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PUBLISHER'S MEMO

The Power of Integrity: The Power of Missions

By Ram Gidoomal

The word *integrity* can bring to mind many other words—*morals, ethics, values, and character*. In the spiritual context, however, I immediately think of *holiness* and *purity*. While it may seem that we hear more and more about corruption and dishonesty, we know that the need for integrity, holiness, and purity is as old as human history.

David, a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22), passionately pursued integrity and purity in every aspect of his life and relationship with the Lord:

- "Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart" (Psalm 24:3-4a).
- "May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope is in you" (Psalm 25:21).
- "Create in me a pure heart, O God" (Psalm 51:10a).

In fact, the Lord lifts up David's pursuit of integrity as a model with a promise to Solomon that if he walks "in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did" (1 Kings 9:4) God would establish Solomon's throne over Israel forever.

God desires us to have a pure heart and live a life of integrity that is pleasing in his sight and is integral in our walk with him. God's purity and holiness is the ultimate expression—and source—of integrity.

From an earthly point of view, however, we know that we all fall short (Romans 3:23) of this pursuit. Temptation, carnality, self-centeredness, and pride get in the way.

As we strive for integrity, we are striving to be Christ-like. This pursuit of Christ-likeness brings a greater demonstration of integrity and a greater opportunity for mission. In everything we do, say, and think, our integrity allows others to more clearly see Christ and have the opportunity to come to know the God behind the integrity. Our lives can serve as Christ-like shining examples of purity and holiness in a world darkened by sin.

The power of integrity is the power of mission.

My background is a bit unique: I came from a Hindu family, practiced the Sikh faith, was educated in a Muslim school, and am now a Christian believer. I've had the opportunity to look at the matter of integrity from the perspective of several religions. I know that all of my friends, regardless of their religion, look at integrity as being very important. What is important to them (and to all outside the Christian faith) is whether there is a link between my belief and my behavior. Does being a Christian impact what I do? Is there a visible, tangible aspect to my integrity? Are my actions consistent with my belief?

In this issue of Lausanne World Pulse, we're looking at several aspects of "The Power of Integrity" as it relates to funding, mission statistics, and personal holiness. I hope you'll be as encouraged as I am that Christians are pursuing greater measures of personal and corporate integrity that help strengthen the witness of Christ.

One question that can be raised is whether someone can have integrity in one area and not another. You've likely heard it said, "Character is what you are when no one is watching." You don't need a firm of auditors or inspectors to determine someone's integrity. If a life is not lived consistent with integrity, it will be exposed.

I like the term "holistic integrity"—integrity that is practiced in every aspect of life. I am a husband, father, brother, son, cousin, businessman, co-worker, neighbor, board chair, etc. While I may have different responsibilities and expectations placed on me in each one of those roles, I strive to live with integrity regardless. Is your goal to live a life of integrity? Are you consistent in your character, no matter what happens or who is looking?

Lausanne and Cape Town 2010

The Lausanne Movement is seeking to encourage the global Body of Christ in the area of integrity—both in our message of the truth of Christ and how we present it in all spheres of society. The recently released [Cape Town Commitment](#) emphasizes integrity as a foundation for our Christian living, behavior, and discipleship. The Cape Town Commitment addresses a whole host of matters in this area, including poverty, wealth, stewardship, and personal humility. We recognize that God is the giver of all gifts and is the source of all wealth. As stewards of these resources, we need integrity to manage all that God has given us.

Post-Cape Town 2010, Lausanne is focusing its efforts on the priorities outlined in The Cape Town Commitment and is building mechanisms to evaluate and track our progress. We're moving beyond just a gathering towards real, sustainable action on the priorities of world evangelization.

Additionally out of the Congress, the Lausanne Resource Mobilization Working Group has established the Global Generosity Declaration, which challenges Christians worldwide to increase their level of giving from an estimated two percent of income to three percent and more. An increase of just one percent could mean a significant unleashing of resources for the church and missions.

The [Lausanne Standards](#) were also launched at Cape Town 2010. The Lausanne Standards for giving and receiving income helps donors and recipients interact with each other with integrity and accountability.

I encourage you to consider [adopting both the Declaration and Standards](#) for your work and ministry.

A Challenge

Accountability is important not only in corporate integrity and holiness, but also in personal integrity and holiness. I belong to a prayer triplet with two other men. We pray for each other and ask one another the tough questions about how we're living our lives. Who do you share with about what is happening at the deepest level of your heart? Who holds you accountable for how you react to the weakness and temptations you face?

I recommend that everyone—regardless of position, wealth, or location—pursue the development of a trusted prayer triplet. Everyone needs to be accountable for their actions and choices. When we're tempted to lower the bar and not meet the level of integrity Christ demands from us, praying with and sharing with others is an important support mechanism.

What steps can you take today to live a life that demonstrates the power of integrity?

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NEWS BRIEFS

August News from around the World

CHINA: Repeated Arrests of Christians Prompts Petition to Government

Pastors from unregistered churches in China have lodged a petition with the Chinese government, calling for religious freedom and a peaceful resolution to an ongoing conflict involving one of Beijing's largest house churches. Shouwang Church has persisted in its efforts to worship in public despite many of its one thousand members being detained by the police, placed under house arrest, or losing homes and jobs. Government interference has taken place since April 2011. The petition to the National People's Congress, which is the first of its kind in sixty years, asks for special permission to be set up to investigate events surrounding the church's clash with authorities and a review of current rules governing religious affairs. (Barnabas Aid)

FRANCE: Luis Palau Leads Unprecedented Evangelistic Campaign

In a country that has resisted open proclamation of the gospel for hundreds of years, God provided a much-needed breakthrough in southern France, focusing attention on the city of Marseille and the greater area of Provence. Invited by 1 Meme Coeur, an organization of church leaders from throughout the region, evangelist Luis Palau led evangelistic campaigns in Istres, Aix-en-Provence, and Marignane. The campaign culminated in a three-day gospel festival on Marseille's Plage du Prado beach. Riding on the tails of France's official Day of Music (21 June), and appealing to France's affinity for gospel music, the festival in Marseille included a good deal of music and helped reach sixteen thousand people with the gospel. The campaign, involving more than thirty evangelical congregations and three thousand believers, was the first time certain events were allowed to be held in open venues, including amphitheaters, public beaches, and parks. The gatherings brought together civic and church leaders as never before. Hundreds of individuals made public decisions for Jesus Christ. (Assist News Service)

HUNGARY: Hungarian Parliament Passes Europe's Most Restrictive Religion Law

Although Communism officially ended in Hungary over twenty years ago, the Hungarian Parliament just adopted its new "Law on the Right to Freedom of Conscience and Religion, and on Churches, Religions

and Religious Communities." More than one hundred currently registered religious organizations will be retroactively stripped of their status as religious communities are "de-registered" as religious organizations, losing key rights and privileges provided to registered churches. Only fourteen religious organizations will retain their registration status, and religious organizations that have been "de-registered" may not use the name "Church" and will lose their status as a religious organization if they are not re-registered. Noting the passage of the bill, the pastor of an evangelical church, stated, "This is the greatest discrimination against evangelical Christians since the fall of Communism. This is just the first step against real, active, Bible-believing Christian groups. During Communism we were oppressed and persecuted, but we didn't expect the same from a so-called 'Christian' government." (Assist News Service)

