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A free, monthly, online publication that provides you with evangelism and mission news and information.

June/July 2011  
**PUBLISHER'S MEMO**

**Discipleship in Its Many Forms**

By Lon Allison

**Our theme this month is a discussion of *discipleship* from a global perspective. Our three main themed articles are rich in ideas and application.**

First, [Knud Jorgensen](#), a Norwegian, writes from the perspective of lament and admonition. As one who has seen the demise of a Christian Europe, he makes an appeal for a robust and rigorous discipleship. He argues quite convincingly that one of the reasons the Church in Europe needs revival today is because the “cost of discipleship” was lowered for centuries.

Using Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s concepts of “cheap grace,” he remarks that when the only requirement for incorporation into the church was infant baptism (with no corresponding faith and responsibilities of faith required later in life), that the vibrancy of Christianity was less than ideal. We often hear the term a “faith a mile wide and an inch deep” applying to the fast-growing churches in the Majority World. But Jorgensen uses the term to define European Christendom. It is a sober reminder.

As an American, I see the same dangers in churches here. We don’t have a “state” church, but we do have the challenge of most people calling themselves “Christians” but neither living out the responsibilities nor the joy and power of faith.

[LaNette Thompson](#) discusses the special challenges of discipling new believers from oral cultures. As a practitioner of evangelism and discipleship in such a world, she writes in a compelling autobiographical tone. I expected the challenges of oral discipleship to be the lack of resources. In literate cultures, books and periodicals are available, but in oral cultures there is little discipleship content in cassette, CD, or digital formats.

I thought that would be the problem. According to Thompson, however, the main problem is not resources—it is oral disciplers who come from primarily Western cultures where faith is private, discipleship is private, and growth is between the new believer and God.

Most oral cultures are communal. Thompson realized that until she was willing to spend as much personal time *discipling* new believers as she spent *evangelizing* them, their growth in Christ would be

slow. Her admonitions are as valuable for those of us discipling people in the Western literate world as in oral cultures.

I ended my readings with the fine article by [Sara Singleton](#). She discusses a theme I find very relevant—namely, that it “takes God to make us God-like.” That is good news. The spiritual disciplines that define the content of discipleship are not an end in themselves—nor are they to be done in our power.

Rather, they are reminders initiated and used by God to move us to depend completely on Christ, and to rest in him. In my journey with Christ for over forty years, I’ve gone through stages where I make my own discipleship a “good work” to achieve an end.

That was and is wrong. Singleton’s brief outline of learn, listen, and live in the light were helpful signposts on the journey where Jesus himself leads us to love him more deeply and faithfully.

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### June/July News from around the World

#### **BANGLADESH: Bibles for Street Preachers**

Twenty young Bangladeshi Christians are risking their lives by selling and handing out Christian literature on the streets, busses, and marketplaces in their cities. In the past 11 months they have distributed more than 500,000 Bibles, New Testaments, and leaflets. They were able to do this in part with the help of Barnabas Aid, which provides training and literature for distribution. (Barnabas Aid)

#### **EGYPT: Christians Attacked in Slums**

Deadly clashes between Egypt's Christians and Muslims highlighted rising interfaith tensions. Security had to be tightened around churches in a Cairo slum following riots over rumors of a Christian who converted to Islam. The reports turned out to be false, says Greg Musselman, spokesperson for Voice of the Martyrs Canada. "The last reports I saw: twelve were dead, and churches were burnt down. Really, it was started by a group called Salafist...an ultra Islamist group. The coordination of the rebellion grew over whether or not this was the first play by the Muslim Brotherhood to make a grab for power." Musselman says the two groups don't seem to share the same ideals. Leaders say that 190 people detained in connection with the violence face a trial in military court. Even while that might be good news, the Christians in Egypt still feel like easy prey. (Mission Network News)

