

[NEWS BRIEFS \(www.lausanneworldpulse.com/newsbriefs.php/04-2008\)](http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/newsbriefs.php/04-2008)

AROUND THE WORLD: Over Four Million Bibles and NTs Handed Out

Bible League workers handed out more than four million Bibles and New Testaments in 2007 to millions of people worldwide. Additionally, more than three million Bible studies were completed and more than 539,000 individuals became part of a church. **(Bible League)**

AROUND THE WORLD: Millions Discover God Speaks Their Language

People from twenty different minority language groups received God's Word in their heart language in 2007 as a result of a long-standing partnership between Bible League and Wycliffe Bible Translators. These newly-translated scriptures were placed in the hands of specific people groups throughout Ghana, Kenya, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Peru, and the Philippines. **(Bible League)**

AROUND THE WORLD: TWR Surpasses 225 Languages-and-Dialects Mark

Listeners in West Africa are the beneficiaries of expanded ministry experienced by international Christian broadcasting network Trans World Radio (TWR). Recent broadcast supplements to the airwaves include Baatonum, Ditammari, and Lukpa—all languages spoken in Benin, West Africa; and Ifè, a language of Togo. With these and other new additions, TWR now proclaims God's Word globally in more than 225 languages and dialects. **(Trans World Radio)**

CHINA: Mass Sentencing of Chinese House Church Leaders

Twenty-one prominent Christian leaders have been sentenced to re-education through labor in what China Aid Association describes as the largest mass sentencing of house church leaders in China in twenty-five years. The leaders were accused of holding an "illegal religious gathering" and labeled as members of an "evil cult," a term which Chinese authorities arbitrarily apply to unregistered religious groups. **(Christian Solidarity Worldwide)**

HONG KONG: Beijing Needs to Turn What It Says about Religious Freedom into Reality

The government in Beijing needs to turn what it says about religious freedom into reality, says Chinese pastor, the Rev. Bob Fu, founder of the Texas-based China Aid Association. Fu was once a member of an underground house church in China. **(Ecumenical News International)**

MALAYSIA: English-language Bibles Seized

The seizure by Malaysian customs officials of thirty-two English-language Bibles from a Christian woman who was bringing them into the country for a study group has prompted an outcry from Christians in the Muslim-majority country. "The Council of Churches is flabbergasted that such acts are happening in our country with such frequency and impunity," said the Rev. Hermen Shastri, general secretary of the Council of Churches of Malaysia. **(Ecumenical News International)**

NIGERIA: Bible Reading Marathon Draws Record Numbers

The most recent Bible Reading Marathon in Nigeria drew nearly 730 participants, up from 152 in 2006. Sponsored by the Bible Society of Nigeria, the event, which offers anyone the opportunity to read the Bible aloud in any language, took place in six different churches and Christian centers in Lagos. The readings were primarily given in English, Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, French, and Egun. **(Bible Society of Nigeria)**

SRI LANKA: More Christians Facing Violence

Christians in Sri Lanka have seen a dramatic increase in violence within the last month, according to reports from the National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka. On 3 March the Zion Mount Prayer House in Mulaitivu District was set on fire. The previous day, ten Bible school students in Lunuwila, Putlam District, were attacked by masked

men on motorbikes. On the same day a mob of two hundred people surrounded a local pastor's home in Udugama, Galle District, and told him to leave the village or face death. (**Christian Solidarity Worldwide**)

UNITED KINGDOM: General Director of the Evangelical Alliance UK Leaving Post

One of the UK's most senior Christian leaders, the Rev. Joel Edwards, will be leaving his post as general director of the Evangelical Alliance UK after more than a decade of service. As the Alliance's first black general director, Edwards progressed and deepened the diversity of the Alliance while bringing credibility and attention to evangelicals in the ecumenical and secular spheres. (**Evangelical Alliance UK**)

URUGUAY: One Percent of Nation Accepts Christ at Outreach

Over one percent of the population of Uruguay made a commitment to Christ through *Mi Esperanza-Uruguay*, a nationwide outreach sponsored by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. The event, held in September 2007, was the largest evangelistic event in the history of the country and included 1,413 participating churches. By the time the *Mi Esperanza* office closed 30 November 2007, 33,261 commitments to Christ had been recorded. (**Billy Graham Evangelistic Association**)

ZIMBABWE: Pastors Key to Churches Being "AIDS Competent"

If African churches are to be "AIDS competent," their pastors must be trained to equip members with "sharp minds, keen ears, warm hearts, quick feet, and loud voices," says Ezra Chitando, a Zimbabwean historian and theologian. Chitando has authored two new books on African churches and the pandemic. Such theological training of pastors is the essential first step, Chitando said, to overcoming "ambulance theology," which he described as "always arriving after the accident has already taken place." (**Ecumenical News International**)

PUBLISHER'S MEMO

Church Leaders in the Global South Speak on Mission and Evangelism by Doug Birdsall, co-publisher of LWP.