NEW ZEALAND: Greg Laurie's Harvest Draws Thousands

In what has been billed as the largest outreach of its kind since Billy Graham visited New Zealand more than forty years ago, evangelist Greg Laurie saw more than 2,500 people make decisions of faith at a recent Harvest Crusade. Some two hundred churches throughout the Auckland area watched and prayed expectantly as they hosted the Greg Laurie: Auckland Harvest at Vector Arena. By the end of the two-night evangelistic outreach, 2,777 people made decisions to put their faith in Christ, while another 170 made the same decision via an online broadcast. (Assist News Service)

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: Matching Grant Will Help Complete Fifteen Bible Translation Projects

According to the Joshua Project, twenty-five percent of Papua New Guinea is comprised of evangelical Christians. According to SIL's Ethnologue, 830 languages are spoken in Papua New Guinea, representing twelve percent of the world's languages. To help push the country's translation projects toward completion, Wycliffe Associates is raising matching funds for the New Ireland Translation Institute (NITI) in the New Ireland Province of Papua New Guinea. Following through on a new model of collaboration of Bible translation organizations, the Bible translation acceleration ministry is helping national translation teams to get the New Testament translated into the last fifteen languages in the region that are without scripture. National translators living in the New Ireland Province regularly travel from their villages to the New Ireland Translation Institute to carry out the work of Bible translation. They rely heavily on the support of Wycliffe Associates for everything from their food during the training to the computers they use for translation work. (Mission Network News)

SOMALIA: Kenyans Support Somali Christian Refugees

The brutality of the persecution Somali Christians are facing has many fleeing across the border into Kenya. But even leaving the country does not always stop the Al-Shabaab, a radical Muslim group, from hunting down Christians. Being the #1 country on the failed state list and in the throes of civil war, drought, famine, and piracy make living in Somalia very dangerous. But God is using Global Advance and Kenyan Christians to reach out to Somalis in their time of need. At the Global Advance Frontline Shepherds Conference in Kenya, God stirred the hearts of leaders in Kenya to help fleeing Somali brothers and sisters. The group is targeting refugees who have come across the border into Kenya. A key goal is to disciple future leaders who are going to go back into Somalia with the vision to plant churches and participate in other mission work. This year alone, Kenyan refugee camps are receiving nearly ten thousand Somali refugees a month. This is nearly double the amount of Somali refugees per month in 2010. (Mission Network News)

SUDAN: South Sudan Churches Hope for Peace and Growth

Church leaders in South Sudan expressed their readiness to help secure peace, stability, growth, and development in their new nation, which was proclaimed an independent state on 9 July 2011. Leaders

led citizens in thanksgiving prayers on 10 July, a day after thousands in Juba city witnessed General Salva Kiir Mayardit sworn in as the first president. "We stand willing to play our part in sharing the burden of responsibility which rests on the shoulders of the government of South Sudan," Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul of the Episcopal (Anglican) Church of Sudan said in a pastoral letter on Independence Day. Amid celebrations by the churches, which played a critical role in the 50-year struggle for independence, Deng said his church understood the new government faces numerous challenges in delivering the fruits of autonomy. Kiir will lead Africa's 54th state of nearly 9.7 million people, which is beset by serious social and economic issues. Most people live on less than one dollar per day. More than ten percent of children die before the age of 5 and more than seventy-five percent of adults cannot read or write. (Ecumenical News International)

THEMED ARTICLES: The Power of Integrity

The Conundrum of the Power of Integrity

By Jonathan Bonk

"Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place." - Psalm 51:6

To write about the power of integrity is not easy. In conjunction, these two terms are jarring. They are categorically worlds apart, evoking different linguistic and moral spheres.

Integrity derives from the Latin *integritas*, from *integer*, meaning "intact or complete." To lack integrity is to be somehow deficient, to have parts missing, to be unable to function optimally.

Power, on the other hand, is associated with hubris and the delusion of relative invincibility. It is marked by getting one's way most, if not all, of the time by vanquishing the weak—by being louder, faster, stronger, smarter, larger, and more influential than neighbors and enemies. Individuals, families, sports teams, universities, corporations, political parties, armies, and nations can all be *powerful*. In attaining, maintaining, and imposing power, ethical scruples are a huge disadvantage, and integrity is compromised or abandoned altogether.

It is no surprise, then, that powerful people and nations have not been generally noted for integrity. Conversely, those with integrity have seldom aspired to or wielded power. The Gospels suggest that *power* and *integrity* are inversely proportional. Our story from Genesis to Revelation persistently reminds us that incumbent power inevitably finds genuine integrity difficult to tolerate. "Men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil," Jesus observed as he summed up the history of God's chosen people in his conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:19).

Power seems to be unavoidably corrosive, corrupting those who wield it, however well-intentioned they might be. Power corrupts because we human beings are self-serving individually—and by extension, ethnically, communally, and nationally—justifying whatever it takes to promote, sustain, and advance self-interest, even to the point of taking the lives and possessions of those who stand in our way. Such self-seeking is antithetical to obedience to Jesus, who modeled and advocated self-giving—what he called taking up our cross and following him (Matthew 16:24)—as the only sure evidence of kingdom life.

In its conventional usage, then, power should *not* apply to Christians. Power to *witness* after the Holy Spirit comes upon us, yes (Acts 1:7). But *witness*—literal translation of the Greek word *martyr*—is more about *relinquishing* human power than *wielding* it or *benefiting* from it.

For followers of Jesus, his Sermon on the Mount serves in ways analogous to the United State's perpetual self-correcting or self-justifying recourse to its Constitution. But these two defining documents could not be more dissimilar in intent, means, or outcomes. In Jesus' "Kingdom Charter," the powerful are never "blessed"—although they are tellingly castigated. Throughout his short life, Jesus steadfastly rejected conventional power as a means to advancing God's will on earth. He chose, advocated, and modeled *weakness*, not power.

Being vs. Appearing to Be

And herein lies the conundrum. What kind of power can possibly be associated with integrity or, as the title implies, might even be an *implicit* dimension of it? The power of self-preservation or self-advancement? The power to dominate large numbers of people, amass vast sums of money, or direct complex organizations? The power to live a secure, self-fulfilling life, getting one's own way most of the time?

Clearly, none of these things is associated with what Jesus promised to those who "simply let [their] 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and [their] 'No,' 'No' (Matthew 5:37). Although there are notable scriptural examples of power as the reward of integrity (e.g., Joseph), more common are the stories of those whose integrity landed them in deep trouble, rendering them powerless. The prophets, Jesus, and the apostles are our exemplars here.

As deeply religious but fallen creatures, infused with the very image of God, we are aware of the difference between *being* and merely *appearing to be*. The great sin of the professionally pious through time has been to substitute *looking good* for *being good*.

This is a particular peril for those of us who earn a living from being religious. There is an insidious internal pressure to divert ever so slightly from the implausible paths of righteousness ... to display the exterior trappings of piety while going astray within. It was for this that the Pharisees became known. We can be certain that these deeply pious, sanctimoniously scrupulous religious leaders did not set out to become the first word in the thesaurus on hypocrisy! How did this happen?