#### **ENGLAND: Global Day of Prayer London Calls for Twitter Followers to Tweet Lord’s Prayer**

As part of a 50-day campaign leading up to the Global Day of Prayer on 12 June 2011, GDOP London is calling for fifty thousand followers on Twitter to tweet the Lord’s Prayer. On Easter weekend, GDOP London began tweeting segments of the Lord’s Prayer to encourage Christians to pray for the United Kingdom. “We want to get people of all ages and backgrounds praying the Lord’s Prayer wherever they are,” said GDOP London convener Jonathan Oloyede. This unique project is being coordinated by prayer strategist and trainer Daniel Eagle, who believes strongly in the power of social networking to mobilize prayer: “As the world becomes more and more interconnected as a global village, it is imperative that

we use all the tools at our disposal to promote the cause for which GDOP London exists....Social media is the next wave for global communication and interaction." So far, #GDOPLondon has a growing number of followers, including some members of the British Parliament. (Assist News Service)

### **JAPAN: Churches Urged to Work Together after Triple Disaster**

Japan's churches and Christian councils should establish a consortium to respond to the devastating 11 March 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear power plant accident, read a statement released at the Japan Earthquake/Tsunami Relief Ecumenical Solidarity Meeting held 6-7 May. In addition, the National Christian Council in Japan should "convene a forum of all the Japanese partners to facilitate the exchange of information and activities and explore avenues of cooperation." About forty representatives of Christian partner organizations and churches from the West and Asia attended the meeting, which was coordinated by the North East Asia Churches Forum of the Christian Conference of Asia. About 14,700 people were killed by the March disaster, with about 10,700 listed as missing. The disaster also crippled the Daiichi Fukushima nuclear power plant. (Ecumenical News International)

### **INDIA: Churches Challenged to Address Caste Discrimination**

Churches in India were called upon to tackle "institutional casteism" at a conference organized by the World Council of Churches (WCC) in collaboration with Indian churches and groups. Attended by over seventy delegates, the 1-4 May 2011 conference on "Caste, Religion and Culture" was organized by the WCC Commission for World Mission and Evangelism in collaboration with the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI). The Student Christian Movement of India and the Centre for Social Studies and Culture based in Kerala state also participated. Geevarghese mar Coorilos, moderator of the WCC Commission for World for Mission and Evangelism, noted that "caste dynamics has changed over the decades. The new dynamism must be translated into the life of the churches." (Ecumenical News International)

### **INDIA: Justice Eludes Christian Victims of Orissa Violence**

Nearly three years after vicious attacks by Hindu radicals in Orissa left dozens of Christians dead and thousands injured, there has been just one conviction for murder, with thousands of complaints disregarded by authorities. A devastating report by a Christian journalist and human rights activist about the Indian authorities' investigations into the mass violence in Kandhamal between August and October 2008 exposes how justice has eluded the Christian victims. The Orissa State government acknowledges fifty deaths, of which thirty-eight were Christians, in Kandhamal during that period and the earlier violence at the end of 2007. Church activists list ninety-one murder cases. In twenty cases brought to date, there has been just one conviction for murder. Around 18,000 people were injured in the attacks, 6,000 houses and 296 churches and smaller places of Christian worship were burnt, and 56,000 people were displaced. (Barnabas Aid)

### **RUSSIA: Older Orphans Face Serious Risks**

There are roughly twenty-one million children under the age of 15 in Russia. Nearly 730,000 of these are orphans. Strict adoption laws can make inter-country adoption from Russia difficult, but so can uncontrollable factors like a child's age. After age 3, the chances of adoption for a Russian orphan are slim; by early elementary school, opportunities to find a forever family are virtually nonexistent. "After 7, there is no chance," Natasha Votrakova, country director for Buckner in Russia, told Buckner International. "I mean, it's zero. There are no adoptions in Russia that are done by Russian families after the age of 7." The consequences of overlooking these children are severe. Adoptive parent Garth Wilkins says, "After they are emancipated from the orphanage at 16 or 17, ten percent of the kids commit

suicide within the first three years. Forty percent turn to alcohol and drugs, and forty percent fall into a life of prostitution or crime." (Mission Network News)

### **SOUTH ASIA: Gospel Tracts Distributed on a Mountain**

Celebrating a holiday, villagers in one area of South Asia climbed a mountain, planning to worship local deities when they reached the top. A group of Bible college students also climbed the mountains, but with the goal of sharing the love of God. The students handed out gospel tracts as they hiked up the mountain. Some village elders criticized them, asking, "Why do you disturb us by distributing tracts that belong to another religion?" In spite of the opposition, 1,500 hikers willingly received tracts. (Gospel for Asia)