We are living in a global age; this is especially true in the Church. For some time now, we have heard and felt the increasing influence of the Global South. No longer are the voices of the Global South in the periphery. They are the very center of the world in which we live today. We must integrate and incorporate the voices, thoughts, and ways of the Global South. To this end, we listen to leaders in this issue of LWP.

www.lausanneworldpulse.com/leadershipmemo/911/04-2008

THEMED ARTICLES: CHURCH LEADERS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH SPEAK ON MISSION AND EVANGELISM

A Theology of Evangelism in the Global South by Samuel Escobar, former member of the committee that drafted the *Lausanne Covenant*. By the 1960s, evangelical leaders in Africa, Asia, and Latin America started the quest for a theology of evangelism that would match their activism but also respond to the tremendous social tensions of that decade. The urgency of communicating the gospel in a context of poverty, revolution, strife, oppression, and violence required a fresh understanding of the gospel and new models of missionary action. In response to the social dilemmas of the 1960s in Latin America, evangelicals developed an understanding of evangelism that was built over a Christological structure that shaped both message and method. Since then, evangelicals have kept a central focus of reflection on Jesus Christ; however, in the Global South evangelicals have tried to deepen their understanding of this basic Christology. This included bold humility, the spirit of service of Jesus Christ, and an orientation toward "the others." www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/923/04-2008

Imperative of Transformational Discipleship in the Global Church Pursuit of the Great Commission by U. Obed, international coordinator of the *Apostolic Discipleship Movement*. There is an increasing gulf between the growth of the Church in number and spread, and her spiritual growth. Because the command to "teach" is yet to be interpreted and pursued with any sense of urgency, spiritual decline has set in. The three necessary action steps (go, baptize, teach) in the Great Commission are critically related. As we obey the command "go" by engaging in mission and evangelism, souls are won. As these converts are baptized and brought into believers' fellowship, the Church grows and spreads. As the Church teaches the converts to observe or abide in all the commandments of Christ,

disciples are raised. And genuine disciples constitute the most reliable spiritual force and resource for the Church both now and in the future. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/922/04-2008

The Spirit and Mission: Two Ripples of Pentecostal Mission by Wonsuk Ma, executive director of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies in Oxford, UK. Ma highlights the two spheres and stages (ripples) of Pentecostal mission development—the other side of heaven and this side of heaven. Armed and compelled by eschatological urgency and a Spirit-filled sense of missionary calling, the expansion of Pentecostal Christianity through missionary activities is unprecedented. Equally impressive is the movement’s unusual ability to engage with the context (social and cultural) to create forms of Christianity that are dynamic and engaging. This sheer size and dynamism has turned its churches, particularly those in the Global South, into a powerful mission force “from South to South” as well as “reversed mission to the West.” www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/925/04-2008

The Third Ripple: Deeper and Wider Mission Engagement by Wonsuk Ma, executive director of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies in Oxford, UK. The third ripple of mission engagement often aims at “justice” in social, economic, political, racial, and environmental areas. “Reconciliation” is another term used for this sphere of mission engagement, which includes ecumenism, peace initiatives, and environmental stewardship. Reaching this level, Ma says, will require a quantum leap in Pentecostal mission thinking and practice. He shares three points to encouraging already “progressive” Pentecostals to engage deeper and broader with social issues. He also shares three reasons why the characteristic dynamism of Pentecostals is confined or trapped in the spiritual sphere. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/926/04-2008

A Mission Voice from Latin America: Partnering for World Mission by Valdir Steuernagel, international vice-president for Christian Commitments for World Vision. The missionary awakening of the Church in Latin America comes at a time of significant church growth. Steuernagel believes that the missionary movement which has emerged in Latin America calls for a growing humility that is willing to learn from history. Yesterday’s experiences must be studied more, and the learning of our predecessors must be assimilated by today’s generation. Steuernagel shares four areas in which Latin America has accumulated experience that can enrich and challenge today’s Latin American missionary practice. He also discusses three areas where simply copying a former missionary approach should not be used. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/927/04-2008