They became more concerned with the *husk* than with the *kernel*, with the *pot* than with the *porridge*, in *looking good* rather than with *being good*. Because Jesus was genuinely good, he looked bad; because their religion focused on pious façade, masking a deadly (literally) reality, Pharisees looked good. As Kenneth Pike so aptly notes, "The deepest sins are camouflaged as holiness."¹

It was this obsession with appearances that elicited from our Lord his most scathing, unsparing rebukes. All seven of his "woes" in Matthew 23 are directed at the most pious men of his day.

... they do not practice what they preach Everything they do is done for men to see.... they love ... to have men call them Rabbi.... Hypocrites Blind guides ... blind fools ... blind men You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside ... are full of greed and self-indulgence.... You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to

people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.... Snakes
Brood of vipers ...

It is hard to imagine a stronger emotional eruption. Jesus was deeply disturbed by the endemic failure of religious leaders. Such leaders, he said, make their converts “twice as much son(s) of hell” as themselves (v. 13). And he was grief-stricken by the looming disastrous consequences of such leadership, climaxing his impassioned outburst with a tearful lamentation: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing” (v. 37).

A Call to Service & Vulnerability

The benefits of integrity are readily apparent in governments, businesses, churches, mission organizations, and personal relations. To pretend to be what one is not takes a lot of energy and memory, and the paths of righteousness soon become overgrown and obscured. Integrity—whether it be personal, group, business, or government—means trust. When honesty, justice, and compassion have been internalized, people can rely on each other and on their leaders. People can proceed in confidence, knowing that the person, business, organization, and church are trustworthy... even to the point of “swearing to [their] own hurt and changing not” as the Psalmist put it (Psalm 15). This kind of integrity or wholeness is its own power.

The real power of integrity is the power of a living seed. True to its identity, infused with the mysterious gift called life, it will bear fruit when it falls into the ground and dies. Its power derives from its being wholly true to itself ... not simply *looking* like a seed, but *being* an actual seed. Only this gives it the power to grow into a tree and replicate itself through its seeds.

The power lies within the healthy kernel itself, not in its husk or outward appearance. As long as it does not make self-preservation and majestic appearance its central goal, or pretend to be what it *is not* and *cannot* be, it will be part of the divine relay for successive generations of life, in accordance with its Creator’s intentions.

The power of integrity is the power of wholeness—of being what God intended us to be in his world, doing his work, in his way. This kind of integrity is at the very core of the good news: For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God. (John 3:16-21)

Integrity is powerful, precisely because it is vulnerable. It was not by brute power that Jesus could overcome the deep evil that subverted and deformed his creation, but by his vulnerability. Seeds do not yield new life by being strong, self-reliant, and safe, but by falling into the ground and dying. The power

of integrity, then, is the power to give oneself in service to others. Integrity ties into the eternal. That is true power.

Endnote

1. Pike, Kenneth L. 1997. "Hypocrisy." In *On the Shepherd Feeding the Flock. Volume 3, Kenneth L. Pike Poetry*. Ed. Sharon Heimbach, 103. Dallas, Texas, USA: SIL.

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Integrity and Partnership in Mission

By Carlos Scott

The idea of "integrity" is something that is complete. It is whole, without missing parts, full, perfect, with appropriate weight and measure. When referring to a person, it's about the pure, proven, without cracks.

When we speak of mission, we are sharing in the mission of our missionary God; we're not working on a private project. We are fulfilling the *missio Dei*. Our mission is to share his mission.

"Partnership" is about *koinonia* (Philippians 1:5), fellowship, solidarity, contribution, reciprocity, equity, something that is shared—either a purpose or an experience, suffering, persecution, weakness and strength, realities and common privileges, sharing time, worship, wealth, or money. Everything we have must be shared.

Partnership is the thread that weaves everything together. The first thing shared in the context of the church is faith. *Koinonia* of faith results in *koinonia* in actions. Sharing faith comes first and defines practical cooperation, but such faith must lead to practical engagement with tangible consequences.

As the Body of Christ, we have a common future and identity. This involves welcoming others, forgiving one another, humbling ourselves, becoming less—not claiming superiority over another. Our identity and future show we have the same feelings and are unified in following the Father's plans. It includes understanding our different cultures and helping each other—becoming open to others and doing what Jesus would have done.

The Blind Man, Bartimaeus

The story of the blind man, Bartimaeus, teaches us many lessons about evangelization, fellowship, integrity, and solidarity. Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" (Mark 10:46-52).

Many passages in Mark highlight the fact that the disciples did not understand this. Their minds were numb—they lacked clarity and a complete vision. The key is the ability to see. We often find ourselves struggling with the same thing as disciples. We do not see with clarity, and we do not understand. We need to achieve a clearer vision of mission, evangelization, and fellowship (partnership).

We may find ourselves in the middle of a process, like the blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26). But in this process there is hope (the blind man of Bethsaida and blind Bartimaeus were eventually able to

see). The disciples saw as well. We, too, can achieve a clearer vision of the mission we have now. But there is a price to pay: *following Jesus and the process of receiving sight go hand in hand.*

Jesus showed he valued humanity by being available. The blind man's answer, "I want to see," was his response, and he was healed. It was a miracle of Jesus; his faith healed him. He decided to follow Jesus and there was transformation.

In his Gospel, Mark presented a very sharp contrast between the aspirations of the disciples and those of the blind man. While the disciples asked for status and privilege, the blind man answered, "Rabbi, I want to see."

Mark attributed value to the main character of the text by stating his name. He was not a nameless beggar. This was very significant. We must learn the way Jesus responded to each person's need. Bartimaeus was an outcast. He was considered a sinner, excluded from the covenant, excluded economically, excluded from the appreciation and esteem of others due to his blindness.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Some lay hands on, pray for, and ask for healing for the one in need. Others seek to deal with the economic situation, teach the person to read Braille, get a dog guide, help them find a job, or create awareness of the person's condition. Some respond through the ministry of the body, where the person finds love, appreciation, forgiveness, and acceptance. Still others quickly tell the person to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. With such varied emphases the blind man would know one aspect of Christ, but something would be missing—doing it the Jesus way.

Below are four lessons the story of Bartimaeus can teach us.

First, we must value the individual. Jesus' method was to open up to the needs of the other person. Faced with Bartimaeus' cry, Jesus stopped, asked for him to be called, and asked the question, "What do you want me to do for you?" All these actions value *the individual*—not a method, ideology, or doctrine.

Jesus simply appealed to fellowship, opened up, and showed interest in the other person. This is because fellowship, cooperation, integrity, and solidarity are about sharing life and valuing the other person.

Often, we do not want to ask, "What do you want me to do for you?" We are afraid the person will ask us something unexpected, or worse, something we do not want to give or do. Asking questions causes instability and discomfort. We prefer to be in control and manage our agendas.

Second, we must press forward in faith. This implies self-management, trust, and dependence upon God. The order established according to our capacities can tell us what we can and cannot do. Bartimaeus decided to reject the role the crowd wanted to impose on him. He did not settle for being the blind man, a beggar and quiet. He came on stage at the wrong moment and decided to go to Jesus as his main resource. What was at stake was who Jesus was and what he was for him.