### **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: Students Predisposed to All-inclusive Beliefs**

Due to the recent release of a controversial book written by a well-known pastor discussing heaven and hell, the topics of pluralism and universalism have risen to the surface of Christian conversation. "There's definitely an increase in terms of young people today being at least open to the possibility of results of universalism and pluralism," says InterVarsity Christian Fellowship evangelist York Moore. "Among Christians, I think we've seen an increase as well." A recent study by the Barna Group seems to confirm this. Universalism—defined by the Barna Group as the belief that all human beings will be saved after death—was supported by forty-three percent of subjects questioned. "Another thing this study cites is that 51% do not believe that they have a responsibility to tell people about their faith in Christ," explains Moore. "So that lack of responsibility, coupled with an openness for universalism and pluralism among Christians, is a real problem in InterVarsity." Moore says the danger of straying from these 2,000-year-old truths is significant. "People are gravitating toward that which is easy, that which is more appealing to our American lifestyle, and the consequences of that could potentially be disastrous." Already the number of college students who leave the church during college and return later in life has declined significantly. Despite the various voices influencing college students, InterVarsity has been winning this war. InterVarsity is still seeing a higher number of conversions than at any time in their 70-year history. (Mission Network News)

## **THEMED ARTICLES: The Power of Discipleship**

### **The Gospel within Discipleship: Spiritual Formation**

By Sara Singleton

**The cry of the global Church is for every believer to engage in a life of discipleship.** Disciples are intentional, disciplined learners who apprentice themselves to the person and way of Jesus. Disciples are outposts of the Kingdom of God in every geographical location, every sphere of influence, and every strata of society.

*But do intentionality and personal discipline result in a lightness of being—or a heaviness of performing?*

As earnest disciples, we find that whenever we set our wills to do the will of God, we are liabilities of righteousness and libels of God's love. Our desire for well-disciplined lives and the mandate for mission give way to discouragement from the competing coup within our hearts and inertia of behaviors that hold us back.

What can change us from within and sustain us in our discipleship? *It is abiding in God's intentional and engaged love for us that we are made into faithful and loving disciples.* It takes God to make us God-like—restoring us into the image of his Son (Romans 8:29). The Apostle Paul discovered this gospel when his own efforts failed him (Romans 7:7-24). Bursting with exuberance, Paul declares the good news of spiritual formation by abandoning self reliance and clinging in dependence on God's ability to remake us from the inside out (Romans 7:25-8:30).

### **God's Call to Spiritual Formation**

What is meant by the term "spiritual formation," and how do we cooperate with God's intention to conform us to Christ? Spiritual formation refers to the Holy Spirit-driven process of refashioning the inner world of the human self in such a way that it becomes a reflection of the inner being of Christ himself.<sup>1</sup>

God intends for this "metamorphosis" to occur in every believer's life.<sup>2</sup> Since it is God's intention, why do we not always experience ourselves or other Christians as "little Christs"?<sup>3</sup>

By faith, we are regenerated into a new birth, making us *genuinely* new, but not *totally* new.<sup>4</sup> Why? Scripture reveals three dynamics of the progressive nature of spiritual formation.

1. We are like infants who must eat in order to grow (1 Peter 2:2).
2. We are insensitive to the presence of God and need continual awakening to his voice and initiatives (Hebrews 4:7-13; 2 Corinthians 3:18).
3. We are deformed through the effects of sin in our identities and relationships and we need ongoing healing (Colossians 3:5-17; Romans 12:1-2).

Respectively, God calls us to *learn, listen,* and to live in the *light*.

### **Call to Learn**

In discipleship, we grow into the full stature of Christ through feeding upon scripture as taught and modeled by people who are apprentices of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:13-16). We learn who we are in Christ and our place in God's redemptive history.

The goal of discipleship is maturity of obedience, love, and the reproduction of faith in the lives of others. As disciples, we desire to honor God as we hunger for greater knowledge and faithfulness. Even so, we may find ourselves panting for more than knowledge and ministry provides.

