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## A free, monthly online publication that provides you with evangelism and missions news and information.

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# WORLD NEWS BRIEFS

### AROUND THE WORLD

As part of the Micah Challenge coalition, Christian leaders are calling on Western governments to stick to their promises on tackling global poverty. The call comes in the light of a report by the Africa Progress Panel, which was set up by British Prime Minister Tony Blair to monitor the promises on poverty made by the G8 nations at Gleneagles in 2005. While the UK is on track to meet its Gleneagles commitments, other countries are lagging behind. Charles Badenoch, chief executive officer of the development charity World Vision, said, "Since Gleneagles, we have allowed so many other priorities to take precedence over our commitment to fund development programmes designed to lift millions out of poverty in Africa. The international community has poured resources toward issues of international security at the expense of the poor. It's time it made good its promises." Joel Edwards, co-chair of **Micah Challenge International**, said, "We urge leaders to stick to their promises. Extreme global poverty can be beaten, if there's the political will to do so." (**Evangelical Alliance Press**)

### GABON

Senior government ministers have welcomed a proposal by the Bible Society of Gabon to launch the *Good Samaritan* program in order to help tackle the country's escalating HIV/AIDS problem. The Society put forward the proposal last month following a call by Gabon's vice president, Didjob Divungi Di Ndinge, for NGOs, civic groups and government agencies to "intensify the national response" to the crisis. Recent figures published by Gabon's Ministry of Public Health and Population indicate that there are eight new cases of HIV infection per day. It is estimated that in the main cities of Libreville and Port Gentil, where two-thirds of the country's 1.2 million people live, the infection rate is between seven and nine percent. "With the HIV/AIDS infection rate continuing to rise, something needs to be done to help people avoid contracting the virus, and this means encouraging them to change their behaviour," explains Bible Society general secretary Georges Thierry Mabiala. Gabon will be the fifteenth country in Africa to launch the *Good Samaritan* program. The other countries already participating are Uganda, Cameroon, Togo, Burundi, Rwanda, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Namibia, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Swaziland, the Sahel Project (Mali, Senegal and Guinea Conakry), Sierra Leone and Tanzania. (**United Bible Societies**)

### HAITI

After a two-year interruption due to widespread violence in the country, the Church of the Nazarene in Haiti resumed and completed eleven district assemblies in April. Final membership totals are not yet complete, but nearly every district showed growth. Two districts showed significant losses due to deaths suffered from flooding over the past two years in Fond Verette on the South East District and in the Gonaives area on the North Central District. Jurisdictional General Superintendent Jerry D. Porter presided over the assemblies. Porter, who had the honor of ordaining thirty-nine individuals, commented, "It was a great privilege to represent the global Church to the nearly 100,000 Haitian Nazarenes as we celebrated the eleven district assemblies. Our

Haitian brothers and sisters are passionate about serving the Lord and the Church of the Nazarene as we 'make Christlike disciples in the nations.' They have embraced a Centennial Celebration faith projection of reporting 250,000 Nazarenes by 2009." (**Church of the Nazarene Caribbean Region Communications**)

## INDIA

The **National Council of Churches in India** (NCCI) has called on the authorities to act immediately to restore the rule of law, following a number of attacks against Christians in recent weeks. The council urged state governments to clamp down on what it said were Hindu fundamentalist groups "responsible for fanning communal hatred and social tension." The NCCI, which groups twenty-nine Orthodox and Protestant churches, made its call in a statement that followed the beating up of two Christian evangelists in the Kolhapur district of Maharashtra state, in western India. (**Ecumenical News International**)

## SCOTLAND

A call for Christian mission work to promote "non-aggressive" evangelism and for traditional denominations to find new ways of working with Pentecostal and charismatic movements has been made by the **World Council of Churches** general secretary, the Rev. Samuel Kobia. "It is of particular urgency that mission be understood and practiced in a way which does not lead to an increase of hatred and violence," Kobia said, speaking in Edinburgh during a 12-day visit to Britain and Ireland. "That's one of the reasons we are involved with the Roman Catholic, Evangelical and Pentecostal churches in searching for a code of conduct on conversion." (**Ecumenical News International**)

## TOGO

The recent staging of the African Football Federation's Under-17 Africa Cup tournament in Lomé provided an opportunity for the Bible Society of Togo and other Christian organisations to bring God's Word to many sports fans. Teams and their supporters from South Africa, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Gabon, Ghana, Nigeria, Tunisia and Togo gathered for two weeks in March. Under the banner "With God, we will achieve great things and save souls for his glory," the Bible Society and their partners organised a busy schedule to ensure that God's Word was seen and heard. As well as organising prayer sessions, they set up stalls at various sporting venues from which biblical materials and testimonies were distributed. The Bible Society distributed more than five thousand copies of the booklet *Plus précieux que l'or* ("More Precious than Gold") in both French and English. It also showed the film *Demeurer vainqueurs* ("Keep on Winning"), produced by the United Bible Societies' Area Service Center in Lomé and featuring testimonies from leading African footballers. (**United Bible Societies**)

## TURKEY

The killing of three Christians at a religious publishing house in eastern Turkey has triggered strong condemnation by the United States and international church and advocacy groups. Twelve suspects have been linked to the killings of the three men, Necati Aydin and Ugur Yuksel, both Turkish Christians, and Tilman Ekkehart Geske, a German national, in slayings that have prompted concerns about the safety of the minority Christian community in Turkey. (**Ecumenical News International**)

## UNITED STATES

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA and the University of Wisconsin (UW) have reached an agreement that settles a lawsuit and fully restores recognition to InterVarsity's student chapter at the UW-Superior (UW-S). The agreement also removes the threat of derecognition that has been facing InterVarsity chapters at the UW-Madison and other University of Wisconsin campuses. The university notified the UW-S chapter that it was being stripped of official recognition in February 2006. The chapter has been active on the UW-S campus for more than four decades. UW-S officials said that the chapter's requirement that its leaders affirm InterVarsity's Basis of Faith violated the university's non-discrimination policy. InterVarsity maintained that a student religious organization should be able to require reasonable religious standards for its student leaders. (**Intervarsity Christian Fellowship/USA**)

**UNITED STATES**

Individual congregants of sixty-five Christian denominations that reported financial information for publication gave an average of $713 to their church in calendar year 2005. That figure was reported in the seventy-fifth *Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches*, published in March 2007 by the National Council of Churches USA. The per capita amount represents an increase of just $18.93 per person from the previous year. The *Yearbook* article notes that the increase (2.7%) does not exceed the official inflation figure. Benevolence giving—financial contributions to church programs such as relief efforts and feeding or housing the homeless—remained flat at fifteen percent. The below-inflation increase in overall giving coupled with a "stagnant posture in benevolence" has the practical consequence of "less support for church-sponsored day care, fewer soup-kitchen meals, less emergency help to persons with medical problems or reduced transportation to the elderly" in local communities. More than $34 billion in total church giving was reported to the *Yearbook* by the sixty-five denominations. (**National Council of Churches**)

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# PUBLISHER'S MEMO

### Communication and the Gospel
**By Doug Birdsall**

*The whole Church taking the whole gospel to the whole world.*

This is the stated vision of the **Lausanne Movement**. And in every generation, the question is, how can we more effectively communicate the truth of the gospel to all peoples? As Christ himself came to communicate the truth of the gospel through his incarnation, I believe there is no greater witness to Christ in our broken world today than to be the Church God has called us to be.

As the Apostle Paul wrote, we are the body of Christ; we are many members, but one body led by one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Just as one member of the body cannot regard others as unimportant, so too must the Church be ever cognizant and in right relationship and communication with the other parts in order to function at its optimum capacity. Being in right relationship and in effective communication is more important than ever before.

Today, with the advent of constantly evolving mass media and communication, the necessity to understand its utility and drawbacks, as well as harness its energy, is essential in effectively reaching the world with the hope of the gospel. We are constantly being bombarded with the messages and philosophies of this world. The challenge to better herald the truth of the gospel in the ever-growing myriad of voices in this world remains before the Church.

To this end, cooperation, partnership and dynamic, cross-cultural, face-to-face communication are vital to being the body of Christ incarnate.

This month, 250 leaders from fifty countries will gather in Budapest, Hungary for the Lausanne International Leadership meetings. Three significant streams of leaders from across the world will gather together 18-22 June: the first generation of senior leaders of Lausanne, current leaders of Lausanne and younger emerging leaders. Every movement needs the experience of those who have gone before us, the commitment of those currently engaged in ministry and the leadership, enthusiasm, vitality and promise of a new generation. We hope to gather the wisdom of the past, the strength of the present and the hope and passion for the future.

Together we will join in worship, prayer, study and preparation towards 2010 and the future work of world evangelization. Please pray for this gathering as we come together in unified purpose and vision to reach the world for Christ. As we plan and pray for the future, let us be mindful and deliberate in the development and refinement of the youth who are to energize and lead us into this next dynamic era of world evangelization.

Thank you, once again, for your partnership in the work of the gospel. May God continue to wonderfully bless you. And may you enjoy this issue of Lausanne World Pulse and what these leaders have to say about communication in today's ever-changing world.

**Doug Birdsall** is executive chair for the **Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization**, and director of the J. Christy Wilson, Jr. Center for World Missions at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He has served as a missionary in Japan with Asian Access/LIFE Ministries since 1980. Birdsall has been president of **Asian Access**, a mission focused on evangelism and church multiplication, since 1991.
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# WORLD EVANGELISM & MISSIONS REPORTS

## Communications among International Christian Leaders
**By Phill Butler**

**It was a steamy, late nineteenth century day in Bombay.** The noise on the docks was deafening, shouts of stevedores mixing with the cry of local vendors and the screech of overburdened block and tackle. Two British missionaries, bound for home after years on the field, met that blistering afternoon moments after boarding the ship. Over the next two weeks at sea they discovered a number of things: although they knew each other by name, they had never met in person; although they had worked in sharply different cultures, one in the south and the other in the northwest, there were major areas of common experience. These men were able to encourage each other and share information and experiences. After they returned to India, both committed to experimenting with what they had learned in those welcome conversations. Once on the docks in Southampton, they parted ways, never to meet again.

Each of these men vowed he would share his insights with others and encourage his missionary friends to share their experiences more intentionally and frequently. The truth is that what they had shared in experience and understanding was largely lost to the wider missions community, much less the wider Church community in the United Kingdom. In modern parlance, the hard-won intellectual capital (which in this case could be taken to include objective data and cultural, emotional and spiritual dimensions), born out of living in highly complex, strategic circumstances, was largely lost.

**The More Things Are Different, the More They Are the Same**
Despite CNN, shorter missionary terms, ease of transportation and communication and the ubiquitous Internet, to the reasonably informed observer there is some question as to whether circumstances have changed all that much in 125 years.

Superficially they no doubt have. Reports can be filed electronically; missionaries travel more frequently at lower cost per mile traveled and prayer support for distant circumstances can be marshaled virtually overnight. But what about the "standing gap" of information among international Christian leaders—is it really much different today than in those circumstances reflected in the lives of the two missionaries on the Bombay dock?

**What This Piece Is and Is Not**
In this short article no attempt is made to examine the specific communications skills or routine practices of

international Christian ministry leadership. How a leader handles email, deals with communications technologies, prioritizes his or her communications with colleagues or handles communications with the Board of Trustees or donors has been covered dozens of times by other authors.

In contrast, this is an effort to (1) raise awareness and questions regarding the current international context and practices of communication between international Christian leaders and (2) ask whether creative, intentional efforts at more effective communications might yield near-term as well as eternal dividends.

In preparation for this article, I sent an informal questionnaire regarding communications practices to seventeen international leaders (roughly evenly divided among Westerners and non-Westerns). I have known all for quite some time. The outbound email communication was marked "priority" with the well-known red exclamation point attached. A response was received from seven (forty-one percent) and the first to respond was the leader of the largest of all the international agencies. The reader may draw his or her own conclusions from this modest exercise.

The responses to the questionnaire, buttressed by a lifetime of mixing with Christian leaders around the world, suggests that consistent, intentional meeting and communicating with other leaders in similar areas of responsibility is, at best, occasional. Anecdotal connections seem to be the order of the day.

**Parallels: Secular and Sacred**
Having come up in the world of business and commercially-oriented international communications, I am acutely aware of how critical effective communication is among leaders. Sometimes personal and company fortunes rise and fall literally overnight. Effective communication is critical in these circumstances, within their company or direct area responsibility, of course. But with wider industry, real-time information is needed as well.

One response to this essential need in the leaders' lives would be the links where face-to-face relationships can be built, information exchanged and alliances formed. To this end a wide variety of associations, networks and specifically orchestrated forums exist.