Third, we must learn that to follow Jesus means to leave something behind—whether that is a boat, a cloak, or a way of thinking and acting. Bartimaeus left everything, threw his cloak aside, jumped up, and broke through the crowd. He did not accept the place he had been given. His healing began at the

precise moment he decided to meet Jesus. The miracle is to break free from the standards and barriers people set for us or, many times, we set for ourselves.

Finally, we must understand our real need. Perhaps the Lord is working on our life, church, and ministry. He asks, “Do you know what your real need is?” Here are a few questions to ponder as we consider the above points:

- How do I value others in evangelism, fellowship, and partnership?
- What kind of style and spiritual leadership makes a difference?
- How do I normally relate to the whole Body of Christ? Do I welcome or do I exclude? Do I ask questions or do I impose my agenda? Do I listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, or do I cling to already established plans?

No one can be complete, whole, or righteous without being like Jesus Christ.

(This article was originally written in Spanish. [Click here](#) to view the original.)

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Integrity and Accountability in Reporting Missions Statistics

By Jim R. Haney

Case Study

Pastor Kusa was a great church planter. I’m not sure how many churches he planted, but there were many. Well known in the villages of our district, many called upon him for special occasions. Whether he conducted a Muslim or a Christian funeral, the man preached fearlessly that Jesus was the Son of God. One day, I stopped at Pastor Kusa’s house, greeted him, and told him that the main office wanted him to fill out his annual church report. I left him a copy of a form and told him I would soon collect it.

Within a week, I returned for the report and found that he had filled it out completely. I greeted his family and climbed back into my truck. Before taking off, I decided to have a look at it.

I must have had an odd look on my face because Pastor Kusa, waiting for me to drive away, came up to my window. In his language, he asked, “What has you?” I replied, “Oh, it’s nothing. You have done a good job with this. Did someone help you complete it?” He smiled broadly and told me that his friend Ibrahim, a Muslim, had helped him. Again, I told him he had done a good job.

However, “what had me” was Pastor Kusa’s response to one of the questions: “How many R.A.s¹ are in your church?” His answer was 33.

I looked at the question; then, I looked back at Pastor Kusa. He was still smiling. I asked, “Pastor Kusa, can you tell me what an R.A. is?” He thought a bit and shrugged his shoulders. I continued, “But you have the number 33 here on the form where it asks that question.” Again, he smiled.

After a moment, he volunteered an answer: “I answered everything. Now, the people at the home office will be happy.” With that rationale, he assured himself that his annual report was adequate. I added a note to his report, and turned it over to the home office with my stack of similar reports.

Is there evidence of integrity and accountability here? Was Pastor Kusa telling the truth? No, he didn’t have 33 R.A.s in his church. Yes, he wanted his superiors to be happy with him. Even with my comments added, I dutifully moved the reports up-line. Others, receiving the reports from the four corners of the country, compiled and reported the results to others. It goes without saying that improvements to the process were needed. Let’s look closer at what we are after—integrity and accountability in reporting mission statistics.

Integrity

Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged, defines *integrity* as an “uncompromising adherence to a code of . . . values: utter sincerity, honesty, and candor.” Concerning ethical management and organizational integrity, Robert D. Herman and Associates write that “integrity has to do with continuity between appearance and reality, between intention and action, between promise and performance, in every aspect of a person’s or an organization’s existence.”²

Accountability

Webster’s New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, defines *accountability* as a furnishing or reckoning to “account for one’s acts.” That is, accountability implies that if challenged, one can provide some evidence of statements made to others, such as provided in a journal, book, or other set of materials. This evidence may support assumptions completely, or it may provide caveats that call for further analysis and interpretation.

When integrity and accountability are brought together and applied to mission statistics, we expect that what comes to us is what it says it is, within the definitions and scope provided, and that it is useful for strategic intervention in our world. Further, we expect that we can test what comes to us using our own understanding of reality so that together a more precise understanding of reality will emerge.

This clinical approach to accountability invites all who use mission statistics to test what is offered so that what we learn and verify improves our understanding of reality, makes more certain our actions, and more fully measures our performance.

As we compare the case study that introduced this article to the ideals of integrity and accountability, we must admit that there is a gap between the two. This gap is a matter of concern for those who gather and report statistics and for those who use statistics for their strategy. How can the gap be closed?

First, those who collect mission statistics can examine their collection and verification methodologies and make improvements where necessary.

Since 1845, IMB (International Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention, USA) has monitored the work of its missionaries around the world. We have learned a great deal about reporting with integrity and accountability. What we have learned has helped us to make advances in the reliability of what we report so that we can enhance our strategic impact in the world. We are accountable to those who view the statistics we share (see www.peoplegroups.org; www.grd.imb.org).

As such,

- We **invite feedback**.
- When we receive feedback, we evaluate it.
- If feedback is incomplete, we return it to the sender for additional information. When feedback is complete and well sourced, we send it to field-based researchers for evaluation. The normal turnaround for feedback is two months.
- When field personnel judge the feedback to require a change to the statistical data for any people group, they make a change, and the change they make is reflected in the next monthly report published to our website.

Other information providers, such as the [World Christian Database](#) and [Joshua Project](#) have similar feedback mechanisms. Additionally, those providing statistics include definitions so that those who wish to interact with the information provided have a frame of reference for understanding the statistics offered.

Sometimes, mission statistics look too good to be true. When this is the case, missionary agencies cooperate to conduct field assessments. Assessments help to make statistics more accurate, provide new insights into what God is doing in the world, and suggest new applications of fruitful practices that have contributed to amazing breakthroughs.

Finally, there are times when statistics need reflection in the context of field experts, but an assessment team is not possible. Advances in communications allow researchers to verify via Skype and other communication tools realities with those living on the field. This methodology allows people with a good understanding of their local environment to contribute to research without passports, travel budgets, and logistical complications.

Second, those who report mission statistics can be transparent in the strengths and weaknesses of the information they offer.

Our colleagues at Operation World show integrity in reporting statistics in *Operation World, 7th Edition*. We can see it in the frame they put around their content when they say: “The availability, consistency and accuracy of secular, religious and Christian statistics vary enormously from country to country, denomination to denomination, mission agency to mission agency.” Here, they admit that it is difficult to compile all they have.

Further, they invite us to join them in their effort to be accountable when they say: “We welcome input and dialogue; the entire premise of the ministry is collaborative, relying heavily upon literally thousands of contacts and correspondents scattered around the globe.” Further, I know that contacts in just about every country are given opportunities to review material, give feedback, and suggest changes multiple times before a new edition of *Operation World* is published.

The transparency reflected in the front matter offers a glimpse into the diligence applied by the staff and volunteers in the production of this trustworthy prayer guide. In fact, as a part of their accountability, they invite us to join them in making the data better.

Third, those who use mission statistics can be involved in testing the statistics even as they use them.

Our understanding of reality does not have to be perfect before we obey God. Mission statistics inform our participation in the missionary enterprise. The missionary enterprise is not an option—we are commissioned to the task of making disciples of all nations. Still, some are slow to use statistics. There are at least two key reasons for this.

