



Lausanne World Pulse

Providing Evangelism & Missions News, Information and Analysis

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PUBLISHER'S MEMO

Goal: Creatively Integrate Evolving Technologies

By Doug Birdsall

Over the centuries, the Christian message has remained a constant in an ever-evolving world. The message embodied in the very life and ministry of Christ has always been, at its core, the incarnational love of God for his people. However, the means to communicate and deliver the message has radically changed in the last century. The challenge now is how to continue being incarnational in delivering the gospel message with the ever-evolving nature of technology in the twenty-first century.

With the radical evolution of technology, the means by which this communication takes place has changed and multiplied exponentially. Immersed now in the digital age, global communications to a mass audience no longer takes place over weeks and months but in a mere blink of an eye.

Endless Options for Communications

Not only are we able to communicate via print media, telephone, radio, and television, but through email, vmail, gmail, hotmail, and redmail. We are bombarded with updates from news sources, corporations, governments, and individuals through SMS, rss, Twitter, Facebook, and MySpace. At the same time we are bombarded with endless entertainment options through CDs, DVDs, mp3s, and YouTube.

Over the last century communication has become exponentially faster and more interactive than ever. This generation is the most wired the world has seen, and yet the next generation promises to be even more so.

Communication is not the only area in which revolutionary technology has left its indelible mark. We have seen radical increases in the capacities and speed of global transportation; shipping materials and goods globally; preservation of perishables; production of foods, clothing, and other goods; and building and construction capacities. We have witnessed revolutionary developments in banking, money transfers, and micro-financing projects in the developing world. We have also seen leaps and bounds made in agriculture, aquaculture, medical procedures, and the capacities to sustain, extend, and improve the quality of peoples' health and lives.

With all these advances, the peoples of the earth should be healthier, happier, older, and living fuller lives. Yet hunger, disease, war, loneliness, pain, and suffering continue to plague us. And even with all these advances in technology, the percentage of Christians today differs little from the percentage of Christians one hundred years ago.

Harnessing the Power of Technology

The challenge in evangelism now lies in how we can best utilize these different mediums effectively, especially in bridging the gap between those who have access to improved technologies and those who do not.

Historically, the missionary movement has been quick to utilize and adapt emerging technologies (such as print materials, films, and mp3 players, as well as harnessing and delivering developments in education and health care) to communicate the gospel. Currently, however, more traditionally-minded churches and mission organizations seem to approach emergent digital technologies with fear or reluctance, often with the result of lagging greatly behind the creative work of businesses and individuals who have embraced new technologies.

In many ways, our Pentecostal and Charismatic brothers and sisters are leading the way in effectively harnessing the power of these new technologies. Some mission organizations are also creatively integrating new technologies in their evangelism and ministry. Whether it's counseling services, advocacy, interactive engagement, resources for preaching and missions, networking, discussion boards, low-cost audio and video broadcasting, micro-finance projects, or increasing agricultural and industrial sustainability, the possibilities to connect with different peoples in different ways and on different levels are infinite!

These new technologies change the methods by which we communicate and collaborate. Not only are initiatives and communication being started by churches and mission organizations, but with the amazing advances in technology, individuals now have the ability to initiate communication and exploration of the gospel message.

With the advances in technology, communication and ministries can be more individualized, interactive, and dynamic. Ministry approaches can change as quickly as the needs of the people change or are better understood. As fast as a videochat, email, blog, or Facebook post, ministries can be more informed, prepared, and responsive. This is essential in building the personal relationships necessary in winning the hearts and minds of people. And it is in personal relationships (not merely faster, more accurate information, or better resources) that hearts are won to the gospel.

As exciting as the possibilities are with innovative developments in technologies, we must be mindful of its limitations. As we consider world evangelism and that much of the world has limited access to such technological developments, we must work toward increasing accessibility.

For example, with digital media (particularly the Internet), developed countries have the highest percentages of Internet users, yet seven of the ten countries with the lowest percentages of Internet users also have the lowest GDPs, lowest adult literacy rates, lowest school enrollments, and highest levels of corruption. We must work toward creatively utilizing new technologies to reach the least of these with the life-changing message of the gospel and to further the development of personal relationships.

It is my hope and prayer that we are able to creatively and successfully integrate new and evolving technologies in better connecting with people personally and dynamically. I pray that the studies and meditations in this issue would inspire us to work boldly and innovatively toward new and uncharted territories and means to bring the gospel to all.

Doug Birdsall is executive chair of the [Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization](#). He served as president of [Asian Access](#) from 1991 to 2007 and continues to serve on their board of directors. Birdsall is a graduate of Wheaton College, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Harvard University. He is co-publisher of Lausanne

NEWS BRIEFS

ALGERIA: Christians Stand Firm, Meet in Vandalized Church

Even on an ordinary Sunday, it takes courage for Pastor Mustapha's church to meet together. As Christians living in Algeria, many face daily pressure from their families and neighbors, as well as the threat of growing surveillance and restriction from authorities. Recently, the church came under direct attack from a mob of local extremists. The gang entered the premises of their Tafat Church in Tizi Ouzou, sixty-two miles east of Algiers, and began destroying the building and its contents. The extremists were interrupted by the police, but later returned, burning everything they could lay their hands on. And yet the Christians are standing firm, even meeting together in their vandalized building. The Sunday after the attack, many of the believers met together as usual, resolving not to be deterred by the extremists. They have requested police protection, but local officials have as yet failed to respond. ([Open Doors USA](#))

AROUND THE WORLD: Project Hannah Addresses Plight of Women

On 26 April 2010, [TWR](#) announced the release of a newly revitalized, user-friendly website spotlighting ministry efforts to women around the world. [Project Hannah](#) offers compassion, encouragement, and hope to suffering women worldwide through prayer, awareness, and radio programming. Project Hannah's popular "Women of Hope" broadcast is aired in fifty-six languages globally. "If you ever wondered if you could help change the world, this website offers practical ways to get involved in addressing one of the transcendent injustices in the world today—the brutal treatment of women and female children," says Project Hannah global ministry director/founder Marli Spieker. "This site provides a powerful account of God's intervention and restoration in countless women's journeys from darkness and despair to light and hope." ([TWR](#))

BANGLADESH: Buddhist Extremists Drive Christians Out of Village

[Compass Direct News](#) (CDN) reported that four Christian families in southeastern Bangladesh left their village on 2 May 2010 under mounting pressure by Buddhist extremists to give up their faith in Christ. A group of Buddhists, brandishing sticks and bamboo clubs in Jamindhonpara village, began patrolling streets on 30 April to keep the eleven members of the Lotiban Baptist Church from gathering for their weekly prayer meetings. Christians in Jamindhonpara have since fled, taking shelter in another village. Jamindhonpara is located in the Lotiban area, Panchari sub-district of Khagrachari district. "When they come, they do not listen to us," said one church member. "They arbitrarily do whatever they like. The situation is indescribable—they hunt us down the same way that one hunts down a mad dog to kill it." ([Assist News Service](#))

CHINA: World Vision Responds to Devastating Earthquake

It has been reported that more than two thousand people have died as a result of a 7.1 magnitude earthquake on 14 April 2010 that rocked Qinghai Province, a remote, mountainous area of western China. Tens of thousands have been left homeless. [World Vision](#) aid workers arrived after thirty hours of travel by road. The team has distributed one thousand boxes of noodles, hygiene kits, and child-friendly kits in Jiegu, where more than eighty percent of the buildings have been damaged or destroyed. According to Meimei Leung, who led World Vision's assessment team into the affected area, adequate shelter and warm clothing for children and families remained a key concern, as average temperatures in the area hovered between -3 to 14 degrees Celsius. ([World Vision](#))

CONGO: Amidst Strife, Gospel Reaches more People

The United Nations plans to begin withdrawal of their peacekeepers from the Democratic Republic of

Congo in two months time. There are concerns for the civilians in the Congo's east because of increasing rebel violence. However, Sam Vinton with [Grace Ministries International](#) says, "The troubles that have taken place in the Congo, and just the general situation in the country, have made people very open to the gospel." Their 2-year-old evangelism program, "Reaching Congo Students," has seen phenomenal response. The team has taken [OneHope's](#) DVD, "The God-Man," into hundreds of rural villages along with evangelism training. So far, over fourteen thousand people have made a profession of faith in Christ. ([Mission Network News](#))

