

LausanneWorldPulse.com

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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

The International Bible Society (IBS), one of the world's largest translators and distributors of scripture, and Send the Light (STL), one of the world's largest distributors of Christian literature, have merged. The new organization, IBS-STL, has operations in the United States, the United Kingdom, India, Asia, Africa, Latin America and other parts of the world. It combines the core competencies of Bible translation, Bible and Christian book publishing and global distribution. "The blending of these organizations is a powerful combination," said Keith Danby, CEO for the new organization. "It's not often that two ministries can come together with the potential to have such far-reaching global impact for the cause of Christ and the Bible." ([International Bible Society](#))

CHINA

Amity Bible printing press in China is planning to move to a new site. On a visit to Nanjing, China last fall, Daniel Willis, CEO of [Bible Society NSW](#), inspected the new site for the Amity Printing Press. "At the moment, the site is just a vacant block of land with a few cattle grazing on it, but when the site is developed, it will mean millions more Bibles for China," said Willis. The 86,671 square metre site is part of a new industrial development in Nanjing, a city of over six million people. Funding for the new development, expected to cost RMB 230,000,000, is coming from the [United Bible Societies](#) and the other joint venture partners. "Who would have thought that twenty years ago when the press first opened that we would be so successful that we would need to move to a new location?" Willis asked. "Over that twenty-year period, the press has printed fifty million Bibles and New Testaments with forty million Chinese language Bibles distributed in China... We are seeing an unprecedented opportunity for whole Bible distribution throughout China." There are fifty-five thousand Bible distribution points spread throughout the country. ([Bible Society NSW](#))

CHINA

Using the 2008 Olympics in Beijing as a platform, a United States commission on religious freedom has called for increased international pressure on China to end its intolerance of religious expression. Felice Gaer, chairperson of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, asked the US Congress to give the subject of religious freedom the same priority as trade and security when dealing with China. ([Ecumenical News International](#))

GERMANY

Faced with a dwindling church membership and growing secularization, the mainline Protestant churches in Germany are launching one of the most radical reforms in recent history. The former "people's church" in Martin Luther's home country has suffered continuous losses since the 1970s. Today, the mainline Protestant churches have close to twenty-six million members. If nothing changes, this number will drop to seventeen million by 2030. Protestant leadership, including Bishop Wolfgang Huber, have proposed changes that include

more missions, a greater focus on the Great Commission and the proclamation of the gospel taking top priority. The label “Protestant” must be filled with meaning and content, Huber said. ([idea](#))

INDIA

The [International Bible Society](#) pioneered the first prose literature ever written in the Awadhi language by completing the first Awadhi translation of the Bible. More than fifty native scholars in northern India worked for twelve years to accurately translate the language, style and theology of the complete Bible into a language spoken by more than twenty million people. More than 1,500 people gathered 17 December 2006 in Lucknow, India as Mayor Dinesh Sharma presented the first Awadhi translation of the Bible. “It is the translation by the people of Awadhi and for the people of Awadhi,” explained Michael Paul who coordinated the project. This IBS translation is the first Bible Awadhi speakers can read in their own language and the first piece of prose literature in the language, since for centuries the Awadhi language has been written only in poetic form. “Today, the Bible has become the text book for students of the Awadhi language in general,” Paul said. ([International Bible Society](#))

INDIA

Christian groups in India have lambasted the passage of an anti-conversion bill in northern Himachal Pradesh state, ruled by the secular India National Congress party, as pandering to a small minority of hardline Hindu nationalists. The ecumenical [All India Christian Council](#) (AICC) has appealed to the federal coalition government led by the Congress party to stop the enactment of the bill passed by the Himachal Pradesh legislature at the end of 2006. ([Ecumenical News International](#))

INDIA

Despite being a “secular democratic republic,” India is still “not a very safe place for its tiny Christian minority,” says a report released by a top official in the [All India Christian Council](#) (AICC). The Christian community faced at least one crime against it every third day during 2006, with a total of 128 cases recorded in the media, said the report compiled by John Dayal, general secretary of the council. “The figure may actually be much higher,” said Dayal in the introduction to his “Unofficial White Paper on Violence against Christians in India * 2006.” ([Ecumenical News International](#))

LATVIA

A locally-produced Children’s Bible has hit the market in a country where, until now, most Children’s Bibles have been translations from other languages. The Bible is the culmination of a project launched several years ago by the Latvian Bible Society. Having decided to publish a Children’s Bible featuring pictures painted by local children, the Bible Society launched a competition in autumn 2002 entitled *My Favourite Bible Story*. Nearly 650 children from a wide range of religious and ethnic backgrounds submitted paintings illustrating many different Bible stories, along with written comments about why their chosen story appealed to them. Some fifty paintings were selected to appear in the resulting full-color Children’s Bible. Bible texts were adapted for children and are accompanied by prayers and by questions to prompt further reflection. ([United Bible Societies](#))

SENEGAL

[Operation Blessing International](#) (OBI) recently built innovative micro-enterprise fish farms in Senegal. OBI hatched plans to help a local missionary build two more tilapia ponds, but this time with a twist: the side by side ponds will be fished not by nets, but by draining the ponds of their water. That water then goes to water nearby garden projects. The integration helps unify the community. The OBI team's project was aimed at demonstrating God's love by meeting physical and spiritual needs. ([Mission Network News](#))

UNITED KINGDOM

Plans to build the largest mosque outside of the Middle East are being made. The mega-mosque, which will be called the London Markaz, will be located on London’s east end. The land for the proposed mega-mosque now

hosts a small make-shift mosque. The proposed building will be a 17-acre worship center for as many as seventy thousand Muslims and is set to be the hub of an Islamic quarter for the 2012 London Olympics. The mosque will dwarf many of Britain's Christian cathedrals and will include an Islamic garden, a library and some residential accommodations. The group behind the project, Tablighi Jamaat, is thought to have ties to al-Qaeda and the project is being funded from sources in the Middle East. Although there is opposition to the project, London's far-left mayor, Ken Livingstone, supports the proposal. ([CBNNews](#))

UNITED KINGDOM

The number of languages into which at least one complete book of the Bible has been translated reached 2,426 at the end of 2006, according to the [United Bible Societies'](#) (UBS) 2006 Scripture Language Report. The report records each scripture translation carried out by UBS or another translation agency which is received at the library of either the [American Bible Society](#) or the [British and Foreign Bible Society](#). Along with three new Bibles, the 2006 *Scripture Language Report* lists thirty-one new New Testaments, of which five are the first recorded scripture publications in those languages. Additional portions were registered for thirty-four languages which do not yet have either an Old or New Testament and for twenty-one languages which have the New Testament but not the Old Testament. In twenty-six other languages in which translation and publication had already taken place, new or revised versions of portions, Testaments or Bibles are now available. ([United Bible Societies](#))

PUBLISHER'S MEMO

[Witness and Creation Care: "The Stones Will Cry Out!"](#)

By [Lon Allison](#)

One hears various titles given to the theme of this month's issue of Lausanne World Pulse. "Environmental Concern" is one title. Another I have heard is "The Greening of the Church." I prefer "Creation Care." The title matters little as long as we take seriously our role to be stewards of our planet. In my country (the United States) and throughout the Western world, one hardly reads or watches news without finding this topic prominent in the newscast, and rightly so. We should be deeply concerned about global warming, greenhouse gases, ozone alerts, destruction of the rain forests and many other issues. Several of our authors address these topics with skilled pens.

My contribution this month is to tie creation care to my passion and one of Lausanne's passions, namely, that of witness. I have always been arrested by Jesus' response to the Pharisees as he rode into Jerusalem. If you recall, the crowds were preaching, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest" (Luke 19:38). Angry at such a declaration, the Pharisees urged Jesus to quiet the crowds. Jesus responded, "I tell you, if they keep quiet the stones will cry out" (19:40). Throughout the scriptures we find God's creation in the role of proclamation or witness. "The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech, night after night, they display knowledge," declares the Psalmist (Psalm 19:1-2). Paul argues that the central role of creation as declarer of God's reality: "For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse" (Romans 1:20).

I am deeply concerned about our environment. In our home, we are taking some steps to help, including recycling as much as possible. Did you know that one aluminum can of Coke or Pepsi when recycled saves the equivalent of ½ gallon of gasoline? Or, as I tell my son, "One can recycled is ten miles (sixteen kilometers) of petrol!" We are also using fluorescent light bulbs in all our lamps and lights. There is a tremendous energy

savings in doing so. Future generations deserve a healthy planet on which to live. We must each individually and in our ministry leadership practice preach creation care.

In addition, I want to care for God's creation because I understand that it is, in and of itself, part of the Kerygma, as all three passages above evidence. I have many personal stories of God speaking deeply to me through creation. Perhaps you do as well. I remember one time when I first turned to Christ. I was on a pine tree-covered hill in the mountains of northern California. It was night and the moon was shining through both the trees and on a rugged cross placed on the hilltop. I could hear the sounds of animals and birds. It was there that God told me, through his creation, that I was to focus on his cross where Jesus shed his blood for the forgiveness of my sins and those of the whole world. In theology we would call this the integration of general and specific revelation. I did not know those terms then. I only knew God was speaking to me in a profound way. The fact that I remember it some thirty-five years later is evidence of that.

Creation is God proclaiming his beauty, his power and his sure presence. May our God guide us to be devoted caretakers of creation, for it is our fellow evangelist.

Lon Allison is director of the [Billy Graham Center](#) at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, USA. He also serves as director for the [Institute for Strategic Evangelism](#) at Wheaton College. He is co-publisher of *Lausanne World Pulse*.

WORLD EVANGELISM & MISSIONS REPORTS

Environmentalism and the Gospel

By Peter Harris and Barbara Mearns

Care for Creation—A Major Theme of the Bible?

The way the Bible frames the question “What is Christian mission?” is to ask who Jesus is, and what it means to follow him as Lord.

From the beginning of Genesis to the final promises of Revelation, the biblical story is of God's love reaching out to his whole creation, and supremely to people within it. Nothing else can explain the promise of the first covenant in Genesis 9:17, “This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on earth” or the ringing hope of Romans 8:19-21, “The creation itself was subjected to futility...in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God.” The Bible understands that those who follow Jesus as Lord are led straight into relationship with him, and then toward the restoration of all their relationships—be them personal, social or with the wider creation itself.

Does Creation Care Matter to God?

It is impossible to imagine that God is indifferent to the widespread destruction of what he has created. Indeed, the closing chapters of Job reveal God's compassionate, protective concern for the mountain goat, the wild donkey, the young raven in its nest and countless other creatures. To think that we can claim on the one hand to love God and then to be indifferent to his creation, or even worse to live destructively, is tragic. It has been well said that “it is impossible to say you love Rembrandt while you trash his paintings.” Set the wonderful promise of God's redemption of creation against some of the statistics.

In 2003 the World Conservation Union's Red List said that more than twelve thousand species (out of forty thousand assessed) faced some extinction risk. This includes:

- one in every eight birds

- thirteen percent of the world's flowering plants
- one quarter of all mammals

What we are witnessing is widespread, catastrophic destruction even while our awareness of the causes becomes clearer. While conservation organisations increasingly wonder why their cries for radical action have so little effect, the Old Testament asserts that environmental abuse is often the result of sin—the pursuit of quick gain through unsustainable exploitation or illegal action (Hosea 4:1-3, Isaiah 24:4-6). We are seeing the consequences of religious choices as human society on the Western consumer model opts for personal comfort at the cost of the survival of the wider creation.

A Christian Response

For over twenty years **A Rocha, Christians in Conservation** has been working to show how a distinctively Christian response can bring protection to endangered areas and species, and new hope to the human communities that are impoverished in consequence. Behind it all lies a Christian witness that recognises the relevance of the gospel to everything God has made. Now working in sixteen countries, A Rocha teams are conducting scientific research and educational programmes and living out in practice what the gospel means to all of creation.

