



# Christian Mentoring

JOHN MALLISON MINISTRIES

## A GUIDE TO ORGANISING AND PROMOTING YOUR TRAINING EVENTS

John Mallison and Ian Richardson

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## INTRODUCTION

*This guide is essentially to help those responsible for organising and promoting a local church training event.*

It is based on nearly 45 years of experience organising such events and acting as the main presenter, initially as a local church pastor and then for the majority of this period as a full time Christian educator.

This is a guide, not a detailed text. It aims to show planners what needs to be done to ensure a successful learning event. Most of the items will need to be “brain stormed” to produce detailed plans for each specific situation.

Although most of these notes apply to regional (or local) church training gatherings, they are the basic planning requirements, which will also be common to national and international events.

Organising a conference, no matter what size, requires careful and creative planning and coordination through all stages.

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First published 1994  
Revised 2004

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## 1. PRELIMINARY PLANNING

### AIM

*The AIM should be spelt out clearly. The advertising, choice of speakers/session leaders, program etc will all be governed by the purpose of the training event.*

### TARGET GROUP

- For whom (persons, their roles & responsibilities) are you organising this event
- Who are you seeking, and most likely, to attract
- Are you intending to invite others who are not of your own constituency – ie. Other churches, or specific occupations whose duties will be reflected in the content.
- How many do you estimate will attend (Important for choice of venue and budgeting)

### SELECTING THE DATE

- Take into consideration the following:
  - Vacations – Public and Private Schools and Universities
  - School and University examinations
  - Public holidays. If it is a national event check these in all States.
  - Regular or special Denominational events (eg. Annual Assemblies and other major meetings)
  - Cross denominational events
  - Major events in the Christian year

Some of these may be complementary and will work for you; others may work against your program, depending upon the nature of your event. Hence, it will important to check a national calendar as well as with denominational programmers and key Christian leaders through their Regional offices.

### PROGRAM

Consider the following:

- Speakers/session leaders contributions and requirements (accommodation, equipment and resources)
- Are there to be workshops, electives, field trips, etc?
- Major sessions need to be of 1½ hours duration
- Workshops could be a little shorter, but not less than 1 hour  
Keep in mind time needed for movement between workshops – say 15 minutes
- Coffee/tea breaks need to be 30 minutes
- Meal breaks 1 hour
- Avoid planning more than four 90 minute sessions in any one day
- Provide an active session or a free time after lunch.
- Brochure (or key advertising points) needs to have a copy of program.

*Suggested time frame options for one day events:*

A	Registrations	8.30am	to	9.00am
	Session 1	9.00am	to	10.30am
	Tea break	10.30am	to	11.00am
	Session 2	11.00am	to	12.30pm
	Lunch	12.30pm	to	1.30pm
	Session 3	1.30pm	to	3.00pm
	Tea break	3.00pm	to	3.30pm
	Session 4	3.30pm	to	5.00pm



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B Same as 'A' up to 1.30pm  
Electives 1.30pm to 2.30pm

**Change over 2.30pm to 2.45pm**

Electives 2.45pm to 3.45pm  
Tea break 3.45pm to 4.15pm  
Electives 4.15pm to 5.15pm

C Same as 'A' up to 1.30pm (especially for residential event)

Free Time 1.30pm to 3.30pm  
Afternoon tea 3.30pm to 4.00pm  
Session 3 4.00pm to 5.30pm  
Free time 5.30pm to 6.00pm  
Dinner 6.00pm to 7.30pm  
Session 4 7.30pm to 9.00pm

## VENUE

Availability & suitability of these need to be considered in selecting the venue:

- Auditorium with seating to accommodate estimated number of participants
- Stage area / podium
- Elective/workshop rooms
- Seating (individual seats – may need to hire)
- Tables
- Assembly Areas for registering, tea breaks
- Dining Areas
- Catering facilities
- Parking
- Access to facilities and other means for people with disabilities
- Amplification (Check that it is in good condition)
- Available equipment (in good condition – check!) [may need to hire some]
- Signage required
- Position of electrical outlets, switchboard and fuses or circuit breakers  
(All electrical items will require tagging by an approved person]
- Air conditioning or cooling and heating arrangements
- Contact person on site – caretaker, etc. to open up for inspection and on day(s) of event

*(Two or three of the Planning Team should inspect the venue initially, and nearer to the event to check for any changes).*

## BUDGET

Include these in your calculations:

- Promotional strategies – brochures, mailing, various media, tele marketing web design or linkages
- Venue Hire
- Equipment Hire
- Catering
- Signage
- Fees – Speakers, musicians, technicians, etc
- Travel costs, accommodation
- Administration
- Mobile phone charges
- Resources Purchase/Production
- Accommodation
- Contingencies



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## **NEGOTIATING FEES WITH SPEAKERS**

*Negotiate fees when you engage a speaker and confirm in writing. Some speakers may have little idea of what to charge. Remember considerable time will be spent in preparation and maybe travel, in addition to the time at the conference. There may also be the costs of the speaker's support staff. There will be out of pocket costs such as phone, faxes, photocopying etc.*