At the highest level, the United Nations and regional expressions like ASEAN provide a political forum. G7 and the World Economic Forum are high-level platforms where leaders can discuss global and regional economic issues. Moving to the business and scientific sectors, literally tens of thousands of specialized associations and networks are intersections where like-minded leaders can meet; some primarily serving technical and professional people, others, primarily senior leadership. (Google currently lists twenty-six trade associations just in the field of polymers. Another site lists seventy-six associations and societies that only deal with setting technical standards!) The world of education has similar entities—points at which like-minded leadership can connect.

The problem these days is if you are a brain surgeon, it is no longer good enough to just be part of the American Medical Association. You will need to be a member of The Neurological Society of America which, in turn, is part of the World Federation of Neurological Societies. In thousands of other professional and business sectors it is the same. It is a big, complicated world today—filled with innovation, competition and changes that affect you—especially if you are a leader in your field.

There are some Christian counterparts. In the West, groups like the **Evangelical Alliance of Britain** and the **National Association of Evangelicals** in the US often have retreats or conferences for leaders. The same would be true in parts of the non-Western world such as with the **Evangelical Fellowship of India**. And, the missionary counterparts of these groups, **Global Connections in the UK**, **Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies** and **Interdenominational Federation of Mission Agencies** in the US and the **Indian Missions Association in India** place an active emphasis on staging regular retreats or conferences for their leaders.

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There are, of course, a wide range of more specialized yet regional or global communities. One only has to look at the Anabaptist, Reformed or Pentecostal sectors to see these expressions each providing a place where their respective leadership can meet.

Specialized geographic and functionally focused networks and regular meetings in the global Christian community serve much the same purpose as they do in the secular world. Some of these networks include: **AERDO** (Association of Relief & Development Organizations), the **Forum of International Bible Agencies** and **The Refugee Highway**. In the US, groups like the **Mission America Coalition**, **Christian Management Association**, **National Religious Broadcasters** and **Christian Booksellers** are examples of the growing number of specialized networks—placed where like-minded Christians can meet.

Regional annual meetings or networks are increasingly connecting practitioners and specialists internationally. **COICOM** (communications) and **COMIBAM** (missions) serving Latin America, and MANI (Movement For African National Initiatives) serving all the sub-Saharan African countries are examples. Many more exist and space limits a comprehensive list.

Additionally, more than a dozen regional gatherings, most of them annual, bring together like-minded individuals committed to collaborative approaches to evangelism and church planting. From the Tibetan Buddhist Peoples and Minorities of SW China, through Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa, these consultations regularly see between two people and four hundred people gather to assess developments in the region and to pray and plan together for greater effectiveness.

A troubling question is how many of these venues actually attract the leaders—the decision makers? How many denominational, mission or other essential Christian CEOs or ministry executives are present? And, if and when they are present, is there any encouragement or motivation for them to meet and share around the problems unique to their leadership role?

Internationally, groups like the **World Evangelical Alliance**, with members in 128 countries, and a resurgent **Lausanne Movement** have sought with varying degrees of effectiveness to provide the "macro" context where leaders can meet.

The face-to-face options the secular networks and associations provide are augmented by a blinding array of enewsletters, electronic audio and video conferences and other electronic/Internet empowered means for sharing, educating or planning. The numbers of commercial companies providing similar services for these specialized sectors grows daily. Connecting and informing leaders is big business!

In the Christian community a comparatively small number of electronic helps (enewsletters, audio/video based services, etc.) are focused on the leadership community. The largest of these, not surprisingly, seem to be collected around the local church and the pastor's role in it. This is Christianity's biggest "business"—dwarfing even Christian broadcasting and publishing—and certainly the missionary sectors.[1]

**Motivation and Standards**
There is a historic, biblical, justifiable sense of responsibility and accountability in the Christian leadership community—to God, to the donor, to their own team, to the Board of Trustees and, in some cases, to the **Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability** (ECFA, a "standards" agency in the Christian sector). Motivation born out of kingdom obedience, vision or calling can and does drive leadership to examine their performance and that of their organization. Our view of the Great Commission, the nature of evangelism and God's plan for redemption drives much of this. Our constituencies' views on these subjects often drive the perceived standards of performance and communications about that performance. Rarely is it "industry" standards or "market forces" that drive Christian leaders to talk with one another.

In science, business and education, reputations, professional longevity, competitive market position, stockholder satisfaction and personal income are regularly at stake. It is a harsh, unforgiving world. The monthly and annual bottom lines never go away and motivation is frequently highly personal. But, even in this highly competitive climate, the accounts of leaders communicating with and helping other leaders fill textbooks and make up case histories are common.

On standards of performance, the pace of the Christian sector seems considerably more leisurely than business. The demands made by dozens if not hundreds of market or industry analysts talking and writing about your company, your industry and where you stand are just not there. There is no pressure like "stockholder return on equity." Or trying to explain why your stock is down when your profits are up. There is no *Forbes* or *Business Week* ranking your university's MBA program. In business, science and education, you have to know what is going on within your industry—ready at a moment's notice to compare and defend your performance with that of others. To do this, you need to be talking with and listening to others in the industry. The constant pressure for profits and the associated issues never go away.

**Timelines and Vocabularies**
This raises an interesting, less often discussed aspect of assumptions and standards that, in turn, motivates communication between leaders. What is the "horizon" or timeline by which you must accomplish your goals? There is often discussion if not debate on the short-term demand for profits in Western business vs. the longer-term perspective of the Japanese. Not a week goes by when some leader does not take over a troubled company and pundits predict how much time "the market" will give him or her to turn the company around. All the while, of course, the market will use those ever-present industry standards to judge the leader's performance.

On the Christian front, debate erupts when movements like **AD2000 and Beyond** suggest specific dates and sponsor and share analytical data on the unfinished task to motivate and inform high levels of engagement and performance in world evangelization. They then convene working meetings to encourage new, bold strategies and goals. God's people working to some objective standard of performance by itself is inadequate. Those objectives must always be accompanied by a timeline. The timelines themselves create further motivation for dialogue and discussion among leaders.

If in business stockholders motivate performance and industry standards allow leaders to judge their performance, it is a standard vocabulary about those matters that makes communications possible among the leaders.

When comparing secular and Christian leadership, one quickly finds that a big part of the problem Christian leaders face is that they lack the highly developed vocabularies found in business, science, technology and education. There are general and very specific business terms, reference points for each industry. Each specialization has its own additional, more technical language. Leaders in each sector are to be conversant in both the general and the specialized language. That is what allows them to communicate both within their own company or enterprise and across the industry and with the investors and analysts. That is what allows them to lead and to meet and communicate with other leaders. It allows them to compare how well they are doing. It makes the analysts' reports meaningful.

Yet, what are the comparables in Christian ministry? In a local church, the number of membership, size of staff and budget are most often quoted. In missions, it may be the number of missionaries, countries in which you are operating and maybe your budget. In both cases, once you get past those numbers, the conversation between leaders suddenly goes "soft"—no standard vocabulary powers the conversation. Complicating the problem further is that, internationally, today's truly global Church meets in the field—East, West, North and South. Southern and eastern leaders are crying to be heard. They want to contribute meaningfully to the discussion about the direction and mission of the Church. But often, here, the lack of common vocabulary dealing with

assumptions, performance standards and historical contexts are even more diverse, making effective communication among leaders even more difficult.

**Where Do We Go and What Do We Do?**
So, what do we do about the Bombay dock syndrome? How do we capture the richness of the "intellectual capital" God is giving his global Church each day? Then, how do we share it, learn from it and do better because of more effective sharing among leaders? What will it take?

- More and different kinds of meetings?
- More essential information passing through varied, alternative communications channels?
- Who will work on the vocabulary we need?
- Once we assume faithfulness, who will candidly explore the question of performance standards that empower comparison and communication?
- Is there a forum where these issues could be explored and new directions charted?
- Who sees this as a priority and will take the initiative?
- Who will put up the money and what will be "the business plan?"

What happens today in the Muslim communities of the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan has high relevance and learning potential for those working five thousand miles west in Islamic West Africa. What is being learned in efforts to "re-evangelize Europe" has high relevance to America's secular cities. What God's people are doing in the slums of Manila could be very important to those working to hold up the light in the *favelas* of Rio.

The ability to share information about God's work across these boundaries is no longer a question of communications capacity. The Internet has forever put an end to that excuse. It really is not a question of money. The vast discretionary money held back by Christians and their declining giving percentages in the West make that clear. No. It is a question of will—and leadership: leaders committed to strengthening the way we communicate and work with other leaders for change. As that occurs, the kingdom will advance with greater energy and effectiveness.

**Endnote**

1. For more on this, see Moreau, Scott and Mike O'Rear. 2007. "Missions-related News On The Web." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*. 43(2); 244-248.

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## Mobile, Glocal & Evangelism
**By Jonathan Petersen**

**The world is on the move.** People can't stand still. There are more than **600 million motor vehicles worldwide**; global bicycle production in 2000 alone totaled **101 million**. Over **thirty thousand** commercial airline flights occur every day in the United States alone, and an endless number of buses and trains depart from countless depots twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, all over the world.

With that physical mobility comes the need for technology to follow. People want to stay in touch, keep up to date and remain informed wherever they find themselves. Gone are the days when television, computer and telephone required a person to use that equipment only when they were tethered to a fixed location by an electric

cord and cable. They have all taken on the characteristics of the transistor radio when it was first introduced in 1954.

Mobile TV, handheld PCs and cell phones are the norm, no longer the exception. For every one hundred people in the US, Germany, Japan, France and the UK, there are **seventy-six cellular phones**. In February 2007, Japan passed the **100 million mark** for mobile subscribers. This means that the country is fully penetrated with advanced wireless services and only the extremes of society (the extremely young, the extremely old, the extremely poor) are not served by mobile services. The total number of mobile phones in use worldwide **exceeds** the number of landlines and mobile technology is fast being integrated into the cultures of developing countries.

According to the BBC, "There is growing evidence that mobile phones are more than a fashion accessory and can transform the lives of the people who are able to access them. From Kampala to Mombasa, handset sellers are plying their trade. An enormous number of people, including taxi drivers and tradesmen, now rely on mobile phones to run their small businesses—well over eighty percent in Egypt and South Africa alone."

Communication is boundary-less. As long as technology works as it is designed, geography and distance are not impediments. Roaming while communicating is a natural part of talking on the phone, text messaging and surfing the Internet. In fact, people have come to demand "relentless connectivity," whether they are in the middle of a desert or on top of a mountain. The era of **Dick Tracy**'s two-way wrist-radio/TV is finally here.

**Wi-Fi**
Wireless broadband, also known as wireless fidelity (Wi-Fi), is one industrial breakthrough that is making limitless Internet access possible.

All that is needed for a person to ethereally surf the web is a laptop or handheld device with Wi-Fi 802.11b wireless capability, often already built into the operating system, especially in newer models. If not, a Wi-Fi networking card can be purchased for most laptops and many handhelds from major electronics retailers or direct from the manufacturer. Then, a standard Internet-ready browser on any operating system is needed. No additional software is required. All that is left is to locate a **Wi-Fi hotspot** (where Wi-Fi Internet service is provided, often free), such as an airport, a hotel, a library, a Starbucks coffee shop or a Panera Bread restaurant. There, a person simply types a URL into the device's Internet browser and is connected to the world.

According to **Business Week Online**, the number of Wi-Fi hotspots and users continues to skyrocket, particularly in Western Europe and Asia Pacific. The latter region, with its 3.7 billion-strong population, remains the world's largest market for Wi-Fi. But this year, Western Europe is expected to outstrip North America and Asia Pacific in the number of Wi-Fi hotspots. That is because European wireless service providers have found that offering Wi-Fi connectivity, even for free, can significantly increase customer loyalty.

Globally, there are more than 141,000 Wi-Fi hotspots in 132 countries. Top countries are the US, the UK and Germany. Taipei (2,501) tops JiWire's list of Wi-Fi friendly cities list for having the greatest number of hotspot locations, followed by Seoul (2,056) and London (1,996). A full listing of the top ten hotspot cities and top ten countries can be found at **http://usatoday.jiwire.com/** or **www.jiwire.com/search-hotspot-locations.htm**.

According to the **Pew Internet & Life Project**, one-third of US Internet users, either with a laptop computer, a handheld personal digital assistant (PDA) or a cell phone, have surfed the Internet or checked email using Wi-Fi broadband or cell phone networks.

One quarter (twenty-five percent) of American Internet users say they have a cell phone that connects to the Internet with a wireless connection. Among those, over half (fifty-four percent) have used it to get on the Internet. And one in eight (thirteen percent) US Internet users have a PDA that can connect to the Internet using a wireless network. Of these, most (eighty-two percent) have used it.