GREECE: Churches Prepare to Provide Relief in Battered Economy

With difficult times ahead for the people of Greece, churches' ecumenical officers met in May 2010 at a gathering organized by the [World Council of Churches](#). According to news reports, as a consequence of the "austerity" measures, the Greek economy is forecast to shrink four percent this year and 2.6 percent in 2011. Unemployment has risen to 11.3 percent, a six-year high. "As a church, we need to bring hope to the people," said Rev. Fr. Gabriel Papanicolaou, an official attending the meeting. "But we also are preparing to supply food, clothes, and other relief items, as well as to care for the needs of the people who lose their jobs and assist them with pastoral and psychological attention." ([World Council of Churches](#))

INDIA: 13-Year-Old Girl Rescued from Brothel

Acting on information given by [Indian Rescue Mission](#) (IRM), on 27 April 2010, police in the city of Pune raided a brothel in the city's Red Light area and rescued a 13-year-old girl, who had been sold, trafficked, and forced into prostitution. James Varghese, founder and president of IRM, said that that an IRM investigation team was initially planning to rescue a 15-year-old girl from a brothel, but during an investigation the previous night, an IRM team member discovered the 13-year-old girl. The girl has now been placed in a government protective home in Pune and the brothel keeper has been arrested in connection with this case. ([Indian Rescue Mission](#))

INDONESIA: Extremists Infiltrate Pluralistic Nation, Upset Religious Harmony

Life is becoming difficult and dangerous for Christians in Indonesia because of outside extremists, the head of a group of churches in the Muslim-majority nation has warned. "For centuries, Muslims and Christians have been living in harmony and have been coexisting peacefully, but agents [from outside] of extremism and uniformity based on Islamic *Shariah* law are threatening the peace and harmony of our country," said the Rev. Gomar Gultom, general secretary of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia. He said that since 2008 Christians have experienced the adverse impact of the influence of "outsiders with Arabic roots and orientation" who have "infiltrated national and local political parties of moderate Muslims" in Indonesia. Islam is Indonesia's majority religion, with Muslims accounting for about 200 million of its 240 million people, making it the country with the world's biggest Muslim population. ([Ecumenical News International](#))

UNITED STATES: Rapid Response Team Deploys following Natural Disaster

In May 2010, after flood waters from the Cumberland River spilled into Nashville, Tennessee, during a record rainstorm that dumped 13.5 inches of rain in two days, the [Billy Graham Rapid Response Team](#) (RRT) began making plans to deploy. As the deluge receded and the recovery began in earnest, crisis-trained chaplains began ministering to the emotional and spiritual needs of the survivors. Several people were killed in the storm, and thousands of homes were damaged. The RRT deployed in coordination with [Samaritan's Purse](#). "Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Nashville, and especially with those who have lost loved ones in this tragic storm," said Jack Munday, director of the RRT. "At times like this, the survivors of the storm need hope and love, and need to know that they are not forgotten." The RRT is a U.S. network of chaplains across forty states that are specifically trained to deal with crisis situations. ([Assist News Service](#))

UZBEKISTAN: Churches Raided, Christians Detained and Questioned

According to [Forum 18](#), on 10 April 2010, eight police officers raided a Protestant church's youth conference held in the village of Baraj in Bostanlyk District of Tashkent Region. Officers claimed to be checking individuals' identity documents. Forum 18 said police confiscated the conference program, as well as computer files of seven hymns. Forty-three attendees, including the conference leader and his wife, were taken to Bostanlyk District police station. All were fingerprinted and photographed before being freed. Two days later, police, tax inspectors, and local officials raided Eternal Life Protestant Church in Tashkent's Yakkasarai District. At the time of the raid, church members were feeding homeless people. Authorities complained that church members were conducting activity "not according to their (registered) charter." After questioning those present, the police detained the pastor's assistant and several other church members. All were freed after questioning. An investigation against the church is still underway. ([Assist News Service](#))

THEMED ARTICLES: Technology: Is It Changing Mission?

How Technology Is Changing, or Should Change, the Way the Gospel Is Shared

By Dion Forster

The German theologian Helmut Thielicke once commented, “The Gospel must be constantly forwarded to a new address because its recipient is repeatedly changing his place of residence.”¹ This is a very challenging yet true observation about the nature of mission and evangelism.

One of the most significant Christian books of our era is Philip Jenkins’ *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*.² Jenkins quotes Philip Yancey, who notes that:

As I travel, I have observed a pattern, a strange historical phenomenon of God “moving” geographically from the Middle East to Europe to North America to the developing world. My theory is this: God goes where he’s wanted.³

There is no doubt that the geographical movement of Christianity throughout history has radically changed the manner in which the gospel is shared—from its birth in Israel among disenfranchised Jewish peasants; to a state-sanctioned religion under the emperor Constantine; through Europe and the Reformation; taking a detour via the dominance of media and mega-church-driven North American Christianity of our recent history; to where Christianity seems to be finding its place among African, Asian, and South American believers. Each new context presents challenges and opportunities for the gospel and the faith.

The Next Shift in Global Christianity

But what if the next shift in Christendom is not merely a geographical shift, but in fact a shift into cyberspace—a movement of a completely different kind?

Let me qualify what I am suggesting. Yancey and Jenkins have suggested that Christianity is dominant where the Christian population is most present (numerically) and most influential. This shift can be traced throughout history as different people in different places (geographical locations) have gathered in communities of influence to develop the theology and strategy for sharing the gospel.

However, what if the next major gathering of believers is not bound to a single geographical location, but rather is characterized as some form of scattered “gathering”—a means of drawing together across

geographical boundaries with a common mind and purpose? Up to fairly recently, such a shift was not possible.

The limits of effective communication in order to share ideas, create community, and develop influence were simply not possible via single direction broadcast mediums (written letters, messengers, even faxes and telegraphs). However, with the advent of fast, reliable, and pervasive communication technologies, the possibilities for communication and connection are changing. The globe is smaller!

Consider this amazing little fact—at the time of writing this article, the Internet social media website Facebook had just passed the 400 million user mark. If one were to compare the users of Facebook to the populations of countries across the world, you may be surprised to discover that Facebook has the third largest population in the world (bigger than the United States, Indonesia, and Brazil).⁴ If Facebook continues to grow at its current rate, it will soon be one of the most populace communities in the world.

That is significant! How many ministries and churches are taking this “scattered community” seriously? Are we sending the message of the gospel to places from which the recipients have already moved?

The Relationship between Technology, Evangelism, and the Apostles

For some years I used to teach an introductory course on the New Testament at the University of Pretoria. At the start of the year I would often ask the students, “Who was the most prominent apostle in the New Testament?” Theological critique aside, most of the students would reply, “Paul.” When I asked them why they thought this, their reasoning was most often because Paul wrote two-thirds of the letters and epistles in the New Testament.

Of course, it is historically and theologically more accurate to point out that Peter was the most prominent apostle; after all, it is upon Peter that Christ founded the Church (Matthew 16:18). However, there is little doubt that history has given Paul and his ministry a special place in Christendom.

Simply stated, Paul understood and used the dominant technology of his time (letter writing), and through this, his ministry has left a lasting legacy and impact. What this illustration suggests is that language and the medium of communication are as important as location of those with whom we wish to communicate. If you send a letter written in English to a village in Africa where the only person who can read has moved on, it doesn't matter how eloquent the letter is, its effect will have been lost!

I would contend that the Internet and social media on the Internet are the most important communication (and community forming) technologies of our time. Not only are new media technologies like Facebook and Twitter giving us some indication of the location of the world's population, they are also giving us an indication of the language this new location requires.

The New Language for the New Location

It is important to remember that geography is playing less of a formative role in the identity of emerging generations—for example, in South Africa there are many English-speaking children who have adopted American accents since their primary exposure to the English language comes through American cartoons and sitcoms, and of course YouTube. It is not strange to find African, European, and even Asian teenagers who have more in common with the youth of California than their native context. Media has an increasingly dominant role in the formation of cultural identity—such identity is no longer primarily dictated by geographic boundaries.

Thus, simply knowing the location of the population⁵ is not enough for truly effective evangelism and missions. We need to “listen” to the emerging language these platforms are generating. Just as earlier

shifts in the gospel (from Jerusalem, to Rome, to England, to America) required a change in language, so this new shift will require the emergence of a new language through which the gospel is communicated. Below are some of the lessons we are learning from social networking tools and platforms.

