

October 2008 Executive Summary

NEWS BRIEFS, condensed version (for the complete news briefs, go to:
www.lausanneworldpulse.com/newsbriefs.php/1021)

CHINA: American Christian Group Leaves after Airport Standoff

In August 2008, Vision Beyond Borders (VBB) leader Pat Klein and three others spent twenty-six hours at Kunming airport waiting for officials to return more than three hundred confiscated Bibles. The four decided to leave the airport after it was clear the Bibles would not be returned. Klein said he became concerned that he and his companions, including a 78-year-old man and 15-year-old boy, would be taken by force from the airport. (Vision Beyond Borders)

CHINA: Unprecedented Crackdown Planned against “Unstable Social Elements”

The China Aid Association (CAA) has been informed that an unprecedented nationwide crackdown of “unstable social elements” is being prepared in China. Those elements were identified as: illegal Christian house church leaders, petitioners, human rights defenders, and political dissidents. The crackdown, set for October 2008, is to coincide with the government’s campaign of “China’s twenty more years of political and social stability.” (China Aid Association)

GEORGIA/RUSSIA: World Council of Churches Finally Reaches South Ossetia

Barred from making a half-hour drive from within Georgia to Tskhinvali in South Ossetia, a pastoral delegation sent by the World Council of Churches (WCC) took a four-thousand kilometer detour to reach people caught in the Georgia-Russia conflict. The original route designated for humanitarian access by a ceasefire agreement in August was not being honored as such, and armed groups are being accused of violence in the area. (Overcoming Violence)

GUATEMALA: YMCA Worldwide Urges Investigation of Killings

Three young volunteers with the Guatemalan Young Men's Christian Association who were shot dead in August are being remembered by YMCAs worldwide, which are also calling for urgent action to investigate the deaths. The bodies of the three volunteers were found 11 August 2008. The volunteers, well-known for their work with children and youth in Amatitlán, south of Guatemala City, were beaten and killed. (Ecumenical News International)

HAITI: Nazarenes Report Hurricanes' Heavy Toll

In the hurricane-damaged Caribbean, Haiti remains among the hardest hit, with Gustav leaving eight thousand people homeless and Hanna causing further destruction with flooding and mudslides. According to Nazarene French field coordinator Bill Dawson, conditions are so bad that no relief can be flown in, and major roads are impossible to drive in areas outside the capital. All eleven Nazarene districts in Haiti report major losses of homes as well as crops and livestock. (Nazarene Communications Network)

INDIA: International Community Expresses Concern over Recent Violence

Seven United States members of the House of Representatives sent a letter to India's Ambassador to the U.S. expressing concern about recent attacks on Christians in Orissa state. Violence against Christians erupted after the murder of controversial Hindu swami Lakshmanananda Saraswati by unknown assailants. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad, or World Hindu Council, publicly blamed Christians for the murder, leading to mob attacks on Christians in several Orissa districts. According to Christian leaders, the breakdown of law and order in Orissa has led to over four thousand homes being destroyed and an estimated fifty thousand people displaced. (Assist News)

INDIA: Karnataka Christians Protest Violence, Face Possible Consequences

Christian groups have expressed dismay at attempts by the government of India's southern Karnataka state to take action against hundreds of church educational institutions after they closed for a day to protest at ongoing violence against Christians in eastern Orissa state. In an appeal to India's National Human Rights Commission, the Global Council of Indian Christians urged it "to take steps to see that the Christian institutions are not penalized for this action of solidarity and peaceful prayer for the victims of violence in Orissa." (Ecumenical News International)

INDONESIA: Muslim Mob Storms Church and Calls for Ban

While celebrating Indonesia's Independence Day, approximately twenty church members were stormed by a mob in the village of Pondok Rangon in Cipayung. The attack, which took place at the Pentecostal Church of Indonesia, was perpetrated by a Muslim group who later erected banners in the street declaring a ban on "churches and religious services." (International Christian Concern)

IRAN: House Churches Growing Despite Persecution

With the rapid spread of Christianity in Iran, a major crackdown has been launched with President Mamoud Ahmadinejad declaring, "I will stop Christianity in this country." There are seventy-three registered churches in Iran, but it is the rapid growth of unregistered house churches that apparently concerns the government. The crackdown on these churches has had a surprising effect in that house churches are spreading out into smaller groups and therefore reaching out farther into various parts of the country. (Assist News)

MALAYSIA: Malaysian Christians Urge Leaders to Heed Religious Unity

The chairperson of the Christian Federation of Malaysia, Bishop Paul Tan Chee Ing, has urged the country's national leaders to ensure the religious and racial diversity of the South East Asian nation, and has pledged his organization's support to achieve it. "Our country needs to re-examine her priorities and policies, and reassert the Merdeka (freedom) spirit that shaped the nation that we have become," said Ing. (Ecumenical News International)