Because of the conviction that all of our relationships matter to God, A Rocha teams root themselves in particular communities where conservation action is needed. Often the team is based at a field study centre, facilitating long-term conservation research studies and an intimate understanding of local issues. At present there are field study centres in Portugal, France, Kenya, Canada and the Czech Republic. In Lebanon, the team are based in a village close to the Aammiq Wetland, where they also have a classroom.

The Kenyan centre is close to the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest, a forty kilometre-long fragment of the remaining East African coastal forest which used to extend a thousand times that length from Somalia in the north to Mozambique in the south. As time was given by A Rocha team members to learning the causes of the final destruction of the last fragment, the true needs of local communities emerged.

Most of the wood was being cut to fund secondary school fees. Of those children who earned the grades to continue education, ninety percent were unable to do so for lack of funds—tragically so, as education is a key way for families to find their way out of the grinding poverty that is endemic to the region. Proscriptive solutions that policed the forest, or educational programs that extolled the importance of its habitats in global terms, were never going to succeed without taking account of the primary needs of the local communities. A solution has therefore been found in a programme called ASSETS, which brings in revenue from the forest through eco-tourism and is then directed to providing school fees for local children. It is crucial to notice the depth of local relationship and involvement—and to recognize all of the connections—before work like ASSETS can be undertaken. At a superficial level, it may seem that there is no connection between school fees and the fate of the Sokoke Scops Owl, but there is.

There is not the space here to tell similar stories of how the Lebanon team came to understand and address the complicated causes of the destruction of the Aammiq Wetland, or how the Canada team is working with other conservation organisations to restore streams where salmon can spawn. Please visit the website for pictures and stories from around the world at www.arocha.org.

What Does God Require of His Church?

John Stott has written, “Christian people should surely have been in the vanguard of the movement for environmental responsibility because of our doctrines of creation and stewardship. Did God make the world? Does he sustain it? Has he committed its resources to our care? His personal care for his own creation should be sufficient to inspire us to be equally concerned.”

Ecological involvement must be included under the heading of “mission,” for mission embraces everything Christ sends his people into the world to do, service as well as evangelism. And we cannot truly love and serve our neighbours if at the same time we are destroying their environment, or acquiescing in its destruction, or even ignoring the environmentally-depleted circumstances in which so many people are condemned to live.”

There is still time for the Church to embrace the biblical imperative to care for creation as a normal part of mission. We can reassess the teaching in theological colleges, church sermons and Sunday schools. We can pray, as church fellowships and individuals, about local and national environmental issues and seek God’s guidance in the action needed. We can encourage suitably talented young people to consider careers in environmental sciences. We can re-prioritise the use of church lands. We can challenge all church members to make changes that will lead to more sustainable lifestyles.

If we do not do these things, we fail in our obedience to God, we contribute to the degradation of God’s world and we present an unbalanced gospel which will be increasingly irrelevant to the countless numbers of people, both within and without the church, who seek hope and encouragement in their efforts to save the planet. That would be a tragedy. For the good news that God passionately cares about his world and has plans to one day, through his Son, “reconcile to himself all things” (Colossians 1:19-20) and liberate all creation from its sufferings, is one of the most glorious and hope-giving truths of the gospel.

Peter Harris is international director of **A Rocha**. He and his wife moved to Portugal in 1983 to establish and run A Rocha’s first field study centre and bird observatory. In 1995 the work was given over to national leadership and they moved to France where they have worked for the last nine years with national colleagues to establish a similar centre which opened early in 2001. Peter coordinates A Rocha projects in sixteen countries worldwide.

Barbara Mearns is part of the A Rocha international team.

HCJB World Radio Becomes HCJB Global

HCJB World Radio, the world’s first missionary broadcasting ministry, which has also developed an international medical outreach, has changed its name to HCJB Global. The ministry also named its media ministries HCJB Global Voice and its healthcare ministries HCJB Global Hands.

“We feel as we move into the future and expand the incredible dynamic between media and healthcare, the HCJB World Radio name did not accurately portray this vision,” said HCJB Global president David Johnson. “We will work to develop leaders and mobilize missionaries as we serve the world through HCJB Global Voice, our media arm, and HCJB Global Hands, our healthcare ministry.”

At the same time, HCJB World Radio engineering center in Elkhart, Indiana, USA, has become the HCJB Global technology center, focusing on the provision of quality assistance through consulting, service and engineering development wherever technological solutions play a role in the advance of the gospel.

The new names, along with new logos, were launched at **Urbana 06** in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, in late December 2006. HCJB Global will formalize the name change in a dedication event at the ministry’s newly named ministry service center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA, later this month.

“This is a major change for our ministry, because it is far more than skin deep,” said communications director Jon Hirst. “Our new name reflects major changes in our vision and focus as we work to integrate media and healthcare ministry around the world. As we moved toward the name change, we found that our friends and supporters wanted us to retain the call letters of our first station radio station—HCJB—that we established

seventy-five years ago in Quito, Ecuador. In maintaining the name, we are honoring our heritage and building upon it.”

For more than seven decades HCJB Global Voice has used shortwave radio, satellite, FM, AM, television and the Internet to deliver the gospel worldwide. For over fifty years HCJB Global Hands has been providing compassionate healthcare to those in the greatest need.

Since 1990 HCJB Global has enabled local partners to plant more than three hundred radio ministries in one hundred countries throughout Euro-Asia, North Africa/Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia Pacific and the Americas.

HCJB Global’s missionaries, pastors, broadcasters and healthcare providers use media, healthcare and training to work with partners around the world to spread the gospel. Lives are transformed so that people are engaged in the growing Church, making an impact on their communities as they are empowered to use media and healthcare tools. The ministry is headquartered in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Its website is www.hcjbglobal.org.

(This article was edited from an [HCJB Global](#) news release.)

[A Call for Papers for the Twelfth Assembly of the International Association for Mission Studies, Held 16-23 August 2008](#)

“For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring,—heirs according to the promise.” (Galatians 3:26–29)

Mission studies is concerned with academic reflection on the missionary practice of the Church and on the future of its missionary calling. As such, it utilizes an interdisciplinary approach that includes theological disciplines, the humanities, the social sciences and other academic fields. Religion—the Christian religion included—is often perceived as contributing to conflicts of identity, sometimes resulting in violent encounters. At the same time, the Christian faith finds its fundamental identity in a gospel of reconciliation.

What is the relationship between the different, even conflicting, human identities and the gospel of reconciliation? Is there a human identity that supersedes all specific identities—national, religious, gender, and/or economic, etc.? How can apparently conflicting identities be reconciled? How can one achieve a wholesome self-identity that includes the possibility of change and transformative mobility? And what is the role of reconciliation as offered by the gospel to the Christian community and by the Christian community?

The twelfth assembly of the [International Association for Mission Studies](#) (IAMS) will bring together scholars of different disciplines who will share their research and their evaluation with respect to such questions. It will be held 16-23 August 2008 in Budapest, Hungary. The topic will be “Human Identity and the Gospel of Reconciliation: Agenda for Mission Studies and Praxis in the 21st Century.”

It is hoped that a fruitful cross-fertilization can be realized that might stimulate further missiological research and set an agenda for future studies and ongoing praxis. It is also hoped that churches and other religious institutions might gain fresh insights from this assembly for their day-to-day work in a world where conflicting identities seem to subvert reconciliation efforts.

The goal of the Budapest assembly will be to identify and explore ethnic, gender, political and religious dimensions of human identity as challenge, opportunity and obligation for Christian churches in mission, from the vantage point of scholars whose academic disciplines intersect with mission studies. Papers from across a range of intersecting or related themes—such as ethnicity, race, gender, violence, poverty, nationalism, religion, ecclesiastical tradition, inner renewal, etc.—will be welcomed.

Since the assembly will be convening in Budapest, special attention will be given to issues of identity, reconciliation and the Church's mission in Central and Eastern Europe.

The proposed topic, with 150–300 word abstract, is due by 30 August 2007.

Papers are due by 1 April 2008.

Guidelines for writing paper: Papers are not to exceed six thousand words, including notes. Writers will be expected to strictly adhere to *Mission Studies* writing and documentation standards as outlined on the website at www.missionstudies.org/6publ/Mission_studies/style.htm.

Process governing acceptance of paper: All proposals with abstracts will be carefully reviewed by the IAMS executive committee, and writers will be notified of the committee's decision no later than June 2008. The executive committee will finalize the Budapest program at their 2008 January meeting.

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God's Word Holds Brightest Future for New European Union Members Romania and Bulgaria

As people across Romania and Bulgaria ushered in 2007 with fireworks celebrating their countries' entrances into the European Union (EU), Bible League staff in those two countries started another year of ministry in prayer. EU membership will be a "double-edged sword" for Bible League ministry in these two Balkan nations, according to the Rev. Robert Martin, director of Central and Eastern Europe Ministries.

"Our ministries in Bulgaria and Romania will now have better access to printing and transport of printed materials from Western Europe," he explained. "This may lower taxes and customs costs for imported scriptures. We now will also see a free flow of personnel across the border of Romania and Hungary. This will allow us to reach more people in the country's Hungarian-speaking minority, especially in the Transylvania region."

But Bible League also anticipates higher costs to do ministry and to acquire scriptures in Romania and Bulgaria, Martin said. "Wages, taxes and cost of goods all go up in the EU. Also, laws limiting the spread of the gospel are a real and present danger in a highly secularized European Union."

Romania's president hailed his country's EU membership as an "enormous chance for future generations." Bulgaria's leader described EU entry as a "heavenly moment." But Bible-believing Christians in this region know that only God's Word holds the promise of true hope and heaven for their countries' people. In fact, Martin foresees these Christians becoming salt and light to Western Europe, bringing new hope to a highly secularized EU. With more opportunities to head West, Martin notes that new Bible-believing churches are already springing up. These churches and more may spark a revival among dying churches across Western Europe.

Used within Bible League's scripture placement and church planting programs, God's Word is essential in enlarging God's kingdom in Romania and Bulgaria. Last year partner churches in these two countries reported a total of more than 104,000 Bible study completions and welcomed more than 13,250 new members.

This year marks the beginning of Bible League's fourteenth year of sending God's Word into action across Romania, and its twelfth year in Bulgaria. During this time, partnership with local churches across those two countries has resulted in 1,586 new churches established, nearly 79,000 baptisms and more than 740,000 Bible study completions.

For more information about Bible League's ministry in Central and Eastern Europe, go to www.BibleLeague.org.

(This article was edited from a Bible League news release.)

Internet Evangelism Day a Time to Use Church Websites to Reach the World for Christ

"Does your church's website communicate to outsiders as well as to church members?" asks a new web resource. A church site is the congregation's "shop window" to its community. To fulfill this function well, it must be enticing, people-centered and easily understood by outsiders. Unfortunately, many churches are unsure how to achieve this vital mix.

The **Internet Evangelism Day** (IE Day) team has produced an **online self-assessment tool** to help churches become more web-savvy in presenting their evangelistic message. It leads a church through a series of questions, to highlight areas of their website which may need development.

A church site which has been prioritized for non-Christian visitors can be remarkably effective in reaching the community. According to a spokesperson for one growing church in London, "Week in, week out, more visitors turn up at our church on a Sunday because of the website than anything else."

The IE Day **site** also explains other types of online evangelism, such as outreach websites, video clips, blogging and podcasts. There is even a free conversation starter screensaver to download.

Holding a Focus Day

The IE Day team also encourages churches and other groups to hold their own web awareness focus day on (or near) this year's Internet Evangelism Day, **29 April 2007**. The IE Day **site** provides downloadable video clips, drama sketches, posters, handouts and a PowerPoint presentation, making it easy for any church to create its own IE Day program. This can be a 2-minute spot within a worship time, or it can be an entire themed church service, seminar or midweek meeting.