- **Text remains an important form of communication.** However, long-form text (books and articles) is much less effective than short-form text. For example, Twitter allows only 140 characters of text to be posted. Status updates on Facebook are seldom longer than one or two short sentences. The intention of textual communication is changing. Whereas text has always been used primarily as a means of communicating facts (i.e., statistics, ideas, findings, experiences), social networking is showing us that text is transformed from a *broadcast* medium (i.e., communicating facts) to a mechanism to solicit *interaction*. This leads to the next important linguistic shift that the new online location is showing.
- **Community is more important than communication.** The average user on Facebook is connected to 130 persons. This allows for a far greater reach than was possible in previous generations. Only one hundred years ago the majority of the world's population would not have had significant contact with a person in a different city or town, let alone a person on a different continent. Today such contacts are common.
- **There is a shift from data to wisdom.** According to the “shift happens” team, there are thirty-one billion searches on www.google.com every month. In 2006, there were only 2.7 billion searches. It is estimated that a week's worth of the New York Times newspaper contains more information than a person would come across in their whole lifetime in the eighteenth century.⁶ Data and information are no longer a commodity in a world where persons can find facts on the Internet. This has led to development of knowledge engines such as “Wolfram Alpha,” which takes information and applies complex computational processes to extract knowledge.⁷

In a more organic way, we have seen aggregated search results (such as “trending topics” on Twitter) become a valuable commodity for people to sift through the overabundance of data that is available. Social networking is showing that persons value trusted sources, authoritative voices, and services that can help them find what is necessary and valuable.

Concluding Thoughts

There are many other important things that can be learned from social media and social networking.⁸ However, it is my hope that these few insights would stimulate some thought around the “language” churches and ministry groups use to engage people with the unchanging and ever-powerful gospel of Christ.

Christians, and the Church, in every age have to make some necessary shifts in order to effectively communicate the gospel to a moving population. Just as Paul's letters transformed and built the early Church, and the Guttenberg Press transformed the Church around the time of the Reformation, so I believe the Internet, and particularly social media, is challenging us to transform the way in which we engage the world with the love of Jesus.

Endnotes

1. 2007. In *Mission Shaped Youth: Rethinking Young People and the Church*. Eds. Tim Sudworth, Graham Cray, and Chris Russell. London: Church House Publishing, 11.

2. 2002. *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.

3. Ibid, 15.

4. See <http://econsultancy.com/blog/5324-20+-mind-blowing-social-media-statistics-revisited> for the number of registered users on Facebook as of 9 April 2010. For more up-to-date statistics on registered Facebook users, see www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics. Compare this to the population size of countries across the world at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population; also see this older article on the size of Facebook in relation to population numbers in various countries across the world www.readwriteweb.com/archives/how_big_is_facebook.php.

5. Statistics on user numbers for various popular social networking and new media platforms: Facebook (over 400 million users), Twitter (75 million user), and LinkedIn (50 million users). See <http://econsultancy.com/blog/5324-20+-mind-blowing-social-media-statistics-revisited> and www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics.

6. <http://theinspirationroom.com/daily/2009/shift-happens-updated-in-did-you-know-4-0/>

7. See www.dionforster.com/blog/2009/7/13/moving-from-information-to-knowledge.html and www.dionforster.com/blog/2009/7/14/sustainable-economies-world-resources-and-wolframalpha.html for a brief discussion on this tool.

8. I have discussed the application of social media and social networking tools for ministry here: www.dionforster.com/blog/2009/10/27/a-superb-video-how-the-world-is-changing-new-media-and-minis.html and here www.dionforster.com/blog/2009/9/6/using-media-in-ministry-redux-facebook-twitter-blogs-youtube.html.

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The Inseparable Bond of Technology & Mission

By Nick Nicholaou

In a recent conference about technology in church ministry, Pastor Rick Warren of Saddleback Church (Lake Forest, California, USA) said, “Every time there is an advance in technology, the kingdom advances.” Technology has a huge impact on our mission—not the “what” of our mission, but the “how.”

Some Perspective

The Gutenberg Bible was the first book printed on a printing press. Invented by Johannes Gutenberg around 1440 AD, the printing press ushered in a technological revolution that sparked the Protestant Reformation. I was surprised to learn recently that it was also used to print Martin Luther’s *Ninety-Five Theses*. Apparently, someone took Luther’s Theses to Gutenberg, who printed them, thus helping his words and impact spread across Europe.

Radio and television reached further than any previous method. Billy Graham was the first evangelist to use television to reach a national audience. ABC Television said his 1951 *Hour of Decision* program reached a national audience of seven million viewers. According to the [Billy Graham Evangelistic Association](#), that’s more than had heard all of his sermons combined!

Pastors began using faxes to reach many in the 1980s. Saddleback Church claims to be one of the first churches (starting in 1992) to use the Internet to reach its community and beyond. Today, most churches are on the Internet in some form.

Is Technology Changing the Church's Mission?

In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus gave us the Great Commission: "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." Nearly every church or ministry mission flows from this verse. Advances in technology do not change our mission to fulfill Jesus' command. As many have said, the message does not change, but the way we communicate it does! There are some great tools available (and even more coming) that are impacting how we fulfill our mission.

Current Technology Trends

Many today have access to—and have become comfortable with—the Internet. Email and social websites have made it possible to communicate very easily. In 2009, the largest user group on Facebook was those 50-54 years old, and Facebook declared itself the sixth largest nation on earth! It now has more than 400 million active users, over seventy percent of whom are outside of the U.S. Churches are among the 1.5 million "businesses" that now have Facebook pages in addition to (or instead of!) websites.

But today's younger generations don't like talking on phones or using email. They prefer text messaging and consider the other communication tools as those they need to use at work or for school. Twitter was discovered accidentally by a group of programmers and has become a major communication phenomenon. It is built on the concept of text messaging technology which limits each message to 140 characters. Although one cannot say a lot in 140 characters, one highly regarded secular communicator said it's a great way to start a conversation.

Mobile Computing

The trends of text messaging and Twitter point in the direction of things to come—namely, mobile computing. Some in the information technology (IT) field are predicting that notebook computer sales will slow to a trickle in the next couple of years as smartphones (cellular phones—like the iPhone, Blackberry, and Droid) with the ability to access the Internet and run applications become more prevalent. What does this mean for the Church and how it fulfills its mission?

First, mobile applications and information will become key. Some churches are already redesigning their websites to recognize when they're being accessed by a smartphone and then reformat themselves to fit the smaller screen.

Second, many church management software companies are designing smartphone applications that can access a given church's database to do congregant lookups, post attendance, and more.

Third, some churches are beginning to take advantage of their congregants' use of cell phones. Here are three examples:

- Inviting congregants to text questions during sermons, some of which are given to the speaker to respond to during the message. Inviting congregants to respond to a poll whose results show in bar or pie chart format on a screen in real time.
- Using cell phones to text a parent when their child needs their attention in the nursery.
- Sending text messages to members who have opted into their communication system. They receive prayer requests, meeting reminders, volunteer commitment reminders, etc.

One of my favorite mobile applications is the YouVersion Bible published by LifeChurch.tv. It runs on many smartphone platforms, has almost every popular translation, and it's free. (While speaking to a

graduating seminary class recently, I told them I rarely use a printed Bible thanks to the great resources available on my phone and computer. I think some gasped.)

Cloud Computing

Because of the increasingly widespread use of smartphones and their processing power, cloud computing is growing in popularity. Although I don't believe it's reliable enough yet (it should be in the next year or two), this concept will enable those with smartphones to do anything on their little mobile devices on which they previously needed a notebook computer. Cloud computing is the concept of centralized data and applications available via the Internet. They might be on a public system like Google, or they might be on a church's servers. Some smartphones are even coming out with little projection systems built into them to help display a larger image.

It's about Communication

Ministry has always been about communication. Whether we are sharing the gospel, learning of someone's need, or organizing a group of believers so they can focus on accomplishing ministry, communication has been necessary. With the growing strength of mobile computing, we will have many new ways to share, serve, lead, and follow. The Church should be planning for this next wave of technology that will help advance the kingdom.

In Warren's message to the church technologists at that conference, he said technology "is the frontline of evangelism. Churches will be larger in future generations, and one benefit of technology is to make the big church personal." Whether you're leading a big church or a small church, an established church or a church plant, use every technology tool available to increase your ability to communicate and reach more for Jesus.

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Ten Ways the Internet Is Changing Evangelism and Missions

By John Edmiston

There are currently 1.7 billion active Internet users; another three billion are expected to be added in the next five years. The developing world will soon go online as cell phones become smartphones and as cheap digital devices such as netbooks and e-readers proliferate. The rollout of fiber-optic cable in Africa and massive satellite communication projects will also mean that bandwidth availability and reach will increase.

