



Living to Share Faith

Faith2Share Leaders' Retreat and Leadership Consultation



Report

*This was the 17th Leadership Consultation run by Faith2Share since 2000. The event which gathers the senior leaders of our 40 member mission movements, together with other partners with whom we regularly work, is normally held every 18 months. The previous one took place in Bangalore, India, in April 2016. Finding the right location for these consultations is becoming increasingly problematic as we require a country with no, or easy, visa requirements and a venue which can provide budget accommodation for all of our leaders. We have previously met in Bangkok but chose Chiang Mai this time so as to be close to the Vision 5.9 consultation (see below) which followed. Chiang Mai did, however add extra cost and logistic problems because of the need for most participants to fly into Bangkok and then on to Chiang Mai. Our welcome, however, at Lanna Palace Hotel (Christian owned) was beyond expectations at a very reasonable price. The theme for our consultation this year was **Living to share faith : Exploring patterns of missional discipleship in contemporary contexts.***



Silence, consultation and celebration

For the first three days 29 leaders gathered for a silent retreat led by Bishop Hwai Teik Ong from Malaysia. They were then joined by a further 37 leaders for three days of intensive consultation, after which 15 leaders transferred to the *Abide and Bear Fruit* Conference and celebration run by our sister network *Vision 5.9* in a neighbouring hotel.

Network Members

AIMS Sri Lanka, Anglican Frontier Missions, Anglican Relief and Development Fund Australia, Antioch Mission, Asia CMS, Asian Outreach Alliance, BORN, Church Army Africa, Church of Nigeria Missionary Society, CMS Africa, CMS Australia, CMS, CMS Ireland, Friends Missionary Prayer Band, Global Teams, IGOSA, Indian Evangelical Mission, Interserve India, Isa-e Church, iServe Africa, Lifeway Mission International, Mahabba Network International, Mahanaim Ministries, Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association, Mekane Yesus IMS, Mission Together Africa, Mission Together Inc. (Canada), MSF International, NAMS Network, National Mission Commission of Nepal, New Life for India, New Zealand CMS, OMF International, PMI, SAMS Ireland, SAMS USA, SOMA UK, TEAM, The Sheepfold Ministries, Torchbearers Mission

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Intimacy before Fidelity



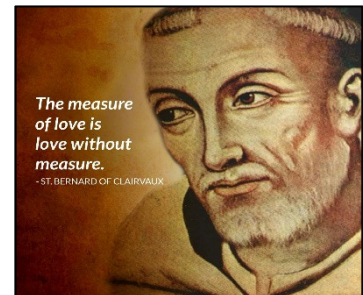
Bishop Ong with Faith2Share board chair Bob Wilkes

Three years ago Faith2Share introduced the concept of a leaders' retreat before the main consultation but on that occasion (in Ethiopia) we failed to create enough 'space' for an effective retreat. In 2016, in Bangalore we allowed more time and had one person, Dr. Prabhu Singh, take us through the retreat which worked much better. However, the considered opinion seems to be that, at last, this year we found a much better pattern a full two-days silent retreat. Bishop Ong Hwai Teik, the Methodist Bishop in West Malaysia brought us three gifts – a deeply spiritual approach to being on retreat, powerful Biblical

insights and a vulnerable sharing of his own journey in faith (partly growing out of a recent serious illness). His theme was "Intimacy before Fidelity". Drawing on the life experience of several Biblical characters, starting with Jonah, he helped us explore the essential path of intimacy with God. We can only, he suggested, be faithful to our missionary call, faithful in our daily discipleship, if we are enjoying an ever more intimate relationship with God.