*Travelling by car should be paid at the rates recommended by state automotive organisations (NRMA etc). When air travel is involved, remember ground travel costs to and from the airport.*

*Leaders who are paid a salary from their church should have their churches reimbursed for their time and costs plus a personal gift.*

*Other leaders have to raise all of their own income. A realistic fee should be offered. (One leader says "just pay me per hour what you pay your accountant!") Knowing that leader, he has more qualifications and experience than most professionals.) "A labourer is worthy of his/her hire".*

## **INSURANCES AND SAFETY**

*Be sure at least the following are covered: Public liability, equipment, voluntary workers. Occupational health and safety of persons involved must be a primary consideration.*

## **MEETING THE BUDGET**

*Here are some ways to consider:*

***Set an item in the annual Church budget** to meet part of the cost of ongoing leadership training, to take some of the financial burden off deeply committed members heavily involved in terms of time and financial support to the Church. You may find that highly motivated leaders, who know the need to keep growing in their leadership abilities, are often most out of pocket, but seldom ask for support.*

***Invite other churches** to join in the event to broaden the fellowship and the financial base for the event. It will also maximise the services of guest speakers and leaders.*

***Charge realistic attendance fees.** Low fees usually result in low expectations. Many would pay double the average cost charged for a one day training even to have a relatively cheap night out! You may consider offering concessions to concession card holders, students, pensioners and couples who register.*

- *Indicate that no one will be excluded because they are unable to pay the fee. Some conference organisers advertise what they consider to be a realistic fee to cover costs and also a low minimum fee and ask participants to pay what they are able.*

## **PRAYER BASE**

*Not much if anything happens, which is of eternal value, without prayer.*

*Invite and plan to have people praying for the conference during each of its stages of preparation and during the event. Be intentional about this.*

- *Assign one person to facilitate prayer.*



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## 2. CONFERENCE TEAM

*Some of the following may be paid Church staff, but in such events many will be volunteers.*

All of these positions may not apply to your Conference, but are listed for your consideration.

- Conference Overseer ~ Manager of the whole event
- Program Co-ordinator ~ MC, Announcer
- Finance Co-ordinator
- Secretariat
- Promotions Co-ordinator ~ Brochure planning, publishing, mailing invitations; targeted mailings, Web site designer
- Media Liaison
- Accommodation Co-ordinator
- Workshop Co-ordinator ~ Oversees resources; Supervises setting up of tables, chairs and other equipment.  
Hosts meeting, welcomes and introduces leader; conducts closure (thanks, etc)
- Fieldwork Co-ordinator ~ Airport pick-up and transfers; Special transport needs of the whole and individuals
- Special Events' Co-ordinator
- Prayer and Counselling Co-ordinator
- Praise/Worship Leader/Co-ordinator
- Musicians
- Catering Team
- Technical Team ~ Amplification, Recording (audio/video); CD duplication  
Data projected Images; Laptop Computers
- Setting-up and Break-up Team
- Decorator ~ Floral arrangements, banner
- Welcoming Team ~ (See notes under Running the Conference)
- Registration Team
- Resources Sales Team
- Photographer
- Medical Attendant ~(e.g. Qualified Attendee) First Aid Qualifications
- Security and Occupational Health and Safety Team ~ Caring for personal effects and property; Being alert to circumstances that may be injurious.



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## 3. PROMOTION

Promoting a training event is a marketing operation. Try to get on your planning group, someone with marketing experience. Many who organise church conferences have little or no idea of marketing and on occasions, an excellent program is offered and is poorly attended.

Consider the value of a web address. Many conferees seek further information or enrol by e-mail. A basic principle of marketing is that you need to make significant outlays to get a good return. Don't skimp on your budget for the promotion. A well designed and printed brochure more than pays for itself by the extra enrolments. But be sure to distribute the brochure widely – it needs to get to the right people.

In deciding how many brochures to produce, let the following guide you:

*Generally there is an 8 to 10% response to most promotion. If you are hoping to have 100 people attend you will need to distribute well over 1,000 brochures.*

Don't depend entirely on printed promotion, talk it up. Commend the event by word of mouth in appropriate gatherings and in face to face contacts. Make phone calls, send out e-mails, personal commendation is a powerful medium.

### BROCHURES

Decisions about the following will need to be for inclusion in your brochure:

- Privacy Protection: Refer to a privacy policy.
- Statistical information: If you don't organise for this you won't get it. For example – denomination, position in church, age (response to 5 year blocks), male/female etc. Ticks in boxes can save space.  
Discounts and Concessions: Will you offer these for early registrations, groups from same church, seniors, students (other concession card holders).
- Childcare by approved Carers: Will this be provided or not?
- Payment of Fees: Will you offer credit card facilities, cheque, other?  
Be sure to include to whom payment is made and whether GST applies. Will receipts be issued & registrations acknowledged?
- Will people be able to pay on arrival? (This often results in a number of "no shows" and a long time for registrations on the day). Try to get payment with registration in advance.
- Cancellations: How much will you lose if people don't turn up? Will there be, say, a 20% penalty for non-attendance. Are you prepared to negotiate?