Within five years, at least half the globe should be online; within fifteen years, Internet reach should be almost universal. Global proclamation will soon be within the reach of any Christian with a computer.

The changes are not only quantitative, they are also qualitative. The very nature and dynamic of Christian ministry are being fundamentally altered due to the new possibilities for relationship, connectivity, and information delivery that the Internet has brought about. The very heart of how we minister is being changed forever in at least ten significant areas.

1. **Information.** The Internet is bringing an enormous amount of timely strategic information into the hands of even the smallest church or mission agency. These include religious and cultural statistics, demographics, compilations such as *Operation World*, and research websites such as [Joshua Project](#), [Caleb Project](#), and [StrategicNetwork](#). This is allowing us to see the big picture better than ever and to drill down to the small details that affect how we implement our evangelism strategies.
2. **Ratiocination.** People “think aloud” in cyberspace. The theology and practice (including ecclesiology and missiology) of most Christians is now primarily formed as a peer-to-peer online process with occasional expert input. There is less and less reference to decisions promulgated by the central governing ecclesiastical bodies of the major world religions. People do their own thinking, and they do so increasingly online through sources such as Wikipedia; out-of-copyright commentaries; and through browsing various websites, e-groups, and postings on social networks. Those ministries who wish to influence opinion need to start doing so in cyberspace, because that is where Christian opinion is now largely being formed.
3. **Exploration.** People do their private, personal, and controversial thinking online. If a person wants to find out about a suspected medical matter or investigate a forbidden political opinion, they first check it out online. A Muslim wishing to find out about Christianity is not likely to ask his or her family or imam; rather, he or she will look at Christian websites. About one-quarter of all Internet users make regular queries about religious matters. They are exploring their own and other faiths. The Church needs to have an evangelistic, apologetic, and missionary presence in this new global marketplace of ideas.
4. **Collaboration.** The Internet is facilitating collaboration across denominational boundaries and across national borders. Experts are now able to link up with other experts in fields such as church planting and theological education. This collaboration is making the denomination almost obsolete. Most Christian workers now operate in networks rather than in denominational silos. People are partnering with like-minded specialists in their area of interest rather than with people who totally agree with their formal belief system.
5. **Validation.** People use the Internet to check things out. This applies to everything from a “too-good-to-be-true” investment scam to the local church they plan to attend when they move to a new city. One oft-quoted statistic is that eighty-five percent of young people check out a church's website before deciding whether or not to even visit that church in the first place. Churches and organizations that are easy to validate online have a huge competitive advantage. This includes having a clear statement of faith and making your ethos, programs, meeting times, address, contact information, operating principles, and finances clear and above board to the honest online enquirer.
6. **Allocation of Resources.** The Internet is allowing donors, foundations, and churches to efficiently assess projects and receive applications for funding across national boundaries. Groups such as [JIMI](#) (the Joint Information Management Initiative of the WEA-MC) and the Global Missions Fund are trying to refine this process of allocation so that the ministries who are most worthy are most funded. A big part of this is having trusted mission information facilitators who regularly supply quality information in a secure format so that it can be used for resource allocation purposes.
7. **Proclamation.** The gospel is being proclaimed on websites, in chat rooms, on YouTube, on cell phones, and on numerous Internet-connected devices. Evangelistic crusades are using the Internet both as a decision mechanism and as a follow-up mechanism. Organizations such as [Global](#)

[Media Outreach](#), [Jesus Central](#), [TopChretien](#), and [GodRev](#) specialize in purely online outreach, while many churches and organizations use the Internet as an augmentation of existing outreach strategies. The Internet is an economical means of proclamation and Internet missionaries do not need visas!

8. **Education.** Online education has been a huge success and has revitalized Theological Education by Extension (TEE) and distance education. Groups such as MAF Learning technologies are working at developing highly effective Internet-based pedagogy. Many Masters and PhD programs are now partly or wholly via Internet-based distance education.
9. **Mobilization.** The Internet facilitates making connections and imparting information and motivation necessary for effective mobilization of pastors, evangelists, and missionaries into the global harvest. [ChristianVolunteering.org](#) matches tens of thousands of volunteers with Christian agencies. A ministry without an online presence will soon find it very challenging to gain new recruits, since for many people, the ministry simply will “not exist.”
10. **Multiplication.** The Internet brings leverage to networks and enables contacts to be made for the multiplication of house and cell churches, church-planting movements, and small TEE-based Bible colleges resourced via an Internet-based curriculum.

Many people start searching for a new church by going online, start their search for information about God online, and start forming their theology online. Missionaries deciding which organization they will serve with, or students deciding on which Bible college to attend, will use online information to narrow down their choices. The Internet is not the be-all and end-all of ministry; however, it is quickly becoming the *starting point* for most ministry. I used to think of the Internet as a tool for outreach, much like having your own radio program. Now I see it as an ocean in which we must sink or swim.

John Edmiston is chairman and CEO of the Asian Internet Bible Institute and [www.Cybermissions.org](#).

The 21st Century Roman Road: How Technology Is Changing Missions

By Troy Carl

Gone are the days when mission workers could assume that our technology is more developed than that of the population we serve. Often, we are stronger on missiology than technology. Unlike those to whom we reach out, we may not be “digital natives” who navigate the world of ISPs, apps, and digital readers with fluency. Our great challenge is to understand communications technology and how to leverage it for the kingdom in every corner of the globe.

The familiar verses of Matthew 28:19-20 don’t leave anyone, no matter how isolated, outside of God’s plan for evangelism: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (emphasis mine). Earlier in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus underscores this inclusiveness: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout *the whole world* as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14; emphasis mine).

In a similar passage in Mark 16:15, Jesus commanded his followers to take the gospel “into all the world.” Intriguingly, the Greek root word κόσμος [cosmos] encompasses more than the physical globe—it also means a world system or order. In sending his disciples into “all the world [system],” Jesus sent

them into an unparalleled, orderly network of Roman roads built originally for conquest but ultimately used to spread the good news of salvation.

The Roman road system has a twenty-first century equivalent: the complex web of computer servers, programming, cell towers, and satellites that form the global telecommunications and Internet superhighway system. Increasingly, the distinction between computers and phones is blurring as cell phones take the roles formerly played by computers. This phenomenon is especially vigorous in the developing world, where many will never own a desktop or laptop computer but consider a mobile phone indispensable.

Too often, when we consider incorporating technology into our mission work, we make the decision based on our own frame of reference. For instance, Americans tend to view cell phones as luxuries, but in other parts of the world, cell phones are priced affordably and people make sacrifices to stay connected. Some seventy-one countries have greater cell phone market penetration than the U.S., and dozens are far ahead in sheer innovation in using cell phones.

In many countries that Americans might consider “third world,” cell owners use their devices to send and receive money, look for work via SMS text messages, and even record and transmit sermons.

By the end of 2010, mobile subscriptions are expected to surpass five billion—more than the number of people with access to decent toilets. Countries without adequate access to telecommunications will not have long to wait. Various initiatives such as *Other 3 Billion* and *Connect the Unconnected* have been launched to provide them with broadband and cell phone networks by the end of 2015.

The pace and saturation of technological advances pose unprecedented challenges to the mission community. How can we stay relevant and effective in a digital world, especially one characterized by high levels of poverty and reliance upon oral communication styles?

In the ministry where I serve, our answer is in providing Audio New Testaments in hundreds of languages free of charge in easy-to-use digital formats that include downloads, streaming, and solar-powered playback units. We are also developing a Digital Bible Project, designed to be the world’s largest repository of digital Bible content, freely available online or through cell phones, mobile music players, and e-readers.

We don’t have the luxury to consider our options for years on end—the first one to stake a claim online often ends up dominating the market. Now is the time to “fill the earth . . . with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14).

Technology and the worlds' systems aren't going to wait for the believing community to catch our breath. And it continues to change rapidly. Just six years ago Facebook didn't exist. So if you have a five-year plan for your ministry, new technology and online outlets for effective ministry may emerge before the year's end. Field missionaries must remain flexible to cultural dynamics and current events. Technology missionaries must do the same.

The digital “Roman road” has been built. Once again, the Lord has provided a way to spread the good news to places otherwise unreachable. It is the mission community’s to use—or lose.

Troy Carl is the national director of [Faith Comes By Hearing](#). He has served as a pastor and mission director. Carl was the president and CEO of a telecommunications company and served on the Board of Directors of another Internet company with gross sales of over \$50 million USD. He is a gifted pioneer and visionary, seeking to make

God's word in audio available through innovative audio Bible discipleship efforts.