One of the gifts Bishop Ong left with us was the "Four degrees of love" first expounded by Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153):

- Loving ourselves for our own sake
- Loving God for self sake (to receive his gifts and blessing)
- Loving God for God's sake
- Loving ourselves for the sake of God



Faith2Share reaches 40

In British culture one is often regarded as having reached "middle age" when you get to 40. Well Faith2Share is only 17 years old but this year we grew to 40 member agencies. This meant that at this consultation we welcomed new member agencies (specifically OMF International, TEAM, Mekane Yesus IMS, Mahabba Network International, MSF International and Anglican Frontier Missions) and several new representatives of partner organisations such as The Jesus Film, IMB (Southern Baptists) and friends from Pakistan. In total we were 66 participants from 23 different nations – a rich cultural and ecclesial tapestry.



Because of our desire to have a retreat beforehand and to allow participants to move on to the Vision 5.9 consultation we had one less day for our consultation than in recent years (just four days) and this led to a very pressurized programme which may have been a mistake. In future we may revert to a five day programme.

Discipleship that transforms society

The theme chosen for our opening day was “Intentional Discipleship”. Opening the event, the chair of the Faith2Share board of trustees, The Very Revd. Bob Wilkes, celebrated the fact that the network now represents a solid commitment to discipleship through collaboration. Faith2Share Associate International Director, Anton Ponomarev, then stressed the importance of understanding our time together as ‘consultation’ rather than ‘conference’ and that we approach each day with the expectation that God will help us grow in mission as we grow in fellowship together. Anton also introduced Faith2Share and its vision to those who were attending such a consultation for the first time.



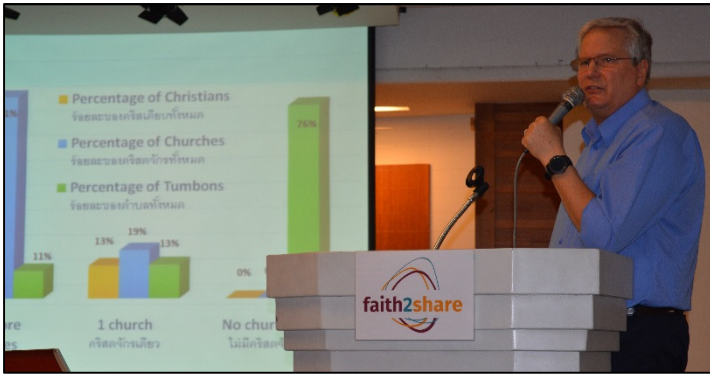
Faith2Share International Director, Mark Oxbrow, then gave a key note address on the topic “Discipleship – the foundation of mission” (His power-point presentation is available to members.) His pivotal texts were the Great Commission as recorded by Mark “As you go into the world, preach the good news to all creation”, and words from the Apostles Creed, “One holy, catholic and apostolic church” which he suggested might be helpfully rendered as “Apostolic, catholic, holy and one church” – the church which starts in mission, to the whole of creation, in the image of God and in so doing finds its unity. A discipleship which transforms society he said will be missional, embracing all of life, holy and seeking unity.



After an amazing Thai banquet laid on by our hosts at Lanna Palace hotel our first day concluded with worship led by local musicians and one of our leaders who works in the Gulf region. At this service the outgoing Director of CMS Africa, Dennis Tongoi preached. Dennis also focused on the call to intentional discipleship and reminded us that as communities observe the quality of our lives shaped by Jesus they will be drawn to discover the source of our joy and strength in life.

Mission Context of Asia

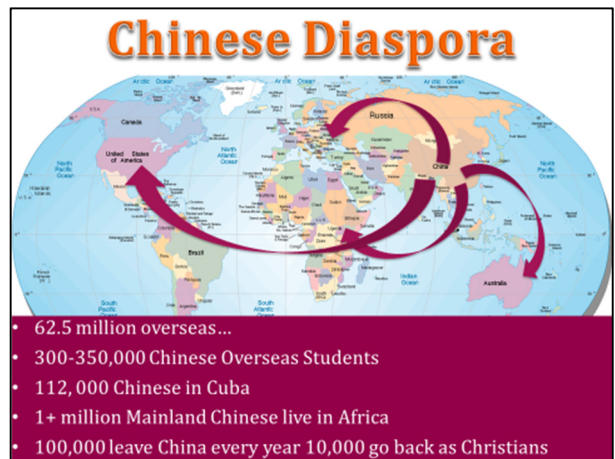
Much of our first full day together was given over to understanding the challenges and opportunities for mission in the context of Asia, with a specific focus on two countries. Firstly Dwight Martin from



the Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand made a very detailed and encouraging presentation on the state of the Christian community in Thailand. Dwight's research is being used by mission agencies and churches working in Thailand to help them understand what strategies for discipleship are most effective and where resources should be targeted. (Dwight's powerpoint presentation is available from