### **Call to Listen**

The Holy Spirit whispers God's invitation to know him intimately. It comes as a thirst or longing for the living God, and when he speaks, we are challenged to listen (Psalm 62 and 63).<sup>5</sup> Our busyness and efforts as "agents for God" prevent us from listening to the still, small voice (1 Kings 19:12).

Much of modern ministry substitutes God's presence for a "functional culture that is driven by technology, schedules, and computers; a culture that moves at a faster and faster pace, driving out time for prayer and reflection."<sup>6</sup> God invites us into a conversational relationship of listening and responding, leading us back into a shared life with God.<sup>7</sup> Listening is most effective in a secret place of intimate

communion with God.<sup>8</sup> Jesus showed us this “way” through his practice of Sabbath rest and time alone in silence and solitude (John 14:6).

### **Call to the Light**

Embedded in the human psyche are wounds and brokenness that testify to the need for *renewal* of the inner life (cf. Romans 12:2). Within our heart is a deep pit of intergenerational sin and wounds, false identities we cling to for emotional security, and a host of fractured relationships. God wants to reclaim everything that is false and present us with our true self. God wants to identify what is broken and heal it in his love.

But God waits for our permission to do so. We grant permission by giving God access to what is hidden. Paul writes, “Anything exposed by the light becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light” (Ephesians 5:13).

Nothing remains hidden forever (Hebrews 4:13). Paul writes, “The sins of some people are conspicuous and precede them to judgment, while the sins of others follow them there.” Instead of *being exposed*, whether now or in the end, how much better to *disclose* what is hidden to a trusted spiritual friend.

We read, “Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed” (James 5:16). The bridge to humility and holiness is through self-disclosure to a soul friend—a person who incarnates the love and grace of Christ. Mature Christians have discovered the link between self-disclosure and spiritual growth. The alternative is self-protection through hiddenness. Self-protection leads to a self-deception that completely obliterates spiritual growth.<sup>9</sup>

### **Spiritually-formed Disciples**

The change that comes from the renewal of our inner life leads to an irrepressible love for God and others. When we face our whole selves, both the best and the worst, and know the unconditional love of God at work within, we find ourselves able to love others with deep and unconditional love.<sup>10</sup> Through learning, listening, and living in the light, disciples become expressions of the abiding love of God in Christ.

### **Endnotes**

1. Adaptation of the definition offered by Willard, Dallas. 2002. *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 22.

2. *Metamorphosis* is the English cognate for the Greek word used by Paul in 2 Corinthians 3:18.

3. C.S. Lewis speaks of God’s intent in this way: “[Christ] is a living Man, still as much a man as you, and still as much God as He was when He created the world, really coming and interfering with your very self; killing the old natural self in you and replacing it with the kind of self He has. At first, only for moments. Then for longer periods. Finally, if all goes well, turning you permanently into a different sort of thing; into a new little Christ, a being which, in its own small way, has the same kind of life as God; which shares in His power, joy, knowledge and eternity.” 1975. *Mere Christianity*. New York: Macmillan Publishing, 149.

4. Hoekema, Anthony A. 1996. “The Reformed Perspective.” In *Five Views on Sanctification*. Ed. Stanley N. Gundry. Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA: Zondervan, 74.

5. See also Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. 2005. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*. Downers Grove, Illinois, USA: InterVarsity Press, 15.
6. Standish, Graham. 2007. *Humble Leadership: Being Radically Open to God's Guidance and Grace*. Herndon, Virginia, USA: The Alban Institute, 75.
7. Willard fully expounds the biblical basis for a life of relational communication with God in his 1999 book, *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*. Downers Grove, Illinois, USA: InterVarsity Press.
8. Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*: Volume I, III. 20. 29, 892.
9. Moon, Gary M. and David G. Benner. 2004. *Spiritual Direction and the Care of Souls*. Downers Grove, Illinois, USA: InterVarsity Press, 79.
10. Barton, Ruth Haley. 2008. *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership: Seeking God in the Crucible of Ministry*. Downers Grove, Illinois, USA: InterVarsity Press, 210.

**Rev. Dr. Sara Singleton** now pastors at First Presbyterian Church in Colorado Springs after a 20-year career as a registered nurse. She earned a DMin in spiritual formation from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and is the editor of a 2-volume audio devotional series, *Hearts on Pilgrimage*. She is married with two adult children and a granddaughter.