Wireless PDA and smart-phone sales **are booming**. More than forty-two million units shipped in the US during the first half of 2006, up fifty-seven percent from 2005. Most of today's new mobile devices have built-in wireless interfaces that can be used to reach other users, corporate servers and the public Internet. Many also have expansion slots through which to add other wireless adapters. Mobile connectivity has never been easier.

**ZVAN and ZBIBLE**
A leader in Christian communications, **Zondervan**'s mission is "to meet the needs of people with resources the glorify Jesus Christ and promote biblical principles." Meeting the needs of people who are mobile is an integral part of that mission. So Zondervan has created mobile websites (**http://zvan.mobi** and **http://zbible.mobi**) that are designed specifically for easy readability on small screens.

Zvan.mobi can be downloaded into a device as a syncable AvantGo channel (over seven million people subscribe to the free AvantGo mobile Internet service) or it can be accessed live through Wi-Fi. The site offers daily relevant material including a Bible verse, Bible passage, church word definition, church history milestone, news, sports, weather, a weekly book excerpt and author interview, emergency preparation information and timely religion news to help users stay informed and on track in their life and Christian walk. The site is also a portal of four hundred links to other mobile-friendly websites designed for the small screen. Categories of links include hotspot directories, search engines, news, technology, travel, Christianity and devotionals.

Zbible.mobi is **ZondervanBibleSearch.com** for small screens, allowing users to look up Bible verses and passages from anywhere.

**Glocal**
The world is flat, seamlessly integrating the local and the global ("glocal"). In his book *Glocalization: How Followers of Jesus Engage a Flat World*, Bob Roberts, Jr., says, "We must orientate ourselves to this strange new 'flat' world in which we find ourselves—where we're closer and more connected than ever before.… Glocalization creates a massive opportunity for the church. The world has changed and opened like never before."

Now is the time for churches and ministries to expand our vision beyond our mainstream websites. If we are going to continue reaching the world with the message of salvation, we must embrace the mobility of the world and communicate with people where they are and in ways expected by those people. Some are already doing this, such as Campus Crusade with **"The Four Spiritual Laws"**, **"Would You Like To Know God Personally?"**and **"The Spirit-Filled Life"**; RBC Ministries with **"Our Daily Bread"**; and Back to the Bible with **"Lessons on Living"**. Another method is what **Words of Hope** is doing: using text messaging to share the hope of Jesus with citizens of countries that are closed to the open sharing of the gospel.

According to an article by Walt Wilson in the March 2007 issue of *Christian Computing Magazine*, deep social change is about to happen because of mobile technology, altering the habits of how people listen to music, get information, blog and pay for purchases. Martha Dennis of telecom investors Windward Ventures is quoted as saying, "Babies will be assigned lifetime 12-digit phone numbers at birth. Money will no longer be used" as cell phones become the conduit of transactions.

**Mobility and Ministry**
Some ministry organizations have already seen the burgeoning power of mobility and have channeled their

resources there. Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral in Kansas City, Missouri, USA, offers a sermon, worship times, meditative reflections and directions to the church on its **mobile website**. The **Coptic Orthodox Church Network** offers a Bible verse of the day for subscribers' cell phones. The Church of Christ in Singapore uses a **mobile site** to communicate with its members about prayer concerns, news, mission updates, service information and contact help.

Tony Whittaker heads up **InternetEvangelismDay.com** and is keeper of **www.web-evangelism.com** which has a helpful **mobile device component**. He suggests churches produce evangelistic video clips that people can share with their friends on their cell phones, and text messaging that integrates the timeless gospel with timely and relevant current events.

Associate director of **visionSynergy.net** (a collaboration ministry think-tank), Rev. Dave Hackett, is the co-facilitator of **mobilev**, a mobile evangelism wiki. He says with such strides in technology as Microsoft's pending release of **Deepfish** and **Google's site** for optimizing any website for mobile functionality, mobile Internet surfing is only going to expand. He points out that 6.2 million people already watch video clips on their phones, up from 2.5 million in early 2006, according to the consulting firm Telephia.

"If you want to see where mobile evangelism and use is heading, look to Korea," recommends Hackett. "Churches there have done far more to adapt to the Internet age than Western churches." According to the **World Factbook**, twenty-six percent of South Korea's forty-nine million people are Christian. "Several Korean churches have homepages just for cell phones so visitors and members can receive messages from the pastor, information about church events and more," says Hackett. "And they have studios inside their churches where they produce Christian videos to stream over the Web and to cell phones." An active Korean Christian website he recommends is www.Godpia.com that includes a mobile evangelism section.

"We can't assume the American experience is at the top of the technology curve," Hackett says. "We're down in the pack." The **Digital Opportunity Index** ranks the US twenty-first in the world (Korea tops the list). "Many nations, including developing countries, are ahead of us," Hackett reports. "Because of their small geography, they can leapfrog America in broadband coverage." He says it may be frustrating news for Americans, but it offers vast opportunities for mobile evangelism outside the US.

Organizations exist or are being formed to aid in advancing mobile evangelism and discipleship. The **Global Christian Internet Alliance** (GCIA) provides convenient access to quality Christian Internet resources in all the major languages of the world. While the **Internet Evangelism Coalition** focuses primarily on English Web evangelism, the GCIA and the IEC have been **involved in the formation of the International Internet Evangelism Network** (IIEN) to create a worldwide network of web evangelism pioneers who work in languages other than English. Hackett expects a non-English mobile evangelism group will emerge as a sub-network of IIEN. "As we've tried to develop the web evangelism side, we've run headstrong into mobile evangelism," Hackett says. "The synergy between them is high; they're two sides of the same coin. Mobile application is tightly tied in with Web applications." Hackett is also bringing that kind of collaboration and integration together with the new website **www.powerofconnecting.net/**.

Since the communication landscape is fast becoming more mobile, it is up to more churches and ministries to harness this "technological bronco" that is the mobile Internet and purposefully ride it to meet the spiritual needs of the mobile if we are going to be effective in reaching this postmodern age with the gospel.

**Jonathan Petersen** is director of Internet Marketing for **Zondervan**. He has worked in network broadcast journalism, print journalism, media relations, corporate reputation management, strategic marketing, retail and direct marketing, Internet marketing, customer relationship management and speech writing. Prior to Zondervan, he was founding religion news

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## Viva Global Prayer Weekend Calls Christians to Stand against Modern Day Child Slavery

**A**midst the celebrations marking the bi-centenary of the abolition of the slave trade, **Viva Network** is urging Christians around the world to stand against the modern-day slavery that affects millions of children today by taking part in the World Weekend of Prayer for Children at Risk 2-3 June 2007.

While we should recognise the extraordinary faith, persistence and achievements of William Wilberforce and his contemporaries, who together abolished the trans-Atlantic slave trade, many people do not realise that slavery is still very much alive today. All around the world, projects that are part of Viva's local networks are working with children and teenagers who face the daily reality of slavery. Many are trapped in forced and bonded labour. Others have been trafficked across borders far from home. Today, consigned to life in brothels and factories, with little chance of escape, nearly nine million children around the world are enslaved.

"[This] weekend is an incredible opportunity to stand with millions of Christians around the world and pray for God's freedom and healing for many suffering and enslaved children," said Patrick McDonald, founder and CEO of Viva. "When Christians pray together, lives are transformed."

Facilitated by Viva, and in partnership with the **Global Day of Prayer** and other prayer movements, over two million Christians around the world are expected to pray for children at risk over the weekend. Many are organising special events and Sunday church services.

For more information, to order resources or to take part in this year's prayer weekend, please check out **www.viva.org/pray**.

*(This article has been edited from a **Viva Network** news release.)*
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# WORLD PERSPECTIVES

## Overcoming Communication Barriers and Boundaries in Sharing the Gospel
**By Andrew Sundar**

**W**e should never ignore the empowering of the Holy Spirit in overcoming communication barriers and boundaries in order to share the gospel with people from various languages, cultures and social backgrounds. The tower of Babel may signal the beginning of such obstacles as a result of humanity's selfishness. God's response as creator resulted in confusing human languages and scattering people abroad. Later, however, we see God turning the tables through the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, thus enabling the disciples to communicate the gospel across a multitude of languages and cultural barriers that resulted in many being saved.

As we consider how best to deal with various hindrances in sharing the gospel, we need to acknowledge that there will most certainly be numerous challenges ahead. J.O. Terry, who served as a media missionary in the Asia Pacific region for thirty-two years, has listed more than twenty difficulties that exist as we seek to evangelize and disciple the world's peoples. A key element in many of them is in-depth study on the worldviews of our projected audiences. This will often help to identify the stumbling blocks to the gospel that may exist

within different audience segments. The good news is that whatever the barrier may be, the Word of God becomes the bridge to communicate the message through the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

To keep us focused, this article will concentrate on using media to overcome communication barriers and boundaries. While we consider the term "barriers," our focus will be on people whose worldview is shaped within a specific culture that creates a number of impediments to them understanding the gospel. When we consider the term "boundaries," our focus will be human-made regulations within the socio-political regime that prevent the spreading of the gospel to people.

**Nepal Case Study**
As a useful example, we will consider the country of Nepal, which was declared officially secular in May 2006. Prior to that, Nepal was recognized as a Hindu nation that did not permit any open evangelization or broadcasting of the gospel on any local stations. Greatly influenced by Hindu fundamentalists from India, Nepal had set strict boundaries that prevented the spreading of the gospel to its population.

I met a Nepalese radio program producer, who prepared a five-year systematic Bible teaching series in the Nepali language. He said that the barriers to communicating the gospel in Nepal have been enormous. Technologically, the only broadcasting outlet available was to broadcast by short-wave from great distances, as local FM stations were not allowed to broadcast Christian programs. While creating the content for the broadcasts, he considered the worldview of the Nepalese people regarding Christianity. According to the producer, the Nepalese people consider Jesus as only one among the variety of other gods that they believe in and are open to "adding him to the list." There is also a widespread view that Christianity is a Western religion, and people who follow it are more likely to be people from a lower caste.

The key bridge to overcome the Nepalese worldview was to teach the Bible chronologically, setting the foundation of God as the creator and using that to explain the origin of sin, the condition of humans as sinners and the consequences of sin. From there, the series progressed to teaching salvation through one man, Jesus Christ, and the destiny of humanity, leading to eternity. The producer considered non-believers to be his primary target audience; therefore, he shaped the programs' content by addressing the Nepalese worldview in every lesson that he produced. He does acknowledge that a radio program by itself should not be seen as the only bridge to reaching the Nepali people for Christ. In addition to broadcasting, he shared how they took a holistic approach in order to overcome the trials his team was facing. His Nepal media team has six field staff, whose primary responsibility is to establish relationships in the community, with the goal of leading to church plants.

Despite significant restrictions, their field staff visit as many homes as possible, promoting the radio programming and requesting people to listen. They feel that the radio programs become an effective bridge to Nepali households as the field workers express their desire to return and seek the listeners' opinions on what they have heard. The friendships established in this way eventually allow the field worker to invite listeners to a common place for a seekers' meeting, where they share the gospel. Based on the outcome, they look for listeners who are willing to open their homes for Bible study. The goal of these studies is to start more in-depth teaching of basic biblical truths, leading people to conversion and baptism.

Once that takes place, they gather new believers together for worship. The use of this process has led to the planting of six churches in Nepal that have more than four hundred members. While the six field workers engage in relationship development for spiritual purposes, their wives engage in community development by teaching Nepali women various life skills (literacy, cottage industry, etc.), which also serves as another bridge to sharing the gospel.

As well-thought through as such an operation model is, it is hard to anticipate the real cost of such relational ministry and when the barriers may move from theoretical or philosophical to highly personal. According to one Nepal media team member:

"I used to go to [a certain location] to meet listeners in that area… Most of the people who live there are Buddhists. I went there for three weeks and managed to establish contact with a few people and they started to listen to radio programs. Some listeners could not understand what they heard in the programs, so they wanted me to come and share with them from the Bible.

One evening I went to their place to conduct a meeting, where twelve people came together and we were discussing about the Bible and Jesus. At that time, two strong young men came into the house and caught my hair, and asked me why I was preaching foreign religion in the place of Buddha, and that other religions were not allowed. They left the place, but after few minutes another two people came in and without saying anything, I was badly beaten and warned to leave the village or I would be killed. I came back home very discouraged.