The Challenge of Keeping Up with Technology for Ministry

By Robby Richardson

For the past fourteen years, I've had the privilege of being involved in the exciting area of "digital ministry." For a number of years, in my position with Gospel Communications, I worked alongside hundreds of ministries in many parts of the world to help them understand and utilize Internet technology for ministry. My association with the Internet Evangelism Network has provided me the opportunity to work alongside, and learn from, many of the pioneers in utilizing digital technology to present the unchanging truths of the gospel.

Changing at Breakneck Speeds

One of the foundational truths of working with technology is that technology changes, often at breakneck speeds. It often seems that we are just getting a feel for some new "cutting edge" technology when a new tool comes along to make what we are doing, if not obsolete, at least well off the radar screen. Depending upon your perspective, this can be extremely frustrating or very exciting.

One of the easy mistakes to make in today's technology-driven culture is to put our focus on the wrong place...on the technology. I'm not saying the tools we use aren't important, but we need to keep that part of the equation in proper perspective. We need to be very clear on *who* we are trying to reach and *why* we are trying to reach them before we begin to evaluate the best tools to accomplish that purpose.

It is vital for us to be conversant in new technologies and with how various segments of society are using them so we can make the best decisions possible regarding how to reach our intended audiences.

Let me illustrate from the arena of Internet evangelism. In the early days of the Internet the World Wide Web was primarily an information-driven media. A successful website was one which communicated static content. Many of the early Web evangelism sites were, in essence, Internet versions of previous evangelism tools like *The Four Spiritual Laws* or *Peace with God*. Over time, the driving force of the Web changed from information and entertainment to conversation and community. How well have ministries adapted to that change?

Adapting to the Changes in Communication

The addition of an "interactive element" like email was an early way to adapt to these changes. And for many "older" users of the Web, email is still an effective means of communication. But as new technologies have appeared and usage patterns have changed, many of us involved in Internet ministry have not kept pace. We need to ask whether our tools of choice are really the most effective in reaching our intended audiences.

A June 2009 report by The Nielsen Company entitled "How Teens Use Media" found that eighty-three percent of American teens between the ages of 13 and 17 used texting or SMS (Short Message Service), while only twenty-eight percent claimed to use email. If you take the research to the next level, you would find the disparity to be even greater. While the number of monthly emails sent or received by the average teen has been dropping steadily, the number of text messages is skyrocketing. The same Nielsen report states that the average U.S. "mobile teen" now sends or receives an average of 2,899 text messages per month. The numbers for technology users in their twenties would be similar.

Add to this the meteoric rise of use of social networking sites like Facebook or Twitter, and you have an almost totally changed digital landscape from that of just a few years ago. If our goal is to start a conversation about the gospel, we better know where people are actually talking.

Does that mean that we all need to abandon our previous tools for ministry and flock to Facebook, Twitter, or the iPhone? No, but if we want to have an effective tool for reaching a large (and quickly growing) slice of society, we better have a response mechanism that matches their current technology use. If I only offer a phone call or email as a means of responding to my ministry page, I am effectively excluding a significant number of people.

A New Kind of Missionary

We need a new set of “pioneer missionaries” who understand the culture and can use current media and technology to effectively communicate the gospel and engage people in conversation about a living Savior.

Many of our younger generation of Christians spend significant amounts of time immersed in these new technologies. We need to encourage (and equip) them to “be there with the gospel.” And we need to actively seek out their input, and leadership, in developing new initiatives to reach their generation for Christ.

Robby Richardson is executive director of the Internet Evangelism Network and a local pastor in Michigan (USA). He spent thirteen years as director of Internet ministries for Gospel Communications International. Robby and his wife, Karen, have three grown children.

PERSPECTIVES

Glocal Evangelism: Jesus Christ, Magdalena, and Damascus in Greater Toronto Area

By Sadiri Joy Tira

The word “glocal” was originally coined to express a new interweaving of “local” and “global” in business and communication advertisements. In evangelism and missions, I propose that Christ’s followers must be engaged in local *and* global arenas simultaneously.¹ This has also been suggested by Charles Van Engen, who says that local churches must be doing “glocal” missions.²

Glocal evangelism and missions is an alternative to the traditional practice of doing “home” and “overseas” missions, or “here” and “there” evangelism.

Glocal Evangelism in Toronto

The city of Toronto is considered by demographers to be the most multiethnic, multicultural city in the world.³ Since moving into the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) over a year ago, I have witnessed firsthand collaborative evangelistic and mission projects by several local churches, para-church organizations, and individuals committed to the cause of Jesus Christ. These individuals and groups join forces to reach GTA’s *diaspora* population by distributing several evangelistic films: The *JESUS* film, *Magdalena*, and *Damascus*. These people have become “glocal Christians” representing “glocal congregations.” Such local collaborative evangelistic outreaches have global ripple effects. Below is an introduction to each film.

The JESUS Film

- Most widely distributed film in history.
- Translated into over one thousand languages.
- Seen by over three billion viewers worldwide.
- Most accurate film ever made on the life of Jesus Christ (based on the Gospel according to Luke).
- Approved for distribution by Al-Azhar University at the Cairo Book Fair, this film has been the bestseller for years.

Magdalena

- Reveals what can happen when women (people) refuse to live in defeat and chose to discover their real value.
- True story of Jesus seen through the eyes of Mary Magdalene: a story of tenderness, freedom, purpose, and hope for the future.
- Portrays how the love Mary Magdalene experienced changed her life and the man she followed changed the world.
- Available in English, French, Spanish, Arabic, and Portuguese languages

Damascus

- Life story of Saul, whose name was changed to Paul.
- He entered Damascus a persecutor and left an apostle.
- Entirely filmed in Syria and released in March 2009.
- Highly acclaimed by the Syrian government and endorsed by the Vatican.
- Now available in English, French, Italian, Arabic, Farsi, Hindi, Russian, Turkish, and Urdu.

Power of Films Glocally

We are living in a technological age and most of our gadgets are digital. The evangelistic films distributed by many glocal Christians and congregations penetrate homes, apartments, condominium complexes, and dormitories. Imagine these films getting into living rooms, family rooms, and even bedrooms. Not many evangelists have access to these private places.

I have heard firsthand stories of Muslims having dreams about Jesus Christ, and consequently surrendering their lives to the Saviour. I have also heard stories from people of different nationalities and linguistic backgrounds who, after watching these films in the secret places of their homes, decide to follow the Master Jesus. These people then form their own “faith community.” Indeed, these films are highly effective in reaching the more private and secluded fractions of our society. I am witnessing the impact of these films in GTA.

This past Lenten season twenty-five Filipino congregations in GTA who are associated with the Filipino Ministerial Fellowship (FMF) were mobilized to distribute thirty thousand JESUS, Magdalena, and Damascus DVDs. Last year, close to 200,000 DVDs were given by two other partners of the Filipino International Network and the Power to Change (i.e. Campus Crusade for Christ-Canada).

It is even more exciting to see many diaspora people in GTA who have watched these films ask for copies for relatives in their homelands. What was designed to be a local evangelistic outreach has now become a global outreach. These local recipients of DVDs are now distribution agents back to their homelands.

Only eternity will reveal the results of this evangelistic effort. Some people may ask, “How successful is this DVD distribution to the diaspora groups in GTA?” Perhaps the best way to answer such a question is to quote the late Dr. William “Bill” Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, “Success in witnessing

is simply taking the initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God.”

Meet Alyona and Ewa,* My Neighbours

In December 2008, we gave our apartment neighbors *JESUS* film DVDs as Christmas gifts. Most received our gift enthusiastically with the exception of one or two who returned their copies after watching.

Months later, on 28 March 2009, there was a knock at our door from an elderly lady. She looked nervous and shy as she introduced herself: "My name is Alyona. I live in the second floor of the building. A few months ago you gave me a DVD. I watched it many times and I liked it very much. Do you have another copy? I am going to my homeland, Ukraine, this spring and would like to show this film to my relatives and friends." On 4 April 2009, someone visited Alyona to give her copies of the *JESUS* film to take to Ukraine. She was there with two of her grandchildren, ages 9 and 10. After explaining the gospel and how they could follow Jesus Christ and receive eternal life, Alyona and her two grandchildren prayed to follow Jesus Christ.