Faith2Share.) Dwight's presentation included much useful information about the unique culture of Thailand and how this affects reception of the gospel. He suggested that evangelism is most effective when carried out by locals through friendship and social networks and that worship and other Christian activities must be in local languages and adapted to Thai culture.

The presentation which probably provoked most discussion during the consultation (and hopefully most collaborative action afterwards) was that given on China and the Chinese diaspora by one of the directors of OMF International. (For security reasons this powerpoint presentation is available only to Faith2Share member agencies and those who attended the consultation.) We were first reminded of the huge size of China, which with its diaspora represents at least 20% of the world population, and its disparate regions. The situation of the churches and the opportunities for mission equally vary enormously from province to province. The differences between, and relationships between, registered and unregistered churches were explained with clear reference to the current growth of the church amongst educated urban middle classes and intellectuals. A significant part of the presentation was on the Chinese diaspora. This led to



considerable discussion amongst participants who wanted to respond in two ways, (a) to consider how they prepare more mission works to serve amongst Chinese in SE Asia and (b) to develop new work amongst the Chinese diaspora wherever they are found. The greatest interest in Chinese diaspora came from African delegates who confessed that the Chinese working and living in Africa are often seen as coming to steal African resources rather than those who come to share skills and who need the gospel. OMF and CMS Africa already have some work in Nairobi, we heard, to reach out to Chinese settlers. Others expressed a desire to focus on student ministry amongst the thousands of Chinese students who will return home, often to influential positions in society.

After lunch participants had an opportunity to meet new leaders and renew old friendships as a foundation for mission collaboration.



New Models for Global Mission

Earlier in 2017 Faith2Share had facilitated a consultation for a smaller number of 'established' missions to consider how they needed to adapt to changed contexts with new models for mission. The session in Chiang Mai, introduced by Tanas Alqassis (Palestine/UK) and Paul Radha Krishnan (India), took this topic further and challenged us all to look for effective contemporary models in mission. Having looked at Biblical models the presenters suggested that we should give more attention to 'indigenous' models of mission that were locally sustainable and used the resources that God has provided locally. Tanas explained how Church Mission Society works through 'local partners' and Paul shared the development and locally sustained ministry of Mahanaim Ministries. Most of the work in this session was done in small discussion groups. Two clear foci which emerged from the groups were the importance of collaboration in mission and the increased interest in media missions. Two examples of suggestions from groups are shown below.



Youth in Mission



The significance of youth in mission had already been raised during discussion on China and new models for mission so it was not surprising that an evening session led by Bisoke Balikenga (DR Congo) and James Wainaina (Kenya) raised some challenging questions about the lack of resourcing of youth mission within our churches. Both Bisoke and James work with young missional leaders on a daily basis and gave witness to the effectiveness of the work undertaken by the youth. We were privileged to have several younger leaders with us at the consultation including two young NAMS trainees from Nepal who both made a significant contribution to this and other debates.

Collaboration and Partnership in Mission

Faith2Share places a very high value on building effective collaboration and partnerships in mission and it has become our practice to give significant time to actually doing this (rather than just talking about it) during our consultations. After a highly relevant Bible study by Bishop Emmanuel Ngendahayo (Rwanda), Anton Ponomarev, our Associate International Director and an Associate of IPA (International Partnering Associates) led an interactive session on what constitutes a healthy collaboration in mission. Participants then identified practical issues from their own ministries where they could benefit from collaborating with others and then formed themselves into small working groups ranging from two to ten members each. Each participant was able to join two groups during the morning. At least two of the groups had already formed WhatsApp groups for further work together by the time we broke for lunch. Others continued their conversations and planning during break times later in the week. Faith2Share will hope to gather information about these emerging collaborations as they develop during 2018. One such example is the leadership training to be undertaken jointly by Kenyan and Rwandan participants.