### DESIGNING THE BROCHURE – SOME HINTS:

Have the brochure designed professionally, because an unprofessional look can be counter-productive and work against you. The cost will be more than met by the increase in attendance because the brochure gave the appearance of an event worth attending.

- Discuss creative/design/artwork costs with a desk top publisher or publishing firm. Obtain an estimate or quote. Alternatively give a budget to work to but remember you get in proportion to what you are prepared to pay. Consider whether by increasing your budget the design/art will be able to include some extra input such as graphics or illustrations that will make a big difference to the impact of the brochure.
- Consider overprinting two colours to get a third colour (free!). Use solid colours or tints of colours overprinting. A desktop publisher can also advise on colour and printing costs.
- Half tones or photos can enhance the printed page especially where too much type can become boring.
- Choose photos carefully. The subject matter must be sharply focused and compelling. Don't let nice coloured prints mislead you. How will they look when converted to black and



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white (greys)?

If using photos crop out unnecessary information in the picture. Close up on main subject matter. Remember photos will be broken up by a dot screen ... don't use paper clips to fasten photos to typed copy!

- Keep the front cover simple and informative for impact. Further details can appear early inside, perhaps in a panel, to draw attention to the copy. Remember, there should be a logical, easy progression through the brochure. Don't put information all over the place ... wherever there is a gap! White space can work for you!
- Discuss stock/paper with your printer. Perhaps there is something different from your first choice that would work just as well and be refreshingly different. A good choice of stock can give your promotional piece an added impact.
- Glossy, or art paper, can sometimes be difficult to read, especially if there is a lot of copy, because of the way light falls on to the shiny surface. On the other hand, some photos may not reproduce well on some matt stocks. Talk to your printer – show him the quality of the photos.
- In choosing the size of your brochure, keep in mind the size of the envelope it will require and the relative postage costs.
- Be sure to include these items:
  - A catchy but descriptive title which sums up the purpose of the conference.
  - Distinctive symbol, diagram, picture, etc.
  - The aim.
  - The target group for whom it is intended.
  - Dates and times.
  - Costs – (stating what it includes, eg course fee, resources, morning and afternoon teas, meals, accommodation etc).
  - Venue with address (include nearest cross streets).
  - Directions for reaching venue by public transport.
  - Parking arrangements.
  - Program with times and session titles, speakers/session leaders (putting it in a grid format makes it clearer).
  - Speakers/session leaders – brief biographical sketch (give background which is especially relevant for this event).
  - Photograph (head and shoulders).
  - Quotes from “satisfied customers” – those who have attended previous events.
  - Commendation by well known and respected leaders.
  - Registration form
    - address, postcode, phone fax, e-mail details,
    - elective preferences,
    - method and amount of payment (cheque, credit card, etc).
    - address to which registrations are to be sent and contact details for further information.
    - (see other items raised earlier).

## **SOME STAGES IN PROMOTION** for an event that is locally or regionally-based

- **6 months (plus) beforehand**
  - Preliminary announcements to Parish/Church through normal means of communication, and letter, followed by phone call, to other churches who are to be invited.
- **4 months beforehand**
  - Distribution of simple small flyer announcing the event to parish/Church; to other churches; by e-mail
  - Copies left on counters of Christian bookshops and other outlets (depends on training focus).





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- **Announcement over community radio**
  - Distribution of brochure giving full details and registration form (as above) with an interview if possible
  - Advertising where appropriate in local papers.
- **2 months beforehand**
  - Distribution of brochure giving full details and registration form (as above)
  - Promotion in church announcements and commendations
  - Personal approach by key leaders etc to people for whom training is especially planned
- **1 month beforehand**
  - Phone calls to all churches who indicated interest
  - Reminder by e-mail
  - Continuing personal approach by key leaders
  - Interview or short recorded message by conference leader on community radio

***For an Event designed to attract interstate or some international bookings:***

- Begin earlier with first stage, and judiciously use e-mail.
- Approach denominational regional or state bodies about including brochures in their regular mailings.
- Place advertisements in magazines and denominational papers.
- Consider placing brochures in Christian magazines/denominational papers (expensive for small event).
- Use tele-marketing more extensively. Enlist a few confident people to ring specific churches and key people to promote the event. Write a brief for each to follow. Each records expressions of interest with addresses.
- This phoning around can be done again closer to the event.



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## 4. USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT

Check with speakers regarding the nature of technology they may wish to use and its compatibility with what may be available.

### LAP TOP COMPUTERS, DVDS AND DATA PROJECTED IMAGES ON SCREENS

The level of sophistication of the presentations will call for a range of technical equipment as well as expertise to manage it. Those who use data projectors in their every day work will be able to draw on skills in developing PowerPoint presentations and may come prepared to offer advice in the manner of set-up and projection they wish to employ.

