

Fourth Virtual Meeting of Zones—16 January 2021, 11:00 am–12:30 pm, PST

The fourth Virtual Meeting of Zones took place 16 January 2021. Lib from the World Board facilitated, and 26 members from 14 zones attended. All of the zones except African were present. Five Board members attended to observe, and four members attended as interpreters for Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking members. There were also three staff people present to help translate, take notes, and administer the meeting.

Lib explained that the Virtual Meeting of Zones will function as the project workgroup for the Role of Zones Project, as per the project plan passed at WSC 2021. So the main goal of this meeting was to set some project goals that can be accomplished during the next several meetings and perhaps through conversation via email in between.

Background-

Lib reviewed the project origins. The idea to have all of the zones meet together came out of a WSC of the Future Workgroup discussion. That workgroup was comprised of one member chosen by each zone plus Iran. Many of them, at that point, had relatively little exposure to other zones. They were inspired when they heard what others are doing in their zones, and they wanted to create an opportunity for all zones to have the same experience. They suggested that the World Board organize an online meeting of all zones so that zones could hear from each other.

That first Virtual Meeting of Zones took place September 2019. That was the first time all zones were present at a meeting together. Each zone had four minutes to introduce themselves and there was time for members to share what they wanted to hear more about and decide whether to meet again.

The top item they prioritized to focus on was:

- more meetings to learn more about other zones' development and organization, and to develop bonds between zones

The second item prioritized at that first Virtual Meeting of Zones was discussions about:

- zonal representation at the WSC. Ways to work with CAR/CAT within zones. Gathering the voice of unseated regions vs the voice of the entire zone or other processes. How to inform unseated communities about WSC business/issues.

The focus of the second zonal meeting was decided by survey, and it was

- multi-zonal collaboration

The third meeting was May 2020, and it focused on

- how to support the Fellowship in carrying the message and online meetings during the current COVID-19 crisis.

Notes from all three of those meetings as well as the two meetings of US zones that World Services organized are in the Conference participant Dropbox.

Project Focus

At the last World Service Conference, participants passed a Role of Zones Project Plan. The focuses identified in the project plan come from the items prioritized in past meetings. Lib read from the project plan, repeating the paragraph that explains the role of the workgroup:

We are recommending that a virtual workgroup be created for the 2020–2022 cycle and that the primary focus be on gathering and sharing ideas and experience to help zones become more effective service bodies and focus on their relationship to the wider Fellowship as called for in the original motion. [Role of Zones Project Plan]

The project plan calls out two topics as focuses for the workgroup, zonal collaboration and gathering a conscience, and the group was asked what they want to accomplish by WSC 2022 related to those topics, and whether they want to add anything to the list for the project.

Lib reminded everyone that there are only ten months until the *Conference Agenda Report* is published, and about a year until the Conference Approval Track is published. So the group may not get to everything on the list.

Before opening discussion, Lib asked: Is everyone on board with these two topics being the first focus for us—zonal collaboration and gathering a conscience or representation issues? ‘There was no objection to taking those as the first two focuses.

Full-group Discussion Notes—Project Focus

What do you want to accomplish related to these two focuses—zonal collaboration and gathering a conscience—by WSC 2022?

Collaboration: tools and methods for ongoing communication

- Create a way for zones to share what they are doing. All of the zones are doing things.
- Regular meetings among the zones will help us improve our own zonal forums’ functioning. We often get asked what other zones are doing in terms of representation, creating guidelines, and so on. And we don’t really know. The meetings don’t need to be decision-making, just discussion meetings. Exchanging experience will help our growth. Our challenges as a zone may have been already met by another zone. (x2)
- Establish and maintain ongoing communication among zones, not just at webinars. This will help see opportunities for collaboration and take advantage of them. (x2) It will also help clarify the broader role of zones—that they aren’t just big regions.
- Establish some form of online collaborative communication, including somewhere that we can post fliers or events. APF has had FD and PR events that haven’t many attendees from outside the APF because there isn’t as much awareness of these events as we could have.
- Not all conversations need to be with all zones. We need the ability for some zones to talk to and collaborate with others—for instance MZSS benefitted from talking to LAZF.

Collaboration: Reporting

- Compile a list of previous collaborative efforts among zones. How were they organized? What worked and what didn’t? A living list can grow as more work is done and can both help the zones in planning and help with the message to the Fellowship that zones are valuable.
- Visualizations of what the zones are doing would be really helpful to see what other zones are doing and where zones can reach out for information and help. E.g., NEZF started a FD committee which was “plagiarized” from the EDM. Not knowing what others are doing means opportunities are missed. For instance: who has a convention, service symposium, PR, FD, sponsorship behind the walls, activities, etc. The Snapshots were helpful. The map of zones is a powerful image. Graphics really help. Perhaps we could have something like the map that shows not just where zones are but what they are doing.