Churches that have already held their own focus day are enthusiastic. “It was a real eye-opener for many,” wrote one person in Muncie, Indiana, USA. “We held a midweek evening presentation of ninety minutes for other local churches,” said another person from Dawlish, United Kingdom.

A Canadian church leader commented, “I used a 10-minute presentation that focused on how anyone can get involved in reaching out to the Internet community. I also added a section on using our church website as an evangelism tool, as some of our members have already had great success with it.”

Internet Evangelism Day is an initiative of the [Internet Evangelism Coalition](#), an umbrella group of major interdenominational Christian groups involved in web ministry.

Preparing the Younger Generation for Missions in the 10/40 Window

By Bethany Newman

There is a small area of the world that extends from ten degrees to forty degrees north of the equator and stretches from North Africa to China. Two-thirds of the world’s population (nearly four billion people) live inside this rectangular-shaped band. Here you will find the largest population of non-Christians and ninety percent of the world’s poorest people. This area is known as the 10/40 Window.

Unfortunately, many Christians are not eager to go to this part of the world. Only three percent of missionaries are serving among unreached peoples; the other ninety-seven percent remain in areas where the gospel is readily accessible. God is not unmindful of the situation, however, and is raising up a new globally-minded generation. There are currently over one million students who are qualified to join the mission to the 10/40 Window.

The Beginnings of a Movement to the 10/40 Window

In 2000, Chuck Phillips was asked to help Passion Ministries put on an event in the United States called One-Day, where fifty thousand Christian college students gathered on a field to pray for their colleges, their nation and the world. Bent down, faces to the ground, these students pled for God to move across their land. As Phillips looked across the field, he realized that he was standing in the middle of the solution—an entire generation of fervent Christ-followers who could potentially complete the missional movement into the culturally-diverse, but spiritually-deceived, countries of the 10/40 Window.

Phillips immediately shared with his pastor what God was stirring in his heart. With the support of his church, he began traveling across the US to talk with Christian students. At each university, he prompted a student group to create a list of obstacles that prevented this missional movement from happening. The lists were almost identical across the nation: a lack of confidence, a lack of knowledge, a lack of support, cultural expectations and outdated methods of mobilization.

The missional life remains as mystical and abstract as heaven itself. More than any other time in history, students today desire to make a lasting difference. They want more than just a job that will pay the bills or provide an influential role; they want to change the world. This leads Christ-followers to missions, which usually leads them searching for short-term mission opportunities.

Short-term mission trips are a normalcy among this generation. Many people love short-term mission trips because they provide the experience without the commitment. In 2005, over two million short-term mission trips were taken by people in the US; half of the participants were under age 25. Initially, short-term trips were invented for the purpose of developing longer-term missionaries. Those who began the movement hoped that by providing a taste of missions, people would be led into full-time missionary service. Instead, the number of full-time missionaries has remained the same for the past twenty-five years.

Statistically, this generation could complete the Great Commission. However, according to Phillips, “We are very busy being concerned about the Great Commission, but we are not at all busy completing the Great Commission.”

The biggest problem is perception. Most people believe that mission work is only for the most holy of Christians. Since many believe they do not fit in this category, the majority of believers do not truly believe they can make a difference on the mission field, and certainly not among the unreached nations. The reality is that missionaries are normal people whom God is using for his glory because they are willing to believe that he can.

The American culture also clings to a distorted perception of the 10/40 Window, which includes Northern Africa, the Middle East, India and Southeast Asia. Most people presume that Americans are hated in these parts of the world. The truth is that these countries are among the most hospitable. Americans are much more likely to be well-received than they would be in places such as France, Scotland, Hungary and other European vacation destinations. Indeed there are wars being waged in the Middle East, but should we allow secular news media to form our Christian worldview? Since our view of the unreached nations is a murky blend of violence, hatred and war, many students are hesitant to even consider going. Moreover, their parents may be quick to discourage, and in some cases, forbid them to go.

Today’s students are also embedded in a world of corporate ladders and technological advancement; they are pressured by the expectations of American culture and surrounded by voices that say, “Get married. Get a real job. Grab all you can.” In many cases, young people are choosing the path of least resistance, surrendering to corporate America and rejecting the missional life simply because they do not know enough about it.

Café 1040

Phillips took all these factors into account when he founded **Café 1040**. The organization’s goal is not to make missionaries; it is to bring clarity of decision and to offer the facts of a missional vocation within the 10/40 Window so that young believers can make informed decisions about the path of their lives.

Café 1040 participants spend three months overseas. They are taken to an undisclosed location inside the 10/40 Window for intensive training. The training is a taste of the real experience; they ride camels, wash clothes in a bucket, read and respond to the culture around them, survive in the Sahara Desert, learn languages and live and thrive in community. Trainers and mentors take their hands and lead as they teach. These experiences give students the confidence to believe they can live in these parts of the world, and can make an eternal difference in the lives of unreached peoples. Students in the Café 1040 program acquire skills that are priceless.

For the past six years the organization has had great success in preparing Christians to reach the unreached nations. Café 1040 actually has more students than they are able to train. One of the greatest challenges to their growth is stateside staff. In an effort to meet growing demand, other opportunities for training bases are arising in other parts of the 10/40 Window. Phillips has located bases in the Middle East and Southeast Asia in which to grow the program.

The four billion people who reside in unreached nations cannot be ignored. The two million students who are waiting to be trained and sent out cannot be disregarded. We all, as believers, have been given a great task. Let us seek ways in which to pursue and participate in the completion of the greatest advancement we could ever know.

For more information about Café 1040, call US 1-678-999-2191, email info@cafe1040.com or visit www.cafe1040.com.

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WORLD PERSPECTIVES

Evangelicals and Climate Change

By Brian Edgar

Should evangelicals have anything to say about climate change? Some might suggest that it is not a topic of concern for evangelicals. Others might see it as a matter of science beyond the expertise of non-experts. Still others might be concerned that it is an intrusion into politics.

But here are five reasons why evangelicals *should* be involved in what is said and done with regard to climate change.

1. Climate change has a significant theological dimension of interest to evangelicals. Evangelicals, along with other Christians, worship the creator God who made all things “good.” They believe that “the earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it” (Psalm 24:1). They know that God not only entered into a special relationship with humanity, but also with the creatures of the world (Genesis 9:8-13).

Consequently, evangelicals have a fundamental theological reason for caring about the effects of climate change. This is reinforced by the fact that God gave humanity a particular responsibility to tend and care for animals and the rest of the world. Evangelicals are also keenly aware that God’s love for the whole world is seen in the fact that he will redeem it through Jesus Christ. The expectation of a renewed creation is an encouragement to Christians to actively care for the present world, its people and the natural environment. Not to care about the world which God loves is an offense to God and his far-reaching purposes. Evangelicals who are especially concerned about redemption should be clearly aware of the value which God attributes to his world.

2. Climate change has a moral dimension which calls for repentance and change. Evangelicals are very aware of the need for faith and are opposed to any sort of nominalism. They preach the biblical notion that “faith without works is dead” and are strong on calling for repentance. Consequently, evangelicals should be aware that as inhabitants of God’s world we all need to seek forgiveness for the occasions when we have treated it as our own and for the times we have inappropriately exploited and polluted the world without thought for others both present and future. Repentance involves turning away from those things that have unnecessarily contributed to global warming.

Loving our neighbour means taking a global focus and recognising that those who are wealthier bear more responsibility for producing greenhouse gases while those who are poorer suffer more from the effects due to their lesser ability to deal with them. Evangelicals in wealthier countries should note that they are creating a pollution which is hurting their brothers and sisters in poorer counties. Can evangelicals in countries such as the United States (the greatest emitter of greenhouse gases) or Australia (the highest *per capita* emitter of greenhouse gases) or Europe not give a thought to their brethren in Tuvalu (the first climate change refugees) or East Africa (where malaria will increase)?

James 2:15-17 reads, “If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,’ and yet does not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.” Evangelical faith without practical action is dead.

3. The evangelical witness concerns the whole of life. If evangelicals believe that helping people to follow Jesus is central to life then it is important to follow him in everything, and he was involved in people's lives as a whole. We do not find him ignoring the fact that a man was blind because he wanted to save his soul. Nor did he neglect the hungry or refuse to speak about money, economics or matters of state. Jesus took a holistic view of life, and climate change is about life on earth.

Evangelicals can make a significant contribution to societies which have become narrow and self-centred in their life focus. Recent debate about climate change in Australia, for instance, has not centred on the validity of the scientific assessment (which is broadly accepted) but on an apparent conflict between the needs of the environment and our global neighbours on the one hand, and the preservation of the strength of the economy on the other. For many, an increasing concern for economic growth means a diminished concern for the good of others. But a narrow, economic view of life which is focussed upon national economic interests, or which views the natural world in a purely utilitarian way, is morally and theologically deficient.

Addressing climate change issues with greater energy and efficiency could actually be economically beneficial. As it has been said, the economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment. In addition, operating from a global perspective will certainly be advantageous in terms of security issues (allowing climate change to develop could be one of the most diplomatically de-stabilising events in history). Evangelical witness in the world needs the credibility of a Church which demonstrates concern for the world and for people with integrity and passion.

4. Evangelicals are part of the global community. We can argue a case for involvement in action on climate change by evangelicals simply on the basis of our common humanity. Evangelicals are human beings, a part of the global community with commonly accepted rights and responsibilities. It is foolish to leave the problem to someone else. Those in developing countries sometimes say, "Leave it to the developed world—after all, they caused most of the problems." Those in small nations say, "It's no use for us to do anything; it must be left to the highly-populated countries." Others will say it is the responsibility of those that have the highest rate of pollution. Community groups want governments to act. Governments can blame business. And many businesses would rather the focus of attention fall on the responsibility of individuals. All attempts to avoid responsibility for what is a matter of universal concern lack integrity. Evangelicals cannot say, "This does not concern us." It is an issue which requires a whole-of-society response.

Evangelicals can work with other Christians and those of other religions in promoting understanding about climate change. *Common Belief: Australia's Faith Communities on Climate Change* (available in pdf form from www.climateinstitute.org.au) is an example of this. Although theological differences can make common statements difficult, in this document we find nine Christian statements and seven statements from other religions which indicate a high degree of unanimity concerning the moral aspects of dealing with climate change.

5. Human-induced climate change is real, urgent and reversible. It has not been possible to deny the overwhelming scientific consensus concerning human-induced global warming since the Third Assessment Report of the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) in 2001. Thousands of the world's best scientists from a wide range of disciplines contributed to the finding. Since the report, other independent bodies around the world have examined the findings and more recent evidence has only accentuated the urgency of the issue. There is now no reasonable doubt either that climate change is happening or that a large part of global warming is human-induced.

This claim is controversial to some, but to others it is the scepticism which is startling! Some countries have been subject to overly-politicised and commercially-influenced public debates which have cast doubt over what is a large-scale scientific consensus. Indeed, this data does not fit the consensus paradigm and the persistence of

alternative views by some individuals or groups. Inevitably, given the scope of the research, there will be some contrary evidence and scientists are entitled to debate the way it should be interpreted. And those who dissent from the consensus (perhaps one to two percent; some suggesting the situation has been understated, and other that it has been overstated) fulfil an important role in helping ensure that decisions are made with integrity. In the end, however, the overall consensus is striking and it extends to agreement concerning the goals that need to be achieved.

The question of how much of a temperature increase is “too much” is subjective (the people of Tuvalu have a good argument to say it has already been too much!), but the worst scenarios (involving ocean levels rising, increases in tropical diseases, loss of drinking water, alteration to local climates, etc.) which affect large numbers of people need to be avoided. And the scientific evidence which connects greenhouse gas emissions with climate change is the same evidence which indicates that the goal for developed nations should be in the order of a sixty percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from year 2000 levels by 2050. It makes no sense to accept the conclusions about the *present reality* of climate change and not accept the conclusions about the *necessary goals* for rectifying it as they are based on the same evidence.