PERSPECTIVES

“The Paradigm Is Changing”: Bible Translation and the Church of the Southern Continents by Kirk Franklin, executive director/CEO for Wycliffe International. The missional Church today is a global, inclusive, dynamic Church of believers who are recognizing that God’s mission of reaching the whole world is a mission for the whole Church. A part of that mission is making sure all people have access to scripture in a language that speaks to their hearts. Wycliffe International, an association of forty-eight national organizations in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, the Americas, and Europe, is determined to help these organizations recruit and equip people for Bible translation work around the world. In 2007 Wycliffe International participated in three consultations related to Bible translation movements—one in Cameroon, one in Benin, and one in Panama. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/perspectives.php/921/04-2008

The Challenge of Missions in the Twenty-first Century by Stephen M. Davis, associate pastor and director of missions at Calvary Baptist Church in Pennsylvania (USA). “How can we communicate the unchanging gospel of Jesus Christ in the midst of a changing world?” asks Davis. There are four areas in which our thinking must change in order to meet the challenges inherent in cross-cultural ministry. We must move: from Western cultural superiority to biblical cultural relativism; from planting institutions to planting indigenous, contextualized churches; from conversion as implying cultural discontinuity to conversion as involving worldview; and from inadequate training models to more thorough missiological training. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/perspectives.php/924/04-2008

URBAN COMMUNITIES

The Echo of a Saint: Signs of Hope in a Slum Community by Christopher L. Heuertz, international executive director of Word Made Flesh. Kroo Bay is the poorest slum community in the capital city (Freetown) of the world’s

poorest country (Sierra Leone). Here, however, Noah Tullay runs the Good News Club, a weekly Bible study which includes joyful praise, dynamic Bible stories, heartfelt prayer, compassionate first aid, and nutritious food. Noah, along with several locals and several foreigners, is bringing grace and hope to a place and people who have seen much horror and despair. In the end, Heuertz confesses to “rarely in [his] life having ever been as inspired by a community as [he] was by those children who gathered to worship in Kroo Bay.” www.lausanneworldpulse.com/urban.php/929/04-2008

Simple Spirituality: The Spirit of Francis: A Prophetic Sign of Hope in a Slum Community by *Christopher L. Heuertz*, international executive director of *Word Made Flesh*. A look at the life of Francis of Assisi reveals one saint’s journey toward understanding what it means to “rebuild the Church.” Restoring the Church means centering on those who are poor. Francis’ calling was an incarnational commitment to recovering the identity of Christ’s Church by bringing the vulnerable and the marginalized to the center. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/urban.php/930/04-2008

RESEARCH

The Past Five Years of Christian Growth Worldwide by *Bradley Coon*, a research assistant at the *Center for the Study of Global Christianity*. Research from 2000-2005 shows that Christianity continues to move southward at a steady pace. However, although the gap is closing, the percentage of Christians living in the Global South (sixty-eight percent) is far below the percentage of the global population living in the South (eighty-four percent). Most notably, during the first five years of this century, Christianity as a whole grew faster than the global population. Coon looks at the data region by region, denomination by denomination. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/research.php/928/04-2008

LAUSANNE REPORTS

The European Church Today: Reflections on Her Context by *Gordon Showell-Rogers*, general secretary of the *European Evangelical Alliance*. Although varied, Europe shares a common heritage, geographical space, and some elements of culture in a globalized world. Europe today also has significant similarities with the world in which the early Christians lived. It is pluralistic, multicultural, hedonistic, and perhaps as open to new ideas as that century was. Europe is complicated, but exciting. It is: post-everything, highly secularized, globalized, in search of identity, and very open to spiritual ideas. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/lausannereports/931/04-2008

Where Is the Church in Europe Going? by *Gordon Showell-Rogers*, general secretary of the *European Evangelical Alliance*. There are three possible futures for evangelicalism in Europe: it goes under; it withdraws from society and lives in an increasingly irrelevant corner; or it withstands various social pressures, enjoys increased influence in society, and sees many people finding Christ and growing in him. Showell-Rogers explains how we can make the latter option a reality—and what may hinder us from seeking Europe’s full potential in Christ. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/lausannereports/932/04-2008

May 2008 Theme: Building a Solid Theological Foundation for Mission Policy and Praxis

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