## **Discipleship at Arm's Length? Not Possible**

By LaNette Thompson

**“How can we be good disciples if we cannot read?”** Hawa asked. I looked from one woman to the other as we sat beneath the mango tree. I thought I had done well with my carefully-prepared study until Hawa announced that the women had decided to come an hour earlier to our meeting if I would teach them to read.

Literacy had not been on my agenda, but I could not refuse their request because at that time, twenty-four years ago, I agreed with her assumption. Literacy gives access not only to the written word, but also to myriad discipleship resources. If they wanted to be good disciples, they needed access to biblical knowledge when I was not present. The obvious conclusion was that they needed to read the Bible for themselves.

When it comes to knowledge transfer today, however, the oral learner is no longer shut out. Strategies abound for reaching oral learners with the gospel. Organizations such as the International Orality Network and resources like *Making Disciples of Oral Learners* and the website offer training and practical advice to those who minister to oral learners.

### **Holding on to a Literate Mindset**

Many of us who are adept at using oral strategies in cross-cultural evangelism still struggle when it comes to making disciples, however. We may use oral methodologies such as Chronological Bible Storying, but we use them with a literate mindset. In literate cultures, where independence and physical privacy are valued, discipleship often takes the form of buying the new believer a workbook at the Christian bookstore and meeting once a week (usually at a neutral place like a coffee shop) to go over their answers and discuss issues.

Rare is the person in an individualistic culture who is comfortable telling a new believer to “imitate me” as Paul did. We want our privacy and we respect the privacy of the new believer, often to the point of hesitating to ask personal questions or being reluctant to hold the new believer accountable for lifestyle change.

As literates, we often approach discipleship with oral learners in the same way, keeping the process but substituting stories for the workbook, giving them story sets on cassette to listen to when we are not there. In so doing, we retain our independence and privacy, avoiding the “messiness” of a relationship with the result that we know little about what is actually happening in their daily lives.

Using oral methods, we simply replace a printed Bible with an oral one, encouraging them to consult it when questions arise. Perhaps we prefer knowledge transfer in cross-cultural ministry because our differing lifestyles and cultural values make imitation difficult, if not impossible. Discipleship at arm’s length becomes the standard.

### **The Need to Be Present**

When I first became involved in Chronological Bible Storying over fifteen years ago, I wondered if it were actually the story that made the difference, or if it were the fact that the process forced me to be relational in my behavior and excellent in the local language.

I would sit on a small stool to tell the story, the women pressing against me. One lady liked to sit with her elbows in my lap, her chin on her hands as she gazed up at me while I told the story, hanging on my every word. I sat for hours in courtyards, visiting, “being.”

I was willing to do that, to stretch myself to see that they understood the gospel. I was ecstatic when a group of oral learners from my village accepted the gospel. For months, I had been going almost every morning to their courtyard to share stories. Once they accepted the gospel, however, I immediately retreated into my literate discipleship mindset. Through the evangelism story track, I had given them an “oral Bible,” a series of chronological stories. I wanted the Holy Spirit to instruct them.

I told them I would now come just once a week for a discipleship lesson. Their faces mirrored their disappointment, but I was resolute. In our discipleship times I shared more stories, talking about what Jesus wanted his disciples to know and do. I shared knowledge, but I was reluctant to ask personal questions, hold them accountable for the truths we discussed.

I respected their privacy, happy to have more of my own, happy not to have to pour myself into them as I had been willing to do to get them “saved.” I was wrong.

Discipleship with oral learners must include more than a transfer of stories. It includes the process of “imitating me” not necessarily in how I live, but in how I go about living in the kingdom.

One day while teaching a group of villagers, I talked about prayerwalking and sharing our testimony with those we encounter. As I explained the process, one older man, an oral learner, said in frustration, “Show me!”

I stopped lecturing and began walking around the church, praying aloud for the people as I passed them, stopping before one woman to engage her in conversation and share my testimony. His frustration



turned to joy. "I understand!" he exclaimed. He became an avid prayerwalker in the village, leading others to Christ.

### **The Right Hand of Mentorship**

Cross-cultural discipleship should include mentoring in four areas and can be demonstrated by using our right hand.