Debate about the methods for achieving this goal is essential and there are a variety of proposals. However, the urgency of the matter must be recognised. Early action is imperative. In environmental matters, the “Precautionary Principle” is well understood. It was developed in Europe where it has been necessary to deal with serious environmental issues across national borders since the 1960s. This principle says that where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing remedial measures. The evidence in regard to the effects of human-induced climate change, while not one hundred percent certain, is extremely strong. Waiting for definitive, unambiguous certainty means not operating according to the *best* evidence but according to some far less likely, unreasonably optimistic scenario. It means we would have to wait until after decisive and dangerous events have already occurred. It is a process which risks much and possibly achieves little.

This urgency can be matched with optimism based on the observation that the worst scenarios can be avoided at relatively little or no cost. Changes will have to occur, but some will have other benefits. Waiting to address these issues will simply mean more cost in the long run. The United Kingdom’s Stern report argues that globally the cost is a manageable one percent of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) each year. The [Australian Business Roundtable on Climate Change](#) (a consortium of major oil, insurance and banking companies) indicates that the necessary cuts in emissions could be achieved in Australia (one of the world’s worst per capita polluters) with policies that would only reduce economic growth from 2.2% to 2.1%. In other words, living standards and income can continue to rise strongly while responding positively to climate change.

Moving Forward

These theological, moral and practical arguments all indicate the appropriateness of evangelical action on climate change. Indeed, for evangelicals such action is:

- a function of responsible stewardship
- an expression of respect for God
- a demonstration of care for the natural world
- an act of love for our global neighbours
- an illustration of an authentic Christian lifestyle

- a reflection of our own spiritual life

If we have no care for God's world or God's people we become estranged from our innermost purpose. The destruction of the environment is connected with our own alienation from God. A failure to care for the world is a lack of care for our own souls. As it has been said, the new deserts of our world are a reflection of our own souls.

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The Green Gospel: Seven Reasons Why We Should Care about Creation

By Mark Russell

Times are changing and many say the weather is too. The dramatic rise of the Internet, global communications and satellite networks means that we are more in touch with what is going on around the world than ever before. Natural disasters such as hurricanes and tornadoes appear to be increasing. Glaciers are shrinking, ice caps are melting, oceans are rising, summers are longer and winters are shorter. We are told the earth is heating up and it is because of us. Global warming has thrust environmental concerns onto the center stage of world affairs.

But this has not been without controversy. Evangelicals have responded in a variety of ways. Many have contended that God would never allow this to happen. Others say we are too small and the earth too big for our impact to make a difference. Some, however, have posited that many of these calamities could be God's judgment. This complicated topic deserves some exploration.

Increasing awareness on environmental issues is a strategic opportunity for Christians to look at scripture with new eyes and see what it might say on this important matter. It is not my intent to discuss the political ramifications; rather, I will focus on the spiritual implications of what the Bible says. Hopefully, the following seven points will bring some clarity to earnest Christians.

1. Creation is a gift from God. The Bible starts with the account of the creator breathing creation into existence. He took six days. Following each day, he pronounced it good, with the exception of the final day, which he called "very good." Creation, all of it, was very good. In his benevolence, the Almighty presented a portion of his creation to humans as a gift saying, "Let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground" (Genesis 1:26).

Any reflection on this verse should focus on the gift God was giving. As a parent, I delight in giving my children gifts and watching their joyful responses. However, this delight increases as I see them continue to enjoy the gift over a period of time. In contrast, it would be a great irritation to see them receive a gift and put it in the trash or throw it in front of a car. So it is with the gift of creation that God has given us. A right reading of this passage shows that we should cherish this precious gift from our loving creator.

2. Creation is our responsibility. After creating humans God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Genesis 1:28). He gave us two commands. The first is to be fruitful and multiply—create community. The second is to rule over the animals of the earth—creation care.

This statement from God to us should not be taken as an entitlement but as a privilege. These are not rights; they are responsibilities. Therein lies an enormous difference. We care not for environmentalism because of what pollsters and reporters say; rather, we care for it because of the responsibility that God has given us. Caring for creation is not being politically correct. It is being theologically correct.

3. We express our love to God by respecting his creation. Jesus stated quite clearly what it means to love him when he said, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him” (John 14:21). When God gave us the task of stewarding creation, it was not intended to be a burden, but an opportunity. It was (and is) a chance to express our love to him.

We express our love by caring for his gift of creation. God’s creative actions in Genesis 1 serve as a model for us. After looking at how we care for creation, we should be able to step back and say, “This is good.” When we care for creation in the same way that God did, we know we are obeying his teaching. As Jesus said, this is how we show our love.

4. Creation groans. A lot has changed since the original scene of God and humans conversing as friends in the idyllic setting of the Garden of Eden. Humankind sinned. We failed. As a result, Adam and Eve had to leave the garden. God said that the ground was cursed because of Adam (Genesis 3:17). Paul wrote, “We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time” (Romans 8:22). Creation is groaning.

Some people have responded by saying that there is nothing we can do about this. Creation is groaning until the whole creation is redeemed. There is some truth to this. We cannot completely reverse everything that is going on in creation. In the same way, I could not take away the pains of childbirth for my wife when she twice went through extended labor sessions. But I tried. I rubbed her back. I caressed her hair. The doctor gave her shots. We did everything we could to make it as restful as possible. I think the same approach is justified with creation. We should use all the technology, creativity and love that we have to ease the groaning.

5. Salvation is for all creation. Generally, salvation is considered in terms of the souls of people. However, the biblical portrait is more expansive. Paul wrote, “The creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God” (Romans 8:21).

When we speak of the reconciling work of Christ, often we mean that Christ has reconciled believers to himself. Only rarely, if ever, do we acknowledge that his work of reconciliation related to creation. As Paul noted, “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in [Christ], and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross” (Colossians 1:19-20). This reconciliation will not be made complete in the present. However, there is nothing preventing us from acting on this truth now.

6. Caring for creation gives us common ground with others. Christians are not the only ones who care about what is happening to creation today. Environmental concerns are on the front pages of newspapers around the world. Business owners, social activists, government workers and a host of others are working on these issues. Rather than distancing ourselves from these conversations, we should jump right in. This gives us an opportunity to share common ground with others who do not understand the fullness of God’s truth. Through these exchanges we can express not only our concern for creation as a gift from God, but also our desire for them to understand the fullness of the creator.

7. We express our love for our children and their children. Our creator is infinite. Everything else is finite. Like us, creation has its limitations. Once when I was in Israel, I learned that archaeologists intentionally do not uncover and explore every potential site of interest. Rather, there is a systematic attempt to preserve historical

sites for subsequent generations to explore. In a land with such a long history, it seems that there are endless opportunities for archaeological work. But this is not true. And so it is with creation.

It is only natural for us to desire the best and the most for our children. But desire alone will not be sufficient. We must act. It will take a systematic and intentional way of living that seeks to preserve what we can of creation for the enjoyment of our children and theirs. In so doing, we express tangibly the love we have for them.

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Missionary Pioneers: A Legacy of Women and Men Advancing the Gospel Together

By Mimi Haddad

The gospel partnerships of men and women on mission fields today may seem unprecedented to some. Yet history is filled with examples of men and women using their gifts together, advancing the kingdom throughout the world.

In fact, many of today's evangelical leaders stand as part of a glorious legacy of Christian men and women whose God-given talents advanced the gospel with passion, purpose and power. Even a short survey of mission history offers astonishing examples of men and women who worked together in advancing the gospel. Consider Paula and Jerome who translated the Bible from the original languages into Latin in the fourth century. Or consider Theodora and Justinian—emperor and empress of the Byzantine Empire in the fifth century who brokered peace between Christian factions and developed laws that aided female prostitutes. Or consider Protestant Reformers Martin Luther and his wife Katharine Von Bora. Or consider the missionaries of the nineteenth century such as Catherine and William Booth, Pandita Ramabai and Frances Willard. The gospel partnerships of missionaries throughout history are examples for us to celebrate and model today.

While men and women have advanced the gospel together throughout history, it was during the modern missionary movement of the 1800s when Christians began to develop a cohesive biblical basis for women's service as gospel partners with men. Let us explore several leaders within the modern missionary movement and the biblical foundations they laid for men and women's gospel service.

The Modern Era

According to historians, the modern mission movement began at the end of the eighteenth century as Christians in "Great Britain, Europe and North America, newly awakened to their missionary 'obligations,' founded an impressive array of mission societies."¹ Motivated by a concern for the imminent return of Christ, this movement had far-reaching results.

By the final years of the twentieth century, more than half of all Christians in the world were to be found outside the region that had been the historical heartland of Christianity for nearly 1,500 years. New centers of Christian strength and vitality were now found in widely scattered places in the Americas, Africa and Asia.²

Beginning with the modern missionary movement, for the first time in history, Christians began to affirm a cohesive biblical basis for the shared public ministry of women as well as people of color. Between 1808 and 1930, more than forty-six biblical treatises were printed in support of women's gift-based ministry.³ Their affirmation of women's gospel service grew out of their commitment to evangelical priorities of biblical authority, evangelism and social action.⁴

As voracious students of the Bible, these nineteenth century Christians were dedicated to a high view of scripture. In fact, it was their respect for the authority of scripture that propelled them to new arenas of Christian service not only on the mission field, but also to areas of social action including abolition and universal suffrage. Holding scripture in high regard, they resisted any method of interpretation that undermined the authority of the Bible. They also opposed the proof text method of scripture that gave support to slavery and women's exclusion from using their gifts on the mission fields. Rather, they sought to harmonize those passages that appeared in conflict with the whole of scripture regarding the equal value and dignity of every human being. Thus, they developed a whole-Bible hermeneutic that addressed gender and ministry from a gospel perspective. Here are a few examples:

1. **Fredrik Franson** (1852–1908) founded the Evangelical Alliance Mission and was a prominent leader of the Free Church Movement (now the Evangelical Free Church). He engaged women as part of his evangelistic outreach, and published his support of women's leadership in an article entitled, "Prophesying Daughters: A Few Words Concerning Women's Position in Regard to Evangelism." Insisting that the whole of scripture affirms women's public ministry, Franson held a Genesis to Revelation approach to understanding the ministry of women rather than concentrating on only two passages (1 Timothy 2:12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34). He was troubled that anyone would establish a doctrine "on one or two passages in the Bible, without reading the references in their context."⁵

2. **A. J. Gordon** (1836–1895), after whom Gordon College is named, was a prominent advocate of mission, abolition and women in ministry. Like others, Gordon put forward a whole-Bible approach to assess God's intention for women in public ministry. His biblical study of women's public ministry resulted in an 1894 publication entitled "The Ministry of Women."⁶ For Gordon, Pentecost was the "*Magna Charta* of the Christian Church" as it demonstrated that women and all ethnic groups share equally in Christ's new covenant community.⁷ Embracing a dispensational view of history, Gordon's commitment to using the gifts of all people had a sense of urgency. In the new dispensation, those who had once been viewed as inferior by natural birth attain a new spiritual status through the power of the Holy Spirit. Women, along with all ethnic and social classes, have an "equal warrant with man's for telling out the gospel of the grace of God."⁸ God's gifts no longer rested on a "favored few, but upon the many, without regard to race, or age or sex."⁹

Gordon believed that Paul's instructions in 1 Timothy 2:8–11 and 1 Corinthians 14:34 should be understood in light of biblical examples of women's leadership, preaching and prophesying. He also questioned why Paul would prohibit all women's public ministry after describing the propriety in which their public service should be conducted. According to Gordon, "All texts that prohibit a practice in one place, while allowing it in another, must be considered in the light of the entire New Testament teaching—the teaching of prophecy, the teaching of practice and the teaching of contemporary history—if we would find the true meaning."¹⁰

According to Gordon, there is "no scripture which prohibits women from praying or prophesying in the public assemblies of the Church."

