

Report of the Peshtigo River Circuit (formerly Southern Circuit) of the Northwoods Conference (formerly Lake Superior Conference & Rhinelander Conference) of the Northwestern Wisconsin District (still the Northern Wisconsin District).

Present at the Pastor’s Study Club:

James Wuebben, Fred Meuller, Reginald Pope, John Tesch, Charles Learman, Paul Cole, Matthew Arnold, David Zahn, Greg Stahlecker, Ryan Landwehr. Note that after breaking for Lord’s Supper and a light lunch, some men had to leave; others stayed to continue discussions.

Opening with a devotion and a prayer, we began looking at the Ad Hoc Committee report. Our district in convention wanted to take a closer look (see Report #17, Ad Hoc Commission document from District Convention proceedings), and apparently assigned portions to each circuit. We looked at the following sections of the Ad Hoc Committee Report. Following the format of the chart “Ad Hoc District Reactions” the basic “yes, no, yes with questions” or “maybe” (red, green, yellow lights on the chart) will be followed.

Section 1. Expansion of Mission Efforts (pages 8-10 of the report).

Endorsements: Pages 8 & 9 of report.

Ad Hoc Committee Endorsement	Circuit Reaction	Further Comments
1.1 Board for Home Missions Direction	Yes.	Some unsure of why the change is being made, but figure it is the general “streamlining” approach to administration.
1.2 Discontinue Associate Administrator	Yes.	Assuming that the World Missions and Home Missions are still separate entities.
1.3 Changes approved by 2007 Convention.	Yes.	Not many comments.
1.4 Selection of China as high priority.	Maybe.	Not convinced that China is really an “open door.”
1.5 Manpower for strategic reasons.	Yes.	As long as called workers not left dangling without financial support.
1.6 Self sustaining indigenous church bodies.	Yes.	Standard approach for awhile; good and solid.

Recommendations: Pages 9 & 10 of report.

Tuesday, September 9, 2008 - Study of Ad Hoc Committee Report

Ad Hoc Committee Recommendation	Circuit Reaction	Further Comments
1.7 Publish a National Strategy emphasis on new openings	Yes.	Both new openings, and “this is what we want to do” reporting a good thing; only questions on “what makes an area ‘key?’”
1.8 New church openings.	Yes.	“Dramatic change,” although not sure why this hasn’t been stated before.
1.9 Majority funding in growing areas, look south and west.	Yes, leaning towards Maybe.	Not sure about looking south or west, ignoring midwest.
1.10 Priority on manpower.	Yes.	No real comments.
1.11 Locations driven by a National Strategy.	Yes, leaning towards Maybe.	Not sure what proactive and reactive are meant: will this mean risking more in land speculation (or gaining more in wise land speculation), etc.?
1.12 Use mission counselors for point men.	Maybe.	In theory, agree; but practically can’t imagine that present amount of mission counselors have the time or energy (from what we understand, some individual mission counselors are expected to cover two districts).
1.13 Seek out opportunities of level 2+ and level 3 missions.	Yes.	Again, a DRAMATIC CHANGE as to how things have been done over the last decade; if the “build it and they will come” strategy does not work, stuck. But generally support the recommendation.

Section 2. Synodical Budget and Finances

Fragmentation of Financial Resources (pages 11-13)

Endorsements: Page 12 of report

Tuesday, September 9, 2008 - Study of Ad Hoc Committee Report

Ad Hoc Committee Endorsement	Circuit Reaction	Further Comments
2.1 Reaffirm CMO	YES.	Amen and alleluia.
2.2 Gospel based appeals	YES.	Amen and alleluia.
2.3 Limit special offerings	Yes.	Wise notion.
2.4 Incorporate funds into budget plan.	Yes.	Makes sense.

Recommendations: Pages 12 & 13 of report

Ad Hoc Committee Recommendation	Circuit Reaction	Further Comments
2.5 Funding appeals coordinated	Yes.	Some discussion.
2.6 Closer cooperation	Yes.	Some discussion.
2.7 Gift policy.	Yes.	Some discussion.
2.8 Not exist in perpetuity.	Yes.	Some discussion.
2.9 Reduce numbers of special funds.	Yes.	Some discussion.
2.10 Debt reduction.	Yes.	Some discussion.
2.11 COP address poor CMO	Yes.	Some discussion.
2.12 COP analyze staffing.	Yes.	Some discussion.

The Budget Process (pages 13-15)

Endorsements: pages 13 to 15 of the report.