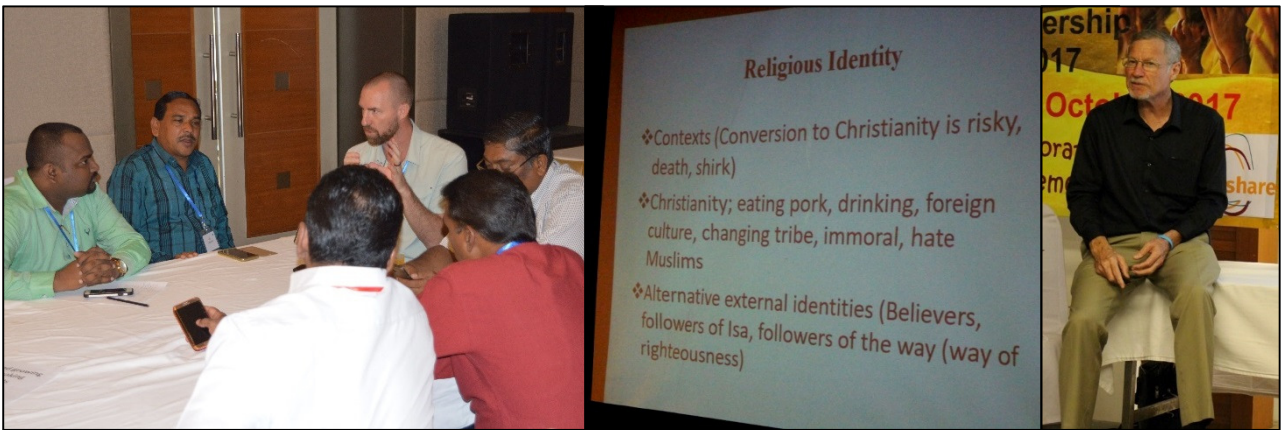


Mission Visits

As an opportunity for further networking and so see what local mission opportunities there are in Chiang Mai, participants spent Tuesday afternoon on a number of mission visits which included “The Well” which provides support for mission personnel in the region, the OMF Mekong centre, and an opportunity to engage with Buddhist monks at a local temple. There was time for debriefing in the evening at which experiences were exchanged.

Following Jesus from Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu backgrounds

We were fortunate to have among our participants several followers of Jesus from Muslim and Hindu backgrounds and leaders of some of our member movements who work exclusively amongst what are sometimes called “insider movements” but which we prefer to talk about as followers, or disciples, of Jesus from different backgrounds. (Sadly their faces are missing from the pictures in this report because of security considerations.) Most of the day was spent in two or three separate tracks (Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist) but we began with a helpful introduction by Aila Tasse (Kenya) and P.T. (Gulf region) who opened up the whole topic of “following Jesus in a multi-religious world”. The Muslim track on this day benefited from several participants who are also part of our partner network Vision 5.9 and the Buddhist track was helped by Larry Dinkins who joined us for the day.



The afternoon ended with two very practical sessions (run in parallel) on “Mission and Security” facilitated by Francis Omondi (The Sheepfold Ministries) who has a wide experience of work in security conscious areas in East Africa, and “Reaching those who shape our culture” facilitated by Jackin Isravel (Indian Evangelical Mission). In his session Jackin reminded participants that many Indian missions have focused on reaching the hundreds of unreached tribals in India (which continues to have the highest number of unreached ethnic groups of any country in the world). However, he then pointed out that it is not the tribal groups that will shape the future of India – this will be determined by the growing middle classes and urban citizens, the vast majority of whom are Hindu. He emphasised that reaching these communities is a major priority not only in India and then suggested some of the ways in which this can be done.