Gordon understood that interpreting scripture correctly works best when every Christian contributes to the discussion. To make important decisions as God's people requires more than an understanding of Greek or Hebrew words. It requires prayer and dialogue so that the Spirit can work throughout the whole church as a "body of regenerate and sanctified believers." He wrote that "To follow the voice of the Church apart from that of the written Word has never proved safe; but, on the other hand, it may be that we need to be admonished not to ignore the teaching of the deepest spiritual life of the Church in forming our conclusions concerning the meaning of scripture. It cannot be denied that in every great spiritual awakening in the history of Protestantism the impulse for Christian women to pray and witness for Christ in the public assembly has been found irrepressible.

3. **Katharine Bushnell** (1856–1946) worked as a medical doctor, scholar, missionary and activist. Her book, *God's Word to Women: One Hundred Bible Studies on Woman's Place in the Church and Home*, was written in 1919 and remains in print today. Bushnell's commitment to the authority of scripture was clear. She asserted that "the Bible is all that it claims for itself. It is (1) Inspired, 2 Timothy 3:16; (2) Infallible, Isaiah 40:8, and (3) Inviolable, John 10:35. Indeed, no other basis of procedure is available for us."¹¹

Like that of A. J. Gordon, Bushnell's reading of scripture was also informed by her observations of women's leadership on the mission field. This led her to affirm a gift-based rather than gender-based approach to ministry. She also insisted upon a whole Bible approach as an interpretative method with a particular focus on Genesis. According to Bushnell, in Genesis we learn that Adam and Eve were both created in the image of God, that Adam and Eve were both equally called to be fruitful and to exercise dominion in Eden, that Eve was not the source of sin and that God does not curse women because of Eve. Rather, it was Satan, not God, who inspired the domination of men over women. God bestows leadership on those who do what is right in God's sight, regardless of their gender, birth order, nationality or class.

Bushnell determined that Paul affirmed the shared leadership of men and women, provided that leadership is neither domineering nor abusive (1 Timothy 2:12), that those who teach must understand and advance the truth concerning the gospel (1 Timothy 2:11–12; Acts 18:26; Romans 16:1–5, 7, 12–13, 15) and that when women pray and prophesy in public they are not disruptive, either by their clothing or through their chatter (1 Corinthians 11:5 and 14:34). Ultimately, Bushnell grounds her understanding of women's status not in the Fall, but in Christ's completed work on Calvary.

Bushnell insists that a correct interpretation of scripture as it relates to women's social, ecclesiastical and spiritual status should be determined in the same manner as man's social, ecclesiastical and spiritual status, based on the atonement of Jesus Christ. According to her, "[We] cannot, for women, put the 'new wine' of the gospel into the old wine-skins of 'condemnation.'"¹²

She condemns the prejudice and interpretative bias noted throughout Church history so that women's status was viewed through Eve's sin, rather than through their full redemption and inheritance in Christ. By challenging misinterpretation and error in Bible translation, Bushnell established a theological foundation for women's ontological equality, a foundation that today's Christians continue to build upon.

4. **Catherine Booth** (1829–1890), cofounder of the Salvation Army along with her husband William, was a noted preacher and a tenacious inner-city missionary. Catherine and William committed their lives to Christian service among the poverty-stricken neighborhoods of East London. When evangelist Phoebe Palmer was criticized for addressing audiences of both women and men in her lecture series, Catherine wrote a defense of women's preaching. Her pamphlet entitled "Female Ministry or Woman's Right to Preach the Gospel," is a concise and thorough survey of the biblical support for women's public ministry.

Booth used a whole-Bible approach in interpreting 1 Timothy 2:12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34, stating that "If commentators had dealt with the Bible on other subjects as they have dealt with it on this, taking isolated passages, separated from their explanatory connections, and insisting on the literal interpretation of the words of our version, what errors and contractions would have been forced upon the acceptance of the Church, and what terrible results would have accrued to the world."¹³

According to Booth, if women bring people to Christ, then they are gifted by God and should be supported by their church or denomination. She also warned that those who hinder women from ministry on the basis of their gender will be judged for keeping the gospel from reaching those whom Christ died to save. Booth recognized a clear link between affirming the biblical basis for gift-based ministry and furthering the work of evangelism.

Conclusion

In preparation for missionary service, nineteenth century women pioneers began enrolling in Bible institutes in record numbers. As a result, these women became skilled exegetes, a discipline that strengthened their missionary leadership and also provided the interpretive tools to assess the gender restrictions placed on them by the very churches and denominations that spent thousands of dollars supporting their ministries overseas. Their biblical studies gave rise to a method of interpretation that asserted gift-based ministry as an overarching biblical principle.

On this basis, nineteenth century Christians offered a serious blow to any biblical support for ascriptivism— ascribing value, dignity and worth to individuals based on their heritage, skin color or gender—thus challenging the long-held prejudice to women’s leadership. Their efforts not only fueled a massive expansion of the gospel on the mission fields, but also an activism in the areas of voting rights and the abolition of slavery.

Women’s able leadership on the mission fields fueled a whole Bible approach to topics such as gender, service and social action. Scholars such as Katharine Bushnell and A.J. Gordon insisted that gospel values must triumph over cultural prejudice, especially in regard to women and slaves. Thus, the leadership of women led not only to new centers of Christian faith, but to important social reform such as abolition and suffrage. Christians today can celebrate the legacy of our nineteenth century evangelical mothers and fathers whose devotion to scripture, evangelism and social action is one we are proud to follow.

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"Wasted" on Jesus

By Ferdinand Nweke

"As [Jesus] sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. And she broke the flask and poured it on his head. But there were some who were indignant... and said 'why was this fragrant oil wasted?'...and they criticized her sharply."

(Mark 14:3-5)

The world has not changed. Every time you pour something costly and precious on Jesus, the immediate reaction is, "To what purpose is this waste?" What the master gladly accepts as a sacrifice, the world calls a waste. As far as the people were concerned, the costly oil was misused. If she wanted to give it all away, why didn't she use the proceeds from its sale to bless some poor people? In other words, there could have been a better use of the precious oil than "wasting" it on Jesus.

There is always an alternative use for whatever you want to pour on Jesus. If somebody with a degree in electrical engineering resigned a lucrative job and packed up to go and settle among the Wolof people of Senegal, the world would ask, "Can you imagine such a brilliant fellow with prospects, wasting his life and calling himself a missionary? What kind of waste is this?" If, however, he becomes an Information Technology guru, walking the financial capitals of the world and flying from New York to Singapore, from Tokyo to Brisbane, it would not be considered a waste.

Many Christians are afraid to pursue God's high purpose for their lives because of the comments and expectations of others whose opinions belong in the trash can and who have no idea what the Lord has ordained for such a life. The truth is, everybody will be wasted somewhere. It is your choice to determine where and on what. But as for whether or not you will be wasted, it is an inescapable reality. Every life is being spent on something.

Some people are wasted on the pursuit of power, popularity and pleasure. Others are wasted on the mad-rush for money and other mundane matters of life. If your life is not wasted on Jesus, it certainly will be wasted on something less. You can only be emptied on something less than the master because there is nothing greater than him. Some people are waiting until they have been wasted by the system. At that time they will limp to the altar at age 70 singing "I surrender all." When the best of your youthful resources have been spent pursuing your own personal agenda, what else is remaining to surrender?

The father of a Palestinian suicide bomber was recently interviewed. He said he felt extremely proud of his son for volunteering for such a mission. He was sure his son was in paradise. They seem to believe a lie more than we believe the truth. Some Igbo traders who cross every border and defy every imaginable obstacle to do business get killed in remote or distant lands when a political or religious crisis breaks out. What you think is a big price to pay for the gospel, others are willing to pay for the sake of their businesses. Every life is being wasted. The question is on what.

Mary Slessor was engaged to be married to a banker before she came to Nigeria as a missionary. After attending a mission conference, God called her to the “white man’s grave.” Her fiancé asked her to choose between himself and her mission call to Africa. She did not even have to pray about it. She broke the relationship, obeyed the call and spent the rest of her life in Nigeria. The woman in Mark 14 broke the neck of her flask and poured her costly oil on the master. There are some things you have to break if you empty the content of your life on Jesus.

The question we must always ask ourselves is, “When time gives way to eternity, what will we be remembered for?” The woman in Mark 14 had a memorial recorded for her because she emptied her best on the master. When the story of the harvest is told, what will be recorded of our lives? We can only pray these words of one famous song writer:

*“When it’s all been said and done, there is just one thing that matters:
Did I do my best to live for truth, did I live my life for You?
When it’s all been said and done, all my treasures will mean nothing
Only what I’ve done for love’s reward will stand the test of time.”*

Dr. Ferdinand Nweke, a medical doctor in Nigeria, coordinates Eternity Ministries which focuses on maximizing Calvary and living with eternity in view. He has authored several books and songs.

PEOPLES OF THE WORLD

[An Overview of Western Europe](#)

By Justin Long

Western Europe has three areas: northern Europe, western Europe and southern Europe. Because each is slightly different—and has different issues it is facing—we will focus on each area separately.

Northern Europe

The ten nations (and three smaller island chains) of northern Europe may be small, but their contributions to global politics, economics and missions are substantial. They are far enough north that ice can impede maritime traffic. Rare and precious metals can be found in the region, as can fish, timber and arable land. Petroleum and natural gas are found in small quantities, but these will likely be depleted in the near future.

This is the least populated region in Europe, and one of the least populated in the world. It is also one of the slowest growing. At a growth of only 300,000 people per year, it will likely increase from ninety-four million in AD 2000 to only 101 million in 2025. It is heavily urbanized and over eighty-three percent of the population lives in cities. Over 180 cities have a population of one million or more. Northern Europe has the third highest concentration of elderly in the world: twenty percent of the people are 65 or older.

Although they have many rich resources, most of the nations are dependent on trade with other nearby countries for certain key items. In this they have been successful. The people of northern Europe are very wealthy (as usual, some more so than others). The region accounts for one-fifth of Europe's total Gross National Product (GNP), with economies that are a modernized mix of capitalism and extensive welfare systems.

All have benefited from globalization and low defense requirements. While Norway, Sweden and Finland are among the best economies in the world, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia lag behind. Iceland is pursuing hydrogen energy, and Sweden and Finland have highly advanced telecommunications companies. All have stable

governments. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have ongoing thorny issues with ethnic minorities (particularly Russians). Britain and Ireland have cemented a peace agreement which is being implemented, though slowly and not without difficulty.

Problems with AIDS are isolated. Estonia has a significant but declining epidemic. Britain has a growing drug problem. Southwest Asian heroin, Latin American cocaine and synthetic drugs are all consumed here.

Christianity in Northern Europe

Northern Europe has a long, rich Christian heritage. Christianity first came to the north through missionaries to Britain and Ireland. Today, the vast majority of residents profess Christianity. Church attendance, however, is markedly low and apathy is common. Nevertheless, the churches of northern Europe have sent a substantial number of missionaries abroad, and many European mission agencies have their global headquarters in England, Sweden and Norway.