If these facilities are to be used, it is important to have on hand (or employ) a person with the expertise to competently use the equipment and to be available to attend to technical faults if they occur.

### OVERHEAD PROJECTORS

Presenters using transparencies on OHP's will expect that the unit is in good condition, with a spare change over globe, or back-up projector in the event of a technical failure. Ensure the focus is sharp and clear.

- Pens and Transparencies
  - Check with the speakers regarding their requirements. - 20 transparencies and 3 pens (black, red and blue) [permanent and non-permanent] is usually sufficient for most one day events. Have some methylated spirits and tissues available for erasing.
- Proximity to Speaker
  - Most speakers require that the overhead projector is adjacent to their lectern for them to operate. Check this with speaker beforehand as very few will work with an assistant operating the overhead projector.
  - If the speaker is working with a small group and prefers to sit whilst talking, position the OHP on a small table so the top is level with the work table. Check if speaker is right or left handed.

### **Mobile stands for projectors are preferred by some speakers.**

- Power Lead
  - Remember to have a power lead to reach the nearest power outlet. A power board may be needed. Be sure it does not breach OH&S conditions by taping it down securely.
- Speaker's Prepared Transparencies
  - Having a second table, at right angles to the work table, on which to lay out prepared overhead transparencies may be of assistance. Be sure these tables are dusted to prevent deterioration of transparencies.

### SLIDE PROJECTORS

These come in a variety of types including remote controlled models, requiring a separate operator. Always run through slides before the presentation to check they are in order and the



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machine functions properly.

## SCREENS

### Self Standing and Fixed Screens

Some auditoriums will have a screen fixed to a wall. Try and ensure they are in a suitable position or provide an operator. Avoid projection on walls as keystoneing\* cannot be corrected and many walls are not continuously flat surfaces or a suitable colour. Self-standing screens must be positioned so that all participants can view them comfortably.

The Size will be determined by the size of the venue. The minimum size for an audience of up to 100/150 is 2 metres wide. Larger sizes can be hired. Transparencies need to be prepared so as to use the maximum screen area.

\*Keystone Correctors are an arm on the top of the screen to allow the screen to tilt forward and reduce distortion.

## AUDIO EQUIPMENT ~ AMPLIFICATION

Amplification is essential when an audience exceeds 40 people, but may be essential if there are participants with hearing difficulties. Hiring good equipment is worth the outlay.

The following Microphones may be considered:

- Fixed microphone on a small boom at the speaker's desk
- Radio mic with small lapel mic to pick up speaker when writing on white board and moving around. (Be sure to have spare batteries),
- Roving mic – hand held mic on long lead running down main aisle for audience participation,
- Fixed mics in aisles instead if numbers of participants are contributing.
- Mics for musicians and worship leaders
- Mics for presenters of role plays or panels.

Where a number of mics are used, a skilled person will be needed to operate the mixer.

## CASSETTE DISK (CD) PLAYBACK or AUDIO CASSETTE RECORDER

This will be needed for background music, playing of special audio input during sessions. Separate operators are needed – usually the person controlling the amplification.

## RECORDING & MULTIPLE COPYING ONTO DISK (or AUDIO TAPE)

If the plan is to supply recorded cassettes of the sessions at the conclusion, contract services will reproduce on CDs or on Audio tape with pre-printed labels. A multi-system copier may be obtained for this purpose.

## VIDEO REPLAY EQUIPMENT

Videos may be played through Data Projectors.

Professional video operators may be contracted if videos or DVD's are required to be produced.



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## PHOTOCOPIER

Multiple copying of paper resources will require access to a photocopier. It is useful to produce extra handouts, etc.

## WHITEBOARD and WHITEBOARD MARKERS

Reversible, double sided boards are essential as well as whiteboard marker pens and erasers (dusters) A special whiteboard marker cleaning fluid may be required (alt. methylated spirits)

## ELECTRONIC WHITEBOARD

These have a built-in copying facilities which allow the board presentation to be photocopied. Further copies can be made on a standard copier for distribution to participants.



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## 5. SIGNAGE

Commercially printed external signage will focus attention on the event and attract additional registrations.

Signs play a major role in the smooth running of even a relatively small conference. They give a sense of security to participants and a good impression regarding the organisation and thoughtfulness behind the gathering. However, they need to be well prepared by hand or on a computer. Some to consider:

- Welcome to venue at entrance & to parking areas & to registration area
- Venues (displays, refreshments and meals, workshops, electives)
- Toilets
- Registration area. Suggest Alphabetically marked registration tables (2 groupings etc A to K, L-Z, etc)
- Late payments separately
- Enquiries table
- Resources area ( and payment options)
- Public Phones
- Out of bounds areas

### FIXING OF SIGNS

- Check if signs are permitted to be fixed to walls( & the use of Blutak)
- Masking tape is suitable for most situations
- *Notice boards may be needed*

### **REGISTRATION**

*Make it look attractive, with a welcome sign, some indoor plants, cloths on the tables and directions for registrations.*

## 6. DISPLAYS AND BOOKSTALLS

### DISPLAYS

*Maximise exposure and information by having displays of resources which relate to the broad aim of the conference and the range of interests being catered for. Many organisations will oblige in providing displays and a person to advocate or answer questions for them.*

One person should have the authority to approve exhibitors and negotiate arrangements of any site costs and setting up & dismantling conditions (contributions). Spaces must be allocated in designated areas.