Wednesday evening was intended as an “Open Evening” but despite our invitation to the local missions community few attended. (In Bangalore in 2016 we had around 50 guests.) However our participants were not disappointed because we had a challenging presentation by Boureima of Fulani Ministries (Burkina Faso) in which he spoke from Acts 10:38 and Peter’s confidence in mission. He called us to “be creative” ... “bring salt and light to the community” and “let people discover Christ in you”.

A future vision for Faith2Share

In a session chaired by Bob Wilkes and John Wesley, the two Faith2Share trustees present, participants were given an opportunity to shape the future vision and activities of Faith2Share. Bob Wilkes introduced the session by reminding participants of the ways in which God has guided the network in past years and helped us to focus on our current key priorities:

- Accompanying, mentoring, equipping **leaders**
- Whole-life **discipleship**
- **Collaborative** mission
- **Emerging mission movements**

John Wesley, a former General Secretary of one of our oldest members, IEM, and now a trustee, summed up what Faith2Share means for him as:

- **Encouragement:** Wesley's first time at a F2S Consultation was in 2007 and he still has friendships today which began then.
- **Enlightenment:** Global perspective - representing every continent in the world; and, focus on current issues.
- **Equipment:** People are equipped in many ways at consultations. It is not just about listening but about interacting, networking, partnering, sharing resources.
- **Empowerment:** People are refreshed and empowered.



Participants then discussed in pairs what God might be saying to us at this time before feeding those ideas into a lively and creative plenary session. On the whole the comments did not suggest a new direction for Faith2Share but underlined some of the core values of the network such as equality of esteem, interactive learning, global perspective, prayer, growing sense of family, diversity, collaboration. There were some comments about the consultation itself which indicated that people would have appreciated more free time for networking and the presence of more female leaders. There was appreciation of the fact



that Faith2Share already gives a place to a good number of younger leaders.

The record of some of the comments made during this session can be found as Appendix 2 to this report.

Developing and Mentoring Leaders

The final session of the consultation focused on a topic which is central to the life of Faith2Share – the development and mentoring of missional leaders. The session began with brief inputs from four Faith2Share leaders who are active in this area:

- Tusha Manna (Manna Mission) trains and mentors a network of Muslim-background leaders in West Bengal, India
- Tek Rijal (NAMS Network) mentors younger leaders in Nepal, two of whom were present with him at our consultation
- Francis Omondi (The Sheepfold Ministries) has been training leaders in Kenya and other parts of East Africa for outreach to Muslim background communities.
- Stephen Dinsmore (SOMA-UK) regularly leads teams to support and mentor leaders cross-culturally.



Some of the learning that was shared was that leaders need to first be experienced in ministry and understand that there is a distinction between management and leadership. Leadership is not a status but a service and leaders ‘emerge’ and then need to be shaped. But leaders should not be shaped in our own image but in God’s. Finally we were given the picture of a reservoir to remind us that we can only help others when we are spiritually filled ourselves.

During the time for group discussion participants worked in regional groups to look at the shape of leadership in their own cultures. There was, however, one extra group which was made up of those who specifically wanted to look at the role of Faith2Share in mentoring leaders. After discussion this group recommended to Faith2Share that we further explore the possibility of working with other agencies to produce some modules on mentoring and some form of training for mentors. It was generally thought that mentoring, a big need amongst millennials, needs to be offered face-to-face although cross-cultural mentoring can be helpful as it overcomes ‘cultural blindness’.

Breaking bread together

The consultation closed with a final act of worship led by Nancy Sturrock and John Wesley during which we met around the Lord’s table and broke bread together.



Abide and Bear Fruit

As the Faith2Share consultation drew to a conclusion 15 of our leaders left to join the Vision 5.9 conference, Abide and Bear Fruit, in a nearby hotel. Vision 5.9 is one of our sister networks which brings together mission workers from around the world who work amongst people from a Muslim background. The conference this year, their largest so far, brought together about 900 people including many Muslim background believers (MBBs). Faith2Share places a high value on its strong links with other networks such as Vision 5.9 and the Micah network.