- **They feel that statistics are an intrusion into the life of faith.** First Samuel 24 is often cited in support of avoiding statistics in Christian living, since in this passage David was judged for counting his troops. David's sin, however, was his lack of confidence in God's ability to win the battle—the real reason behind his count. There are many cases in the Bible where God instructed that a count occur. More often, statistics in the Bible were simply descriptive and used to help readers understand the magnitude of an event or miracle.
- **Life throws so many statistics at us.** Just watch television some evening, and you will be showered by statistical claims. My favorite popular statistic, which goes back a few years, comes in the testimony of a suave physician donning a white coat as if he has just walked out of a high tech lab. He looks into the camera and with an air of cool confidence says, "Nine out of ten doctors prefer Camel cigarettes."

The hope of those who provide statistics is simply this—that we seek to glorify God among the nations. We are not motivated by self interests or sales; we are accountable to God to continually sharpen our understanding of his world and the progress of the gospel among the nations.

Endnotes

1. Royal Ambassadors is a mission program involving men and boys from Southern Baptists and other Baptist conventions around the world.

2. Herman, Robert and Associates. 2004. *The Jossey-Bass Handbook of Nonprofit Leadership and Management*. San Francisco, California, USA: Jossey-Bass, 192.

Jim R. Haney has been director of [Global Research, IMB](#) since 2005. IMB, formerly International Missions Board, is the international mission agency of the Southern Baptist Convention, USA. Before coming to Global Research, IMB in 1999, Haney served for eighteen years in Nigeria and Ghana as a student worker, church developer, and mission director. He holds a DMin from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Leading with Integrity in Response to the Pornography Tsunami

By Brent Lindquist

We've watched news coverage of tsunamis hitting Indonesia, Thailand, and most recently, Japan. A tsunami is a metaphor we can apply to the effects pornography has on each of us. Tsunamis cause wholesale and nationwide wreckage that will take years to overcome.

The statistics of the impact of pornography on our cultures and selves are too depressing to quote at length. Suffice it to say that, at least in the U.S., seventy to eighty percent of Christian men rate "more than attracted" to "addicted at some level." The numbers of women expressing this same tendency is

rising as well. Even among our children, most are exposed and using by the age of 14.¹ What should our response to this be?

In one sense, by the time people are entering their young adult years, it is too late to focus development on any planning strategies, because the wave has already arrived. We need to recognize this reality. While I cannot go into detail in this article, what is needed is a set of responsive strategies which encourage us to holiness and personal purity.

Reacting to Pornography in the Church

If we accept the percentages quoted above, we can accept the assumption that the majority of our church and culture has been impacted to some degree by pornography. If that is the case, then many of us are in recovery from pornography. If this does apply to us, then we are bringing this secret out of the darkness and into the light. “Into the light” means acknowledging to others that we are struggling with, or growing through, the effects of this problem. In our weakness we, through “He,” will become strong.

How would moving from pornography as something we avoid to something we need to break free from change our conversations, trainings, and caring? First Thessalonians 4:3-5 says: “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen.”

Certainly we are called to avoid it, but that is only part of the story; the rest of the story is to learn to control our bodies and desires. For people who enter the church with pornography in their backgrounds, teaching them to avoid it to begin with comes too late. Our approach needs to be embodied in confession and accountability with support.

Recovery from the effects of pornography is not a one-time treatment. It is not a pill we take, a book we read, or therapy we undergo just once, and then is finished.

It is a lifelong call to holiness, seeking to replace the memories, images, and lusts of inappropriate sexual content with holy thoughts and images of biblical truth. Is this possible? Of course. But it requires a constant commitment to personal purity and accountability to someone other than ourselves.

Waiting until people have fallen or discovered to have fallen usually means they are put into a therapeutic program. These programs are good and needed, but we should be focusing our efforts on intervention earlier in this process. This is where accountability and purity enter. Certainly, people who have fallen need accountability groups and processes and need to re-establish commitments to personal purity. But we, as leaders ourselves, need to seek personal purity as part of our regular lifelong spiritual journey.

Pursuing Personal Purity as Leaders

So where do we, as leaders, start?

1. **We need to make a commitment to our own personal purity, no matter the cost.** The reality is that some of us are deep in sin, which is compromising our ministry and witness. “Coming clean” may have a significant impact on our marriages and families, not to mention our ministries and ourselves—but it is something we must do.

2. **We need to find a few people who will walk alongside us.** These must be people to whom we can be accountable, and who will keep asking the hard questions. They become our confidantes, confronters, and encouragers.
3. **We need to begin a lifelong journey of following Jesus with all of our thoughts and feelings.** What we watch comes out of our thoughts, by which I mean that our thinking usually serves to drive us toward activities. If we are thinking impure thoughts, we will be drawn to impure actions. Maybe not in a one-to-one relationship, but it can sure pave the way to perdition!

Acceptance and Accountability

Sexual sin is an abomination to God, whether it is in our thoughts or our actions. As long as we keep so many of our sexual thoughts, desires, and urges to ourselves, we are leaving the door open for the evil one to create lies and distortion. Sexual sin has been around a long time, and we need to see the whole of biblical history as the arena where people dealt with sexual sin and got on with life.

Can we accept each other as sexually sinful people—people who struggle with attraction to Internet pornography, and fail, and then get up to pursue personal purity again? And again? Certainly there may be consequences for leaders who are dealing with personal sin. Some leaders will be removed, and probably should be.

But we need to keep our work in proper perspective. It isn't what we have achieved or what we have done that will count for eternity. What matters is our personal relationship with Christ and how we tried to live and for whom we are striving to live. As leaders, our hardest struggle may be choosing to be accountable in regards to personal purity.

But freedom from sexual bondage brings freedom from oppressed feelings, a life of integrity, and a connection with our divine Lord in a new and glorious way. May God bless your journey to personal purity.

Endnote

1. Statistics from a presentation by Tim Davis, executive director of Pureheart Ministries, given at the Care Connexions conference in Portland, Oregon, USA, on 2 April 2011.

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PERSPECTIVES

Biblical Philosophy of Leadership

By Oliver Lutz

The essence of biblical leadership is servant leadership. Jesus focused on this in John 13:1-17, giving the example of washing the feet of the twelve disciples. By doing this, he gave them a visible example to help them better understand the actions of a servant leader. Below are a few things we should keep in mind concerning servant leadership.

Servant Leadership Means a Yes to Leadership

Typically, we see someone as a leader or a servant, but not both. Jesus, however, combined the two ideas. A Christ-like leader must think and act with a servant mindset. Jesus didn't neglect leadership. In Luke 22:26, he taught that "the one who rules" should do it in a servant attitude. He didn't say we should give up ruling/leading. It is good to give direction, try to achieve goals, expect accountability, take responsibility, correct mistakes, and make decisions.

When God has called you to specific ministry in his kingdom, it is your responsibility to lead. There might be different reasons you are hesitant: perhaps you feel insecure in your personality, or you don't feel gifted (e.g., Moses felt he is not eloquent enough). Likely God is calling you to work on these fears and gain self-confidence.

Servant Leadership Means Serving

Jesus washed the feet of the twelve. This was the duty of a slave. John reported in detail how Jesus took off his clothing, wrapped a towel, and poured water into a basin (v. 4-5). Peter initially refused. On previous occasions, the disciples had been astonished at Jesus' actions and words. For example, Jesus talked about the "little ones" in Mark 9:42: "If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea..." It is easy to utilize young children or make a profit off them. Servant leadership includes welcoming the little ones.