My wife reminded me of our purpose there; she encouraged me to consider the Christ who sacrificed his life for me, and asked if we could not endure some pain for the Lord. She reminded me of how even Jesus' disciples suffered persecution and endured for the glory of the Lord. We prayed for a week, asking the Lord to open doors at the same place.
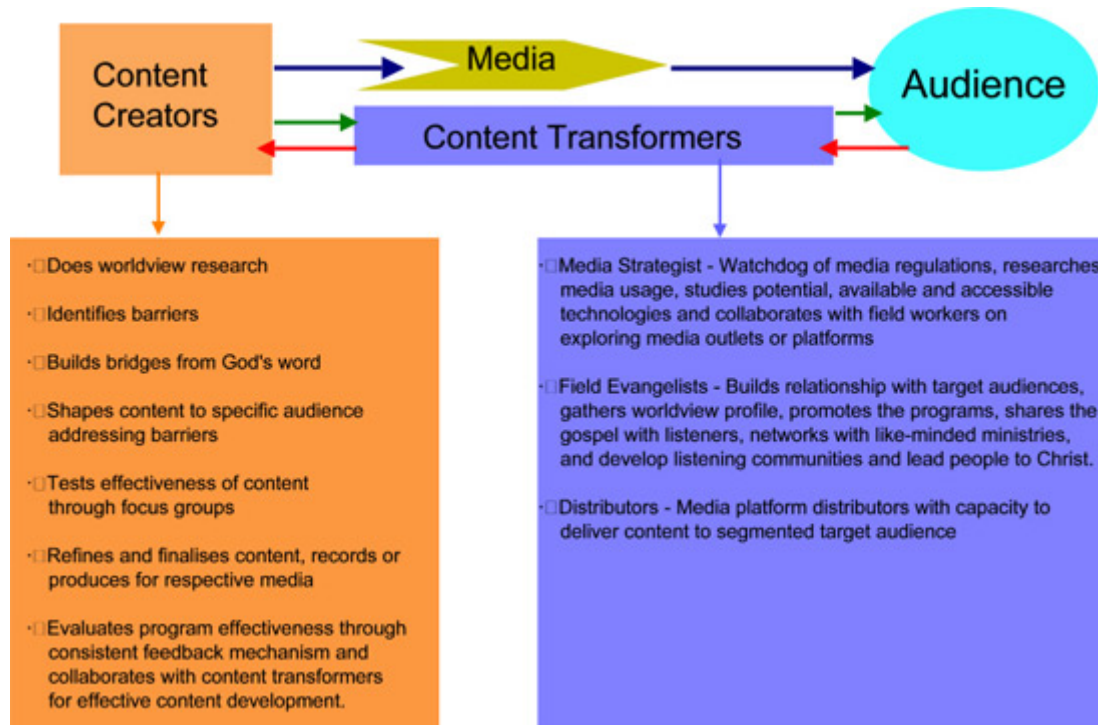
Then I went to that same place to meet the village chief and told him that I have not come to preach a foreign religion, but about the creator God. He is everyone's God, and that is why they should follow the Lord. Eventually, two families came to know the Lord; we then started a Bible study group and eventually a small church was formed. Many are coming and God is working."

We have used this Nepal case study to illustrate how to deal with the some of the barriers and boundaries we may face. However, we need to acknowledge that we have only scratched the surface. Through these experiences, we may draw some practical lessons to develop a communication model that may help to overcome future communication challenges in gospel media ministry. In our analyses, we should also bear in mind the fact that suffering is inevitable if we desire to share the gospel.

**Media Communication Model to Overcome Barriers and Boundaries**

1. The fundamental goal for media ministries is to seek Spirit-led, gifted Bible teachers and evangelists to fill the roles of content creators and content transformers. They may be trained and equipped for media ministry.

2. The key to effective communication through media involves two key functions: **content creation** and **content transformation** (as illustrated below). These functions collaborate to gather and share meaningful communication from scripture.

**Content Creators** → **Media** → **Audience**

**Content Transformers**

Content Creators:
- Does worldview research
- Identifies barriers
- Builds bridges from God's word
- Shapes content to specific audience addressing barriers
- Tests effectiveness of content through focus groups
- Refines and finalises content, records or produces for respective media
- Evaluates program effectiveness through consistent feedback mechanism and collaborates with content transformers for effective content development.

Content Transformers:
- Media Strategist - Watchdog of media regulations, researches media usage, studies potential, available and accessible technologies and collaborates with field workers on exploring media outlets or platforms
- Field Evangelists - Builds relationship with target audiences, gathers worldview profile, promotes the programs, shares the gospel with listeners, networks with like-minded ministries, and develop listening communities and lead people to Christ.
- Distributors - Media platform distributors with capacity to deliver content to segmented target audience

**Content creators** need an intimate understanding of the worldview of their audience. This will help to identify potential hindrances to understanding the message and developing bridges through appropriate pre-dialog questions. The goal is to lead a listener through the appropriate Bible story that will address these sticking points, and to conclude with appropriate questions in the post-dialog that will ensure a listener's worldview has been challenged by the truth from God's word.

**Content transformers** should continuously communicate with content creators sharing information about the worldview of the audience and about the effectiveness of current media content. This should be an on-going process. Further, content transformers should be prepared to walk as Christ walked, possibly going through suffering as they take the risk of building relationships and sharing the gospel with listeners.

Content transformers may fill several types of roles:

1. **Media strategists** monitor media laws and regulatory frameworks to inform content creators and field evangelists on content guidelines in local media. They should also conduct on-going media usage research and keep updated on the latest media technology to advise appropriate media platform strategies. The choice of appropriate media should be regularly re-evaluated in order to remain technologically relevant to the audience.

2. **Field evangelists** are the front-line ministers in the process, reinforcing understanding of program content, digging deeper into a listener's understanding of the message and reporting back to content creators on effective ways of dealing with listeners' needs.

3. **Content distributors** are the vital conduit through which content is brought from creator to consumer. They are often the technological face of the process, interacting with outlet owners or gatekeepers or obtaining appropriate media devices to supply listeners.

The basic challenges for content creators and transformers are to:

1. **Develop their knowledge base** on the worldview profile of their target audience and

2. **Establish real-time communication flow** to share information between creators, transformers and their audience.

**Conclusion**

Process evaluation is an absolute necessity in determining the spiritual return on investment requested by so many who generously fund the efforts we are privileged to take part in. However, caution should be exercised in this.

Are there measurable outcomes we can use in declaring what the Lord has done though our efforts? Our analytical mind may think of statistics, and probably look for listener responses that affirm salvation or a significant life change as a result of a radio program. The Nepal media team member mentioned above is an excellent example of a process that is not specifically quantifiable, but shows the positive effect of faithful, multi-generational ministry. His father came to know the Lord through Christian radio programs, and eventually he came to know the Lord as well. Today, he desires to serve the Lord through radio ministry to reach as many people as possible for Christ.

In a long view, this is a good example of lasting fruit. But if this is typical of ministry in this setting, how does it fit into our need to report results? We should take care that the sense of urgency we feel about measuring short-term outcomes does not cloud the importance of a consistent, long-term relevant presentation of the gospel and the fruit that it will bear, even beyond our own participation.

Content creators and transformers must be open to be change agents actively listening to their audience, discovering their worldview and understanding socio-political trends and audience media usage. They should not fear to test new strategies for effective communication. Developing a willingness to take risks and to be innovators of new media approaches will be crucial for overcoming barriers and boundaries to the gospel in the years ahead.

As a final reminder, we should not forget that in spite of our best efforts at planning and carrying out our designs, the results are God's doing. The entire team must constantly seek the Lord's guidance and the Holy Spirit's empowering. We must depend on God and God alone to effectively communicate biblical content through us.

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## A Call to Kingdom Journalism: Rediscovering the Integral Role of Communication in Mission
**By Steve Knight**

**In my communication role for an international, inter-denominational mission organization, I have the privilege of providing communication training for new missionaries** who are preparing to serve cross-culturally.

Most of the men and women I speak to are trained to do medical work, theological education, children's ministry, etc.—only a small number are trained in communication and/or are seeking to serve in a specific media/arts-related role. Their assumption is often that the "average" missionary has only minor communication

responsibilities (i.e., sending ministry updates to supporting churches and individuals) and that the rest of the work of communication is to be done by trained "professionals" (however few or far between they may be).

My desire has been to help these men and women to see communication as an integral part of mission and to see their role in it. I believe these are two of the primary challenges for the Church today as it seeks to communicate and do mission faithfully in the context of our globalized, broadband-connected, post-everything world.

**Thinking Theologically about Communication**
In order to think theologically about communication in mission, we first must work out our missiology, our theology of mission. We have come to understand mission as being God's mission, the *missio Dei*. God is a missionary God, and we are called to be a mission-centered Church.[1]

However, the reality is often very different. Many churches today are still sending people out—whether it is into the mainstream workplace on Monday morning or into a cross-cultural situation overseas—as if Jesus is in their pocket, an exclusive item they have to offer to an otherwise "godless" world. Even some of the language we are accustomed to using is indicative of this misconception: "God has chosen *you* to take the gospel to the unreached people living in *darkness* ...."

If we understand mission first and primarily as being God's mission, then we can trust that he is already at work in the world and in the lives of those we encounter along the way. Bishop David "Zac" Niringiye of Uganda "pictures Jesus already at work in the mosque, inviting us to the mosque to make disciples there. ... We are invited to participate with him."[2]

So our role is simply to participate in what God is already doing, and these are the stories we are called to tell—the stories of what God is doing in our own life and what he is doing in the lives of others (e.g., our co-workers at the office, the people we are living among cross-culturally, etc.).

**Communication vs. Marketing**
One challenge to this understanding of communication is the fairly recent focus in our churches on marketing and promotion. Like other aspects of the evangelical Church, this model has carried over from the corporate world and been widely adopted by many churches which are seeking to be relevant in our market-driven society.

My friends at the **Center for Church Communication**, producers of the popular **Church Marketing Sucks** website, have done much in recent years to agitate and advocate for more "effective and authentic" communication. They say, "Churches have the greatest story ever told, but no one's listening. ... That remarkable story is lost thanks in part to poor research, little or no planning, bad clip art, cheesy photos and ignorable ads."[3]

The goal, they say, is for "the Church to matter," but the emphasis has remained primarily on producing better-designed, higher-quality promotional pieces—and relatively little focus has been given to rediscovering and reimagining mission. As a result, we are still left with the dilemma of feeling as though our communication is self-centered rather than God-centered. Disconnected from a deeper purpose, our work in communication becomes laborious—simply another task on our "to do" list.

I recently spent time revising the "communication" section of my organization's manual, and in some places I replaced the words "promote" and "promotion" with "communicate" and "communication." I did this not because I oppose all marketing and promotion. There will always be upcoming events to promote, and my work in Internet ministry taught me that "if you build it, they will come" simply does not work on the web (you still have to promote your ministry website to get people to go there). Rather, I based these changes on a desire to reorient us as mission around the ultimate goal of communication.

**The Ultimate Goal of Communication**
While a particular communication piece (e.g., newsletter, website, etc.) should have a specific (perhaps even measurable) goal, we must avoid the pitfall of viewing all communication as primarily utilitarian. As the Church of Jesus Christ, there is in fact an ultimate goal to all of our communication, and it is the same goal as mission itself—the worship of God. As John Piper has written, "Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't."[4]

Through our participation in God's mission, the gospel of Jesus Christ will be communicated to men and women from every nation, tribe, language and people, and by grace they will become worshipers of the one true and living God. Our communication about this redemptive work of God in the world should inspire others to worship him as well.

Even our prayer requests are ultimately a call to worship because, as Bishop Niringiye has written, "The purpose of prayer is aligning ourselves with God's will, in order that we may fulfill God's purposes, for God's glory—living in God's mission—in Jesus' footsteps."[5]

There is a powerful "kingdom vision" presented in the story of Pentecost in Acts 2 wich is helpful in keeping this understanding of communication and mission central. We read that the Holy Spirit falls on the followers of Jesus who have gathered in Jerusalem, and they hear each other speaking in their mother tongues. Notice the topic of their conversation: "They're speaking our languages, describing God's mighty works!" (Acts 2:11, *The Message*, emphasis mine).

The ultimate goal of communication is God's glory, and the ultimate subject of our communication is the *magnalia Dei*, God's mighty acts.

**Everyone Is a Communicator**
If we accept these premises about the goal and subject of communication, then it is not difficult to see that the work of communication should not be relegated to only the "chosen few" who are professionally trained. No, communication is a responsibility that we all share, and our globalized, hyper-connected world is facilitating this "everyone is a communicator" philosophy like never before.

In his book *The World Is Flat*, Thomas Friedman writes, "It is now possible for more people than ever to collaborate and compete in real time with more other people on more different kinds of work from more different corners of the planet and on a more equal footing than at any previous time in the history of the world—using computers, email, networks, teleconferencing and dynamic new software."[6]

Friedman describes how this "flat" world is impacting nearly every sector of culture and society, including his own field of journalism. A new breed of "citizen journalist"[7] (or "networked journalist"[8]) has arisen, armed with an arsenal of electronic tools such as the Internet, blogs[9], and streaming web video.