### BOOKSTALL

Again, this needs to be approved and negotiated in a similar way, including when the bookstall will be open. Most pack up during the last session, so this needs to be anticipated.

Arrange with the bookstall proprietor about setting up and operating a sales area. The range of titles could be limited to those related to the theme of the conference or be consistent with participants' needs.

Recommendations by speakers or brief reviews during sessions can be made.



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## 7. SETTING UP

### TIMING

- *Arrange to have a running sheet for setting up, indicating time and locations for delivery of equipment, hired furnishings (chairs, etc), resources, catering supplies etc.*
- *The setting up of displays will need to be scheduled, with a volunteer on hand to receive deliveries and oversee setting up.*
- *The setting up team need have their duties clearly defined.*

### DECORATIONS

*Indoor plants which can be hired (or borrowed!) to soften the stage.*

### SEATING FOR A LARGE GATHERING

- *Individual chairs are recommended arranged as a "V" facing front*
- *To allow space for rearrangement into small groups provide slightly more space between rows than normal and a centre aisle 4 chairs wide, plus side aisles 2 chairs wide)*
- *Movable Pews are manageable with odd rows reversed*
  - *Participants sit on the seats which face the front, then half the small groupings move to reversed seat for group work*

### SMALLER GATHERINGS IN A MEETING ROOM

*Set up individual chairs in large semicircle(s) to begin the meeting. (The room needs to be big enough to allow for re-arrangement into small groups.)*

### SPEAKER'S AREA

#### Location

- **Floor level** keeps speaker close to participants but vision will be impaired at floor level with more than 50 attending! (Better check how tall the speaker is)
- **On low platform** 300-400mm above floor level can improve visibility. Make sure it doesn't squeak! (A few nails or some packing will help)
- **On a stage** is preferable for a large gathering, provided participants' seating is not too close to stage
- **In a long, fairly narrow space**, consider locating speaker mid-way on the side provided good eye contact with whole group can be maintained.

### LIGHTING

*Natural light behind the speaker needs to be blocked out and kept off the screen. Provide artificial light on the speaker and reading desk, but away from the screen*

### FURNITURE

- **Tables:** Suggest two tables, 2 metre x 1 metre in size
- **Lectern:** A free standing or table lectern is suitable (A briefcase and some books may substitute)

**EQUIPMENT** (See Item 4, previously)



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## 8. RUNNING THE CONFERENCE

### **BE EARLY**

*The staff should be in attendance a hour before commencement to avoid last minute preparation. Negotiate for early access.*

*Speakers need to arrive 30-45 minutes beforehand to make last minute checks to equipment and to arrange materials etc.*

### **WELCOMING TEAM**

*Have a small number of amiable people to welcome people on arrival, give a good impression and heighten expectations*

*Briefings include:*

- *How to give a warm welcome, expressing the hope that participants will have an enriching experience,*
- *Avoiding getting into long conversations, especially with acquaintances, so others are overlooked*
- *Knowing the venue layout – location of toilets, accommodation, parking, handicapped areas – access, toilets, etc*
- *Recognising and welcoming guest speakers etc. knowing where they should be taken.*

### **REGISTRATIONS**

- *Arrange name tags in alphabetical order on separate tables in anticipation that many will arrive only a few minutes before commencement. If receipts are to be given, write beforehand and attach to name tags. Receipts can also be issued during morning tea break. Have two or three people manning each table.*
- *Distribute resource book or folders at registration.*
- *Cease taking registrations at commencement time and receive these during refreshment break. Let them take their book or folder and make a name tag.*

### **BACKGROUND MUSIC**

*Play suitable background music as people arrive*

*A diagram of the venue showing location of toilets, refreshment and dining areas and workshop rooms may assist in orientation.*

### **REFRESHMENTS & CATERING**

- *The catering team will attend to details according to their operational management. Notify caterers of session times. Provide serving points for every 60 participants. Provide iced water and fruit juices at each serving point as well*
- *Ensure good crowd flow by having milk, sugar, spoons and eats slightly away from serving hot refreshments.*
- *Do better than cheap plain biscuits. Sliced teacakes or fruit buns are reasonably inexpensive etc. provide welcome variety in servings.*

### **LUNCHES**

- *Participants may be willing to bring their own lunches to keep costs down. In cold weather a cup of soup is a welcome extra.*
- *Where lunches are provided in low budget conferences the menu should be kept simple. Sandwiches, a piece of fruit, a health bar and a fruit drink is a healthy and relatively cheap meal. These are usually supplied on a disposable plate or container.*
- *Catering companies offer these services, or a voluntary catering team could prepare it. Alternatively, take away food outlets will cater.*