1. **Purpose.** We must move from a "me-centered" to a "God-centered" worldview. It is not "my plans," but "the plans he has for me." This is a difficult concept for all of us. I often say that I would prefer to live in my own culture with my family, but God had other plans for me and I must follow his plan. Each time we talk about our purpose being to glorify God, we can hold up our right hand, palm up, demonstrating that we are now in God's hand.
2. **Relationship.** We must examine and adjust our relationship with God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, other believers, and unbelievers. Each finger on our hand represents a different relationship. As we mentor, we model appropriate relationships in these five areas, including prayer to God, through Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit, interceding for other believers, and praying for the salvation of unbelievers. Within these relationships, we stress fellowship, unity, charity, and outreach.
3. **Knowledge.** We must know God's word, illustrated by the palm of our hand, turning to God's word for guidance. For the oral learner, that means knowing Bible stories and having access to storying or Bible cassettes.
4. **Rituals and power.** We must acknowledge God as the source of all power, deny Satan's influence, and examine cultural practices to determine which ones glorify him. We help new believers answer the questions of daily life from a God-centered viewpoint. The closed fist represents our power over Satan and power for living when all of the other parts are working properly.

While oral methodologies such as Chronological Bible Storying are a giant step in the right direction, we must be careful to not "literacize" them, streamlining them and sucking the relationship out of the process because that is more comfortable for us. Jesus not only told us to make disciples, he modeled how to do it. May we be found faithful.

**LaNette Thompson** and her husband served in Africa with the International Mission Board Connecting from 1985 to 2011. Her writings include her master's thesis, "The Nonliterate & the Transfer of Knowledge in West Africa." She begins doctoral studies at Baylor University this fall.

### **Discipleship: Shallow Lake or Deep Waters? A Nordic Look at Church**

By Knud Jørgensen

**One of the most worn books on my bookshelf is *Costly Grace* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1937).** Next to it stands an English variant on the same theme, David Watson's *Discipleship* (1981). Both books have been foundational for my life and faith. As a young theologian I was particularly impacted by Bonhoeffer's challenge to obedience, a simple obedience that realizes there is no other way to faith than obedience to the call of Jesus.

## The Impossible Call to Obedience

To follow this call means to leave behind a life of safety and certainty and to enter a life of uncertainty, but a life with Christ. A life without discipleship will always be a life without Jesus—an idea, a myth, a folk religion, without Christ as the center.

Such a life with Jesus starts with Jesus calling *us to take definite steps out of the situation where we find ourselves*, in bondage, mending our nets, and sitting at the custom house like the first disciples were challenged to do. These steps will bring us out of a situation where faith is not possible and into a situation where faith becomes possible.

As long as Peter is mending his nets, he may do a good and honest job within his old religious world, but if he wants to believe in the living God, he must get up and walk the dusty roads with Jesus. So the way to faith goes through obedience to the call of Christ: “Follow me!” Only the obedient may believe, and only the believer shall obey, says Bonhoeffer.

This obedience—this discipleship—brings us into a life of *grace, costly grace*. The primary enemy of the church is “cheap grace,” a grace on sale, forgiveness and comfort at a discount, grace without any price. It is forgiveness of sins as a general truth because God loves the sinner and never gets angry with the sinner. It is justification of sin instead of the sinner.

Since everything is by grace, nothing really needs to be changed. Cheap grace is forgiveness without repentance, baptism without discipleship, communion without confession of sin. It is grace without discipleship, grace without cross, and without the living Christ.

Costly grace is the hidden treasure in the field, the costly pearl for which I am willing to sell everything. It is the call of Christ that makes me leave the nets and follow him. *Costly* because it calls to discipleship, *grace* because it calls to discipleship with Jesus; *costly* because it will cost my life; *grace* because it by the same token gives me my life. *Costly* because it cost God his only Son, and what has been costly for God cannot be cheap for us. *Grace* because the price has been paid and I can go free.

Without costly grace and obedient discipleship, the Church is like the lake, says English bishop David Watson, a mile wide but only a few inches deep. It will only take a small change in the spiritual temperature for that lake to shrink, and to do so very rapidly.

