strategic decisions, and it reserves the authority to pass judgment upon all decisions that affect the missionary. Still, the agency must have the liberty to maintain its own policies and procedures. If the church or the missionary does not wish to work under the agency's policies, then they ought to find an agency whose policies are more agreeable—that, or send the missionary without the help of an agency.

Sometimes agencies do overstep the boundaries of their rightful authority. Sometimes churches and pastors do, too. If a church chooses an agency carefully, however, then the missionary can benefit greatly from the cooperation between the two.

*(Used with permission – Dr. Kevin T. Bauder, President of Central Baptist Seminary of Minneapolis -- published "In the Nick of Time" October 26, 2007)*

## **My struggle with “triorities” – Dr. Gerald K. Webber**

*I have been associated with FOM for about 22 years, since Dr. Ray Buck first invited me to accompany him to an Executive Committee meeting in the mid-80's. I have been deeply involved since 1991, when I assumed the leadership of Continental Baptist Missions, one of the earliest member agencies. It was an honor to serve on the Executive Committee under both Henry Heijermans and Leigh Adams, and as its Chairman for several years.*

*It was with a clear sense of God's direction that I accepted your invitation to serve as FOM's President three years ago. At the time, I was anticipating my retirement from CBM in the spring of 2006, and expecting that other ministry involvements would be something less than full-time. This new freedom would give me more time to devote to FOM's development.*

*Obviously, my long-range vision was less than perfect. Our call to the pastorate of Maranatha Baptist Church in Sebring FL has changed almost everything. While we accepted that call with the understanding that I would continue my FOM responsibilities, and with the encouragement of the church to that end, I have found that the demands of an active pastorate have diminished my ability to provide the quality of leadership FOM needs and deserves.*

*In recent months, I have graduated from wrestling with priorities to struggling with “triorities”—three things (or more!) that must be done first. It is perhaps unfortunate in this instance that in skirmishes between important and urgent, urgent usually wins. Thus, I cannot help but feel that, in too many ways, I have shortchanged FOM in order to accomplish the tasks immediately before me. I have missed deadlines, neglected correspondence, and given too little thought to the long-range vision I myself cast just three years ago. For FOM's sake, this cannot continue—God has to have a better plan for the organization, whether or not we can see it from our present vantage point.*

*I do not make this move lightly, or without pain. The pangs of withdrawal are real for me. I am as convinced today of the need and viability of FOM as ever, and I wish I could lead the charge in extending and expanding this ministry. But those are human reactions, and it is the Divine perspective that we need.*

*Your Executive, through their Nominating Committee, has asked me to stay engaged at the level of Member-at-large of the Executive Committee. If you confirm that today, I will be pleased to accept, as long as my presence is a positive and not negative factor.*

*I love FOM, and I have loved serving as your President, albeit for such a short time. Please be assured of my continued support and interest for as long as God chooses to allow us the privilege.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Gerald K. Webber*

## **Association of Fundamentalists Evangelizing Catholics**

The Association of Fundamentalists Evangelizing Catholics has a history of being a source of rich fellowship among those who are interested and involved in Catholic evangelism. We are asking you, if you are a pastor, to consider hosting a conference (June preferable) please contact me at [cecmotc@juno.com](mailto:cecmotc@juno.com) or our Promotion Secretary, Pastor Dave Lupex, Box 15, McDaniels, KY 40152. Tel: 270-945-3171. Bill Jackson, 2720 Crone Rd., Borden, IN 47106. 812-294-4974.

## **New Financial Planning Website**

Leon (Mac) McBride has just opened a new financial planning website. Mac has been associated with FOM for many years along with Henry Heijermans, Executive Director of FOMConsulting Ministries. Mac received his accounting degree from the University of Delaware. He is a Certified Public Accountant, Personal Financial Specialist and Certified Financial Planner. He was the co-founder of the Delaware CPA & Consulting firm, McBride, Shopa & Co. He retired from the firm in 1993, but has remained active in financial consulting-working with retirees and those contemplating retirement. For further information check out his website at [www.mcbride-cpa.net](http://www.mcbride-cpa.net) or call his office at 302-731-7899.