When the disciples came to Jesus and asked who is the greatest, Jesus called a little child and had him stand among them (Matthew 18:1-9). A serving attitude is easy to discover when we look at how someone is treating the little ones. This also includes the hungry, thirsty, stranger, and those who are sick and in prison (Matthew 25:32).

Serving means acting for others without any benefit. Our hearts and minds need to be pure and humble.

The most outstanding example of servant leadership, however, was not the washing of feet. It was Jesus' death on the cross. He went to Jerusalem to die on the cross for the sins of the world. It was for the benefit of others—which includes us. Mark 10:45 says, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." He who was without sin offered himself to set others free.

Are we willing to set aside our own rights, needs, and wishes for the purpose of someone else? Leighton Ford once described this as "the freedom to surrender what one wishes in order to serve the purpose of God and the good of others."¹

Servant Leadership Begins with a Call from God

We must honestly answer a number of questions:

- Why are we leading?
- Are our motives like those of James and John, who requested to sit at Jesus' right and left side (Mark 10:36-37)?
- Are we leading because we want to be special or significant?
- Do we want to lead because we love to have power?

- Do we want to be successful, famous, and popular Christian leaders?

If these are our motives, then we choose the position for ourselves. It is all about what we want. The opposite is what God wants. It is a call from God. The difference seems to be very small, but in reality, is quite significant.

Two points:

First, when we lead by a call of God and not our own authority, we actually have authority. It is God's kingdom and we are just the caretakers. However, we can act in the King's authority. We don't put ourselves in the spotlight. All glory belongs to him. We gain the freedom to act upon kingdom's principles. Because we don't care about our own reputation, we are able to make hard or unpopular decisions because we have true authority.

Second, when we lead by a call of God and not our own authority, it gives us godly identities. Our identities could be based on our own (extraordinary) gifts or social status, but when we are aware that God has called us, he is the center and we are deeply secure in his identity.

Servant Leadership Is about Shepherding

Servant leadership finds a vivid and picturesque motive in shepherding. The shepherd cares for the flock. He feeds them (John 21:15) and looks for green pastures and fresh water (Psalm 23). He seeks after the one lost sheep (Luke 15:4) and is even willing to lay down his own life (John 10:11).

After his resurrection, Jesus told Peter, "Take care of my sheep" (John 21:16). Being a pastor today carries the same connotation: looking out for the good of the people in our churches; caring for the spiritual well-being of the people; being watchful for dangers; and seeking those who got lost and taking responsibility for their lives. The focus is not on the shepherd; it is on the sheep.

Servant Leadership Involves a Clear Mission Statement

By not looking over the well-being of the people for whom we are responsible, we are more likely to forget the mission we have to fulfill. Leadership without a clear mission of where to go is bad leadership. *Jesus knew he was sent* (John 4:34; 6:29; 20:21). In the synagogue in Nazareth, he shared his mission: "...to preach good news to the poor...to proclaim freedom for the prisoners...to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" as a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy (Luke 4:18-21; Isaiah 61:1-2).

He also knew why he was sent: to call "sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32); "not to be served, but to serve" (Mark 10:45); "to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10), etc. Jesus had a clear sense of destiny. He even instructed the disciples concerning the time after his death: there is a global mission to fulfill (Matthew 28:18-20).

As servant leaders today, we need to know our mission statement. If we don't, we may do many things, but we will not fulfill God's global mission. As leaders, we must have a very close relationship with God in order to know where to go. We need to study his word in order to know the principles of the kingdom; we must also *apply* these principles or we will be blind guides (Luke 15:14).

When Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, Peter initially refused. Jesus responded with, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.” Before we can serve others and wash their feet, we must allow Jesus to wash our feet. He wants to serve us, refresh us, comfort us, cleanse us.

This is an invitation to sit at Jesus’ table. Out of the refreshed community flows ministry. Jesus, after all, doesn’t want to have slaves, but sons (Luke 15:31).

Endnote

1. Ford, Leighton. 1991. *Transforming Leadership: Jesus’ Way of Creating Vision, Shaping Values & Empowering Change*. Downers Grove, Illinois, USA: InterVarsity Press.

Oliver Lutz studied theology at the Theological Seminary in St. Chrischona, Switzerland. He was a pastor for fifteen years in Germany and Switzerland before leading an evangelistic network in Switzerland.

Hope Has a Name: Creative Outreach Transforms Asia

By Jake Janzen and Stacey Weeks

Thailand is one of the most resistant countries to the gospel in the world. After more than 180 years of missionary activity, the Christian population is less than half a percent. However, that resistance has begun to change as God’s word breaks up the hardened hearts and minds of the Thai people. Creative outreach methods have prompted them to examine the reality of Christianity.

A growing spiritual hunger sprouts to find hope in hopelessness. When presented in a relevant way, the Thai people consider the good news offered by Jesus with great interest. Personal testimonies offering evidence of the gospel’s changing power has forced many to contemplate the possibility that Christianity is more than just another religion.

Unprecedented doors and opportunities to share Christ have flung open in all levels of society, making it essential for Thai believers to respond to their country’s spiritual hunger with creative evangelism and new church plants.

A New Generation of Believers

Disillusionment with established religion and a rapid moral and spiritual downward spiral have dramatically changed Thai society. Youth are not interested in the old mediums of storytelling through puppetry, mime, and traditional music since modern pop culture has captured their attention. Previous generations were deeply ensconced in the customs associated with the national religion, but this generation demands the right to make independent choices.

At the same time, Thai youth are very nationalistic and protective of their heritage. They prefer acting as a group, challenging the Western mentality to succeed as individuals. They are very proud that Thailand is an independent nation.

A New Approach

This interest in modern music and drama, coupled with their proud Thai heritage, requires a relevant presentation of the gospel by their own people. The message has not changed, but the methods have in order to be effective in presenting Christ to those skeptical of shallow religion and opposed to dominating foreign cultures.

A major factor in speaking to the heart of the individual Thai is through the relevant medium of their own people in their native tongue. No one knows the Thai heart, mind, culture, and language better than a Thai. This makes a Thai person the obvious choice to church plant and preach. This approach eliminates many of the barriers for effective Christian witness in Thai society.

Breaking Down Barriers

Establishing a team of young professional Thai Christians with a passion for sharing Christ with their own people is a lofty goal. Yet a grassroots movement is doing exactly that. A team of young professionals in Bangkok is experiencing the power of God in unprecedented ways while evangelizing and planting churches. This team approach appears more acceptable and effective than the alternative of sending out a lone ranger.

Hundreds of thousands of young people have heard the gospel through the creative methodology of this team. The team fields hundreds of responses from youth who want to know more about Christianity.

Educators and government officials welcome the team into universities, colleges, and schools. Students and teachers find themselves drawn to the presenters, who share their transforming life experiences. Doors are also open in markets, prisons, factories, and communities. The evident change in the lives of the team members is real, desirable, and in stark contrast to the general hopelessness plaguing many. This intriguing contrast is an attractive alternative to a desperate generation.

Hard work, prayer, and dedication are essential to be effective in reaching suspicious and discriminating youth. Young people are attentive if the message and medium is professional and real. Therefore, this team performs music that youth easily identify with, thus earning the right to share their story. Initially, the concerts appear similar to other bands; however, once the team is accepted, the focus shifts to the life-giving message of the good news.

