

March 2009 Executive Summary

NEWS BRIEFS, condensed version (for the complete news briefs, go to:
www.lausanneworldpulse.com/newsbrief.php/1107)

AROUND THE WORLD: Religious Freedom on the Decline

Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and now Kyrgyzstan have passed very restrictive religious laws, which all but force the evangelical Church into hiding. Unfortunately, the future for the evangelical Church in the former Soviet Union doesn't look very bright, either. Kazakhstan is also considering strict legislation. The religion laws require two hundred or more people in a church to register with the government. If that's not done, it's illegal to meet. ([Mission Network News](#))

AROUND THE WORLD: Hunger in Families Skyrockets around World

Studies show an increasing number of people are going without basic nutrition. In 2007, close to one in eight Americans struggled to feed themselves adequately. [Bread for the World Institute](#) reports that the number of people going hungry worldwide has increased by seventy-five million in the last two years. ([Assemblies of God](#))

AROUND THE WORLD: New Website to Help Christians Engage with Scripture

The [Forum of Bible Agencies International](#) recently launched a new website, [Scripture Engagement](#). The site offers encouraging scripture engagement methods, thought-provoking articles to download, news of upcoming events, videos, books, and links to useful sites and journals. For those using "translating the Bible into action," all of the hard-to-find articles at the end of each chapter will be posted on this site. ([Scripture Engagement](#))

CONGO: Protection for Vulnerable Must Be a Priority

As Rwanda and DRC join forces against rebel militias, protection of civilians must be the priority, warns humanitarian agency [World Vision](#). Thousands of Rwandan troops recently entered eastern Congo as part of a joint military offensive with the Congolese army against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a mainly Hutu group accused of taking part in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. "Imminent violence may mean more deaths and displacement for people affected by decades of war," said emergency director for World Vision East DRC Bekele Hankebo. The people of eastern DRC have faced brutal conflict, rape, multiple displacements, and recruitment into armed groups for more than a decade. ([World Vision](#))

COSTA RICA: Relief Work Continues after Earthquake

Relief work continues in Costa Rica after an earthquake claimed more than a dozen lives on 8 January 2009. The count of displaced people is over 3,700. Current needs include personal hygiene items, water purification, and sanitary equipment. Relief workers also continue to search through debris from the magnitude 6.1 earthquake, but road damage has made the sites difficult to reach. [Association of Baptists for World Evangelism](#) (ABWE) missionaries have been helping to search through debris for victims and have set up shelter points. ([Association of Baptists for World Evangelization](#))

ENGLAND: Pro-God Advertisements on London Buses

Three separate pro-God advertisement campaigns on the sides of London buses recently hit city streets in the British capital. The BBC has reported that buses adorned with the slogan "There definitely is a God" are from the Christian Party, while the Trinitarian Bible Society chose a biblical verse. The Russian Orthodox Church is also preparing bus advertisements. The adverts, which are unrelated, came a month after the British Humanist Association placed "No God" slogans on buses across England. ([Assist News](#))

ERITREA: Mass Arrests Raise Concerns for Welfare of Church

Mass arrests of Christians in Eritrea are raising concerns for the welfare of the Church. According to Glenn Penner, with [Voice of the Martyrs Canada](#), "Eritrea is probably the most closed country in Africa today." In the past few

months over one hundred Christians have been detained and transferred to a military facility. Reports indicate that some have been severely mistreated and an unspecified number may have died due to untreated injuries sustained while in detention. ([Voice of the Martyrs](#))

GAZA: Bible Society and Open Doors Provide Relief for Suffering Residents

According to the Palestinian Bible Society, many residents of the Gaza Strip suffer from psychological problems because of the aggression of the governing forces, lack of jobs, isolation from the outside world, and a feeling of insecurity. Bible Societies in Israel and Palestinian areas have launched a joint initiative called "Standing in the Gap," offering practical as well as spiritual relief for the suffering Gazan people. [Open Doors](#) is co-supporting a part of the program called "Love your Neighbor/Comfort my People." ([Mission Network News](#))

INDIA: Relief Camps Closed in Orissa

Government authorities in Orissa state have shut down relief camps, forcing thousands of Christians displaced by the wave of violence that began last August 2008 to flee. Believers have been left without adequate protection against further attacks or compensation for damages sustained. Many of the believers were threatened with violence while in the camps and fear further attacks if they return to their homes. ([Voice of the Martyrs](#))