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## **WORSHIP SEGMENTS**

- *Praise should be an integral part of every learning event. Choose reliable leaders who will keep within the time frames allocated.*
- *Getting a reliable music team is not easy. They should set up prior to commencement and play and sing (without trying to involve others) prior to the first session. Amplify the music to registration areas as well as the auditorium.*
- *Do not assume all participants will know the songs/hymns. Have the words projected. Ensure that they can be seen at the back of the auditorium.*
- *Participants may be invited to pray in pairs or groups early in the first session and again on a number of occasions. Those preparing the worship segments need to know this for their planning.*

## **CLEANING TEAM**

*Venues for conference lasting for more than one day will need to be kept clean, either by the regular staff or by putting into place your own maintenance team*

## **EVALUATION**

*Feed-back may be received by:*

- **Informally**, by having members of the team, during breaks, ask simple questions such as:
  - “Are you finding this helpful?” “In what ways?”
  - “What would you do differently?”
  - “What would you like included in a future conference?”
  - “Any general comments?”
- **Formally**, by having participants complete a simple response form in the final session. It is usual for respondents not to indicate their name (or it may be optional)
- An alternative is to have listed a number of statements to which responses can be made by placing a tick in one of four to six columns. These columns range from “poor” to “excellent”, “not helpful” to “extremely helpful”, “not at all” to “very much” etc.

*The forms are collated and a summary given to the speaker(s) and the planning committee.*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*These should be kept brief. A visual giving a summary of the main points will help in both retention and brevity.*





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## 9. SPEAKER'S NEEDS

### **TRANSPORTATION**

#### **Air Travel**

- Agree who will negotiate and purchase tickets.
- Check if speaker requires reimbursement in advance.
- Obtain flight details (flight number and time of arrival).

#### **Transfer Arrangements**

- Will they be met and by whom?
- If speaker is to catch taxi or hire a car, make this clear and give clear directions. (Be sure to reimburse these costs. Many organisers only think to pay for the air ticket and omit payments for taxis at both ends of the forward and return flights).

#### **Car Travel**

(Compare flight costs). If they desire to drive, offer reimbursement equal to standard rates or at the cost of the airfare.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

Check speakers' requirements. Some may have expensive tastes, though many will be satisfied with reasonably priced accommodation in a hotel or motel. Others will prefer to be accommodated in a quiet private home in a single room with a large desk or table. Brief the hosts to be that the speaker will need plenty of undisturbed time for preparation and rest. Where the conference is residential be sure to reserve one of the quietest rooms, preferably with an ensuite. (Remember the desk or table).

### **LIST OF ATTENDEES**

Some speakers appreciate in advance a list of the attendees showing age, denominational mix and other details.

### **TIME TO UNWIND**

During busy programs speakers need time to unwind. Some prefer to have meals in a quiet room by themselves and not spend the evening extending the day's sessions! Some will want to have time for relaxation

### **MEALS**

The speaker may have special dietary needs. Don't forget to provide lunch for the speaker, if the participants are required to bring their own. Most prefer a light lunch so that they don't get drowsy in the afternoon.

### **INSPECTION OF TRAINING VENUE**

Most speakers will want to inspect the venue at least the evening beforehand to ensure that the auditorium, and particularly the speaker's area, is arranged as negotiated and free of interruption from distracting activities or people doing handyman duties.

### **ACCESS TO OFFICE EQUIPMENT AND STAFF**

Ensure there is ready access to a photocopier and other equipment (and office staff) before and during the conference to prepare resources to meet special needs which emerge.

### **ACCESS TO TELEPHONE**

Some speakers will have a mobile phone, if not be sure a phone is readily available. Ready access to a phone in their accommodation and at the training venue is imperative.

### **PRAYER**

Make arrangements for a person or small group to pray with the speaker at least at the commencement of the day.



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## 10. BREAKING UP

*Check how the venue is to be left after the event. It is important for this to be planned beforehand because most participants are willing to help if requested, otherwise one or two will be left with what could be a big task in cleaning up.*

*The following may need to be done:*

- *Stacking or rearranging chairs*
- *Rearranging other furnishings*
- *Removal of all signage*
- *Returning equipment*
- *Arranging return of hired items*
- *Cleaning*
- *Returning keys*

## 11. POST CONFERENCE

*This may include:*

- *Letters of thanks to leaders, venue administrators and volunteers*
- **Processing Orders received for books, CD's or cassettes, etc.**
- **Return of equipment**
- **Evaluation, collation and processing evaluation forms**
- **Organising Committee's debriefing meeting ~ Noting strengths and weaknesses; Ideas for future events**
- **Finances ~ Payment of fees to speakers, musicians, technicians, administration, staff etc.**
- **Payment of accounts**
- **Preparation of financial report, and**
- **Filing of:**
  - **Lists of attendees, addresses etc.**
  - Copies of promotions, programs and other materials
  - Collation of evaluation forms
  - Committee's evaluation