MALDIVES: New Constitution Severely Restricts Non-Muslim Rights

Condemning the recent ratification of a new constitution in the Maldives, the Institute for Religion and Policy reported that the new document fails to provide basic guarantees of rights and freedoms in the country for non-Muslims and violates internationally-accepted human rights standards. The constitution denies citizenship to non-Muslims. (Institute for Religion and Policy)

MALI: Bible Society Launches Three Key Projects

In a Muslim country where spreading the gospel is not easy, the Bible Society of Mali is focused on three projects serving great needs: the *Listening to the Word* project; a literacy project called *Alpha*; and a collaborative venture with Malian Union for the Blind. (United Bible Society)

MIDDLE EAST: SAT-7 KIDS Introduces *Colors*

In August 2008, SAT-7 KIDS began a new program entitled *Colors*, focusing on pre-school-aged children. Launched in 2007, SAT-7 KIDS is the first and only Arabic Christian channel exclusively for children. The new show has no physical sets, but instead utilizes green screen technology which creates various backdrop locations complete with colorful animated cartoons. (SAT-7 KIDS)

MYANMAR: Government Does Not See Christians as Threat

The United Nations estimates that only one quarter of those in need of shelter since Cyclone Nargis killed thousands in May 2008 have received it. While there continue to be reports of government interference with assistance efforts, one native missionary with World Hope International (WHI) said Myanmar's government is not as opposed to Christianity as the world might think. WHI has been delivering aid to twenty-two villages in the Irrawaddy Delta, and with many children orphaned by the cyclone, WHI has also established an orphanage ministry. (Mission Network News)

PAKISTAN: Christians Hopeful about New President

The September election of Asif Ali Zardari, widower of Benazir Bhutto, raised hopes among Pakistan's Christians, who are reeling from recent murders and attacks. Officially Muslim, Zadari attended missionary schools and a top boarding school near Hyderabad. The late Prime Minister Bhutto had told journalists shortly before her assassination that she wanted to reach out to all Pakistanis, regardless of religion. (BosNews Life)

RWANDA: Bible Society Pushes Forward Amidst Challenges

With Norbert Rutebuka now heading up the Bible Society of Rwanda (BSR), the society has fresh energy to face the challenges of a "big harvest with few laborers." Getting scripture into the landlocked country is challenging, forcing Rutebuka to be creative when adversity increases, such as during the recent violence in Kenya, from where BSR transports its Bibles into Rwanda. Another challenge is the fifty-two percent literacy rate in Rwanda; because of this,

BSR is also concentrating efforts on non-print scriptures and literacy materials with the help of Faith Comes By Hearing. (United Bible Societies)

UNITED STATES: Convoy of Hope and Assemblies of God Respond to Hurricane

More than one million residents in the Gulf Coast of the US were without power in the aftermath of Hurricane Gustav in early September 2008. A Category Two hurricane, Gustav made landfall in Cocodrie, Louisiana, on 2 September, causing significant flooding and wind damage in that state as well as neighboring states. Convoy of Hope (COH) is prepared to empty its warehouse if needed to help people impacted. Along with the Assemblies of God, COH has personnel working throughout the region. (Convoy of Hope)

PUBLISHER'S MEMO

The Verbal Proclamation of the Gospel by *Doug Birdsall, co-publisher of LWP.* Verbal proclamation was not only a distinctive mark of Jesus' ministry, but also of the early Church. Similarly, verbal proclamation must continue to be the hallmark of a healthy Christian community today. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/leadershipmemo/1025

THEMED ARTICLES: THE VERBAL PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL

The Verbal Proclamation of the Gospel by *Rev. Dr. Nii Amoo Darku, vice president of the Ghana Baptist Convention.* God could have chosen to save lost humanity by any means; however, Darku writes, he chose to save us by the power of the gospel preached to the sinner. However, those who would benefit from the gospel and be affected by its power must first hear the message in an understandable and compelling way. Therefore proclaimers of the gospel should adjust their message to new contexts and people. For the verbal proclamation of the word of God to have its desired impact, two things must happen: (1) preachers must learn to wait on God for a message meant for a particular audience at a particular time and (2) the anointing of the Holy Spirit must be present.
www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/1031

Evangelism as Story Telling by *Michael Cassidy, founder of African Enterprise.* Although there are many types of evangelism, story telling is extremely powerful because most post-modernists, especially young ones, are ready for demonstration. If we can tell them about something that actually makes a meaningful difference in life, Cassidy believes, than people are interested. Cassidy shares how the plain, simple, and direct personal testimony can be one of the most powerful tools in evangelizing. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/1027