LIBERIA: Bible Marathons Encourage Faith in Christ

Bible Reading Marathons have been held through [Bible Pathway Ministries](#) since 1990, typically beginning with prayer and concluding with eighty hours of scripture reading. As a result of these marathons, the country is being reached with the gospel. Ken Sharp with Bible Pathway says since their ministry began to provide Bibles and copies of *Bible Pathway*—their daily devotional guide—Liberia has experienced much change: "Forty percent of the country's population has now come to accept Christ as their Savior." Five Bible Reading Marathons are scheduled for April and May 2009, with the intent of reaching over a third of the counties in Liberia. ([Mission Network News](#))

SRI LANKA: Anti-Conversion Law Likely

Sri Lanka's Parliament is expected to pass the country's first anti-conversion law. Currently, Sri Lanka's constitution guarantees freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. However, it also calls for Buddhism to hold the "foremost place." Buddhist leaders have expressed concern about the growth of Christianity, especially in the country's rural areas. These Buddhist activists accuse Christians of offering jobs or money in order to get people to convert to Christianity. ([Gospel for Asia](#))

SUDAN: Students Multiply Bible Training

As warfare and genocide have run rampant in Sudan, it's become more difficult for westerners to enter the country to preach the gospel. Building up native pastors and leaders is, therefore, critical. Five students from Sudan left the country years ago to escape the violence. The students, who attend [Grand Rapids Theological Seminary](#) in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, are now dedicated to delivering the gospel message back to their home country. The students will be joining hands with [Serving In Mission](#) to accomplish this mission and to multiply their own ministry training to reach as many people as possible. ([Mission Network News](#))

UGANDA: Workers Needed for Outreach

Violence continues between the Lord's Resistance Army and Ugandan troops. But even as these tensions persist, a ministry is gearing up to reach out to internally displaced people living in refugee camps. Lorella Rouster with [Every Child Ministries](#) (ECM) says many of the kids in these camps are plagued by memories of seeing family and friends murdered. ECM is sending short-term teams in June and July 2009 into some of the camps to reach out with the gospel. ECM is looking for short-term mission participants. ([Mission Network News](#))

ZIMBABWE: Schooling for Orphans and Children

[Serving In Mission](#) (SIM) plans to enable three thousand orphans and children in Zimbabwe to go back to school by paying their school fees, purchasing school uniforms, and providing writing materials. SIM is running this project in partnership with the United Baptist Church (UBC) of Zimbabwe. SIM representatives add that ensuring educational opportunities for children is critical to mitigating HIV-related vulnerability. ([Serving In Mission](#))

PUBLISHER'S MEMO

On Migration, Diaspora, and Displaced Peoples by *Lon Allison, co-publisher of LWP*. During Pentecost, the first listeners of the gospel were more than three thousand people from over fifteen ethnic groups. It was then that the “diaspora” of the gospel began, Allison writes. It started spreading to three continents the first day it was declared. Clearly, this was a “God thing”—and a strong form of instruction to Christ-followers of every epoch. We need not be concerned for the gospel to be understood by people in every ethnic group and family on the earth. It is.
www.lausanneworldpulse.com/leadershipmemo/1111

THEMED ARTICLES: MIGRATION, DIASPORA, AND DISPLACED PEOPLE

Diaspora Occurrences in the Bible and Their Contexts in Missions by *Narry Santos, resident pastor of Greenhills Christian Fellowship in Toronto*. Santos surveys how *diaspora* is used in the Bible and during biblical times and describes how Jewish diaspora (including Jewish Christian diaspora) is related to Christian missions. He also shares how the *diaspeiro* and *diaspora* passages in the New Testament reveal that God has used suffering, persecution, and dispersion as the context for expanding his kingdom and enabling his people to fulfill their commission to become witnesses to all the nations. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/1104

Migration, Displacement, and the Kingdom of God by *Mark Russell, director of spiritual integration at HOPE International*. We are experiencing migration never before equaled in the history of the world, and the current trends of migration have largely eliminated the historical dichotomies (such as rural-urban) and have produced the need to look at things in a more fluid way. Migration is producing at least four challenges for the Church. The authors discuss what the Bible has to say about injustice—and what our response should be.
www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/1100

Ministering to Diasporas: An Interview with Dr. Sadiri Joy Tira. Dr. Sadiri Joy Tira, Filipino-Canadian missiologist and Lausanne Senior Associate for Diasporas, talks about “people on the move” and how Lausanne’s Diasporas Leadership Team is working toward Lausanne’s mission of “the whole Church bringing the whole gospel to the whole world.” www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/1110

Sometimes “Do Not Talk to Strangers” Is Not the Holy Spirit’s Way by *Lorajoy Tira Dimangundayao is communications director for the Filipino International Network*. An interaction between the author's father and a stranger demonstrates how obedience to God's leading must override our fears, doubts, and selfishness in interacting with those we don't know. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/1103