Our apartment superintendent's wife received the *JESUS* film in the same way. We first met Ewa when we moved into our current residence in October 2008. Immediately, she befriended us—offering to cook authentic Polish food. She was one of the first of our neighbours to receive the *JESUS* film DVD. Soon, she requested more copies to share with her loved ones.

If we did not take the initiative to give every family in our apartment building the *JESUS* film, we wonder if Alyona, her grandchildren, and Ewa would know Jesus today. Please pray for Alyona's growth in Christ and her testimony being shared with others as far away as Ukraine. This is a story of a diaspora Ukrainian meeting a diaspora Filipino, then returning to her homeland to introduce the most influential person in her life—Jesus Christ—and the best gift ever—eternal life.

Van Engen is right: local churches must be doing glocal missions. They can, indeed, be mobilised for concerted glocal evangelism. Furthermore, Christian leaders need to be witnessing locally, even as they engage themselves globally. Media evangelism, particularly in the form of the films, is a highly effective tool for making a glocal impact.

* pseudonyms

Endnotes

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3. See www.toronto.ca/toronto_facts/diversity.htm.

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Toronto—one of the world's most multicultural cities.

Beyond Basic Evangelism: Pentecostals and a Broadened Lausanne Evangelistic Agenda, Part One

By Grant McClung

(Editor's note: This article is Part One of a two-part article. To view Part Two, [click here](#). This article includes the first four of eight characteristics of biblical evangelism.)

On a routine Saturday in Boston some 150 years ago, a quiet and unassuming Sunday school teacher by the name of Edward Kimball took the day to visit every young man in his class. He wanted to be sure that each had come to know Christ.

One of the students worked as a clerk in his uncle's shoe store. Kimball entered the store, walked back to the stockroom where Dwight Lyman Moody was stocking the shelves, and confronted the youth with the importance of knowing Christ personally. In that stockroom, D.L. Moody accepted Christ as his Savior (on 21 April 1855). It has been estimated that during his lifetime Moody traveled more than one million miles (before the days of commercial air travel) and spoke to more than 100 million people.

It was Moody who led Wilbur Chapman to the Lord. Chapman became a great evangelist in the generation succeeding Moody's. During Chapman's ministry in Chicago, a baseball player with the "Chicago White Stockings" had a Sunday off (as all professional ballplayers did in those days) and was standing in front of a bar on State Street.

A gospel wagon from the Pacific Garden Mission came by, playing hymns and inviting people to the afternoon service down the street. This ballplayer, recognizing the hymns from his childhood, attended that service and received Christ as his personal Savior.

That afternoon encounter with Christ dramatically changed the life of Billy Sunday. He soon left professional sports to minister in the YMCA in Chicago. Sometime later, Chapman was passing through town and invited Sunday to join his crusade team as an advance man, to help organize pastors and set up the evangelistic meetings. Sunday enthusiastically agreed.

After two years, Chapman left the evangelistic ministry to become the pastor of one of the leading churches in America. Sunday felt stranded, but he refocused on national crusade evangelism and soon began to schedule his own crusades. In one of Sunday's meetings, a young man named Mordecai Hamm accepted Christ. Hamm became a great evangelist in the southeastern United States, ministering to massive crowds south of the Mason-Dixon Line.

In one of those large crowds one night, a lanky North Carolina farm boy named Billy Graham stepped out and moved forward to accept Christ.

In relaying this incredible, God-orchestrated connectivity of persons, Joseph Stowell says,

What a phenomenal succession of faithful and stellar harvesters for the cause of eternity. Edward Kimball, the Sunday school teacher, was simply an unheralded follower who gave up a Saturday for the cause. Heaven is crowded with the results of his routine faithfulness.¹

This story of simple and straightforward evangelistic witness gets to the heart of biblical evangelism. Stories like this are at the core of commonly held views of evangelism in the broader community of Evangelicals, Pentecostals, and Charismatics and are faithful to biblical models of evangelistic witness.

That is the beginning point, but there is more. Allow me to venture that the following eight characteristics of biblical evangelism also typify generally held views of evangelism in our communities of faith. Not only is a broadened evangelistic agenda faithful to the witness of scripture, but it is in harmony with The Lausanne Covenant and The Manila Manifesto, documents dear to those who are committed to see the whole Church take the whole gospel to the whole world.

1. Evangelism is *experiential*. The Manila Manifesto claims that, “Our proclamation that Christ died to bring us to God appeals to people who are spiritually thirsty, but they will not believe us if we give no evidence of knowing the living God ourselves...” (Section 7, “The Integrity of the Witnesses”). We believe that one must know God personally through Jesus Christ and that our evangelistic witness flows out of that personal experience.

The pursuit of a personal experience with God through the Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit must be followed by a corresponding passion to make Christ known to others. “The full experience of the Holy Spirit,” said Arthur Glasser, “...will not only move the Church closer to Jesus at its center, but at the same time, press the Church to move out into the world in mission.”²

2. Evangelism is *exegetical*. Statements regarding biblical authority are central to The Lausanne Covenant (Section 2, “The Authority and Power of the Bible”) and The Manila Manifesto. In both documents there are entire paragraphs on biblical authority supported heavily with a wide array of biblical references for each of their other main sections. Due to their high regard for scripture, Evangelicals and Pentecostals have earned themselves the nickname of “people of The Book.”

Anthropologist Eugene Nida called Latin American Pentecostals, “The Church of the Dirty Bibles.” There, he observed, the Bible is used frequently in worship services, being read along by the poor with their soiled fingers as a reading guide. We believe in the absolute authority of God’s word and are, therefore, committed to telling the biblical story of salvation.

Whenever and wherever there is rising deterrence from non-Christian religions and secularization, along with the alarming drift toward theological “slippage” in the Christian community, the ballast and balance of biblical exegesis and theological scholarship is needed in the task of evangelization. In fact, let it be asserted that, “Exegesis and evangelism need not, and cannot, be mutually exclusive.”

3. Evangelism is *expressive*. The truth of the gospel is meant to be verbally expressed with the expectation of a verdict on the part of the listener. Even an overview reading of scripture shows the centrality of proclamation in the ministry of evangelism, starting with our Lord Jesus Christ as the primary case in point (*italics mine*):

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me *to preach* good news to the poor. He has sent me *to proclaim* freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, *to proclaim* the year of the Lord’s favor. (Luke 4:18-19)

George Peters asks the question:

What if Jesus had silently walked the paths of Galilee or the streets of Jerusalem? If He had only demonstrated the love of God and the compassion of His own heart, but had never proclaimed and

expounded the motive, meaning and purpose of His life, service, death, and resurrection? If He had never informed us of the nature and mind of God?³

The straightforward introduction of Jesus by the Gospel writers shows him launching his public ministry with the ministry of proclamation (*italics mine*):

- Mark 1:14 (King James Version): “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, *preaching* the gospel of the Kingdom of God” (“*proclaiming* the good news of God,” NIV)
- Luke 4:43-44: “I must *preach* the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent. And he kept on *preaching* in the synagogues of Judea”

In the ministry of Jesus and his early followers, there is a direct connection between being filled and anointed with the Holy Spirit and the resulting *verbal expression* of the gospel (*italics mine*):

- Luke 4:14-15, 32: “And Jesus returned to Galilee *in the power of the Spirit*...He *taught* in their synagogues...*his message had authority*.”

The New Testament pattern was, “filled with the Spirit and spoke boldly” (Acts 2:4; 4:31; 9:17, 20; 12:9-10; 19:6). After the Holy Spirit outpouring on each of the 120 on the Day of Pentecost (cf. the language “all” and “each” in Acts 1:1-4), a rough-and-ready blue-collar fisherman went public with the gospel. Peter *stood up* (with eleven others) and *spoke up* into the face a hostile culture.

The Lausanne Covenant gives prioritization to the defining role of proclamation in evangelism. While regarding Christian presence in the world as indispensable to evangelism and providing an opportunity for dialogue, it gives clear priority to gospel expression through proclamation: “...evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God” (see Section 4, “The Nature of Evangelism”).

4. Evangelism is *exposure and confrontation*. Whether it was with John the Baptist, Jesus of Nazareth, or the early Church throughout the Book of Acts, the work of evangelism ultimately exposed and confronted evil powers in spiritual warfare (note, for example, the confrontation of Paul and Elymas, the sorcerer, in Acts 13:6-12).