Worlds Apart

From a Western viewpoint, it is hard to imagine 1,500 university students sitting on a concrete floor for three hours listening to a team present Christ through multi-media, testimonies, and preaching. But it is happening in Thailand.

After each concert, the students are encouraged to fill out a short survey, where many indicate a desire to learn more about Jesus. This curiosity is followed up with personal contact from a team member via cell phone and/or social media. As inquisitiveness develops, the team invites interested parties to a specialized three-day camp. Many people have come to know Jesus through these concentrated camps, have been incorporated into a cell group, and have been part of a church plant.

Vision Thailand

[Vision Thailand](#) (VT) is the organization behind this effective team approach. They train and send out teams of young professionals back into their own communities to reach their neighbors and loved ones for Christ.

VT is a relatively young organization, born after the devastating 2004 tsunami. There are now twenty-five churches or groups in various stages of development. These groups are gaining recognition for their work by the Thai business community, the Thai government, and royal-sponsored youth programs. The doors have swung open, and by God's grace, VT will continue to find favor with the Thai people.

Vision Thailand utilizes all avenues available to share the gospel, including radio and television. Their community radio stations draw favorable responses and they record their concerts with live satellite feed through online radio.

After a youth event in a large Bangkok mall, where a team adjudicated youth music and dance groups in the “American Idol” format, the mother of an involved adolescence requested a youth-oriented TV program for her national satellite TV channel. As a result, VT airs a weekly one-hour television slot with a short gospel message to the entire nation free of charge.

Vision Thailand is thinking ahead and creating a Church Planting School to train leaders to shepherd new believers. This is a natural progression of evangelism, one-on-one mentoring, cell group creation, and church planting. Most new believers have no background or understanding in the Christian faith, and need this nourishment and encouragement.

God is an infinite creative being. Following his lead, VT presents his message in new and appealing ways. The groups trust the Holy Spirit to water his word, and bring people to maturity in Christ. God is at work, and he does not disappoint.

Hope Has a Name

When the 2004 tsunami hit Thailand and submerged entire communities under water, a feeling of hopelessness flooded the nation. Years later, God plants new seeds of hope. He is blessing the ministry methods of organizations like Vision Thailand and not only granting hope to the lost, but giving hope a name—Jesus.

Jake Janzen (left) was involved in the tsunami relief effort in Thailand in early 2005, and is the founder of Vision Thailand. He has helped mobilize Vision Thailand churches to share Christ in relevant and creative ways within Thai communities, using an indigenous approach. He and his wife, Margaret, live in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, Canada. **Stacey Weeks** (right) is freelance writer from the Ontario region.

COMIBAM Embraces Business as Mission

“In order to serve the Iberoamerican missions community, and the peoples they are seeking to reach, COMIBAM (the Ibero-American Missions Cooperation) must stay fresh, aware, and connected with current issues, trends, and opportunities.” - Decio de Carvalho, COMIBAM executive director

With that in mind, de Carvalho initiated an electronic dialogue on the subject of Business as Mission (BAM) in early 2010, which led to several regional meetings and culminated with a BAM consultation in Panama in March 2011.

COMIBAM leaders, as well as leaders from both the business and mission arenas, were involved in the discussions concerning COMIBAM’s role in catalyzing a BAM movement from within the Iberoamerican mission community.

“BAM is certainly a huge area of missions that we need to learn more about, get involved in, and help to equip and facilitate those God is calling from among us as BAMers,” affirms de Carvalho.

Mats Tunehag, Lausanne senior associate on Business as Mission, was instrumental in the consultation and will continue to serve as an advisor. Both Tunehag and de Carvalho have been involved in BAM in various ways in Latin America, but also in the Arab world and Asia. BAM is not new to Latin America.

“A growing number of missionaries from the region are running successful BAM enterprises in many countries, especially in restricted-access contexts and sub-Saharan Africa,” says João Mordomo, coordinator of COMIBAM’s BAM initiative. Mordomo, who was part of the 2004 Lausanne BAM Issue Group, leads a Brazilian mission agency which specializes in BAM.

“Latin Americans have many distinct contributions to make on the global BAM scene, perhaps most obviously those related to football and coffee and the like, as well as those which highlight the typical Latino *joie de vivre*,” adds Mordomo.

COMIBAM was established twenty-five years ago to bring together mission agencies, denominational mission departments, churches, training centers, and other entities involved in the Great Commission. Currently, twenty-five national entities, representing all of Latin American, the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, the Hispanics of the USA and Canada, and Spain and Portugal form [COMIBAM International](#).

LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Leadership Profile: Raphael Anzenberger, Evangelist, Church Planter, France

Q. Tell us about your family.

A. I am a French native (Strasbourg) and have been married to Karen (from the U.S.) for fifteen years. We have four children (Josiah, 12, Abigail, 8, Elisabeth, 6, and Matthew, 4) and live in Loches, France.

Q. Give us a brief overview of your work and ministry.

A. I serve as general secretary of [France Evangelisation](#), an organisation dedicated to the public proclamation of the gospel, the multiplication of evangelists, and evangelism training in churches and Bible institutes. I also preside over the Forum des Evangelistes, a coalition of evangelists across the French-speaking world (Europe, Canada, Africa, French Islands).

Q. What is your favorite quote?

A. "Man is always looking for better methods, God is always looking for better men." - E.M. Bounds

Q. Who has been the most influential person in your life/ministry, and why?

A. Leighton Ford and Ravi Zacharias. Leighton for his passion as an evangelist, not only to preach but also to train emerging leaders. Ravi for his brilliant apologetics of the mind and heart.

Q. What is the best piece of advice you’ve received?

A. Andy Stanley once said that eighty percent of what I do in ministry should be things I must do (not things I can do or should do).

Evangelism. On Point.

Q. Describe a time in which you shared your

Q. What one issue do you believe is the greatest barrier to evangelism, and why?

A. Rationalisation—explaining why we cannot do evangelism, rather than just doing it. As a friend once said, we spend a lot of time surveying the giant, when God actually calls us to use the slingshot with the five stones already there.

Q. What book do you most often recommend to others to read, and why?

A. *The Jesus Creed: Loving God, Loving Others* by Scot McKnight (Paraclete Press, 2004) is brilliant and refreshing. It's a good reminder of what our calling is, and should be.

Q. What would you like to be doing in five years?

A. I just started planting a church, which usually takes up to seven years to mature. This church will also serve as a regional training center for bi-vocational workers involved in church planting. After that, only God knows!

Q. How can people be praying for you?

A. Please pray for my new role as a member of the National Council of French Evangelicals board. It is a great opportunity for me as an evangelist to bring my passion and vision for evangelism, apologetics, and church planting to the table. Pray also with my French colleagues that the Lord would help us plant four thousand new churches in the next fifty years.

faith in Christ with someone who didn't know him, and then saw God clearly work in that situation.

A. This year, we started a church plant in the center of France. We saw five people come to Christ after only two months. They were looking for God, but didn't know where to find him. *Missio Dei* is not just a nice missiological concept, it is very true!