Statistics for the Ten Countries of Northern Europe

Name	P'00	P'25	C '00	%	C '25	%	75-00	00-25	Issues affecting the future
Britain	58.7	63.7	48.2	82%	50.3	79%	+-	+-	Stable government, strong economy, large mission-sending base
Denmark	5.3	5.7	4.7	89%	4.8	84%	+-	+-	Stable, wealthy, aging
Estonia	1.4	1.2	0.9	64%	1.0	77%	--	--	Stable, growing economy, moderate unemployment
Finland	5.2	5.4	4.7	91%	4.8	88%	+-	+-	Stable, wealthy, unemployment
Iceland	0.3	0.3	0.3	97%	0.3	95%	+-	+-	Stable, wealthy
Ireland	3.8	5.1	3.7	97%	4.8	95%	+-	+-	Peace agreement, poverty, Christian heritage, sporadic violence
Latvia	2.4	2.1	1.6	66%	1.6	76%	--	--	Stable, ethnic tensions with Russian minority, unemployment, crime
Lithuania	3.5	3.1	3.0	87%	2.9	93%	++	+-	Stable, poverty, unemployment, openness
Norway	4.5	5.1	4.3	95%	4.7	93%	+-	+-	Stable, oil-dependent, high quality of life, strong mission base
Sweden	8.9	9.7	6.0	68%	6.4	66%	+-	+-	Stable, wealthy, strong mission base

Western Europe

The nations of western Europe have completely recovered from the World War II era and transitioned past the Cold War into the European decade. France (the geographically largest western European nation) and Germany (the most populous and largest economy) are the two powerhouses. With vast resources, strong infrastructure and large industries, western Europe plays a central role in the world's economic and political systems.

Western Europe is responsible for over half of Europe's GNP, and sixteen percent of the global economy. It is not surprising that both France and Germany have been attracting tens of thousands of migrant workers. It is also not surprising these nations are attempting to modernize and globalize their economies further, while maintaining their significant social infrastructure. Although some industries have been privatized, most governments retain significant stakes in leading firms and use government regulation to reduce the gaps between rich and poor and provide for health and welfare. All of western Europe must come to grips with an aging workforce, which will present problems for medical care and pensions.

The governments are stable. Belgium faces some ethnic tensions, but overall no government in this region is likely to fall any time soon. Western Europe is a key player in the European Union.

Christianity in Western Europe

Christianity came to the region in the early centuries after Jesus Christ and, as with the rest of Europe, has had a rich history here. Nominalism is widespread; although increasing in numbers, Christianity's share of the population is now generally in decline. Still, Christians (if in name only) form the vast majority of the population and there is freedom to worship and evangelize. Numerous mission agencies are at work alongside national evangelistic ministries. Ministries to minorities such as Muslims have been a particular focus in France and Germany.

Statistics for the Six Countries of Western Europe

Name	P'00	P'25	C '00	%	C '25	%	75-00	00-25	Issues affecting the future
Austria	8.1	8.3	6.8	84%	6.7	80%	+-	+-	Aging, industrial, stable, high living standard
Belgium	10.3	10.6	8.9	87%	8.5	81%	+-	+-	Ethnic tensions, high debt, migrant workers
France	59.3	63.4	41.3	70%	40.8	64%	+-	+-	Political leadership, stable economy in transition, aging
Germany	82.3	82.0	62.2	76%	58.9	72%	+-	--	Stable, fifth largest economy, aging
Netherlands	15.9	17.2	11.5	72%	10.7	62%	+-	+-	Stable, prosperous
Switzerland	7.2	7.4	6.1	85%	6.2	83%	+-	+-	Stable, wealthy, immigrants, neutrality

Southern Europe

The countries of southern Europe were once great empires, but most have lost the glories of past positions and struggle to advance into the modern global economy. The individual countries are fairly small and many are landlocked. Although resources like timber, water and metals are more common, small amounts of oil and rare metals can be found. Many of these countries sit on key trade routes between Europe and Asia. Most have suffered from air and water pollution. Nearly all have experienced severe earthquakes and continue to be at risk.

Although most of the governments are stable, many are barely so. Albania and the states of the former Yugoslavia have recently endured sharp wars and are still trying to rebuild. Spain is still dealing with the Basque separatist movement. Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain are older countries trying to come to grips with new economic and political realities. Crime and corruption are present everywhere. Albania is struggling with the drug trade.

Economically, all of these nations have seen better days. Southern Europe's GNP is just slightly greater than Northern Europe's, even though it has half as many people. Poverty and unemployment are widespread, with up to one quarter of some countries living below the poverty line. Most of the countries are, to some degree, dependent on tourism. The former members of Yugoslavia are still rebuilding after war. Aid from the European Union forms a small but significant minority of national budgets. Sporadic violence still causes many investors to be skittish.

Christianity in Southern Europe

Christianity came to the region in the first century after Jesus Christ. It has had a long and rich history here, but today many of those who profess to be Christians are highly nominal in their faith. Other religious blocs (such as Islam and Hinduism) are rapidly growing along with migrant workers. Fortunately, there is freedom to worship and evangelize. This is a key region for reaching non-Christian minorities.

Statistics for the Eleven Countries of Southern Europe

Name	P'00	P'25	C'00	%	C'25	%	75-00	00-25	Issues affecting the future
Albania	3.1	3.5	1.1	37%	1.6	47%	++	++	Widespread poverty, unemployment, crime, corruption, drugs
Bosnia	3.8	3.7	1.4	35%	1.2	32%	+-	--	War, reconstruction, poverty, unemployment, black market
Croatia	4.5	4.3	4.1	91%	4.0	93%	+-	-+	War, reconstruction, growing economy, unemployment
Greece	11.0	11.2	10.2	93%	10.3	93%	+-	+-	Turkey tensions, EU aid, immigrant workers, unemployment
Holy See	0.0	0.0	0.0	100%	0.0	100%	--	--	Seat of the Catholic Church
Italy	57.7	56.3	47.4	82%	44.6	79%	+-	--	Illegal immigration, crime, corruption, unemployment, rich/poor gap
Macedonia	2.0	2.0	1.3	64%	1.3	65%	+-	++	Kosovo, economy, poverty, unemployment, grey market
Portugal	10.2	10.9	9.4	92%	9.9	91%	+-	+-	Stable but poor, unemployment, competition with Asia
Serbia	10.5	10.2	7.0	66%	7.2	71%	++	-+	Politics, ethnic tensions, poverty, unemployment, sporadic violence
Slovenia	2.0	1.9	1.9	91%	1.7	92%	+-	-+	Stable, moderately wealthy, few Protestants
Spain	40.7	44.2	37.5	92%	39.7	90%	+-	+-	Growing economy, tensions over social changes, unemployment

Key to the above charts:

P'00 - Population, AD 2000

P'25 - Population, AD2025

C'00 - Christianity, AD 2000 (followed by the percentage of the overall population)

C'25 - Christianity, AD2025 projection, World Christian Database (followed by percentage of overall population)

75-00 - Growth rate. The first (+/-) indicates whether Christianity is growing or declining; the second (+/-) indicates whether it is growing faster or slower than the population (thus whether Christianity's influence is growing or declining).

(+) means Christianity is growing, but not as fast as the population, and so is declining as a share of the country.

00-25 - Growth rate projected for AD2000-2025

Issues - A brief encapsulation of the issues affecting the growth of Christianity in the nation

Justin Long manages strategicnetwork.org and is senior editor for **Momentum**, a magazine devoted to unreached peoples.

A Focus on Western Europe: 234 Least-Reached People Groups Remain

Overview

Christianity seemed defeated until the latter decades of the tenth century. Animistic Vikings invaded Western Europe with little resistance, burning churches and monasteries, along with precious hand-written copies of the scriptures. The Magyar Empire pressed in from the east. Muslim armies moved north with their zeal for Allah. During the sixteenth century the Reformation revitalized the Church to become a force for world evangelization. In the last 250 years the gospel has advanced worldwide; however, it is declining in Europe today. European political ideologies such as humanism, secularism, socialism, Marxism, fascism, Nazism and amoral capitalism have contributed to such evils as global wars, colonialism and oppression.

The twenty-nine countries of Western Europe are going through a period of unprecedented peace but, with political and economic integration, there is also ethnic fragmentation. Many of Europe's great cities today hold in their straining arms a multitude of cultures and languages, drawn by education and opportunities or fleeing

from war, famine, economic deprivation and sometimes horrifying situations. The situation is both rife with problems and rich with opportunities. Western European churches are usually empty edifices filled with more dust than worshipers. Nearly 234 least-reached people groups live here. From tiny Gibraltar with seventy-four percent of its population least-reached, to France, Western Europe's greatest challenge in terms of the gospel with a population of over seven million least-reached people in forty-one different people groups, now is the time to bring the gospel to those searching for answers in Western Europe.

Prayer Points

- **Finding the Father.** These people are far from the Lord. Pray that they will turn their hearts to their creator who can give them eternal life and will find the Father who seeks them continually.
- **Firmness of faith.** For the few Fulani believers, may they continue to grow in their faith in the Lord. Pray for those translating the scriptures into languages needed for these 234 least-reached people groups.
- **Fearless witnesses.** For others to come to the Fulani and these 234 people groups of Western Europe and give them a true testimony of the Lord.
- **Fruit that remains.** That those who have heard the word and are now far away will come back to the Lord and come to know him fully. For wisdom and clarity for those who are sharing the gospel among the Fulani and others.
- **Fullness of life.** For good health for the Fulani as they often die at an early age due to malnourishment and sickness in their homeland; pray also for those who are seeking to minister to their physical needs and for all 234 ethnic groups in Western Europe to find the fullness of life Jesus offers them.

Links

- [Resources](#) for prayer and to mobilize prayer and outreach.
- [Discover](#) Western Europe's 234 least-reached peoples.
- [Pray](#) for the peoples of the Western Europe region.
- Obtain [daily prayer guides](#) for peoples of this region.

Background

Which Way Will They Go?

(Prepared by Keith Carey for the [Global Prayer Digest](#))

Could you imagine not having any idea where to start regarding what you will eat in the morning or what you will wear to work? You probably would not be able to get out the door! For that reason, you must rely on a certain number of assumptions. We make assumptions every day, and they keep our lives from becoming impossibly confusing.

Likewise, cultures have assumptions. In the United States, which we will cover in two months, the assumption regarding immigrant groups is that they will integrate with the larger American culture and become part of the same culture in two or three generations.

But the peoples of Western Europe have had a different set of assumptions. In places like Germany, the Netherlands, England and France, the assumption in general terms is that peoples from the Developing World will come as guest workers, make their money, then return to wherever home may be. They, and perhaps the guest workers themselves, did not anticipate that these people would eventually bring their extended families to come live with them and stay for good.

Therefore, as a general rule these groups, many of which are Muslim or Hindu, are encouraged to live in separate ethnic neighborhoods where they have their own languages, schools, places of worship, markets, etc. They are seen as foreigners, even after the third generation. They are looked down upon, and not given opportunities, even when they speak the local language. The result has been resentment which continues to smolder, and no one has any acceptable answers.

To some, the answer is to send the “foreigners” home. The problem is that some are now citizens, so they cannot be deported. Additionally, the Europeans often depend on their labor.

Others say that it is best to adopt a policy of “multiculturalism.” There should be many cultures and languages, and all should be equal. The problem is that they cannot all be equal. There must be a dominant trade language and a set of agreed-upon moral values. In Europe, that means democracy, equality and tolerance. So it comes as a shock to Europeans when Muslim communities force their young daughters to marry men from the old country. Sometimes when the daughter does not comply, the family will murder her and call it “honor killing,” with the explanation that allowing her to live would have brought dishonor to her family. Will “multiculturalism” allow for this kind of behavior? Few will argue that it will.

Others want the immigrants to assimilate like they do in America. The problem is that both the guest and the host communities must allow assimilation. Often the “guests” do not want to become part of the secular, hedonistic cultures that they find in Europe. And with all of their talk about equality and tolerance, many Europeans, especially the French, do not accept people from other cultures. Studies have shown that with identical resumes, job applicants with Muslim names are far less likely to be called for a job interview than those with French names. The French government has gone out of its way to secularize public life. For example, Muslim girls are not allowed to wear the traditional headscarf to school.