Western Europe is an illustration of such a lake. The continued decline of the established churches in Europe may be viewed as a consequence of our preaching of cheap grace. Everything is on sale. We baptize without really demanding discipleship; we invite everybody indiscriminately to Holy Communion; we offer absolution without asking for personal confession. We preach love, but seldom the love that hangs on the cross and died for our sins.

This preaching of cheap grace is lethal because it may close the way to Christ, instead of opening it up. It allows me to continue in a life of disobedience; it condones my sinful life with its leniency; it makes me stay with the fishing nets and at the custom house while Christ has moved on.

This Western phenomenon is also showing its face in the global South. Nominality is a growing problem within all major religions. Many do not consider a spiritual reality, particularly in the megacities of the world. This is becoming more and more relevant among churches with great vitality and growth,

churches which lack Bible teaching, discipleship programs, or where the links with folk religion are still quite strong. The African variant of the shallow lake picture is that of a church which is spreading widely, but is thin like a pancake.

The large Lutheran churches in the Nordic countries are so-called “folk churches” (i.e., churches that since the early Middle Ages have encompassed the entire population). The countries were therefore considered Christian countries. Together with the rest of Europe they constituted “Christendom.” This has now ended. Our folk churches are slowly crumbling because society has become pluralistic and the church finds itself in a market of many worldviews and values.

How should the church relate to this situation? It may choose a *folk-church/folk-religion perspective* where one will emphasize membership and rituals (particularly baptism), where one maintains that the Christian faith still has great importance among most people. When so few (less than two percent in Scandinavia) attend church, we are to blame because we have made people feel alienated from their own church. What *is* important is baptism—not a loud confession of faith. The weak faith may be just as valid as the strong one. The strategy should therefore be to affirm one’s Christian identity. He or she belongs to the church; one can therefore not talk about “mission” in relation to the folk church or claim that it finds itself in a mission situation.

The alternative is to choose a *missional perspective*: we realize that only a minority within the folk church are true believers (i.e., people with a conscious Christian faith and who actively take part in the Christian fellowship). Genuine faith must have some visible expressions in the form of conversion and discipleship. The focus should therefore not be on affirming, but on challenging.

The passive members of the folk church must be called back to a living faith. The church must be a missional church taking seriously that we live in a mission situation. We must develop committed missional communities in order to act as a catalyst for personal discipleship.

I would largely agree with the missional perspective, but at the same time plead that we tread carefully. The church will never become a pure society of the saved. It will continue to encompass both sinners and saints. Also in our own lives, the battle between new and old, sin and holiness, faith and unbelief, will continue. All of us are in need of daily repentance. So let us beware of an exaggerated complacency, but also of a dangerous judgementalism, Andrew Watson, Anglican priest and evangelist, once said.

Within the folk church there are people who do not shout from the rooftops, but who pray and carry with them Christian faith and traditions. They too need to be challenged to repentance, discipleship, and service. The missional perspective must first and foremost apply to those within the church and then secondly to those outside the church (whether they are dechurched or unchurched).

### **Redefining Folk Church**

Would I like to see a folk church in the future? As long as there is ample room for a gospel about costly grace and for a call to radical discipleship I am prepared to live with the tension between the folk church and the faith community, between the *ecclesia* and the *ecclesiola* (the big and the small church).

But when the structures and the powers choose an ecclesiology that prevents the genes of the biblical church from finding expression, it will be time to leave. Folk church to me is primarily a matter of

bringing the gospel to the whole people and of carrying the Christian faith into everyday life and culture, in witness (*martyria*) and service (*diakonia*).

This calls for a church that both *supports* people (gives to, takes care, welcomes, carries) and *challenges* people to discipleship and obedience. For people to progress along the path of Christ discipleship, they/we need *high support and high challenge*, said Watson.

**P.S.** Can I ask that you would study the **Cape Town Commitment** in this perspective of costly grace and obedient discipleship? Because this is the superior perspective of the document: the need for radical obedient discipleship, leading to maturity, to growth in depth, as well as growth in numbers. This will find expression in humility, integrity, and simple lifestyle. As disciples, we shall walk in the light lest sin and devil catch us in the dark. As disciples, we shall be different from the broken and divided world we are sent to serve. Because we follow a master who is different.