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING

The Challenge of Christian Writing and Publishing in East-Central Europe

By Tony Wales

Ulrich Brockhaus, the distinguished German evangelical publisher, once told me, “The Church gets the publishing it deserves.” His implication was that all Christians are responsible for the development of Christian thought and ideas in their own country and culture.

This principle has inevitable consequences for all local Christian publishing. Of course, wherever we live, a country's books, blogs, magazines, and newspapers are also greatly influenced by the extremely varied linguistic, political, economic, and religious history of each nation. But Brockhaus' observation drives home the thought that, whatever our situation, we too are responsible to God for the publishing that takes place in our own culture.

An Overview

In Europe, the differences from country to country are so varied that it is impossible to summarise briefly. Even the geography of Europe is debated: where does it begin and end, when even an Israeli can enter the Eurovision Song Contest? For the purposes of this article, I have limited myself to one or two aspects of Christian writing and publishing in East and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union.

For forty years, I have been involved in Christian publishing, mostly as international director with [Lion Hudson plc](#) in the U.K. I am now a trainer and consultant with [Media Associates International](#) (MAI), which helps Christian writers and publishers in many of the world's hard places, including Hungary, Poland, and Serbia. When the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 opened up Eastern and Central Europe, the Church in the West responded in three ways.

1. *It continued supplying subsidised literature to those who for decades suffered a lack of Christian books and Bibles.* They used existing undercover networks to distribute with greater freedom.
2. *Major projects were launched to supply huge numbers of Bibles in a way that had been previously impossible.* One project distributed free of charge four million Russian New Testaments to Protestant churches in Moscow and elsewhere.
3. *Serious efforts began to establish indigenous publishing in newly-liberated countries.* These were sponsored by the Eastern European Literature Advisory Committee (EELAC), which later became part of [Langham Literature](#).

These pioneering efforts met with varied results. The former smuggling networks for literature dried up as borders opened. The drive for large-scale Bible production also met an early end due to donor fatigue and the lack of “sexy” smuggling stories in Western Christian media. However, with enormous pains and patience, a significant number of small Christian publishers were established in the former Soviet Bloc nations of Eastern Europe.

Also, soon after the fall of Communism, numerous Christian magazines sprouted across the region. Visionary leaders, lacking in publishing experience or training, rushed to take advantage of new freedoms to publish the good news. [Magazine Training International](#) provided on-site training conferences for Christian magazine staff in many countries of East-Central Europe and the former Soviet Union.

These magazines became a training ground for journalists and potential authors of books. Notable magazine successes include *Inspiration* family magazine in Poland, *Miracle* children's magazine in Albania, and *Tapati* and *Leah* women's magazines in Lithuania and Bulgaria, respectively. However, many Christian magazines are still struggling, largely because of economic pressure and the reality of a small evangelical population.

Challenges Today

The challenges for publishers are varied.

- **Individualism.** One continuing issue is the need to shake off the mentality that “I am just a cog in the wheel.” This leftover thinking from the old command economies of the Communist era detracts from a collaborative vision of the Body of Christ. It also fails to recognise the variety of skills needed by an effective Christian publishing house.
- **Western subsidy.** Unfortunately, Western subsidy has not helped to encourage self-sustaining publishers. Continuing subsidy (particularly those with editorial strings attached) mitigates against the healthy development and growth of Christian writing and publishing in Eastern Europe. Long-standing confusion between “subsidy” (short-term solution) and “capitalisation” (a long-term development opportunity) has plagued the development of self-sustaining publishing

in many countries. This confusion is shared equally by donor groups and those they hope to support. It is, of course, an issue not limited to Europe.

- **Training.** Consequently, there is a great need for training in order that these small and under-resourced publishers will understand and manage these issues. This includes editorial, sales, and financial management where local publishers and writers have very limited skills and experience. Such training takes considerable time and resources of appropriate skill.
- **Staffing.** In many countries, publishers face great difficulty finding capable and motivated staff. In countries such as Serbia, only a tiny percentage of the population is Protestant, and less than **one percent** is evangelical. Serbia is also dominated by a stultifying, conservative, and nationalistic Orthodox Church which views other Christian traditions as cults, and sets out to obstruct wider Christian witness of many kinds, including publishing.

On the positive side, these painful problems have, in some Eastern European countries, pushed Christian publishers toward the general market, where books of much wider appeal (e.g., family life or children's books) may get better reception. This can be a route toward sustainability which would be impossible if they only published Bible commentaries and the like.

- **Local authors.** Unfortunately, these struggles have also slowed the development of local, Christian authors. Again, there are notable exceptions in Hungary, the Czech Republic, and elsewhere. Alexandr Flek and his team in the Czech Republic created Bible21, an updated Bible translation, which has sold more than 100,000 copies since its release. In 2009, Bible21 topped the bestseller list at seventy-five thousand copies in a nation of only ten million inhabitants and twenty-five thousand professing evangelical Christians.
- **Foreign translations.** Even where a limited number of local authors are at last being published, I have observed resistance from some local editors and publishers in favour of translations from the West, mainly by U.S. and U.K. authors. "Translation is easier to produce, the editorial work is already done, and we know what we are getting from the start," I have been told. This attitude overlooks the vital opportunity local authors have to meet local needs in a culturally-appropriate way. In this way, a whole generation of indigenous writing may be lost. If not corrected, this oversight could prove to be a massive long-term strategic error.

Developing and Sharing Local Authors

Consequently, MAI focuses on the encouragement and training of indigenous writers. This often begins with small-scale workshops to nurture potential writers during which they may write short articles or stories that can lead to more ambitious book-length material.

Recently, [twenty-five writers gathered for a fiction workshop in Bulgaria](#), hosted by Mission Possible Bulgaria. MAI trainers from the U.S. and U.K. partnered with local authors and publishers to lead the three-day workshop. Mission Possible Bulgaria has been publishing *Leah*, the nation's only Christian women's magazine, and equipping writers in a monthly writers' club since 2002.

As a result of the workshop, many stories are emerging from Bulgarian soil. *Leah* magazine launched a short-story competition, urging participants to complete the stories they began. The first-prize winner is published in the magazine; the second-prize winner wins a weekend personal writing retreat.

I recently purchased *Family Magazine* at a street kiosk in Budapest. It consists of entirely Hungarian authorship and is published by evangelical publisher **Harmat**. Books by Harmat are increasingly authored by Hungarians and are widely distributed in general bookshops throughout the country.

In the last year Christian publishers in Eastern Europe have launched **BRIEF**, a web-based book catalogue that developed out of discussion at the MAI European Publishing Forum in September 2010. This shared online catalogue showcases best new titles by local authors. A strategic marketing tool, it will enable publishers to expand their audience across Europe and beyond by offering copyrights abroad.

Conclusion

This article only scratches the surface. Elsewhere in Europe, there are many well-established Christian publishers in the broadly Protestant northern countries; much good publishing (often overlooked by evangelicals) is also taking place in the Catholic south. But those are stories for another time. Meanwhile, the whole of the European continent faces continuing challenges, such as the worldwide economic recession. However, it is also responding to the many opportunities (and threats) from electronic publishing, all of which means that no one can relax too much.

Christian publishing in Europe is neither dead nor buried, and Christian writers have more opportunity to develop their skills and reach new readers than ever before—whether through old or new technologies. There are always new fields to conquer!

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