Secular Western Europe

Europe has endured hundreds of years of wars, many of which have pitted one religious group against another. Their answer to the problem of religious intolerance, which brought on these wars, is to secularize society. Although some countries, notably England, have religious instruction in public schools, most Europeans have opted to secularize all public institutions. Tolerance for liberal ideas—ideas like same-sex marriage and co-habiting couples—are almost unquestioned. According to a March 2006 *New York Times* article, in the Netherlands, potential immigrants from Muslim countries must first see a video featuring a topless woman sunbathing and two gay men kissing to discourage them from coming if they cannot tolerate such behavior. Thus, immigrants, many of whom are from unreached people groups, are coming to nations where the moral values are defined more by secularism than by biblical Christianity.

According to a 17 April 2006 article in the *Christian Science Monitor*, “Across Europe, the number of children born to unmarried couples has risen six-fold over the past thirty-five years to nearly one in three of all babies, altering the face of the European family beyond recognition—and beyond recall—say demographers and social analysts” The article quoted Dr. Peter Brierley of England’s Office for National Statistics (ONS) as saying, “People these days don’t expect their marriages to last, so they think, ‘Why get married in the first place if weddings are expensive and divorce complicated?’” The purpose of the ONS is to provide information to help British church leaders make “informed” policy decisions. The churches are expected by local customs to keep to themselves and not try to impose their moral beliefs on others.

Outreach

There is no doubt that the Church is weak in secular Western Europe. According to Tom Hundley, who published an article in the 27 June 2006 edition of the *Chicago Tribune*, “In France and in almost every other European country, Christianity appears to be in a free fall. Although up to eight-eighth percent of the French identify themselves as Roman Catholic, only about five percent go to church on most Sundays; sixty percent say they ‘never’ or ‘practically never’ go.” The rest of Western Europe is in a similar state. Last summer, the final text of the European Union’s new constitution made no mention of God.

This is not to say that there are not vibrant Christians in Western Europe. Wherever you go around the world, you will find some of the finest missionaries are from Germany, the Netherlands or England. But there are far too few of them to give the unreached people groups in that part of the world a fair chance to hear the gospel. Ironically, Europe is a place where they can legally hear the gospel without government or social interference. The unreached can be reached in Western Europe. They cannot easily be reached in Algeria, Pakistan or Turkey. Although the workers are few, there are some excellent ministries working among Europe’s unreached immigrants. Let us highlight some of these for prayer.

1. **Operation Mobilization (OM).** OM has been engaged in training and evangelism among European Muslims each summer for the past twenty years through a program called “Turning Point.” This effort includes door-to-door evangelism, street surveys, video evenings, a coffeehouse ministry, outdoor book tables and programs for mothers and children.
2. **Christar.** Perhaps the most strategic ministry in Europe today is done by **Christar**. Mission history teaches us that people who live among those they are trying to reach and stay for whatever time it takes do the most effective ministry. Christar workers do just this. Providing child care, language lessons or hospitality can go a long way toward making friends and winning people with the love of Jesus.
3. **South Asian Concern.** In many cases, the best ambassador for Christ is a believer from a similar cultural background. The Christian organization South Asian Concern takes on this role not only in Europe, but in many other parts of the world. Most south Asian people groups in Europe are still unreached, and they are far more likely to interact with south Asians outside their communities when they live in a foreign land. So when south Asian Christians put on an event with speakers, discussions and good food, south Asian members of all religious and ethnic communities are willing to attend.
4. **Peers.** Local indigenous European groups are also being reached by their peers, according to an April 2006 article in *Charisma* magazine. Northern Scandinavian Sami Christians are showing members of their communities how they can worship Christ within their own cultures. Thus the gospel—and Jesus himself—become one of their own, instead of appearing foreign.

Let us continue to pray for those who are reaching out to the peoples of Western Europe who have never trusted in Jesus Christ. Pray that they will be filled with the power and fruit of the Holy Spirit. Pray that they will be obedient to the prompting of the Holy Spirit in all they say and do. Pray that the people to whom they minister will be receptive to the person of Jesus Christ.

Into Their World...The Arabs of the Netherlands

By Laurie Fortunak

With more than 200 million Arabs making up the majority populations of twenty-two nations, this people group represents the largest, most diverse and most politically influential Muslim ethnic group in the world. Many of these Arabs, including those found in the Netherlands, are known as “Diaspora Arabs” and look

radically different from the more traditional Arabs. Most Diaspora Arabs identify themselves by nationality rather than tribal affiliations and nearly forty percent live in urban areas.

Although true Arabs are proud of their heritage, due to the influence of Western culture, Diaspora Arabs have gone through great changes in traditional values. Women have greater educational and employment opportunities, there are less arranged marriages and there is less social pressure to conform to traditional religious practices. Despite these changes, Diaspora Arabs hold fast to their original language, which takes two forms: “classical Arabic,” the religious and literary language spoken and written uniformly throughout the Arab world, and “colloquial Arabic,” the informal spoken language which varies by dialect from region to region.

Since the Prophet Mohammed first preached the tenets of Islam to the Arabs in the seventh century, the link between Arabs and Islam has been strong. Nearly ninety-three percent of Arabs today are Muslim. They belong to a number of sects, including the Shia, the Alawi, the Zaidi and the Sunni.

Although fundamental Muslims are very outspoken against Christianity, the weakening condition of the Diaspora Arabs’ traditional Muslim culture opens up doors for Christians to share the gospel. Pray for the Diaspora Arabs in the Netherlands. Pray they would see Jesus as new doors open for them in a culture unlike anything they had ever known.

For more information on the Arabs of the Netherlands, visit:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab>

www.global12project.com/2004/profiles/clusters/8019.html

www.gosahara.org/aa.html

(Information compiled from www.joshuaproject.net)

Laurie Fortunak is editorial coordinator of Lausanne World Pulse. She also serves as editorial coordinator for [Evangelism and Missions Information Service](#) (EMIS) and managing editor of [Evangelical Missions Quarterly](#) (EMQ).

STRATEGY, TRENDS & STATISTICS

[Muslim Growth in the United Kingdom and Worldwide](#)

By Peter Brierley

The growth of the Muslim community and the decline of church attendance in the United Kingdom seem of perpetual fascination to the media. When the BBC Sunday programme “Heaven and Earth” chose five key facts about religion in Britain to explore, one of them was: “When would Muslim mosque attendance overtake Christian churchgoing?” So what are the actual numbers behind all the interest?

Mosque Attendance

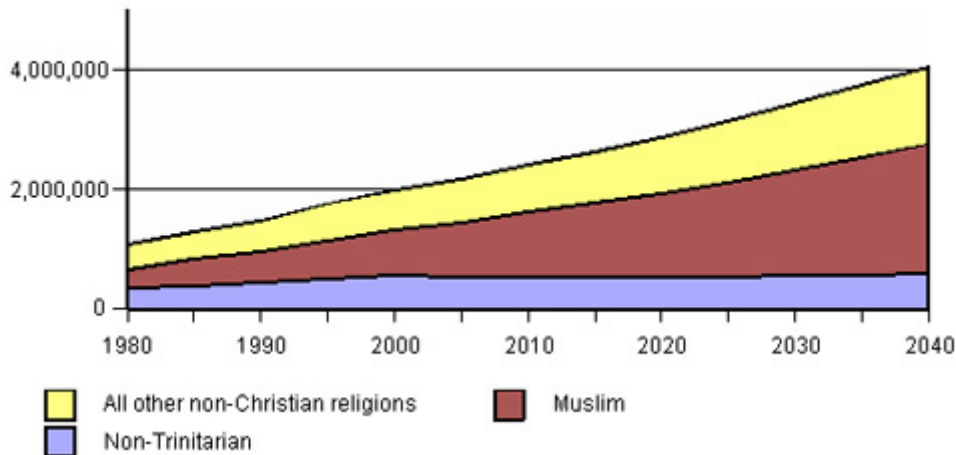
There is no up-to-date reliable information in the UK on how many Muslims actually attend mosque regularly. A comprehensive survey¹ was undertaken in 1986 which found that fifty-one percent of Muslims attended one of the main Muslim festivals, such as *Idul-Fitr*, marking the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting. This is in contrast to the proportion of Christians attending church at Easter or Christmas, variously estimated at between fifteen percent and twenty percent of the population, respectively. This makes up only about twenty-five percent

of Christians in the UK. This includes nominal Christians just as the Muslim percentage includes nominal Muslims.

The same survey found that Muslim Friday mosque attendance was sixteen percent which, again, is slightly more than double the percentage of Christians attending church on an average Sunday. A more recent BBC poll suggested the Muslim Friday mosque attendance figure has increased slightly. However, the same survey found that sixty-five percent of attendance was by children. This means that adult attendance is comparable to the adult proportion of Christian Sunday church attendance.

In the absence of other reliable information, the fifty-one percent result (conveniently rounded to fifty percent) is now regularly used to indicate annual attendance or what are sometimes called “active Muslims.” The number of Muslims in the UK is increasing, partly through immigration, partly because Muslims have larger families and partly through conversion (often at marriage). If present trends continue, the number of active Muslims will increase *pro rata*, rising from half the 2001 Census figure of 1.6 million to half the 2040 estimated number in the UK of 4.3 million (shown in Figure 1 below). The number of active Muslims will outnumber Christian church members by 2049 if nothing changes in the underlying trends.

Figure 1: Active members of non-Christian religions, UK, 1980-2040



Mosques

The number of registered mosques in the UK has increased substantially from four in 1960 to 314 in 1985 to 618 in 2002. Mosques, like churches, must be “registered” by the government central Registry Office if lawful marriages are to be solemnised in them. However, also like churches, there are many places of Muslim worship which are not registered. For example, in 2004, the Muslim website had a database of 1,550 mosques. The non-registered mosques, sometimes called “house-mosques,” are in prayer rooms, houses or elsewhere.

This would suggest an average weekly attendance of perhaps 180 people per mosque. Like churches, some are much larger and others much smaller. The London Central Mosque, the largest, has an attendance of five thousand people at festivals.

Again, this average figure is about double the size of an average Christian church, but strict comparisons are not completely valid as there are more than forty-eight thousand churches in the UK, many of which are in rural areas drawing small congregations. The Muslim philosophy of location is much more akin to the Roman Catholic strategy of having relatively few churches or meeting places, and expecting each place to cater to many people. The Catholics have 4,700 churches in the UK with an average mass attendance of 360 people.

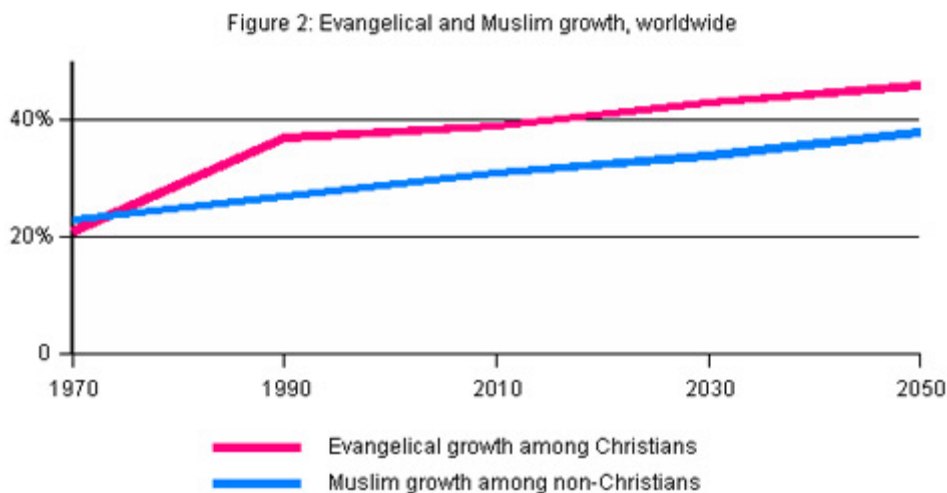
Muslims Worldwide

The number of Muslims, like the number of Christians, is growing worldwide. In 2006, there was an estimated 2.2 billion Christians and 1.3 billion Muslims, both figures including many nominal adherents. These are respectively thirty-three percent and twenty-one percent of the world's population. More than half the people on planet earth are in one of these two major religions. However, the rate of increase of Muslims at 1.9% per annum is greater than the rate of increase of Christians at 1.3%, which in turn is greater than the rate of increase in the general population at 1.2%.