Inside India: Where Are the Indian Missions in Influencing the Indian Diaspora around the World? by *John Amalraj, executive secretary and national director of Interserve India*. Thousands of Indians migrate to different parts of the world for better prospects in education, career, and quality of living. The growing Indian diaspora in recent times have become very influential in their adopted countries. So how can we influence the Indian diaspora to be disciplined to follow Jesus Christ in our generation? Amalraj asks, concluding there are two ways this can be done: (1) Indian mission organizations must start sending workers to serve the diaspora community and (2) Indian Christian leaders need to create viable structures that will help Indian mission organizations to recruit, equip, and send missionaries to other countries. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/1105

From Burma to Korea: Outreach among the Myanmar Diaspora Community by *Tereso Casino, professor of theology and intercultural studies/missiology at Torch Trinity Graduate School of Theology (Seoul, South Korea)*. South Korea is home to an estimated two thousand nationals from Myanmar. The “religious workers,” although small in number, represent the Protestant/evangelical communities in Myanmar. Ministry among Myanmar nationals in Korea commenced with a few leaders reaching out to their countrymen while studying at local schools. A good case in point is Onnuri Myanmar Community. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/1106

Immigration and North America: Who in the World Is My Neighbor Anyway? by *J. D. Payne, with the North American Mission Board and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*. The United States leads the world as a host country. Canada’s immigrant population is also quite high. Such global movements of people to North America provide an outstanding opportunity for local churches to experience the advancement of the kingdom among many

unreached people groups. Unfortunately, we do not know many of the characteristics of the people the Lord has brought to the continent, Payne says. After sharing some significant challenges that interfere with both our understanding of and our desire to reach our neighbors, Payne encourages readers to overcome these obstacles for the sake of the kingdom. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/1099

The Directives to Diaspora Christian Leaders by *Tom Houston, past international director for Lausanne*. The author uses Jeremiah 29 (a letter from Jeremiah in Jerusalem to the first generation of deportees to Babylon) to speak to the diaspora Church today. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/1101

PERSPECTIVES

Hidden and Forgotten People by *Elba E. Somoza, a social worker and psychodrama therapist in Buenos Aires*. Evangelism is the task of bringing the good news of salvation to people and helping them to heal the wounds of the heart. Somoza shares how the course “Healing the Wounds of Life” helped women and men in the church Iglesia Buenas Nuevas (in Buenos Aires) begin an inner-healing process through the different stages of life. According to Somoza, the Church has an outward mission (evangelization) and an inward mission (formation for the maturity of the integral life of the individual). Generally, when we think of hidden and forgotten people, we have in mind marginalized people or people living in extreme conditions. This is true; however, there are many more people in the seats of our churches. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/perspectives.php/1108

The Growing Importance of Larger Churches in England by *Peter Brierley, Lausanne Senior Associate for Church Research*. Brierley compares larger churches to smaller churches in England, concluding that although larger churches are the exception rather than the rule, collectively they draw significant proportions of churchgoers. Therefore, these churches have significant opportunities to have strong teaching, solid programming, and effective outreach. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/perspectives.php/1109

URBAN COMMUNITIES

Part 1. The Global Village on the Urban Edge: The New Face of Urban Ministry by *Michael A. Mata, urban development director for World Vision U.S. Domestic Programs*. A discussion of globalization in the new urban city and the spiritual dimension of the new urban landscape. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/urban.php/1112

Part 2. The Challenge for the Christian Church: New Roles in the Urban Context by *Michael A. Mata, urban development director for World Vision U.S. Domestic Programs*. The author asks, “What is the role of the Christian faith community in the emerging urban world?” Christian-based communities or cell groups have already challenged the conventional concepts of “church.” These ancient forms of church foster stronger networks of community among people of faith, hold each other accountable, and facilitate the movement outward. As we continue into the twenty-first century, every aspect of what we call the urban context is indelibly marked by the powerful changes emanating from the globalization of our world and the advances within technology. The Christian faith has never had a greater opportunity or a more urgent responsibility to live and proclaim its truths. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/urban.php/1113

LAUSANNE REPORTS

Lausanne Consultation Explores Role of Christian Counseling in World Mission by *Bradford M. Smith, president of Care and Counsel International*. Nineteen Christian caregivers from the fields of counseling, pastoral ministry, psychology, psychiatry, social work, and theology met in Mexico City 6-9 January 2009 to explore the future role of Christian counseling in the Church’s global mission of taking “the whole gospel to the whole world.” www.lausanneworldpulse.com/lausannereports/1098

April 2009 Theme: A Self-examination of the Church

Questions or comments about Lausanne World Pulse may be sent to: editor@lausanneworldpulse.com.