Mark Oxbrow
November 2017



Faith2Share Leadership consultation 2017 Participants

Appendix 1

Name	Organisation	Country
Tanas Alqassis	Church Mission Society	Palestine / UK
Teshome Amanu	Mekane Yesus International Missionary Society	Ethiopia
Brian Anderson	The Light of the World Ministries/ Vision India	India
Bisoke Balikenga	The Province of the Anglican Church of Congo	DR Congo
Dillip Barik	New Life for India	India
RC Bernard	Console Evangelical Missionary Movement	India
Prakash Bikram Bhat	Nepal Christian Relief Services	Nepal
David Brown	Rock Church	USA
Johnson Chinyong'ole	Church Army Africa	Tanzania
Mabud Chowdhury	Isa-e Church Bangladesh	Bangladesh
Ribica Chowdhury	Isa-e Church Bangladesh	Bangladesh
Manik Corea	NAMS Network	Thailand
M G Daniel	IEM	India
Boureima Diallo	FULNET (Fulani Network)	Burkina Faso
Stephen Dinsmore	SOMA UK	UK
Bishop Emmanuel	Anglican Church of Rwanda	Rwanda
Jane Fulford	Asia Forum, Church Mission Society	UK
Rispa Gachuri	Mission Together Africa	Kenya
Neale Gregson	Christ Methodist Church	Singapore
Stefan Henger	Vision 5.9 Network	China
Jay Hong	Korean Pioneer Mission	South Korea
Vijay Isaac	Faith2Share / Friends Missionary Prayer Band	India
Jackin Isravel	Indian Evangelical Mission	India
Wesley John	Indian Evangelical Mission / Faith2Share Trustee	India
Kari Kennedy	Jesus Film Project	USA
P Radha Krishnan	Mahanaim Ministries	India
Pranab Kishor Kumar	New Life for India	India
Ram Lian	Grace Family Asia	Myanmar
Tushar Manna	Manna Mission	India
Wondimu Mathewos	Mekane Yesus International Missionary Society	Ethiopia
Timothy Mazimpaka	Faith2Share / Church Army Africa	Nairobi, Kenya
Rev Dr Mwangi	Church Army Africa	Nairobi, Kenya
Patrick Nabwera	The Sheepfold Ministries	Mozambique
David Naingki	Gospel for All Nations, Myanmar	Myanmar
Prakash Nayak	Vision India	India
Kassahun Nigatu	Mekane Yesus International Missionary Society	Addis Ababa,
Lucy Ochieng	CMS Africa	Kenya
Albert Ocran	Torchbearers Mission International	Ghana
Francis Omondi	The Sheepfold Ministries	Kenya
Bishop Hwai Teik Ong	Methodist Church of Malaysia	Malaysia
Mark Oxbrow	Faith2Share	UK
Kiran Pal	NAMS Network / GAP, Nepal	Nepal
Sunita Parajuli	Hopes Promise Nepal	Nepal
S D Ponraj	Bihar Christian Church (BORN)	India
Anton Ponomarev	Faith2Share	UK

Debi Lal Prasain	Himalayan Foundation Nepal	Nepal
Milan Rijal	NAMS Network/ GAP, Nepal	Nepal
Tek Prasad Rijal	NAMS (Himalayan Tibetan People Group)	Nepal
Chris Royer	Anglican Frontier Missions	US
Pastor Naeem Samuel	Agape Elpis Evangelical Ministries	Pakistan
Richard Schlitt	OMF International	Hong Kong
David Serunjoji	Church Army Africa	Uganda
Michael Sillah	Multiplication Network Ministries	Tanzania
Phil Simpson	Global Teams / Mahabba International Network	UK
Edwin Smallwood	IMB	Thailand
Nicki Stevens	Faith2Share	UK
Nancy Sturrock	TEAM	USA
Aila Tasse	Lifeway Mission International	Kenya
Pax Tan	AsiaCMS	Malaysia
Prince Thomas	NAMS Network	UAE
Dennis Tongoi	CMS Africa	Kenya
Ashish Toppo	Jharkhand Christian Workers Assoc.	India
James Wainaina	iServe Africa	Kenya
Stewart Wicker	SAMS	Pittsburgh, USA
Bob Wilkes	Faith2Share	Oxford UK
Zohmingthanga	India Missions Association	Hyderabad, India