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## 12. CHECK LISTS

### MATERIALS REQUIRED:

- Items for registrations and other payments at events:
  - Receipt books
  - Cash tin
  - Credit card slips
  - Writing gear
- Staff name cards
- Participants' name cards or stickers (plastic holders?)
- Participants' workbook or textbook
- Handout folder
- Handouts:
  - Lecture Notes
  - Worksheets
  - Others
- Participants' Biro's or Pencils (and Pads?)
- Evaluation Forms
- Order Forms:
  - For audio/video cassettes, CDs and other resources
- Promotion Handouts
- Pens for:
  - Flip Chart
  - Overhead Projector
  - Whiteboard
- Blank Overhead Transparencies
- Flip Board Paper
- Whiteboard Eraser
- Masking Tape
- Blotak
- Blackboard Chalk
- Blackboard Eraser
- Background Music Cassettes
- Videos

### VENUE:

- Auditorium (individual seating)
- Elective Rooms (individual seating)
- Registration Area (display area)
- Catering Facilities
- Dining/Eating Area
- Toilets
- Parking
- Signage
- Heating/Cooling Facilities

### EQUIPMENT

- Data Projector, Lap Top Computers
- Overhead Projector and Screen (spare projector and globe)
- Whiteboards – plain or electronic
- Flip Chart and Paper
- Chalk Board
- Amplification (with mixer, radio mic and fixed mics)



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- Cassette Recorder
- TV and Videos – VHS
- Power Leads and Power Board
- Speaker's Podium
- Lectern – desk or freestanding
- Speaker's Work Tables and Resource Tables
- Photocopier
- Phones – Public and Administrative
- Sign Boards
- Garbage Bins (Bags)



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## APPENDIX A ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR YOUR PLANNING

**Lynette Maxwell**, who has had extensive experience in organising large Christian gatherings, supplied these additional notes after reading a draft of this guide.

Most of the notes apply to large conferences, but there are many very practical guidelines that apply to smaller conferences which are the focus of this guide.

### ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR YOUR PLANNING

#### **RUNNING SHEET**

The Conference Co-ordinator should prepare:

- **A critical path plan** (long term) which outlines the work that needs to be done and when it should be done. This should be provided to all co-ordinators so that they know what deadlines have to be met and how the whole conference fits together,
- **A running sheet** (short term during conference) should be prepared. This will give all co-ordinators a clear picture of the timetable for the conference, events that will take place each day during the conference and the person responsible. This normally covers the period from set-up to break-down.

#### **MEDIA LIAISON**

- Prepare a list of key media you wish to target.
- You may wish to provide free registration for them to attend the conference.
- Find someone who has had some marketing or media experience to assist with press release both before and after the event.
- Photos are always welcome.
- Make sure you have a clear procedure for handling press at the conference.
- Someone should be available to help them with their questions and arrange interviews with speakers etc.

#### **INSURANCE**

- Make sure you have liability insurance. Usually \$5million is standard.
- If using someone else's facility make sure insurance is in order.
- Check on insurance requirements for equipment etc. Some policies do not cover equipment if taken out of office.
- If hiring equipment carefully check the insurance details, ie two way radios are not covered by insurance if stolen whilst unattended (left in a car, on a seat or in an office).

#### **PRELIMINARY REGISTRATIONS**

- Decide if you will use a computer or manual system for handling registrations.
- If using a computer, make sure there is someone who knows how to use the program and who can correctly set up the database.
- The computer registration form should be a replica of the registration form on the conference brochure with information in the same order on both forms, thus ensuring speedier data entry.
- Always ensure that you keep a backup and hard copy of the registration information. File the registration forms alphabetically for reference.
- If no confirmation letter is to be mailed or e-mailed to delegates, advise them on the registration brochure.
- While for many small conferences receipts are not issued, auditors prefer them to be issued. Certainly for large conferences receipts should be issued. These can be mailed back with the confirmation letter, or if no letter is being sent, attached to name tag at registration desk. (Ensure ABN numbers, Tax Invoice & GST information appears)



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- Ministers and full-time Christian workers will require receipts for taxation purposes.
- For quick reference, make sure receipt number is marked on computer or on the registration form.
- For large conferences you can send out the name tag in advance – this speeds up registration and only 5% will lose or forget theirs.
- If a matter is unclear on a person's registration form call the person concerned. It is much easier to straighten it out beforehand than on the day of registration.

## REGISTRATIONS AT THE CONFERENCE

- This is the first impression delegates get of the conference so it must be well organised. You always need more people than you think.
- Always separate those who have already registered, those who choose to register on the day and those who need to make payments or have lost their information. This speeds up registration for those who have done the right thing by booking and paying in advance.
- Again, depending upon numbers, you may need to split the alphabet into a number of groupings. A supermarket checkout system is better than tables in a line. It allows for better flow of traffic.
- Always have name tags prepared in advance and make sure the type is large so that it can be easily read.