Gathering a Conscience

- Maybe we need to clarify what “gathering a conscience” means.
- Collect the experience about representation / conscience & package it as a resource for zones and for any future group that deals with seating issues.

Do we want to add anything else to the list for this project?

Messaging about zones

- One goal should be to find a consistent message about zones. The zones themselves are not all the same, but we should have consistent messaging around the role of zones and how that relates to the WSC and Fellowship as a whole.
- Consistent messaging about zones could consider the question: What are zones uniquely qualified to do?
- There are significant differences among zones. Some deliver services. Some function primarily as a forum to connect their member regions. It's important for us that the regions see zonal forums as an opportunity for growth and development.
- Can we identify common needs, even if each zone is different? Before we can effectively collaborate and look for opportunities, we need to find the common needs.

Addressing concerns over the role of zones

- How do we overcome the obstacle of the fear that zones are becoming “just another level of service”? This may be a US concern(?) The EDM has not had this challenge.
- Can we come to a common, non-fear-based understanding of what “level of service” means. The EDM, for instance, had a primary concern of FD/providing service, not of connection to the WSC. In the US, the question of connecting to the WSC may muddy the waters and lead to confusion. The question of conscience and connection to the WSC and collaboration on services are two different issues or roles, and we may want to clarify that difference.

NAWS Strategic Plan

- Create a mechanism for zonal contacts, delegates, and alternates to interact with the NAWS Strategic Plan in some way. Having two members from each of the 16 zones interact in a meaningful way could add value to the strategic planning process

Other considerations

- Maybe we need more time just to stretch out and share and not be bound by the project plan all the time too.

Update from US zones

After that discussion, Lib turned the meeting over to Craig, who gave an update from the US zones that have been meeting together.

Craig introduced himself and said that he is the Autonomy Zonal Forum facilitator. He explained that the eight US zones decided to meet to discuss common interests and needs and better cooperation, maybe collaboration. The first couple of meetings of the US zones were facilitated by NAWS, and then they started meeting independently. They put together a survey to help identify wants, needs, and opportunities to collaborate. From that survey and their own group discussions, they used a task team to put together a strategic plan to outline some priorities and function as a road map. Around September, the task team presented the plan to the meeting of US zones. At the same time, there was the desire to take action and “do something.” Contacts and volunteers from each of the zones put volunteered to put on a three-day event. It was a success. It attracted people and helped raise awareness.

They created a task team that is still actively working for a vision and purpose for the US zones. They all decided to meet quarterly and to pause further activities, except the vision and purpose task

team, until the next meeting. The US meeting of zones are trying to be deliberate, communicate well with the Fellowship, and not bite off more than they can chew, Craig said.

Full-group Discussion Notes—Representation Issues

Lib thanked Craig for the report and opened the next discussion topic, which came from the EDM delegate team. The questions are related to carrying a conscience—whether that be of a zone or of a collection of unseated regions—so some of the zonal contacts may not have as much to contribute to this conversation, explained Lib. She thanked everyone for their patience if it seems like the topic doesn't apply to them.

Has your zone made a decision about who the zonal delegates represent? / Do your ZDs only represent regions who are not seated at WSC?

- LAZF: We reproduce the WSC workshops for all the RDs of regions that are unseated at the WSC. This way all of the unseated regions feel “a part of.” We surveyed the unseated regions. We also invite all of the RDs from seated regions to the workshops. We have a WhatsApp group for the unseated regions, and we give them real time information so they are on board. We have been doing some service with both the seated and unseated regions.
- APF: we have 21 unseated regions or communities. We decided to collect only the conscience from the unseated communities. This helped address the concern that some people were getting a second vote. Covid complicated the task. We are finding our way as we go. It is a work in progress. We are still developing policies and procedures, such as who can make a motion.
- BZF: Our zonal forum decided the ZD represents the unseated communities. Two-thirds of our regions are seated at the WSC. The ZD did a series of CAR workshops in the unseated regions. That works for us in Brazil.
- EDM: We made a temporary decision for WSC 2020 that ZDs would represent the unseated communities. We will revisit the issue in February for a formal, ongoing decision.

Have you had to change, or create new, decision making processes at the zonal meeting because of this?