This revolution in media is fundamentally subverting the "gatekeeper" role of the mainstream media and ultimately changing the editorial and business models for newspapers and magazines, as well as television networks and movie studios. Just one example is Gannett, the publisher of *USA Today* and ninety other daily newspapers in the US, who rechristened all of its newsrooms as "information centers" in November 2006 and reorganized its staff from traditional metro, state and sports departments into seven desks with names like "data," "digital" and "community conversation."[10]

**Introducing Kingdom Journalism**
What are the implications of this "flat" world for the communication of the Church? I would argue that, just as in the mainstream media world, there will always be an important role and an ongoing need for professional

communicators. But there are simply more stories of God's redemptive work in the world than the professionals alone will be able to tell.

That is why it is exciting to see more and more men and women in ministry using new technology to "describe God's mighty acts" in words and images. As citizen journalists and citizens of the Kingdom of God (Luke 17:20), these new pioneers of communication and mission are really "kingdom journalists."

Missionary blogger Jim Cottrill tracks over 320 missionary blogs on his site **Missionary-Blogs.com**. I am personally tracking more than seventy-five RSS[11] feeds of **SIM** missionaries' blogs and online photo albums. A number of organizations, such as **HCJB Global** and **Compassion International**—and individuals, such as world missions advocate **George Verwer**—have started uploading digital video to hosting sites like **YouTube.com**. These new media tools have opened up exciting new opportunities for communication—for more stories to be told and more perspectives to be heard.

There are, of course, dangers that go along with this proliferation of media and messages. Each church and organization will have to develop guidelines for communication and set the boundaries of what is advisable and safe. But we need to encourage and equip more communicators in our churches and ministries and not allow the fears of potential pitfalls to hinder them from telling the stories that need to be told. This is yet another part of the adventure we are on as we are all called to kingdom journalism.

My hope and prayer is that our churches will reconsider (or perhaps consider for the first time) the ultimate goal of our communication and the role each one of us has to play. May God be glorified as we describe his mighty acts in our lives, in our communities and around the world.

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## Before Contextualization: Critical Incarnational Living
**By Bryan Galloway**

**S**everal years ago my wife and I returned to our first church plant for a Christmas worship service. Some years had passed since we worshipped with the believers and many changes had taken place. The church had a full-time pastor. New families were a part of the church with some now serving in key leadership roles. As we worshipped together, we sang songs to celebrate the birth of Christ. The pastor preached on a familiar Christmas passage from the Gospel of Luke. We then collected the offering. As the offering was collected, the pastor left the worship hall and departed through the back door. The ushers collected the offering and then the children and youth presented a brief drama on the historic event of Christ's birth.

My wife and I delighted in how the church had grown numerically and how the believers had grown to become leaders in the church. Then something happened. The pastor came back into the sanctuary dressed like Santa Claus. As he paraded around distributing gifts, the pianist began playing a familiar tune and the church members began singing "Ding Dong Hong, Ding Dong Hong." In English, that song is "Jingle Bells."

My wife and I looked at one another in astonishment. What happened? We did not teach them to celebrate Christmas with Santa Claus nor did we teach them to sing "Jingle Bells." I wondered, where did the people learn these expressions of Christmas? When asked, they said they learned to celebrate Christmas with Santa Claus and "Jungle Bells" by watching movies from the United States.

**Cultural Appropriation**
In the above situation and in many countries, new Christian believers sometimes borrow what they see others outside their culture do to celebrate events such as Christmas and Easter. In some situations, this borrowing often comes from the West and more specifically from American culture.

This process of borrowing from one culture another is labeled *cultural appropriation*. Cultural appropriation is "the taking—from a culture that is not one's own—of intellectual property, cultural expressions or artifacts, history and ways of knowledge."[1] No matter the context, people constantly experience changes through innovations (internal) and diffusion (external). Through the process of diffusion, they borrow things, ideas and behavior patterns from others. The amount of cultural diffusion varies from place to place with the amount of contact among cultures. That is, the more contact among cultures, the more likely that things, ideas and behavior patterns will be diffused and borrowed. Anthropologist John Yellen has shown how a total culture (the Kalahari !Kung) can change when exposed to foreign goods and ideas.[2]

**Critical Incarnational Living**
Borrowing is inevitable. It is going to happen as people are exposed to new cultural forms, ideas and behavior patterns from others. With this in mind, cross-cultural workers should realize that people are watching us. They observe what clothes we wear, the food we eat and the conversations we have with others. They observe and learn what we value most (our own cultural values) and see those things that drive our everyday activity and behavior. They see how we strive to initiate change. They also watch what cultural forms we use to worship. In so doing, the people might mistakenly borrow some of our Western traditions and ways of celebrating Christ

events, believing that those very traditions and ways express the true meaning of the Christian faith. In other words, we might unintentionally be the very reason why something less than the true Christian faith is planted.

Therefore, we need honesty in our task. We need introspection, learning to compare and contrast our own cultural baggage with the essence of what is Christian. Learning to compare and contrast happens best by living in a cross-cultural setting. This is the beginning of contextualization; that is, critical incarnational living.

Paul Hiebert's classic article entitled "Critical Contextualization"[3] offers much help for missionaries. His critical contextualization model involves three steps. Step one is to "study the local culture phenomenologically." He insists that "here the local church leaders and the missionary lead the congregation in uncritically gathering and analyzing the traditional beliefs, and customs associated with some question at hand." Step two requires exegesis of the scripture. In this second step, "the pastor or missionary leads the church in a study of the scriptures related to the question at hand" (1987:109). Step three involves a critical response, requiring "the people corporately to evaluate critically their own past customs in the light of their new biblical understandings."

It appears that Hiebert's model presupposes two things: (1) the existence of a church among the people or a particular culture and (2) that missionaries are living among and already actually in a position of knowing the culture at hand to assist others in the critiquing process. With that in mind, Hiebert's model raises several questions.

1. What if there is no church among the people or culture?

2. What if cross-cultural workers are planting a church in an area or among a people that have a distinct culture separate from any existing church?

3. What if there are many co-cultures side by side?

4. Do cross-cultural workers first call in the existing church to minister to the people?

This might be one approach. However, this article proposes another approach.

It proposes that the first step is not critical contextualization with a local body of believers. Nor is it to work alongside a group of Christian believers who have close cultural affinity with the focus people. Instead, it proposes *critical incarnational living*.

Critical incarnational living teaches cross-cultural workers the deeper meaning of cultural forms. It teaches cross-cultural workers how to act and behave. More importantly, it tells cross-cultural workers how people interact, what they value and treasure in life. Hence, critical incarnational living and contextualization of the gospel go hand in hand. George Hunter words it this way,

*"The gospel's ambassador is called to adapt to the cultural forms of the target population. All of 'us' have received the gospel 'wrapped' in the clothing of our particular culture…. But when we too closely identify the gospel treasure with earthen vessels in which we received it, its communication to people of other cultures or subcultures is frustrated. Our task is to 'rewrap' the gospel in the clothing of their culture, to convey it in a vessel that will transport the gospel meaning to them."[4]*

Without critical incarnational living, cross-cultural workers can easily fail at contextualizing the gospel. It would be a tragedy if cross-cultural workers traveled twelve thousand miles and failed to walk the last twelve inches— not knowing the cultural context and not striving to become an in-group member of the people. Consequently,

critical incarnational living becomes the first task for contextualization. In so doing, cross-cultural workers are in a better position to help the people understand what is worth borrowing and what is not.

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## Contextualizing Western Workers—Gifts from the Muslim World
**By Don Heckman**

**Contextualizing our message, methods and ministry to Muslims may overlook our greatest asset: the impact of Muslims upon Christian workers.** Call it a gift from the Muslim world.

I first noticed this impact on my life when I started to counsel workers who were in ministry to Muslims. One couple made the comment that I had always been a gentle, retiring person, but no longer. My counsel to them was to the point, quick and almost bold-faced in its directness. The couple graciously received the counsel and said, "You are a changed person, radicalized and very direct from your ministry to Muslims!"

Muslims are virtually transforming Christian workers, making them radical. They are turning our discrete "Western" sharing into a more integrated lifestyle of speaking the word and life into an oral, Eastern context. Oral communication with Muslims will radicalize you.

Contextualization of the Western missionary is an acute need. When someone needs to change to make the gospel understandable, the person who needs contextual change most is the Christian missionary.

The Apostle Paul affirmed that cultures and peoples will find Jesus in their culture. Acts 17:26-27 reads, "So that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel after him and find him, although he is not far from each one of us." Is Paul trying to contextualize the gospel? Is he contextualizing culture as a path to the gospel? More than ever, I see Paul himself becoming contextualized, if you will, by finding a place in his heart for people of very different beliefs. I am all for contextualization. But much of the talk about contextualizing the gospel for Muslims forgets that it is incumbent upon us to open our hearts wider to people, not just to find a place for *dishdasha* robes and *salat* prayer rituals in a Christian context.

Muslim interaction can give us at least four contextualized gifts.

**1. The Gift of Community**
Community will radicalize Western missionaries. What we know about community as Westerners needs to be "ratcheted up" to where Muslims live. Muslims have keys to the Kingdom of God already within their cultural expression called the *Umma*. *Umma* is an Arabic word that means "community of believers," a deeper meaning of community when compared to what we know in the West.

The most powerful example of public, oral communication is thus the *Umma*. Muslims are part of this Umma, the "underground railroad," so to speak, of a "global Islamic community allegiance." Muslims in London feel literally welded to and a cloned part of oppressed fellow Muslims in Palestine, for example. A rumor that the Quran was dishonored in one country caused a riot in Pakistan, an entirely different country.

Practically speaking, why is the *Umma* community such a gift to westerners? Here is an example. Dressed in a black covering from head to foot, Suade seemed hospitable but imposing. My wife Evey went with Ashley, our 26-year-old ministry intern, to visit Suade who pronounced the blessing of God as she entered her apartment. Suade then brought her husband Chafic to our home. As we began telling the Prodigal Son story (Luke 15), Chafic took over and started to read the story himself. Then he became animated, and began commenting on the story. "He insulted his father!" "He came back defiled. His father ran to see him?" "Why did his father do that?" I lost my job of telling the story! The secret was to turn Chafic's hunger over to God, rather than to make myself the one with all the answers. My Muslim friend showed that the Spirit of God was at work in his life. Later, Chafic invited us over to his home for a traditional Moroccan meal. Hospitality was Chafic's honorable way of saying that God was speaking to him and that he wanted to know more about God in the context of a meal together. God spoke. Hospitality was the response!

**2. The Gift of Shame and Honor**
Muslims are part of a shame and honor culture vastly different from the Western guilt and consequence culture. Biblical teaching contains many themes on shame/honor as well as guilt/consequence themes: Jesus "endured the cross, scorning its shame" (Hebrews 12:2); "I honor my Father, and you dishonor Me" (John 8:49).

A Muslim who is shamed is a Muslim who feels defiled. Yet this concept of shame/honor is a gift to Western missionaries. What is often astonishing among Westerners is this: guilt in Islam must never be confessed, according to Muslim tradition, because it would result in a loss of honor which is worse than death itself. The Turks have a saying, "Even if guilt were made of silk, no one would wear it." An Arab proverb is, "Any injury done to a man's honor must be revenged, or else he becomes permanently dishonored."

Occasionally in ministry I have felt like a plumber trying to do heart surgery because I did not have the right knowledge of understanding the principles of shame/honor. Zacchaeus climbed a tree (Luke 19) just to see Jesus. Jesus asked him to hurry down from the tree so he could eat at his house. Reverse hospitality? Yes, and more. Jesus honored this man who confessed his wrong-doing all the way home.

We normally describe grace as the unmerited favor that melts the sinner's heart. Among Easterners and Muslims, unmerited honor opens the door and melts the undeserving heart in the presence of the word of God, Jesus Christ. We often ask to eat or drink tea in a Muslim's home—and we ask it with urgency. They feel honored, which opens the heart and home.

**3. The Gift of Understanding Holiness and Defilement**
Muslims have a concept of defilement which is not unbiblical. Ezekiel 22 records that "priests have done violence to my law, and have profaned my **holy** things; they have made no distinction between the **holy** and the **common**, neither have they caused men to discern between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them." (emphasis mine; see also 1 Timothy 1:9, Hebrews 12:16)

Biblical concepts of defilement are strange to a Western worker who may have relegated such teaching strictly to the Old Testament.

North African Muslims often place a car tire over their homes, or carry the hand of Fatima or other talismans for protection against the *jinn*, or demonic powers. Being careful to eat with the right hand and to sleep on the right side, Muslims strive for a carefully balanced world. Muslims need deliverance from anxiety about the defilement or shame that could befall them if they violate food or life codes. Freedom in Christ from defilement is another way of describing salvation. The concept of the *fitra* among Muslims is the quest for harmony in a world of chaos due to defilement. *Fitra* is the harmony of all things physical submitting to what is spiritual and conformed to the orderliness of God. Yet disorder reigns for Muslims who will only find freedom from defilement in Christ.