In the last two decades there has been a proliferation of discussion and publication on the topics of spiritual warfare, power encounter, and signs and wonders in world evangelization, much of it reflecting the realities and frontline experiences from the burgeoning Pentecostal/Charismatic movement in the Majority World. Simply put, *evangelism is spiritual warfare*. Both The Lausanne Covenant (Section 12, “Spiritual Conflict”) and The Manila Manifesto (Affirmation 11) provide extensive affirmations of the reality of spiritual warfare inherent in the process of evangelization.

True biblical evangelism will also expose and confront the realities of evil that are displayed in unjust economic and political systems (spiritual warfare is not always so recognized). It will cause Christ’s followers to prophetically address issues concerning freedom and persecution, and call for leaders of nations and governments to safeguard the protections set forth in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (See Section 12 of The Lausanne Covenant, “Freedom and Persecution”). Affirmation 9 of The Manila Manifesto declares: “We affirm that the proclamation of God’s kingdom of justice and peace demands the denunciation of all injustice and oppression, both personal and structural; we will not shrink from this prophetic witness.”

Endnotes

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Beyond Basic Evangelism: Pentecostals and a Broadened Lausanne Evangelistic Agenda, Part Two

By Grant McClung

(Editor's note: This article is Part Two of a two-part article. To view Part One, [click here](#). This article continues with the fifth of eight characteristics of biblical evangelism.)

5. Evangelism is eschatologically urgent. Jesus said, “As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work” (John 9:4). Following Christ today brings with that experience a built-in urgency because we know our time is limited. Again the words of our Lord: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).

In Section 15 of The Lausanne Covenant, the expectation of the return of Jesus Christ is highlighted as a major motivational force in world evangelization (the first three lines are cited below):

We believe that Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly, in power and glory, to consummate his salvation and his judgment. This promise of his coming is a further spur to our evangelism, for we remember his words that the gospel must first be preached to all nations. We believe that the interim period between Christ’s ascension and return is to be filled with the mission of the people of God, who have no liberty to stop before the end...

Eschatological urgency was at the heart of the missionary fervor of early Pentecostals. When supernatural phenomena burst on the scene at the Azusa Street revival and other locations in 1906, Pentecostals felt sure that they were living in and directly experiencing the end-time restoration of New Testament apostolic power.

Signs and wonders were a portent Christ’s imminent return. Everything else was put aside for the urgent business of world evangelization. Scores of Pentecostal missionaries, most of them ill-prepared in language/culture learning and without adequate financial support, took off for the far-flung corners of the globe, expecting to remain there until the rapture, which they believed was imminent. Pentecostal historian Vinson Synan characterized these early evangelists as “missionaries of the one-way ticket.”¹

“Proclaim Christ Until He Comes” was the entire congress theme at Lausanne II in Manila, reflected in the final lines of The Manila Manifesto: “...proclaiming Christ until he comes, with all necessary urgency, unity, and sacrifice” (“Conclusion: Proclaim Christ Until He Comes”).

6. Evangelism is *ecologically active*. Biblical evangelism is also ecologically active—that is, bringing the message and realities of the Kingdom of God into the social affairs of human beings (i.e., “human ecology”) and into responsible stewardship of all creation. Proclamation evangelism results in the emergence of church plants and communities of the Kingdom of God who live out prophetic social activism and community transformation.

African church leader Gottfried Osei-Mensah, a former executive secretary of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE), has said that four words state the different opinions held by Christians on the relationship between evangelism and social action. The words *is*, *or*, *for*, and *and* offer four options for definition and implementation:

1. Social action *is* evangelism—anything and everything done as a social action could be called evangelism.
2. Social action *or* evangelism—a choice of one over against the other.
3. Social action *for* evangelism—using social action/benevolence as a method or channel toward opening up an opportunity for evangelistic witness.
4. Social action *and* evangelism—acknowledging that scripture commands both.

Most Evangelicals and Pentecostals would emphasize at this point the “prioritization of evangelization” or, to use the language of The Lausanne Covenant and The Manila Manifesto, “evangelism is primary” (more from both documents at www.lausanne.org).

Over the years, after discussing Osei-Mensah’s categories with seminary students, local pastors and laity, and church leaders in various cultural settings, I have suggested a fifth option: Social action *in* evangelism—evangelism in and of itself as an action and process is social action.

Another way to express this is to turn it around and formulate it as, “Evangelism is social action.” This is the conclusion of evangelist Luis Palau and the title of an article in *World Vision* magazine:

The people of this world create the problems of this world. If we can lead them to Christ, we will create a climate for other positive, practical changes to take place...Conversion leads to the greatest social action. As people’s lives are changed, they are different in their families, in their jobs, and in society.... I am proud to preach the gospel, which is the power of God, because nothing helps people more than introducing them to Jesus Christ. Evangelism saves people not only from dying without Christ, but also from living without him. As they live with him, and for him, they become salt and light in a world lost in sorrow, injustice, violence, hunger, and disease.²

The biblical integration of evangelism and social responsibility is extensively discussed in The Lausanne Covenant (Section 5, “Christian Social Responsibility”). The Manila Manifesto expresses “a continuing commitment to social action (i.e., an affirmation of the Lausanne statements), but adds a new and unique line of its own that deplors “...all forms of exploitation of people and *of the earth*” (Section 4, “The Gospel and Social Responsibility”).

Evangelistic proclamation creates new church plants and a growing “critical mass” of Christ followers who exert influence in policies of social justice and responsible care of the environment. Although urging social responsibility, The Manila Manifesto explains that, “Our continuing commitment to social action is not a confusion of the Kingdom of God with a Christianized society.” It calls, however, for a

proclamation of "...the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all of life, private and public, local and global" (Section 4, "The Gospel and Social Responsibility").

7. Evangelism is egalitarian in recruitment and leadership. Note the recognition of ministry partnerships and equal involvement of women and men, laity and vocational clergy, youth and children, and all races and cultures in Affirmations 13 and 14 of The Manila Manifesto:

13. We affirm that we who claim to be members of the Body of Christ must transcend within our fellowship the barriers of race, gender, and class.

14. We affirm that the gifts of the Spirit are distributed to all God's people, women and men, and that their partnership in evangelization must be welcomed for the common good.

In Pentecostal/Charismatic history, experience, and evangelistic expression we have been marked by our recognition of human equality and interdependence. From the outset at Azusa Street and for the past one hundred years, media observers and researchers have noted the flattening demographic effect of Pentecostalism. Pentecostal adherents, especially in the South, have come not from the ranks of the privileged, but from the powerless.

In our history, most of our outstanding pastors, evangelists, and missionaries were laypeople from the working classes, with little or no education. The release and participation of the laity ("laity" meaning men *and* women, boys *and* girls) is one of the most often-quoted marks of Pentecostal/Charismatic growth cited both by inside participants and outside observers.

A large part of the dynamic growth of our movement has been our ability to mobilize and effectively deploy women into evangelistic witness and church leadership. In fact, seven of the twelve members of the interracial "Credential Committee" at the Azusa Street Mission in 1906 were women. This committee selected and proved candidates for ministerial licensing and supervised the deployment of evangelists across the nation and around the world. Historian Vinson Synan has characterized the Pentecostal movement as "An Equal Opportunity Movement."³

The empowerment experience on the Day of Pentecost broke the last barrier of separation between humanity, according to Pentecostal ecumenist David J. du Plessis (1905 – 1987). On the Day of Pentecost, du Plessis stated in a 1983 interview that Jesus "...baptized the women exactly like the men, and I say for the exact same purpose as the men are baptized so the women are baptized."⁴

8. Evangelism is ecumenically interdependent. The argument here is not for structural but *spiritual* ecumenism—a partnership of spirit among all who know and personally follow Jesus Christ, regardless of their particular Christian name brand or affiliation.

Kingdom-oriented evangelism creates an environment of interdependence and collaboration. It brings with it an understanding that we all must work together in evangelism, especially when we confront hostility, marginalization, and persecution. David Shibley says it so aptly, "World evangelization can never be accomplished by Charismatics alone. Neither can it be accomplished without us."⁵

The Lausanne Covenant has devoted two entire sections toward global interdependence in evangelization (Section 7, "Cooperation in Evangelism," and Section 8, "Churches in Evangelistic Partnership) and The Manila Manifesto has a lengthy statement on "Cooperating in Evangelism" (Affirmation 9).

People in our world are desperate. Receptivity to the gospel is unprecedented. It is time for all Christ followers to join hands together in a full-orbed, biblically-balanced evangelism that maintains the central priority of proclamation for all believers and lives out the model of the “routine faithfulness” of Sunday school teacher Edward Kimball. What Kimball did for D.L. Moody that Saturday afternoon in a Boston shoe store is our evangelistic heritage. Now is the time to embrace and recover this heritage—as well as all aspects of a broadened, biblical evangelistic agenda—and make it our future horizon.