- LAZF: when we were elected ZDs, we opened a Google group to chat with regions. We had no guidelines for how to perform the role. We leveraged the relationships we had with RDs to move forward. We haven't changed our LAZF guidelines. We have a workgroup to review the guidelines and processes. We did surveyed the regions and asked whether the ZD was going to represent the whole zone or just the unseated regions. The surveys have started to point us in a direction, but we don't have it all defined yet. A process that worked for us was to explain how the large seated regions such as Colombia came to utilize delegation. The RCMs there do make some decisions on behalf of the groups, which has helped these regions function more effectively. We can take into consideration the same ideas.
- EDM: Not yet. We will discuss in February.

Lib thanked everyone for the discussion and asked if any of the zones have new guidelines about zonal representation? None of them indicated that they had created guidelines yet.

In closing, Lib reminded everyone that the Board has committed to holding the Virtual Meeting of Zones three times a year, which would mean the next meeting would be scheduled for May. Given that this group is functioning as a project workgroup, Lib said, the Board may try to schedule something sooner. In any case, everyone will be notified in advance about dates, and an email will go out when the notes from the meeting get posted on the Conference participant Dropbox.

Lib told everyone she looked forward to seeing them at the Conference participant web meeting 13 February.

Meeting Chat

This is the chat from the meeting, copied here exactly as it was shared during the meeting:

11:02:40 From Danny G World Board : Congrats Barry on 20 years!

11:02:47 From Travis K : here comes Mauro too

11:03:30 From Travis K : And Yoel. Shalom Yoel!

11:03:39 From Yoel G. WB : HI

11:03:46 From Danny G World Board : Hey Yoel

11:03:49 From Yoel G. WB : THANK YOU

11:03:53 From Jose Luis A WB : hi Shalom!!

11:04:40 From Eduardo G - WB : Thanks everybody for the service

11:04:58 From Travis K : So good to see everyone.

11:05:24 From Kelly S. SEZF : Everyone but Sam

11:05:32 From Henry C. SZF Delegate : Great seeing everyone

11:05:43 From Travis K : But Dennis is here from NEZF

11:06:16 From Dennis M - NEZF : Sam is here. Kelly is poking at him :-)

11:25:21 From Sam L- Northeast ZF : love you kelly!

11:25:48 From Kelly S. SEZF : miss you dude

11:26:00 From Dennis M - NEZF : I wonder if diving into an IDT or developing some simple bulletin together that better explores the phrase "level of service" - would support that consistent message if we have consistent language / definition - and might be able to address fears around zones standing as an additional impediment between groups and the conference or between groups and our primary purpose.

11:28:25 From Dennis M - NEZF : WhatsApp group?

11:28:38 From Roxanne K. CANA/ACNA Vice Chair : CANA developed a 'What is CANA?' IP and it was distributed amongst the regions by mail and we encouraged regions to share with Areas to help with some understanding of the importance of the Zonal forum

11:29:20 From Roxanne K. CANA/ACNA Vice Chair : Also hosting the pdf for emailing/sharing.

11:30:25 From Dennis M - NEZF : Roxanne - love it - just looked it up on your website - definitely going to bring that up in FD here - Very very nice website too

11:31:12 From Jeff P - Southeastern Zone : What Cindi shared would also help with the Multi Zonal (now up to at least 4 zones) CAR/CAT workshop in February 2022.

11:31:57 From Kelly S. SEZF : we need Scottish translation

11:32:44 From thiago m - translator : lol

11:35:49 From Danny G World Board : You could also self-organize such a meeting, similar to what the US Zones decided to do.

11:40:58 From Cindi B PSZF Contact : There could be an Open Forum type of period for 45 minutes when each zone just shares. Maybe the webinar could stay open after it was "officially" over and just have time to share. No staff would need to take notes and we could facilitate ourselves? Maybe a WB could volunteer to keep the meeting open and then close it so there wouldn't be any additional hours on the staff?

11:41:42 From Stacy M NAWS staff : What about translations?

11:44:32 From Jose Luis A WB : sounds interesting but translations would require some staff to manage the Zoom platform

11:45:35 From Roxanne K. CANA/ACNA Vice Chair : CANA has a powerpoint that is updated annually showing what CANA does, FD/PR, Translations, etc. It is extremely powerful!

11:46:15 From Cindi B PSZF Contact : My bad. I didn't know what all goes on with the Zoom translations. We might not be able to do that independently considering the translation needs.

11:47:23 From thiago m - translator : We can organize translations if we have a zoom account with the feature enables...we have a weekly Tuesday meeting with global interpreters to include needs in schedule and assign relevant interpreters

11:57:01 From Danny G World Board : What about the Zonal Self-Assessment Tool?