When we focus mostly on grace and salvation from specific acts of wrong, it is hard to have the needed compassion and sense of urgency for people trapped in murky defilement.

A better consideration for evangelization is telling Muslims of Adam and Eve. Tell them that Adam and Eve were created without shame. They sinned and had to hide from their shame and defilement. Our Muslim background believer (MBB) church in Paris is led by an Algerian convert who came to Christ by reading the story of Adam and Eve in the garden. He saw that while Adam and Eve were defiled, God never left them. God called for the defiled couple, he clothed them, he corrected them, he gave a promise to them and he kept them alive.

Muslims have never heard that God "associates with" or dialogues with and cherishes and even loves defiled people. In fact, the greatest form of blasphemy in Islam is the concept of *syirik*, or associating with impure people. For Muslims, relational involvement with people diminishes God's greatness. (God, they believe, never associates with humans because of an extreme view of defilement.) But in Christ, the Samaritan woman (John 4) went from "worthless and defiled" to useful and valuable to God. In Christ, Onesimus, who was branded for life as useless, became useful and valuable to Philemon and to the Lord.

Our understanding of holiness and defilement is also a gift to us. We are learning to minister with compassion to people with defilement or addictions and codependency issues. Muslims do not feel that they are worthy or capable of being in relationship with God, due to their defilement. Jesus' carrying their sorrows and entering their darkness is more compelling to Muslims than logical steps or "to do" lists.

**4. The Gift of the Story**
The vast majority of the world's unreached are *oral peoples* (literate and non-literate), for whom the nature of communication is telling stories. For these people, storytelling is not only the way they communicate, it is also the most effective way to spread the gospel. Oral peoples can usually recite back eighty percent or more of the stories they hear. By comparison, Western people can usually recite back twenty-five percent or less of what they hear.

Jesus used parables to communicate with the Jews, who were also an oral people. The Parable of the Sower allowed the listener to become an active participant in the story. No parable can so demonstrate the call of the gospel to be freed from religion as the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

Each story is a mirror of the heart. A nomadic Tuareg pilgrim to Mecca came to me and asked for more and more stories from the Bible. He was trained in Quranic verses. I wondered how he would ever allow me to share openly with him in a Western cultural form. Yet, as a storyteller, I was able to enter into his oral tradition world. He kept saying, "Don, tell me more stories from the Bible."

David, for example, noted the importance of always being ready to communicate stories. Psalm 45:1 reads, "My heart overflows with a goodly theme; I address my verses to the king; my tongue is like the pen of a ready writer." Meaning? My tongue is always ready to communicate my heart and the heart of God my king, whether through stories, laments or songs.

Two significant treasures await the Western worker with this "gift of the story." First, we do not have to be experts in Islam to tell stories to Muslims. No need to tell them the fifteen things that they need to change to become a Christian. Instead, stories allow the teller to let the receiver hear and decipher without imposing the pressure of interpretation.

Second, by telling stories as Jesus did, we do not have to serve as the go-between for Muslims to constantly interpret God to them. We do not want to become a mediator between Muslims and God because we know that "there is one God and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). Becoming the mediator can run the risk of supplanting the role of Jesus. Also, we could become the "bookshelf of answers" that keeps the Muslim background believer from taking their questions directly to the word of God. Dependency is not the same as discipleship.

**Conclusion**
I continue to encourage the contextualization of our methods, our ministry and our message to Muslims. My finding, however, is that the contextualization of the Western missionary is the acute need. Contextualized workers may not wear all the robes or know all the rites of their Muslim friends. Yet they are learners, having taken on the gifts of community, the gifts of shame and honor, the gifts of holiness and defilement and the gifts of oral communication. I am taking a bottom up approach that says, "Yes, I am Western, but Muslims can see that my Western heart is assimilating an Eastern worldview in light of God's word. Rather than a top down, sophisticated, culturally correct approach to the presentation of a contextualized gospel, let us get the word out that we need hundreds and thousands of unassuming workers with unstudied talent. We need Western and non-Western workers who are willing to be dramatically changed and strongly contextualized in their biblical thinking.

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# PEOPLES OF THE WORLD

**Learning from Ants: A Look at Evangelists and Cross-cultural Missionaries**
**By Justin Long**

**H**ere is the problem: In 1900, 879 million people (fifty-six percent of the world's population of 1.6 billion people) had never heard of Christ, Christianity or the gospel. They were *unevangelized*. They could not get access to the gospel very easily. They had no churches, no preachers, no evangelists, no scriptures, etc. What they did have was fifteen thousand cross-cultural missionaries (of all traditions) working among them.

One hundred years later, in 2000, the number of unevangelized people had grown to 1.6 billion—twenty-six percent of the world's six billion people. Sadly, only ten thousand missionaries were working among them.

The percentage of the world that is unreached declined from fifty-six to twenty-six percent. However, because the world's population has grown incredibly, the total number of people who are unevangelized doubled (879

million to 1.6 billion). Meanwhile, the number of missionaries working to reach them declined (see the **July 2006 issue** of Momentum for a full discussion). If the task of evangelizing the world could not be completed in 1900 by fifteen thousand workers, surely ten thousand workers are unlikely to finish it. We need more workers. But how many more?

History is scattered with dedicated servants of God who were used to evangelize hundreds of thousands of people. Below are examples of some of these persons or small teams:

- **Jesus.** *Israel, AD 33.* Jesus himself evangelized the whole of Palestine in three years, thus impacting about 800,000 people.

- **Believers who fled persecution in Jerusalem.** *Antioch, AD 39.* The population of 130,000 in Antioch was evangelized largely through believers who fled persecution in Jerusalem, then later by Paul and Barnabas.

- **Judas (Lebbaeus) and Simon the Zealot.** *Iran, AD 49.* Judas (Lebbaeus) and Simon the Zealot had about 100,000 converts; far more must have been evangelized despite immense hostility from Iran's priestly caste.

- **Paul and related missionary teams.** *Asia, AD 55.* The Roman province of Asia was completely evangelized. Five hundred cities were reached in two years by Paul and related missionary teams.

- **Patrick.** Ireland, *AD 435.* Patrick planted over two hundred churches and baptized over 100,000 converts. He created the effective Celtic monastic mission structure to extend this work.

- **Vincent Ferrer.** *Europe, AD 1399.* Catalan Dominican preacher Ferrer wandered throughout Europe, evangelizing and bringing revival. He saw twenty-five thousand converts and preached six thousand sermons.

- **Filofei Leszczynski.** *Russia, AD 1712.* Leszczynski, an Orthodox missionary, baptized over forty thousand people and planted over three hundred new churches.

- **George Whitefield.** *USA, AD 1735.* Whitefield preached in public eighteen thousand times to eighteen million hearers in crowds of up to thirty thousand people. He was heard by up to eighty percent of the people in the United States.

- **John Wesley.** *Britain, AD 1739.* Wesley traveled up to eight thousand miles per year on average, preached forty thousand sermons, made 140,000 converts and created a vast network of churches and societies.

- **A Russian Orthodox mission team on Kodiak Island.** *Alaska (USA), AD 1792.* A Russian Orthodox mission team on Kodiak Island baptized 2,500 shamanist Eskimos in two years, and ten thousand in 1795 alone.

- **Charles Finney.** *USA, AD 1800s.* Finney's preaching led to the conversion of over 500,000 people.

- **D. L. Moody.** *USA, AD 1800s.* Moody preached to over 100 million people and personally brought 750,000 people to Christ.

- **Billy Sunday.** *USA, AD 1800s.* Sunday became a nationally known evangelist who had over 200,000 converts.

- **Billy Graham.** *AD 1900s.* Graham preached to fifty million people in 229 crusades by 1976, with 1.5 million decisions; by 1984, there were 104 million registered decisions (apart from television audiences). By 2005, through media, he had preached to two billion people.

- **William Wade Harris.** *Liberia, AD 1910.* Harris, a Liberian activist, preached across Ivory Coast and baptized 100,000 converts.

- **Simon Kimbangu.** *Africa, AD 1920.* Kimbangu, sometimes called "The People's Prophet," had a brief but powerful ministry that inspired faith in Central Africa. Imprisoned for stirring up the Congolese people, Kimbangu became the catalyst for Africa's largest independent church.

**What about Today?**
These examples seem to say that a called, gifted, trained and equipped evangelistic team (composed of multiple individuals) can impact hundreds of thousands of people—if not millions—over the space of a few years.

But are these the rule or the exception? If they are the rule, then why are there not more such people? Why don't modern mission teams achieve this kind of success? *Operation World* estimates 200,000 total Protestant, Independent and Anglican missionaries worldwide. *World Christian Trends* says Protestant, Independent and Anglican traditions added 4.3 million new converts per year over the period 1990-2000 (not including children born into Christian households). So, it would seem that 200,000 workers were each responsible for about twenty-one converts. (This number is not quite accurate, as it ignores the work of pastors, lay evangelists and so on.)

*World Christian Trends* estimates there are 420,000 missionaries worldwide (including Orthodox, Marginals and Roman Catholics). About thirty-two million unevangelized people hear the gospel for the first time each year. Each missionary is responsible, on average, for about seventy-six newly evangelized people.

Of course, these are simply averages: the middle position between two extremes. Some missionaries see many converts; others see less. Consider the *JESUS* film. Over 5.4 billion people have seen it since 1979; 200 million of these have made a decision for Christ. There are 4,600 JESUS film teams, so this equates to about 1.1 million evangelized and forty-three thousand converts per team. This is, of course, a very rough estimate. The *JESUS* film has not always had 4,600 teams, and today's teams are not the same as the teams thirty years ago. Even if we divided by thirty for an annual figure, it equates to thirty-six thousand evangelized people and 1,400 converts per year. This is significantly higher than the average cited above, but still far below the "heroic" levels in the first few examples.

There are more startling cases. The mostly Muslim Bhojpuri of northeast India are one. The state of Bihar, home to thirty-nine million Bhojpuri, is the birthplace of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and the hyper-nationalistic movements of India. In the 100-year history of missionary work among the Bhojpuri, there has been very little fruit. Bihar has been commonly known as the "graveyard of missions and missionaries." Yet, in the past fifteen years, a church planting movement has resulted in thirty thousand churches led and planted by indigenous peoples. Over one million believers have been baptized. Some of these churches are tenth generation church plants. A dozen Muslim imams are now baptized church planters and prayer groups are meeting in mosques.

Still, the reality is that this movement—extraordinary though it is—affects only a small part of India's 1.2 billion people. These one million believers represent less than one percent of India. In spite of the success of the numbers, a significant task remains: more than 150,000 Bhojpuri villages are unreached, work on the Old Testament translation is unfinished and—beyond the Bhojpuri—yet another 120 million Muslims throughout the rest of India still need to hear the gospel.

**The Cross-cultural Missionary versus the Mass Evangelist**
To understand what we are talking about, it is necessary to look at the differences between the cross-cultural missionary team and the mass evangelist. Here are several:

- *Evangelists work in their own language.* They have no need for translation. Paul, for example, was equally at home in Greek and Hebrew, and Greek was widely used throughout the Roman Empire.

- *Evangelists are already contextualized.* They do not need to spend months or years learning the culture. Instead, they spend their time presenting the gospel. Many preach tens of thousands of sermons. They do not need to strive at contextualization, since they are already part of the culture they are seeking to reach. (Yes, Paul did contextualize somewhat during the whole Jews-versus-Gentiles controversy; however, that is not the same as contextualizing for a society with which you are not familiar.)

- *Evangelists have fewer security issues.* Although some have faced severe hostility, most do not have the same kind of security worries that cross-cultural workers have. Most evangelists are local and "fit in." Some as citizens have personal freedoms. Paul was protected to some degree by his Roman citizenship, as were the evangelists of the Great Awakening.

- *Evangelists find it easier to raise funds.* Those who are working in their own context generally find it easier to get funding than those who are working cross-culturally. Donors can immediately see the benefits. Thus, it will typically be easier for Billy Graham to raise funds for a city-wide crusade in America than it will be for a missionary to raise funds from Americans for ministry in Algeria.

A look at the lives of several cross-cultural missionaries throughout the ages gives us a deeper picture of what we are talking about and where we, as missionaries, need to put our emphasis:

- **Robert Morrison** was the first Protestant missionary in China (sent by the London Missionary Society in 1807). He arrived in Macao and ministered in China for nearly thirty years. He translated the Bible into Mandarin by 1818 and translated a dictionary by 1821. He faced numerous pressures. Imperial edicts against foreigners forced him to hide in his house. He died in 1834 having seen only ten converts.