Ad Hoc Committee Endorsement	Circuit Reaction	Further Comments
2.13 Changes made in reporting.	Yes.	
2.14 New program budgeting.	Yes.	

Tuesday, September 9, 2008 - Study of Ad Hoc Committee Report

Ad Hoc Committee Endorsement	Circuit Reaction	Further Comments
2.15 Proposed Budget.	Yes.	
2.16 Special funds reported.	Yes.	
2.17 Forecasting.	Yes.	
2.18 Consolidate debt.	Yes.	
2.19 Year of Jubilee	Yes.	
2.20 Carry out directives.	Yes.	Odd that need this, but glad to hear it.
2.21 Provide timely and relevant information.	Yes.	Good and understandable reports now.
2.22 More information in reports.	Yes.	Good to have everything in hand in one place for most delegates.
2.23 Compensation Review Committee	Yes.	
2.24 Closer work.	Yes.	

Recommendations: page 15 of the report

Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations	Circuit Reaction	Further Comments
2.25 Articulation	Yes.	Talking good; listening good. Better.
2.26 Reflect entire work.	Yes.	Good to think of others while making plans.
2.27 Staffing levels study.	Yes.	Schools apparently have already done so.
2.28 Presidential approval.	Maybe.	Reservations regarding the amount of power this puts on the president; are there provisions for appeal? Is there a better place to put this?
2.29 Sunset provisions	Yes.	

Tuesday, September 9, 2008 - Study of Ad Hoc Committee Report

Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations	Circuit Reaction	Further Comments
2.30 Improve budget process.	Yes.	
2.31 COP participation.	Yes.	
2.32 DP advocate.	Yes.	

Break for Lord's Supper; Lunch. Some excused.

Continue with Section 3 Study: Strengthening Congregations & Members

Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations	Circuit Response	Further Comments
3.1 District Adjustments (page 17 of the report)	No.	Does not seem to be a feasible solution; not opposed to the idea, but the how needs be checked out thoroughly. Other solutions to the problems this recommendation addresses would be districts making better use of the resources they already have. Much discussion could be had.
3.2 Circuit Pastor	Yes.	Generally a good thing. Much of these things should already be the case. But as above, in 3.1, some of the apparent difficulties have occurred on account of not quite making good use of the people and procedures we already have in place, like the circuit pastor, regular circuit meetings, etc.
3.2.1 Circuits at 6-8	Yes or maybe.	Stress the "WHERE POSSIBLE"
3.2.2 Circuit pastor from DP	No.	Presently chosen by pastors of the circuit; better to keep it local.

Tuesday, September 9, 2008 - Study of Ad Hoc Committee Report

Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations	Circuit Response	Further Comments
3.2.3 Intensive training.	Yes.	Good idea. Although hoping “intensive” does not include running obstacle courses, etc.
3.2.4 Regular contact.	Yes.	This should be the case already.
3.2.5 COP Circuit Pastor manual	Yes.	
3.2.6 Circuit pastor a call to provide pastoral guidance and direction.	Yes.	Restating the obvious is not a bad thing. In fact it is a big part of our job.
3.3 Redeploy Parish Services	Yes.	This seems to be the “biggy” for discussion.
3.3.1 Areas be retained.	Yes.	Big question: HOW?
3.3.2 Accountability to the COP through VP of Mission and Ministry	Yes.	Question: To whom accountable now?
3.3.3 Administrators of current PS Ministries be called by COP	Yes.	Seems to be called by those to whom accountable: good thing.
3.3.4 Budget category.	Maybe.	Want clarification on this.
3.3.5 Functions of Youth Discipleship & Parish Schools combined	No.	
3.3.6 Campus Ministries to Special Ministries	No.	As 3.3.5, those in it say “not a good idea.” Concerns among our circuit were also regarding practical things like funding; know that campus ministries is turning into a micro world mission field.
3.3.7 VP coordinate and oversight.	Yes.	Seems to be preparing for 3.3.8 & 3.3.9 below.
3.3.8 Support staff reconfigured.	Yes.	If do above, this next step.

Tuesday, September 9, 2008 - Study of Ad Hoc Committee Report

Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations	Circuit Response	Further Comments
3.3.9 Board and position eliminated.	Yes.	Makes sense if the two above are done.
3.3.10 Publication needs to PCC and NPH.	Yes.	

Adjourned 2 PM - with thanks all around. Closed with Lord's Prayer.

4 PM: Computer hackers who inserted phrases like "I'm a little teapot short and stout" to this report were discovered and chastised. Finally, around noon, September 10, the report was finished for circuit review. Awaiting final approval.

Submitted: Ryan J Landwehr