11:58:22 From Dennis M - NEZF : Some means in engaging the zonal conversation in our local culture and conversation

What might help is finding ways to support each other in helping our local communities understand and be engaged in the zones

11:58:40 From Dennis M - NEZF : Like the examples CANA gave - anyone that hasn't looked at CANA's website I strongly recommend

12:00:44 From Matthew EDM ZDA : Really well put Dennis. We are now having a bit of challenge figuring out how WSC representation fits in with our existing processes. We want it to add value to our whole zone and not cause any concern or conflict for member regions who're already represented at WSC.

12:04:18 From Dennis M - NEZF :

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1GHURJZE621ehlulpzUlaOOOzttlvzQp5?usp=sharing>

Google drive link that has all the material around the US zones so far including recent meetings and the Our Gratitude Speaks event

12:05:10 From Dennis M - NEZF : and ty Matthew

I think it all comes together in the conversation - and that's where take the parts of the conversation down their respective paths of either conscience or collaboration

12:08:16 From Dennis M - NEZF :

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLkyKlv0TBbEoWsEyVwGAKjcitVJWaPgkq>

YouTube playlist for the event

I have 2 of the 3 days anonymized and uploaded so far. The 3rd day should be done by the end of today.

12:09:35 From Sam L - Northeast ZF : Danny's US superzone idea for MZSS 2017 has finally come together ;-)

12:10:58 From Dennis M - NEZF : International Zone Speed Dating

12:11:07 From Danny G World Board : ☐

12:12:24 From Jeff P - Southeastern Zone : Not to burst Danny's thunder...but the idea has been around since before the Resolution/Transition Group!!

12:12:55 From Kelly S. SEZF : my WhatsApp number 909-263-2300 If anyone has contacts in Pakistan please let me know. Had a newcomer show up today from there with one day clean.

12:12:57 From Cindi B PSZF Contact : I think a lot of Danny's ideas from Multi-Zonal Service Symposium have come together....

12:13:35 From Danny G World Board : No thunder bursted Jeff, it's a collaborative effort all the way, it's the only way it will ever come to be.

12:14:09 From Jeff P - Southeastern Zone : Slowly but surely...that's my motto!! :)

12:16:11 From Dennis M - NEZF : No direct experience with representation as it relates to ZD's to the conference. But recently have had to engage the delegate / representative role between NEZF and the collaboration of US Zones

In that case, I approached it the same as being a regional delegate - listening to the voice first, the vote was just for participating in the decision making threshold. It is with our voice that we participate in the conversation.

Part of the issue here does come down to understanding the difference between voice and vote as it relates to conscience and decision making. Voice participates in building the conversation together and thus the resulting decision. Vote is for decision making thresholds, specifically pass/fail, start, stop.

Good stuff from LAZF too - looking forward to our ongoing meetings and conversations here

12:16:37 From Matthew EDM ZDA to Everyone : What about representation at WSC?

12:19:27 From Matthew EDM ZDA to Everyone : Ash, is your plan to collect that conscience outside of the zonal meeting? So that it doesn't impact the CBDM process at zonal meeting.

12:20:24 From Dave T San Diego CA to Everyone : The idea of a US conference was discussed during the writing of the Guide to service and due to non agreement on that idea and others it was decided not to continue but to present guide to ;local service

12:22:35 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone : Like many such broad scale topics, I would guess that the topic of a United States body of some kind has been discussed officially and unofficially for decades. With Zones coming to the forefront of supporting our local fellowships, it seems that such broad collaborations have come to the forefront as we all look to figure out how we can better serve our local fellowships and serve within the greater whole.

12:23:41 From BZF- RAIMUNDO to Everyone : MAGAL IS ME

12:27:37 From Matthew EDM ZDA to Everyone : we having a workgroup working on a first draft of guidelines for 'making motions as a zone'.

12:30:33 From Danny G World Board to Everyone : spiritually fed, Kelly

12:30:48 From Sam L- Northeast ZF to Everyone : tough crowd

12:30:57 From Yoel G. WB to Everyone : RIGHT

12:32:28 From Danny G World Board to Everyone : and Stacy!

12:32:35 From Danny G World Board to Everyone : congrats Stacy !

12:32:48 From Michael B WB to Everyone : addict invasion

12:33:11 From Roxanne K. CANA/ACNA Vice Chair to Everyone : Thanks to everyone for your service!!!

12:33:15 From Michael B WB to Everyone : great job everyone

12:33:17 From Jeff P - Southeastern Zone to Everyone : Be well everyone!!!!!!!

12:33:21 From Jose Luis A WB to Everyone : thanks to Lib Travis and everyone else

12:35:18 From Sam L- Northeast ZF to Everyone : love you all, gotta jump!