- **Amy Carmichael** did not see hundreds of thousands of converts, either. She was rejected by the China Inland Mission in 1892—for "frailty." She went as a Keswick missionary to Japan, but decided that was not where God wanted her and eventually ended up in India in 1895. By 1899, she had developed a ministry rescuing children who had been dedicated by their families to serve as temple prostitutes; she eventually founded a society called the "Sisters of the Common Life." She served for fifty-six years without furlough, took in more than one thousand children in her orphanages and wrote over thirty-five books.

- **Gladys Aylward** was likewise rejected by mission agencies for service in China. She decided to go on her own and saved up her own money and traveled by train from London across Europe and Russia, through battle zones (China and Japan were at war at the time). She ultimately reached Yangchen where she helped a retired missionary woman at an inn for muleteers. She learned Mandarin (in spite of the fact that mission agencies had been sure she was too uneducated to do that), evangelized surrounding villages and took in orphan children. She became a Chinese citizen in 1936 and, when warfare in the region became too intense, led her one hundred orphan children over a hundred miles to a safer province.

- **Adoniram Judson** was the first American missionary to Burma (modern Myanmar). He served for thirty-seven years with only one home leave. During his ministry, he translated the Bible, planted one

hundred churches and saw eight thousand converts. The believers continued to grow and multiply after his death, and Burma eventually attained the status it now holds: the country with the third largest number of Baptist believers worldwide.

- **Hudson Taylor** served in China for over fifty years, where he founded a missionary society, bringing nearly eight hundred missionaries to the country and personally baptizing an estimated fifty thousand converts. The largest part of this happened late in his missionary career. His legacy was the China Inland Mission (today's **Overseas Missionary Fellowship**) and what would eventually become millions of believers in China. Taylor was also one of the first Protestant missionaries to contextualize the gospel into Chinese culture (adopting Chinese dress, language and food). He was one of the first to accept single and married women as missionaries—including Lottie Moon, who become a prominent figure in Southern Baptist churches and the inspiration for an annual fundraising campaign.

- **Samuel Zwemer**'s story is told by J. Christy Wilson in "The Apostle to Islam: the Legacy of Samuel Zwemer" (*International Journal of Frontier Missions*, Oct-Dec 1996). Zwemer and his friend James Cantine wanted to go to a "needy field." They looked for the most difficult field they could find and chose Arabia. No society would sponsor them, saying it was foolish for them to go to such a resistant people. Zwemer said, "If God calls you and no board will send you, bore a hole through the board and go anyway." They went to churches and raised their own support, forming the Arabian Mission. In 1890, they headed to Beirut to learn Arabic. During Zwemer's ministry he traveled extensively through the Muslim world, distributing tracts and Bibles; at many conferences he was an outspoken advocate for mission to Muslims. Still, the work he started remains unfinished.

**Understanding Missionary Success**

When it comes to cross-cultural work, it seems long-term significance is far more important than short-term success. The role of the missionary is to raise up a core of nationals who will present the gospel and make disciples. If we begin with two people and each "generation" doubles, then by the twentieth generation there will be more than one million converts. How long it should take to get from generation one to generation twenty is central to church growth debates. If each generation doubled every six months (a radically rapid pace), it would take ten years. The Bhojpuri movement is considered rapid, and it took fifteen years to reach the tenth generation.

What we need are not individuals who can evangelize large numbers, but people who can ensure that large numbers are and continue to be evangelized and discipled and that communities continue to be transformed. In other words, we need Roberts, Amys, Gladyses, Adonirams, Hudsons and Samuels who can identify and serve the Pauls, Patricks, Georges, Johns and Billys within other cultures.

Back to our original question—how many do we need? Let us assume any given missionary team can mentor a local church planting movement that will impact at least 100,000 people over the space of a decade. If so, we arrive at a simple number: about forty-three thousand such teams are needed (see the chart[1]).

How we recruit and send that many teams is a question we will address in the next issue.

| Name | Unevangelized | Evangelized Non-Christian | Teams Needed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Northern Africa | 88,035,669 | 54,380,484 | 1,732 |
| WORLD | 1,849,130,854 | 8,468,627,056 | 43,178 |
| Western Africa | 80,145,410 | 85,661,139 | 1,658 |
| **AFRICA** | 222,816,389 | 254,174,136 | 4,770 |
| ASIA / Eastern Africa | 4,500,549,735 | 6,976,309,729 | 35,669 |
| Middle Africa | 9,469,322,954 | 86,237,900 | 19,943 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| South-central Asia | 751,457,089 | 783,448,570 | 15,349 |
| South-eastern Asia | 187,108,214 | 249,812,980 | 4,369 |
| Western Asia | 108,051,478 | 92,692,269 | 2,007 |
| | | | |
| **EUROPE** | 25,162,182 | 146,060,373 | 1,712 |
| Eastern Europe | 12,094,810 | 68,590,481 | 807 |
| Northern Europe | 2,075,620 | 15,095,314 | 172 |
| Southern Europe | 4,497,993 | 20,522,772 | 250 |
| Western Europe | 6,493,759 | 41,851,806 | 483 |
| | | | |
| **LATIN AMERICA** | 4,538,383 | 36,634,438 | 412 |
| Caribbean | 387,522 | 6,863,714 | 73 |
| Central America | 941,339 | 5,013,973 | 60 |
| South America | 3,209,522 | 24,756,751 | 280 |
| | | | |
| **NORTH AMERICA** | 5,901,825 | 49,138,679 | 550 |
| | | | |
| **PACIFIC** | 754,340 | 5,782,701 | 65 |
| Australia-New Zealand | 546,893 | 5,145,271 | 57 |
| Melanesia | 195,345 | 555,979 | 8 |
| Micronesia | 5,929 | 33,876 | 0 |
| Polynesia | 6,173 | 47,575 | 1 |

**Endnote**

1. Unevangelized and Evangelized non-Christian totals come from the *World Christian Database.*

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## A Focus on South Pacific and Southeast Asia: 661 Least-reached People Groups Remain

**O**verview
The first missionaries who went to the twenty-seven island nations of the South Pacific two hundred years ago were stunned by the beautiful green landscapes and women with long, black hair. But they were also appalled by immorality, human sacrifices and idolatry. Thanks to the hard work of these missionary pioneers, it is difficult to find ethnic groups in this part of the world who have no contact with the gospel; however, there do remain between twenty-five and thirty least-reached people groups.

Cocos (Keeling) Islands only has a population of about six hundred people; however, 68.9% are least-reached (Islamic). Australia has nearly 391,000 least-reached people in ten groups, mostly immigrants and Jews. Today, the Pacific Islanders are taking the gospel a step further—they are sending and being sent as missionaries themselves. Pray for this region with the lowest number of remaining least-reached peoples, that God would quickly establish vibrant fellowships of believers among all of them so that all South Pacific peoples join together to glorify God.

Did you know that many peoples in the eleven nations of Southeast Asia were once Hindus, later Buddhists, but today they are Muslim? Most peoples in this region of color and diversity are either Buddhist or Muslim and over six hundred people groups remain least-reached. The gospel is making small inroads; however, few people groups have embraced Jesus other than a few tribes in northern Thailand and Myanmar. Five countries have least-reached populations of over fifty percent; some have up to 95.2% (Cambodia) least-reached peoples! Indonesia is a huge challenge with over two hundred least-reached peoples and over 130 million least-reached population! We need to pray for the spiritual obstacles to be removed.

**Prayer Points**

- **Resourcefulness.** Pray that God causes people from the body of Christ to work with his divine creativity and in the unity of the Spirit to overcome every barrier to the gospel among every people group.

- **Rapid.** Pray for the Word of God to spread rapidly and be honored as it is proclaimed by faithful men and women before those around them, especially among the remaining least-reached peoples.

- **Remainder.** Pray for the remainder of the least-reached groups to be reached and to join hands with God, one another and believers around the world.

- **Expatriate and indigenous workers.** God would bring many more workers and provide creative means of access to the least-reached peoples throughout these regions for the gospel.

- **Contextual evangelism.** Pray for God to help believers creatively communicate the gospel and his truth through familiar means with an eternal message of hope and salvation.

**Links**

- **Resources** to pray, to mobilize prayer and to do outreach.

- **Discover** more about these 661 least-reached peoples.

- **Pray** for the least-reached peoples of these regions.

- Obtain **daily prayer guides** for peoples of these regions.

**Background**

**Does One Have to Be Muslim to Be Malay?**
*(By Keith Carey, managing editor, Global Prayer Digest)*
To hear the term "Malay" would make you think that the Malay peoples all live in the country of Malaysia, but they don't! Out of twenty-five million Malay people, only about half live there. The other half live in Indonesia (ten million), southern Thailand (2.5 million), Singapore (500,000) and Brunei (231,000). However, if you broaden the linguistic definition, the number of Malay people can rise to 285 million people separated into 766 different subgroups scattered across the Malay World of Southeast Asia. It is worth stating that this Muslim population is one-fifth of the world's total Muslim population, making Southeast Asia a key region for ministry to Muslims.

Language is key in defining the Malay peoples. However, the Malay peoples add one more very important element to how they define themselves. To them, to be Malay is to be a Muslim. How did this come to be? Let us take a look at the historical context.

**Why the Malay Do Not Want to Be "Christians"**
Malays founded several trading empires and their language became the major language of commerce in Southeast Asian ports. During this time period, Arab traders were trading with the Malay peoples. They were on friendly terms. Arab missionaries were spreading Islam throughout the region. Most people embraced Islam by choice.

Unfortunately, Christianity was perceived as being the religion of colonial conquerors. In 1511, well-armed Portuguese ships, emblazoned with the cross, came into Melaka. They conquered this part of the world and held it until the Protestant Dutch forced them out in 1641. Neither group impressed the Malays with their spiritual merits.

Once the British established their colonial administration in 1786 in Melaka, Penang and Singapore, they began Christian missionary work. Unfortunately, most of these early missionaries were simply waiting for China to open up before moving on to the Middle Kingdom. When this door opened in the nineteenth century, only a tiny remnant of the missionary force remained in the Malay world. One notable missionary was Benjamin Keasberry, who resigned from his missionary agency to continue his work among the Malays. At the height of his work, there were sixty Malays in his congregation; however, after he died, all of them reverted back to Islam.

The Treaty of Pangkor in 1874 was a setback for missionary work. In this treaty, the British made an agreement with Muslim sultans not to interfere with the religion of the Malays. To this day, Malay leaders point to this treaty to excuse their restrictions on Christian missionary work. In the 1930s, a group of Christian workers in Malaysia, among them lawyers and other very notable people, determined the treaty said nothing of the sort. But the treaty certainly hindered ministry. Today there are churches and Christians who are reticent to engage in Malay outreach for fear of being closed down, imprisoned or fined.

**Today's Context**
Malay Muslims in Southeast Asia have had to learn to live in harmony with peoples of other faiths. In Southeast

Asia, there are significant Buddhist, Hindu and Christian populations. The Malay Muslims in Malaysia only make up about sixty percent of the population.

During British colonial days, the Malays tended to remain rural while Chinese immigrants excelled in urban businesses. In nearby Indonesia, where ten million more Malay people live, the Chinese also tend to run the most important parts of the economy. Malay people in both countries feel threatened by the Chinese. The usual peace between ethnic and religious groups in this part of the world has been interrupted by sporadic violent persecution of the Chinese minority, some of whom are Christian.

The Malay peoples sometimes feel that they are losing control of their own country. In order to regain control, the Malay legislators have passed laws that require their universities to have a certain percentage of ethnic Malay students. A certain number of government jobs are also reserved for the Malays.

Like all Muslims, the Malays are sensitive about their people becoming "apostates;" that is, converts to other religions. To them, if someone from their family or community turns away from Islam, it means that they all lose face. To the Asian mind, this is unacceptable. A 15 November 2006 article in *BBC News* told of the ordeals faced by two Muslim women in Malaysia who dared to embrace Christianity. One of them said, "If the authorities find out [about my conversion], I will be in big trouble. They will create hell between me and my family, and hell in my life so that I will no longer get any privileges or employment."

She noted that the church where she was baptized had to keep the matter a secret to avoid retribution from the Muslims. At the time the article was printed, one of the women was in hiding and the other feared that Muslim neighbors might take the law into their own hands. Both women were trying to officially change their identity cards that state they are Muslims. This act would make their families feel that they are losing face, and make the Muslim majority fear that they are losing people to another religious system. Remember that Muslims view religious affiliation in political as well as religious terms. Joining another religion is the same as joining their rivals.

To be Malay is to be a Muslim. To become a follower of Christ, one would have to switch not only his or her allegiance, but also his or her culture. Wouldn't it be possible for a Malay to put his or her faith in Christ while dressing like a Muslim, praying five times a day and following Islamic cultural rules that do not conflict with the Bible?