## DELEGATES' HANDOUTS

These should be available at the registration table and could include:

1. A program of the seminar, conference etc. Even though it might be in the brochure some may not have brought the brochure with them, or times and speakers may have changed,
2. Notice sheet or handbook. This would contain relevant information for delegates, such as details on workshops, meal arrangements, transportation, accommodation, facilities for the handicapped, counselling, parking arrangements etc,
3. A map of the venue may be helpful if workshops are involved
4. Tape/CD/Video order forms.
5. Pens and paper,
6. Promotional material on speakers' books etc.
7. Speakers' notes (if provided). You should decide if they will be handed out before or after the conference. Some speakers find it distracting when people read notes and turn pages whilst he/she is talking.

## WELCOME TEAM DUTIES

Could include:

- Reserve seats for VIPs, people with disabilities (plus a friend) and staff. May need to rope off an area or provide signs.
- Clean up any papers left lying around.
- Be on duty a minimum of 30 minutes before people arrive for the morning or evening meeting.
- Be well informed and know answers to basic questions, ie directions to toilets etc.
- Know the procedure for a medical emergency.

## INFORMATION/ENQUIRY TABLE

- There should always be an information table, which is manned during conference breaks.
- The people should be well briefed on the basics of the conference, know the layout of facilities, where toilets are, where lunch will be served, special services for people with disabilities, where and when workshops will be held, know what to do with lost property, phone messages, etc.
- Make sure staff know the procedure for handling complaints.
- A message board is often helpful.



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## HOST, MC OR CHAIRPERSON

- Make sure he/she is well briefed.
- Provide announcements for each session
- Provide an introductory background on each speaker if needed. This person should be available to meet and pray with speaker before session.

## ACCOUNTS

- Change needs to be readily available for registrations, book sales etc.
- Each area should keep its money separate in order that sales can be accurately accounted for.
- More than one receipt book may be needed for different areas, ie registration, CD/tape sales, book sales etc.
- Refunds on registrations should be handled after the conference and a letter of receipt should be obtained from the delegate.
- Clear guidelines should be established for the purchase of goods and the authorisation given.
- Consider if credit card facilities are needed. This will cost you in bank fees, but the extra sales could be worth it.
- If accommodation is required, the designated money should be kept separate and under no circumstances should it be spent for any reason than for what it was paid.
- All offerings should be counted by a minimum of two people and signed off. Security protocols need to be in place.

## DUPLICATION OF CD'S OR AUDIOTAPES

- Make sure you have a good quality recording of the message. Use a C92 (never C120) tape depending on length of speech.
- Do not allow private recordings to be made during a session, and ensure that tapes are covered by copyright for yours and the speakers' protection.
- Always use a good master quality tape for recording.
- It is against copyright laws to record or duplicate songs.
- You should have the speaker's permission in writing to record and sell his/her tapes.
- In most cases a royalty on sales is appropriate and should be discussed up front with the speaker.
- You need to have people with experience to handle the duplication of CD's/ tapes. They can give you advice on duplication, labels, etc and obtain reasonable prices.
- Decide in advance how you will sell the tapes, ie as individuals or as a packet. You normally provide a discount for people buying all the tapes or in a set package.
- **Make sure tape order forms clearly indicate price, ordering procedure, contact number for queries, refund policy and guarantee of quality.**
- If faulty tapes are sold, you have an obligation to replace at no charge.
- You need to decide if CD's/tapes will be available for sale during the Conference or whether they will be mail ordered. Both have their problems but usually a combination of both is required.

## ACCOMMODATION

- This can often be difficult because people's plans can change. One person needs to be designated for this job.
- Where possible avoid receiving payment for accommodation; endeavour to have delegates handle as much as possible directly with the hotel etc.
- However, where this is not practical, ensure that you know their arrival time and date, departure time and date, type of room required (twin, double, single).
- Costs should be clearly outlined.
- Willingness or otherwise to share a room.
- Indicate if breakfast or other meals are included or not.
- Payment, cancellation and refund procedures should be clearly outlined.



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## **BILLETING**

- Have one person responsible for matching up the host and the billet. The billet should be given contact details of the host and vice versa, and should be instructed to contact the host about arrival times etc. This saves a third party being involved and generally works quite well.
- Take into account age, health, occupation, sex, if smoker, pet or food allergies, handicaps, ethnic backgrounds, religion, children, location of home, type of bed available, single or shared room and transport. A little prayer can match just the right people together.
- Some payment should be made to the host for the provision of accommodation. Normally they would provide breakfast, but billet should be responsible for lunch and evening meal. An average contribution would be \$10-\$20 per night. This is normally paid directly to the host and should be indicated as a requirement up front.
- Some people cannot afford to have someone in their home without a little extra to cover the costs. Some hosts may choose not to take the money depending on the circumstances, others may wish to donate it to charity but it is the host's choice.

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