On the assumption that present trends continue, the number of Muslims is set to become more than the number of Christians, but not until well into the twenty-second century. It should, however, be noted that present trends very rarely continue into the future, and this is as true of the UK as it is of the world figures. Completely unknown factors can radically transform the numbers. Additionally, a number of Muslim lands are liable to environmental catastrophes such as tsunamis, earthquakes and rising sea levels.

Evangelical Growth

Christians worldwide (and in the UK also) divide into two broad groups: evangelicals and non-evangelicals. In both the Developing World and the Developed World, the proportion of evangelicals is increasing, although this is happening for different reasons. In the first, especially Africa, evangelicals are growing because of the number of conversions being seen. In the second, the proportion of evangelicals is growing because the number of non-evangelicals is decreasing faster than the number of evangelicals.²



This increasing evangelical growth, as a percentage of all Christians, is significant. It may be compared with the rate of increase of Muslims (taken as a percentage of non-Christians in the world), as given by David Barrett in the most recent edition of the *World Christian Encyclopedia*. They are plotted together in Figure 2 above. A small amount of Muslim growth will probably be from the Christian community, but this is discounted as being too few to show.

Why Is All this Important?

Space does not allow us to show the decreasing trends in the non-evangelicals nor the general population who are neither Christians nor Muslim. The only two growing religious movements at the beginning of the twenty-first century are the evangelicals and the Muslims. Their zeal is similar; their devotion is real. Clashes between the two groups have already been seen in places such as Indonesia, India, Nigeria and Pakistan. It is very likely such clashes will continue and even intensify.

How do we prepare Christian people for this challenge to basic religious ideology and how do we best enable people to follow examples such as Martin Luther who said, “Here I stand; I can do no other?” Christians are called by the Apostle Paul to stand for the faith, contesting for the truth seen in a risen and living Jesus Christ, in an uncompromising yet gracious manner both at national and local levels.

Endnotes

1. Holway, Jim. 1986. “Mosque attendance” in *UK Christian Handbook*, 1987/88 Edition. London: MARC Europe and Evangelical Alliance, 150.

2. For more details, see the article in *Religious Trends*, no. 5, 2005/2006, edited by Peter Brierley. London: Christian Research, 1, 5.

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LAUSANNE REPORTS

Mission through the Lens of AIDS

By Evvy Campbell

For five days at the end of December 2006, 593 Urbana 06 delegates collectively focused on what it means to live missionally in a world pressed with the numbing reality of forty million people living with HIV/AIDS. Participants in “Mission through the Lens of AIDS,” an Urbana 06 residential track, explored the state of the pandemic, effective programs and opportunities to respond as Christians. Key topics included discerning how the Church can learn from AIDS and learning how the good news of God’s kingdom can bring and manifest hope in places where coping with AIDS is a necessity.

Let Scripture Speak

Attendees who signed up to be part of the track resided together in the Drury Plaza Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri, USA—the city where Urbana 06 was held. On the first night, they formed family groups of four to six people. This allowed them to practice on a small scale the type of communal processing and living described in the book of Ephesians, the subject of the “Let Scripture Speak” Bible studies. Don Everts, [InterVarsity](#) area director from Boulder, Colorado, USA, led these family groups through a study of Ephesians. Everts facilitated the 90-minute sessions, utilizing staff with roving microphones to stimulate group discussion. He included time for individual reflection and prayer as well as large and small group dialog that allowed opportunity for consideration of a biblical response to HIV/AIDS. Similar studies on Ephesians for other delegates were held in sixty-nine additional venues, after which the 22,250 attendees trekked to the Edward Jones Dome, where missionary statesman Ajith Fernando of Sri Lanka led four additional expository sessions on Ephesians.

Engaging the Pandemic through Seminars

The heart of “Mission through the Lens of AIDS” was the thirty-one seminars led by those intimately involved in responding to the pandemic. Speakers were selected by an internationally diverse steering committee co-led by Grace Tazelaar, missions director for [Nurses Christian Fellowship](#), and Jim Thomas, professor of epidemiology at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. Steering committee members Sujai Suneetha, a physician from Hyderabad, India, and his scientist wife, Lavanya, spent over fifteen years in leprosy work and research in different parts of India before God led them to begin a drop-in center in their home that now caters to

five hundred HIV-positive persons and their families. The couple spoke eloquently on “Caring for People with HIV/AIDS” and were joined in their presentation by University of Illinois at Chicago infectious disease specialist Dr. Jonathan Uy.

Emmanuel Katongole, a Ugandan Catholic priest and professor of theology and world Christianity at Duke University, also served on the steering committee. Katongole spoke on “Theology through the Lens of AIDS,” drawing on the personal experiences of watching his 21-year-old niece, his eldest brother and ultimately scores of friends in Uganda die of AIDS. Katongole said, “I found myself raising more questions than I or anybody had answers for—as it soon became clear that with HIV/AIDS we had entered a new *kairos*, a moment of truth, in which AIDS was killing not only our bodies but also our usual and comfortable ways of being church and what it means for us to be God’s people.”

Jane Wathome, founder of **Beacon of Hope** in Kenya, led seminars on “Income Generation to AIDS-Stricken Communities.” Wathome’s ministry began in 2002 through listening to the needs expressed by women in the impoverished community of Ongata Rongai. Starting with the production of textiles, Beacon of Hope has grown to include childcare and orphaned child sponsorship, a feeding program, medical assistance, training in home based care, spiritual guidance, group support therapy, HIV testing and counseling and a youth program. To accommodate the rapidly expanding programs, Beacon of Hope has purchased an eight-acre parcel of land and is embarking on the development of a self-sustaining community initiative that will continue to serve women, children and youth affected and infected by HIV/AIDS and poverty.

As an HIV-positive person, Christopher Yuan shared how his past addiction and drug trafficking led to a three-year federal prison term, during which he was informed by a prison nurse that he had contracted HIV. Alone in his prison cell, he noticed a reference to Jeremiah 29:11 scrawled on the metal bunk above him. At the time of his trial, Yuan began reading a Gideon Bible he had found in a garbage can. “At the most hopeless time in my life, God met me and told me he had plans for me, plans to give me a future and a hope. It was at that point that I submitted to him and relinquished control,” Yuan said. A **documentary** produced by CrossRoads and shot on location in South Africa, Russia, Jamaica and the United States relates the thought-provoking stories of Yuan and three other HIV-positive Christians who not only share a grave diagnosis but a sustaining hope in Christ.

Deborah Dortzbach and W. Meredith Long’s *The AIDS Crisis: What We Can Do* (InterVarsity, 2006) was also introduced at Urbana 06. Colleagues at **World Relief** with a combined forty years of engagement with the pandemic, Dortzbach and Long draw readers into responding to HIV/AIDS through vignettes of those whose lives have been changed by AIDS. Solid information interlaced with study questions and online resources enable readers to take the next step in both personally responding to AIDS and in stimulating their churches to do so. Long presented with Stella Kasirye, who has directed World Relief’s AIDS initiatives in Malawi, to speak on “Church Partnerships: Tackling AIDS Together.” In a “Sex, Sexuality, Gender and HIV/AIDS” seminar, Kasirye dealt with the issues of poverty that force women into sexual slavery. Paul Robinson, director of Wheaton College’s (Wheaton, Illinois, USA) HNGR (Human Needs Global Resources) internship program, addressed the social and economic inequities that propel the pandemic, while Serge Duss of World Vision outlined strategies for AIDS advocacy.

Experiencing AIDS

A “Broken Bread Meal for AIDS” gave Urbana 06 participants the opportunity to develop a physical awareness of hunger and its impact on a community. A simple meal of corn soy porridge, fortified with vitamins and minerals and easily digestible for those living with AIDS, was served to all conference participants. Such a meal is commonly provided by relief and development organizations to hungry communities. Participants were also given a card that contained ideas for discussion and prayer as well as the stories of people living with AIDS.

World Vision and the [North American Millers' Association](#) partnered with Urbana in providing the recipe and the ingredients for the meal, which were sent to the convention chefs to test. Urbana director Jim Tebbe reported that the chefs rebelled, saying students would not eat the porridge, additional heavy duty trash bags would have to be ordered for the discarded food, the meal would go down in infamy and they did not want their names attached to it. But Urbana staff insisted and eight tons of gruel was prepared. In plenary sessions, delegates were informed of the purpose of the meal and responded to the challenge, eating virtually all the gruel. Money saved with this meal went toward the conference offering of \$1,212,000USD. Robert Zachvitz, a World Vision senior policy advisor, urged students to host Broken Bread Meals on their campuses. Bible study guides together with packets of the corn-soy mixture are available through www.actingtonaids.org.

Urbana 06 attendees had the opportunity to step into AIDS in Africa through an interactive exhibit in which they received the identity of someone in Africa together with headphones and an MP3-player to listen to that person's life story. Progressing through rooms of a hut with dirt and hay on the floor, and confronted with stirring photography and compelling stories, the experience culminated with participants having their hands stamped either HIV-positive or negative. With nearly forty percent of the population of Botswana and Swaziland infected with HIV, the exhibit, hosted by James Pedrick and his Acting on AIDS colleagues at World Vision, provided a haunting simulation of the lives of Africans living with AIDS. World Vision also provided three thousand free copies of a comprehensive and instructive DVD, "Acting on AIDS Toolkit," to help students develop their own campus programs.

Through the Lens of AIDS and Beyond

The 5 January 2007 Wall Street Journal rightly reported of Urbana 06 that "a big focus of the program this year was the AIDS epidemic and the ways that Christians can respond to it."

In addition to the residential track on AIDS, an extended evening session for all delegates featured Kay Warren of Saddleback Church's (Lake Forest, Illinois, USA) HIV/AIDS Initiative, and Princess Kasune Zulu representing the voices of those living with AIDS. Zulu's sister, mother and father all died of AIDS. At a young age, Zulu began caring for those with AIDS at a local hospital in her native Zambia. She married an older man who had already lost two wives to AIDS. Now HIV-positive herself, Zulu has hitch-hiked across Zambia to make high-risk truck drivers aware of AIDS prevention methods, hosted a national radio program on AIDS and travels internationally speaking on behalf of AIDS orphans and girls forced into the sex trade to provide for their younger siblings. Half of the twelve agencies receiving portions of the \$1.2 million Urbana 06 conference offering, including IFES ([International Fellowship of Evangelical Students](#)), [MAP International](#), [Serving In Mission](#), World Relief and [World Vision](#), have AIDS initiatives.

Why Should I Care?

Affy Adeleye of Nigeria, who led a seminar on "Speaking on Campuses about AIDS and the Gospel," said that some attendees, many personally untouched by the pandemic, came to the conference still asking, "Why should I care?" In contrast, a Kenyan student studying in the United States confided to track co-leader Grace Tazelaar that she was questioning her faith in God because, "It doesn't seem fair. The United States is so blessed, yet the people of Kenya are so poor and suffering with AIDS."

The prayers, planning, Bible studies, sacrificial meal and programmatic efforts of "Mission through the Lens of AIDS" were conceived from the passion that no Urbana 06 attendee leave with the first question unanswered and that many would feel compelled to stand alongside those like their Kenyan sister who have tasted the grief of the pandemic. Tazelaar urged the Kenyan student to "hang onto the faith that you have been given. Maybe God has a calling on your life for Kenya and that is why you are here." Indeed, that many would heed the call to respond to HIV/AIDS was a deep part of the heartbeat of Urbana 06. It is part of living a life worthy of the calling.

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