Right or wrong, the Malay people believe that they are in danger of having their culture and their identity overrun by outsiders. This is nothing new. In Melaka, Malaysia, there is the grave of the legendary Malay warrior, Hang Tuah, who protected the Malay people from an outside attack that could have destroyed them as a race. His grave is marked with the following words: "The Malay will never be lost from the Earth."

When God created the nations, he had a purpose for each one of them, including the Malays. We know from Revelation 7:9 that there will someday be people from every tribe, tongue and nation worshipping the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. The Malay are not excluded from the roll call of the nations. Will they resist him to the end, or will they submit to Christ? One factor to consider is that they may be resisting another culture and the possibility of losing face more than they are resisting Jesus. Let us pray for this prominent affinity block as they face monumental spiritual decisions in the twenty-first century.

**How Can We Pray?**

- Pray that **ambassadors for Christ will take the Lord to each Malay people group** in such a way that they can embrace him without losing their culture or losing face.

- Pray for **lasting fruit** to come from the work of those who have worked among the Malays and those who are currently working among them.

- Pray for **an indigenous, biblical fellowship movement** among each Malay subgroup and each Malay community.

- Pray for **Christ to be glorified** among the Malay peoples.

- Pray for a **defeat of the forces of darkness** that deceive the Malay peoples into believing that they cannot put their faith in Christ.

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## Into Their World...The Aceh of Indonesia

**By Laurie Fortunak**

**The Aceh people, who live on the northern tip of the island of Sumatera in the province of Aceh, are strict Sunni Muslims** and have been very instrumental in spreading Islam throughout Indonesia and other parts of Southeastern Asia. In fact, it is often said that "to be Aceh is to be Muslim" and the Aceh have been known to strongly and even violently oppose other religions. The Aceh Province is the only province in Indonesia where Shari'a Islamic law has been formally instituted.

The provincial capital of Banda Aceh is commonly known as the "Veranda of Mecca" because it is a stopping place for Southeast Asian Muslims journeying by ship to Mecca, their holy city in Saudi Arabia. The Aceh are a blend of many races; however, they speak one language. Many Aceh also speak the national Indonesian language.

Most Aceh are farmers or fishers. Although there has been a trend toward building modern, cement homes, many Aceh still live in homes made of bamboo, wood, clay tiles and thatch which stand on stilts that are roughly two meters high. The families often use the space under the house for cattle stalls, chicken coops or to store tools and firewood.

Aceh women run the households. They often wear the traditional Islam dress, complete with head covering, even in their daily activities. Men have little to no say in matters that deal with the home or child-raising and the children in the house are expected to help with family work.

The province of Aceh is rich in natural resources and tourism is a potential industry that could be effective in bringing money to the area if infrastructure were improved. However, unrest and violence associated with an independent movement have kept the improvement of society from becoming a reality.

Pray the Aceh of Indonesia will see the brilliance of Jesus Christ through creation, dreams, witness and other means. Pray that God will turn them from darkness and into his marvelous light.

For more information on the Aceh of Indonesia, visit:

**www.global12project.com/2004/profiles/p_code/773.html**

**www.apeopleloved.com/Aceh.html**

# STRATEGY, TRENDS & STATISTICS

## Women in World Evangelization: More Study Needed
**By Sandi Kim**

**From the time of creation, God blessed both man and woman to "be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28).** As we continue to read redemptive history from Genesis to Revelation, God's design has been for all of creation, and both men and women specifically, to be filled with the knowledge of the living God and to proclaim the good news (Mark 16:15). From Priscilla and Aquila to William and Catherine Booth, men and women in partnership have advanced the gospel together throughout history. In the modern missionary movement, the partnership between men and women in proclaiming the good news, and the role of women in particular, has not diminished, but has grown stronger. However, a search of available materials does not reveal much consideration and in-depth analysis of the current strong and strategic influence of women from across the world involved in world evangelization today. This is an unfortunate travesty that must be addressed.

Throughout the age of modern missions, women from Great Britain, Europe and North America found increasing influence in the realm of world missions both on the homefront through "an impressive array of mission societies,"[1] as well as on the international front as foreign missionaries. Christian missions afforded Western women, especially those from middle and upper classes, the opportunity to exercise their power and skills in the socially acceptable sphere of religion which was considered at that time "feminine."[2]

Today, a brief Internet search on women in global missions in one missions magazine showed only four articles throughout the 1980s, no directly related articles since 1989 and only an incidental article in 2001. Whatever reputable studies on women in global missions there are, they are focused on Western female missionaries from the dawn of the modern missionary movement in the 1800s on into the 1900s, and not on the growing number of women from the global South who are also engaged in global missions.

Studies on women in global missions are primarily qualitative biographical and case studies rather than quantitative systematic analysis. Most notably, these qualitative studies are usually written by Western women about Western women, focusing on women as "influencers," social reformers, advocates and educators.[3] Unfortunately, this is not reflective of the current direction in which Christianity is growing most, that is in the global South, and as Dana Robert argues, "The current demographic shift in world Christianity should be analyzed as a women's movement."[4]

Roberts indicates further that there is no "hard data behind this assertion—because there wasn't any," yet we have indicators that "if the fastest growing indigenous groups in Latin American and Africa were predominantly female, and that if in the year 2000 these two continents together contained roughly forty-one percent of the world's Christians, then one could speak of the typical Christian in 2000 as Latin American or African female." More concerted efforts must be made to investigate and unveil the data that lies underneath these swells for which we currently only have indicators.

**In-depth Study Needed for Women in World Missions**
In-depth study focusing on women in global Christianity, and especially those involved in world missions, is

required to take world evangelization to the next level of strategic thinking. Although there currently is no such study available, there are some figures to help us in our initial search provided by David Barrett, Todd Johnson and Peter Crossing.[5] Although their data gives aggregate figures from 2005, there is not much in the way of gender-based data. According to Johnson, there is insufficient data from around the world to compile such an in-depth gender based studies. Nevertheless, Barrett, Johnson and Crossing do give us a few figures to consider.

The following data is pulled from Barrett, Johnson and Crossing's Global Table 2 in "Missiometrics 2007."[6] In 2005, there were over 4.4 million women engaged in full-time Christian work around the world, including home pastoral care, home mission and foreign missions. Over half of home pastoral workers (fifty-three percent) were women, and women constituted nearly half of all full-time foreign mission personnel (forty-five percent). Women constituted about forty-five percent of foreign lay personnel, forty percent of foreign lay ministers and about seventy-four percent of lay foreign missionaries. Women also comprised fifty percent of pilgrim evangelizers as well as seventy percent of tourist evangelizers.

Special consideration must be made for the strategic training of unmarried women on the job, as two-thirds of all women in full-time ministry were unmarried. Over half of the women in full-time missions were unmarried (fifty-two percent), and just under half of the women in home missions were unmarried (49.7%). The overwhelming majority of women in home pastoral staff (77.7%) were unmarried.

Not only do women have a formidable role in world missions today, but also on the homefront as former missionaries and retired personnel. In 2005, women constituted about fifty-seven percent of ex-foreign missionaries (about 120,000 of 210,000), and about fifty percent of retired personnel from foreign missions (about 5,000 of 10,000). For total background supporters, according to Barrett, Johnson and Crossing, women constituted about fifty-six percent of all background supporters in missions, both in home missions (130 million, fifty-nine percent) and foreign missions (258 million, fifty-five percent). Sadly, of those who were retired personnel, only about thirty-six percent of those with pensions were women, and among retired personnel from foreign missions there were twice as many women than men who were unpensioned.

These figures help us gain a little more insight into the significant role of women in the task of world evangelization today, especially as lay foreign missionaries and evangelists where they constitute over two-thirds of the workforce. The figures also show that women are in need of better support following their tenure as world evangelizers. With these facts in mind, more strategic training and especially the strategic deployment and utilization of women are needed.

Currently, there is a surprising dearth of strategies and scholarly studies focusing on the role and effect of women in world evangelization, especially considering their very large numbers. If we are indeed to be on the cutting edge of evangelical world evangelization, greater energy and focus must be devoted to strategic consideration and study of the other half of the team, the half invisible, the half that is woman.

### Endnotes

1. Robert, Dana L. 2005. *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice.* Macon, Georgia, USA: Mercer University Press. ix.

2. Okkenhaug, Inger Marie. 2004. "Women in Christian Mission: Protestant Encounters from the 19th and 20th century." *North South. Gendered View from Norway.* Special Edition of *Kvinneforskning,* 3.

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4. Robert. "World Christianity as a Women's Movement," 180.

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6. Ibid, 28.

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# LAUSANNE REPORTS

## Lausanne III: Cape Town 2010 International Congress on World Evangelization

**The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) recently announced plans for the Third International Congress on World Evangelization, to be held 16-25 October 2010 in Cape Town, South Africa.** "Lausanne III: Cape Town 2010" will gather mission and church leaders from around the world to address challenges and opportunities that are before the Church with respect to world evangelization.

Rev. S. Douglas Birdsall, LCWE executive chair, says the year 2010 was selected to celebrate the centenary of the historic World Missionary Conference convened in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1910 under the leadership of Dr. John R. Mott. The selection of Cape Town also has historic significance, as William Carey, considered the father of modern missions, first proposed an international missionary conference to be held there in 1810. "We believe the 200th anniversary of William Carey's vision and the centennial of its fulfillment is an appropriate time to once again encourage international leaders to come together to chart the course for the work of world evangelization in the twenty-first century," Birdsall said. Dr. Michael Cassidy, founder of **African Enterprise** and a member of the Lausanne III advisory council, also believes Lausanne III "will add enormous impetus and encouragement to the African Church to fulfill its destiny in world missions in the twenty-first century."

"There is no doubt we have entered a new era in global Christianity," Birdsall added. "We need to strategize about how we can advance the spread of the gospel around the world. This is especially important as our world continues to shrink through new technologies, and as the evangelical population has shifted to the southern hemisphere."

Lindsay Brown, newly appointed international director for LCWE, points to the dramatic shifts that have taken place in Christianity over the course of the last century, shifts that are reflected in the leadership of Lausanne III. Anglican Archbishop Henry Orombi of Uganda will serve as the chairman of the Africa host committee. The Lausanne III advisory council is chaired by Dr. Samuel Escobar from Latin America. Bishop Hwa Yung of the Methodist Church in Malaysia is chairman of the participant selection committee. The program committee will be chaired by Rev. Ramez Atallah, director of the Bible Society of Egypt. Lausanne III Congress director Rev. Blair T. Carlson, a former international crusade director for the **Billy Graham Evangelistic Association**, grew up in Hong Kong and has spent most of his life working and living in locations around the world.

Cape Town has literally opened its arms to the Lausanne III Congress. Christians throughout the area are offering their homes to host as many as one thousand of the four thousand church and mission leaders from two

hundred countries who are expected to attend. "We have been overwhelmed by the welcome we have received from Cape Town," said Robyn Claydon, LCWE deputy chair. "We look forward with great excitement to what God is going to accomplish through this event and the city of Cape Town."

The first International Congress on World Evangelization (**Lausanne I**) was held in 1974 in Lausanne, Switzerland. The gathering was convened under the leadership of Rev. Billy Graham and drew more than 2,700 evangelical leaders from 150 countries. The focus of the meeting was both practical and theological, producing the **Lausanne Covenant**, a document that provides theological underpinnings for intentional collaborative world evangelization. The Covenant includes fifteen articles dealing with major issues such as the authority of scripture, the nature of evangelism, Christian social responsibility, the urgency of world evangelization, faith and culture and the nature of spiritual conflict. The Covenant has provided a framework for unity and serves as the statement of faith for hundreds of organizations around the world.

In 1989, 3,600 leaders from 190 nations attended **Lausanne II** in Manila, Philippines. The resulting **Manila Manifesto** reaffirmed and expanded upon The Lausanne Covenant and the call to "Proclaim Christ Until He Comes."

The foundational work for Lausanne III began with the **2004 Forum for World Evangelization** in Thailand which brought together 1,500 participants in thirty-one simultaneous consultations to deal with the seminal issues in respect to world evangelization. Two years later, the preparation continued with a concerted effort to engage a new generation of Christian leadership, as five hundred younger Christian leaders from 120 countries gathered for the 2006 **Lausanne Younger Leaders Gathering** in Malaysia. The Lausanne Bi-Annual Leadership meeting this June in Budapest will accelerate the planning for the Lausanne III Congress.

"The pressing issues before us today, such as engaging worldviews increasingly hostile to Christianity, the threat of terrorism and HIV/AIDS, coupled with new opportunities and new technologies, are very different from those issues faced in 1974," Birdsall explained. "New global challenges require thoughtful and prayerful global responses. We pray that Lausanne III: Cape Town 2010 will serve to unite and energize the Church with a new vision and a new commitment to partnership for the work of world evangelization for a new time."
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