Endnotes

1. 1992. *The Spirit Said “Grow.”* Kansas City, Missouri, USA: MARC Publications, 39.
2. 1990. April/May, 4-8.
3. Smith, Harold, ed. 1990. *Pentecostals from the Inside Out.* Wheaton, Illinois, USA: Victor Books, 43-50.
4. 1983. *Theology, News, and Notes.* March, 6.
5. 1997. *A Force in the Earth: The Move of the Holy Spirit in World Evangelization.* Lake Mary, Florida, USA: Strang Communications.

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LEADERSHIP PROFILES

Leadership Profile: Marli Spieker, Global Ministry Director/Founder, Project Hannah

Q. Tell us about your family.

A. My parents were missionaries with the Salvation Army in South Brazil. I like to think that I was raised by my own “George Muller” and “Mother Teresa.” Their lives were the embodiment of Isaiah 61.

At 17, I too started ministering in the slums of my country. Forty-four years ago, when my German husband, Edmund, proposed to me, I answered, “With you I’ll go to the moon!” Well, not quite yet; but, as **TWR** missionaries, we literally have gone to the ends of the world serving our King together. We have three children and eight wonderful grandchildren.

Q. Give us a brief overview of your work and ministry.

A. **Project Hannah** is the answer to God’s calling on my life when I saw the unspeakable plight of women and girls first in Asia, and then worldwide. Project Hannah is a ministry of **TWR** offering compassion and encouragement to suffering women through awareness, prayer, and radio programs in fifty-seven languages. Its main thrust is the Prayer Movement in over 105 countries.

According to Genesis 3:15, the root cause for the suffering a majority of women face is spiritual. Therefore, intercessors from all walks of life and different denominations stand in the gap for women trapped in cultural, emotional, physical, and spiritual bondage. It is a wave of prayer around the globe 24/7. Empowering women through prayer and radio programs is complemented by “on the ground”

ministries in prisons, hospitals, and orphanages, to HIV/AIDS patients and their families, to prostitutes, and in literacy and micro industries. Calling the Church to action is also part of Project Hannah's awareness programs.

Q. What is your favorite quote?

A. "Pray not for greater works. Prayer IS the greater work." - Oswald Chambers

Q. Who has been the most influential person in your life/ministry, and why?

A. My mother was a simple, self-taught woman with Abigail's wisdom, Esther's courage, Deborah's determination, and Hannah's faith. In a time and culture where most women were to be seen and not heard, she taught me by example what it takes to be a woman of dignity, faith, and destiny. My husband has also greatly influenced my Christian walk and service with his wisdom and unwavering faith. He has taught me by example what it takes to embody Galatians 2:20 at home and in ministry.

Q. What is the best piece of advice you've received?

A. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not in your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your path straight."

Q. What one issue do you believe is the greatest barrier or opportunity to evangelism, and why?

A. Prayer—or lack of it. In Christian work we tend to spend too much time developing evangelism methods and strategies and too little time listening and actively waiting in prayer for God to reveal his strategy and ways for us to reach the lost.

Evangelism. On Point.

Q. Describe a time in which you shared your faith in Christ with someone who didn't know him, and then saw God clearly work in that situation.

A. Graciously, the airline company bumped us to business class when they heard that we were traveling because our son, Fabio, had died that morning. Danielle, a beautiful and caring Brazilian stewardess, took care of us the whole flight. As the night progressed we talked about many things: Fabio, her little son sick at home, her marriage falling apart, her hopes and fears. "I am afraid to die," she said softly. "Our Fabio was not; and neither are we," I answered. Then I told her why: "Jesus died for me. And he died for you, too. Death is actually dead. I do not need to fear it anymore. Fabio is in Heaven with Jesus and we will meet him again when we die." She left us for a moment and I said to my husband, "We need to pray for her." When she returned and talked a bit

We all know that prayer is the most powerful weapon we have in evangelism, but ironically, it is the least used, and oftentimes, it is our last resort. We forget that PRAYER IS THE WORK and that ministry is just reaping the results.

Q. What book do you most often recommend to others to read, and why?

A. The book of Isaiah (the “gospel of the Old Testament”). Isaiah is my favorite prophet. God used Isaiah’s discourses, prophesies, and songs to call me to himself and into full-time ministry.

Q. What would you like to be doing in ten years?

A. There is a fire burning in my bones with a passion to take every woman and girl back to their rightful place as “a daughter of the King.” I want to continue calling out “world changers” who will pray and work, introducing Jesus’ eternal hope to women everywhere so that their God-given dignity is restored.

Q. How can people be praying for you?

A. Please pray that my First Love always remains the first priority of my life. Pray for wisdom, strength, and grace to “finish well.”

LAUSANNE REPORTS

Ephesians Expositors Meet in Cairo

By Lindsay Olesberg

The Ephesians Expositors Team gathered in Cairo in February 2010 to begin preparation for Cape Town 2010. The Bible Society of Egypt provided an excellent environment for almost fifteen hours of close study and dynamic conversation. Together, we worked through an inductive manuscript study, which was new for many of those gathered.

Ajith Fernando wrote afterwards, “It was amazing! Few things on earth can match the thrill of studying God’s word along with other experienced students of the Bible. It was wonderful to learn so much from those who were there and to discuss how best to apply our passages to the international audience.” John Piper expressed his appreciation for the gathering by writing, “Thank you for an excellent study of Ephesians. I loved it. That is the sort of thing I could do all day, every day.”

The goals for the meetings were three-fold: to listen to God for the global evangelical Church by studying Ephesians inductively, to develop a community of leaders and teachers marked by the values expressed in Ephesians, and to lay the foundation for an Ephesians book/DVD resource to be produced after Cape Town 2010.

more, we asked if she wanted to pray and receive Jesus into her life. Over the Atlantic Ocean, when all other passengers were asleep, Danielle knelt down in front of our seats and prayed to Jesus to forgive her sins and to give her eternal life. Tears of joy mingled with our tears of pain. My husband gave her his own Portuguese Bible. We talked about her need to seek a good Bible-believing church in her city. Joy and peace were written all over her beautiful face. She continued asking questions until we landed in Miami.

Two years ago, a plane of that same company crashed in Sao Paulo City. Danielle was on the list of those who lost their lives. But I will see her in Heaven!

The meeting included the Expositors Team (Ajith Fernando, Ruth Padilla DeBorst, John Piper, Vaughan Roberts, Calisto Odede, Ramez Atallah, and Rebecca Atallah), representatives of the Programme Team (Grace Matthews and Lindsay Olesberg), David Oginde (Small Groups Committee chairperson), Chris Wright (Theology Working Group chairperson), and Noel Piper (John Piper's wife). The gathering was invaluable in forming the group into a team that will be able to bring a coherent message from Ephesians to Cape Town 2010.

A highlight was the discussion about how the text applies to various regions of the world. For example, after studying Ephesians 1, which emphasizes Christ's cosmic enthronement and his commitment to accomplish his purposes in the world through the Church, Ajith shared that the passage is a powerful antidote to the corruption found in Asia. Ruth agreed and added that double standards in the church and violence in the family are all challenged by the Lordship of Christ.

Ephesians 1 speaks prophetically to the prosperity gospel common in Africa, Latin America, and North America. David and Calisto noted that the Church in Africa needs the reassurance from this text that Christ is not an equal and opposite force to the demonic and that God is still in control, even when we suffer. The metanarrative of God's good purposes described by Paul is desperately needed in Europe and North America, where a sense of grounding truth has been lost. Ramez commented that Middle Eastern Christians are often so concerned about their own problems that they don't have a world vision. Ephesians 1 lifts our eyes to see far beyond ourselves and to refocus on God's plan and will.

While in Cairo, the team enjoyed a reception and dinner hosted by the Lausanne Committee of Egypt, a tour of the Bible Society's Bible World, and an interview with Father Simeon, pastor of the Garbage Village Cave Churches. Additionally, Vaughan, Calisto, John, and David preached in local churches on Sunday evening. The team was impressed by the vibrancy and unity of the Evangelical Church in Egypt.

The gathering was a small foretaste of the richness we will all experience as we gather in Cape Town this October and feast on Ephesians together. Thank you for your prayers for this team and their preparation.

Lindsay Olesberg is the Lausanne Cape Town 2010 Plenary 1 coordinator.

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