Total attendees 66 (Total bookings 75)

Note: Nine booked participants were unable to attend. (Three Nigerian participants and one Ghanaian, representing Faith2Share member agencies Church of Nigerian Missionary Society and Torchbearers Mission International, were refused visas for Thailand. The representative of the Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association, Bishop Mar Coorilos, withdrew at the last minute because of family sickness. Two Kenyan participants did not arrive because of flight and work issues. Three representative of Micah Network booked but failed to confirm travel arrangements and never arrived.) These absences not only depleted our fellowship and mutual learning but also sadly caused Faith2Share extra expenditure where flights had been booked in advance.



Future Vision for Faith2Share Network

Faith2Share is at a growth point with a new International Director and new trustees being appointed in the near future. God is giving a good thing to His church through Faith2Share – how do we nurture this?

Faith2Share provides:

- **Encouragement:** Wesley's first time at a F2S Consultation was in 2007 and he still has friendships today which began then.
- **Enlightenment:** Global perspective - representing nearly every continent in the world; and, Current Issues – some people wouldn't meet otherwise eg Pakistan & India
- **Equipment:** People are equipped in many ways at consultations. It is not just about listening but about interacting, networking, partnering, sharing resources
- **Empowerment:** People are refreshed and empowered.

Feedback from participants

- (KN) His first time at a Faith2Share consultation and has been impressed and has learnt a lot. Courage for mission despite differences. Common issues and vision. Same purposes in spite of differences.
- (JF & KP) Value of contextualisation, collaboration and partnership. KP learnt a lot about monks in Nepal and burden
- (TA) First consultation. Diversity and learning from each other which challenges you to go back and do things differently. Discipleship – very important. Suggest half a day on Africa, half a day on Asia and half a day on Middle East.
- (ES) Very impressed, learning about network and how it works. Would like partnering and collaboration in Business aspect.
- (LO) Encouraged by networking and sharing and meeting people. When praying could we be more specific and directed.
- (MC) Valued fellowship – sitting at tables, sharing perspectives. Sometimes it felt rushed and because of tiredness could be a bit of a challenge. Build in more time for this?
- (BB) Security – friends from around the world a great encouragement. Learning from people's experiences and challenges.
- (BD) First time at a consultation and very encouraged. Sense of family and appreciated speaking together and hope that may continue. Valued insistence on intimacy with God. Would value more testimonies – how people came to be here, what are their greatest struggles and how have they solved them. Younger members can learn from this.
- (RG) Only a few women attending Leadership Consultation. Could we offer more opportunities to women to come.
- (DP) Second generation Nepali. Not getting a lot of friends around the world so valued sharing, fellowship, prayer and partnership. Attended a W-L Discipleship Consultation in 2012
- (PN) Valued exposure to wealth of experience and knowledge
- (PN) Partnership. How to handle persecution.
- (JW) Mission-minded – knowing we can come together and work together and pray together. Realised that didn't know Asia very well so valued hearing about these countries. Maybe evening session could be more restful.
- (WM) Mission sending in future. Would value more on discipleship and ? Focus on reaching the unreached. More than a network. Working alongside mission organisations and able to be a member. Mentoring for EMMs would be helpful.
- (PT) Simplicity and opportunity to learn progressively. Suggest time for interaction in evening culturally (or on a lighter side)
- (BS) Culture and environment. Ideas learning. More young leaders coming. Muslim tract. In India limited – great to see how working elsewhere.