Verbal Communication of the Gospel: "More than Words Can Say" by *Charles Madinger, co-founder and executive vice president of T4 Global.* Every people and culture has a story that must be confronted with the story of the kingdom. Our challenge is to translate the story of the transforming power of the king. Madinger asks, "How can we best deliver the gospel message to those who cannot, do not, or will not read? How can oral learners come face to face with God's kingdom and God's king?" He considers four case studies and tells how some oral cultures are receiving the gospel through local leaders and new technology.
www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/1028

A God-ordained Appointment with a Listening Group in Nicaragua: Audio Bibles and Salvation by *Jerrid Stetler, who has been in vocational ministry for nineteen years.* The community of *La Chureca* in Managua is home to nearly one thousand of some of the most desperate people on earth. Stetler shares the story of Rogerio, a resident of *La Chureca*, whose life was radically changed after he began attending a *listening group* to hear recordings of the word of God in his heart language. Because over half of the world's population is functionally illiterate (and in some places, churches are being led by pastors who cannot read God's word), the importance of being able to hear scripture in a recorded form cannot be underestimated. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/1032

A Talking Bible for Those Who Need to Hear by *Paul Hoekstra, vice president of Talking Bibles International, and Ed Compean, church planter and lecturer.* To hand the new, non-reading Christian a book on the basics of the faith and send him or her home to study is not only ineffective, it is inappropriate. Everything that is taught to a non-reading person must be presented in oral form, the authors write. They share how using resources like the Talking Bible in

traditionally oral cultures, like Mozambique, can lead to incredible spiritual maturity and lives transformed for Christ.
www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/1026

Faith Comes by Hearing: Lessons from a Filipino Church by *Martin Johnson, manager of communications for Bible Society NSW.* In oral cultures the Faith Comes by Hearing Proclaimer has played a major role in enabling people to hear God speak in their heart language. At first, one wouldn't think this method of communicating God's word would be relevant in a country like the Philippines; however, pastors testify that the dramatized recording of the New Testament enables people to listen and to hear God speak directly to them. Johnson shares how one church in Quezon City is using this device to lead many to a saving faith in Christ.
www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/1033

PERSPECTIVES

Evangelism as a Whole: A Passion for Souls with Compassion for People by *Jon Jeffrey (Jeff) Palmer, who worked for over twenty years in relief and development in Asia.* The Church today lives with a dualistic outlook on life, Palmer writes. Evangelism is seen as a spiritual discipline and is thus relegated to the spiritual world. Moreover, evangelism is reduced to the core of proclamation and more pointedly what we call the “evangel” or the “good news.” While this evangel message is central to the core of who we are as followers of Jesus Christ, we have done great injustice to the Kingdom of God by seeing it affecting only the spiritual standing of a person or community. Instead, Palmer proposes that a better way is evangelism to the whole person—by word *and* by deed. Our proclamation is the evangel story. However, our demonstration of God’s love and concern for people and their struggles in life is a validation of our proclamation. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/perspectives.php/1030

God in a Box by *Iva May, who disciples women through W3: Women, Worldview, and the Word, a narrative discipleship method she has developed.* Personal theology evolves as people seek answers to worldview questions. What is real to you about God shapes your thoughts, values, and behavior, and even determines your eternal destiny. Thus, what shapes your view of God demands an investigation. May uses the example of Abraham’s story to show how powerful the use of story can be. She goes on to explain four things God intends for us to glean from his stories.
www.lausanneworldpulse.com/perspectives.php/1029

URBAN COMMUNITIES

Gathering Manna in the City: Ministry in Lima, Peru by *Brian Langley, who works among street populations in Peru.* Too often, church congregations practice an exclusive and judgmental way of life that doesn’t intentionally embrace people who live on the margins of society. When Jesus says, “Do not work for food that perishes, but for food that lasts for eternal life,” what is at stake is our ability to recognize God among us, Langley writes. “Can we see the bread we are given, which is God’s presence among us in the poor?” he asks. A young person living on the street is a child of God, a sacred object of infinite worth, just as much as the well-respected local pastor. And yet, instead of seeing the life-giving potential in a person from the street, many of us choose to look away in fear. Instead, we must choose to see God in even the most difficult people and places. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/urban.php/1024

LAUSANNE REPORTS

The Rising Mission Force in French-speaking Africa by *Daniel K. Bourdanné, Francophone Africa International Deputy Director for Lausanne.* God, in his sovereignty, and in spite of many crises, is doing great things in the French-speaking part of Africa. Indeed, he has often used war to facilitate the propagation of the gospel through refugees and migrants and to accelerate the missionary movement. French-speaking Africa has gradually become a provider of missionaries to other parts of the continent and to the rest of the world.
www.lausanneworldpulse.com/lausannereports/1022

November 2008 Theme: The Persecuted Church

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