**Dr. Knud Jørgensen** is dean of Tao Fong Shan in Hong Kong and associate professor at the Norwegian School of Theology.

## PERSPECTIVES

### How to Pray for Persecuted Believers

By Grant and Janice McClung

**Followers of Jesus Christ will suffer persecution.** This is a basic, but often forgotten fact of Christian discipleship. Jesus used the word *when* (not *if*) as he prepared his disciples for coming persecution:

- "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:11-12).
- "Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also" (John 15:20).

Early Christian leaders taught this same truth. Paul reminded Christians that "...everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12) and "...when we are persecuted, we endure it" (1 Corinthians 4:12). Peter reminded suffering believers that "...Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps" (1 Peter 2:21).

Millions of contemporary believers are following his steps as they endure persecution. According to scripture, as our family they belong to us and we belong to them. Therefore, we must pray for those suffering persecution.

#### How Then Shall We Pray?

How shall we pray for the suffering in our global Church family? The basic prayer guidelines that follow (along with Bible studies, sermons, and resources) are available in a free, online ebook resource at [www.Globalbeliever.com](http://www.Globalbeliever.com). Here are practical ways that you, and those you mobilize and gather for prayer, can effectively pray for persecuted believers around the world.

**Pray sensitively.** Hebrews 13:3 teaches us to, “Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.” Here, God is reminding us to put ourselves in the place of others. With Christian compassion and empathy, we are to identify with our brothers and sisters in persecution as if we were there with them, enduring the same hardships.

**Pray scripturally.** As we follow key word searches throughout the Bible, using words like “persecution,” “suffering,” and “tribulation,” multiple stories of individuals and the collective people of God will begin to emerge. These were real people suffering real persecution. Their stories, filled with their responses to suffering, form a pattern for our personal prayer time and also for group Bible studies and intercessory prayer.

For example, some intercessors pray through the Psalms, using the models of David’s prayers as he cried out for refuge, rescue, deliverance, and preservation. Here are just a few of his cries for help:

- “Deliver me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of evil and cruel men” (71:4).
- “Be not far from me, O God; come quickly, O my God, to help me” (71:12).
- “Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me. Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name” (142: 6-7).
- “O Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief” (143:3).

We can pray and plead those same phrases (and hundreds like them in scripture) on behalf of our suffering family around the world. God gives us words, thoughts, models, and directions for our intercessory praying. An elderly Methodist lay preacher, Uncle Am, always had assurance his prayers would be answered. A young preacher asked for his secret. “Young man,” he said, “learn to plead the promises of God.”

Praying *scripturally* includes not only praying for the persecuted, but also praying for the *persecutor*. The origin of this radical practice is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who commanded, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...” (Matthew 5:44). Paul echoed the Master’s words when he instructed believers (many of them slaves) living under the harsh rule of the Roman Empire, to “bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse” (Romans 12:14).

Paul’s own testimony was that he “was once a blasphemer, and a persecutor and a violent man...” (1 Timothy 1:13). He was present at the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7:58-8:1); some scholars even think he was in charge of the stoning. The last prayer of the first martyr of the early Church was, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them” (Acts 7:60). One can only imagine how Stephen’s prayer haunted Paul and how intercessory prayer among the persecuted Church in Palestine eventually led to his conversion on the road to Damascus.

In “A Prayer for the Persecuted Church,” found at [www.globaldayofprayer.com](http://www.globaldayofprayer.com), there is this sample prayer for persecutors:

“We bring before You those who through ignorance, blindness, demonic interference, and sin have set themselves against Your Church and yet are merely sinners in need of the Saviour. Lord our deliverer, convict them of sin and deliver them from evil.”

**Pray spontaneously.** One of the joys of the Spirit-filled life is to be “on call” for the Lord, ready to pray as God places a burden on us. Even if we don’t always know why we are praying, we are to be available for intercession, “...praying always in the Holy Spirit” (Jude 20).

Pastor Jack Hayford recalls, “One man I know was given the name of a province in China, which he had never heard of. He had to find it on the map to verify it existed, yet the Holy Spirit had whispered it to his heart while he prayed.”<sup>1</sup>

The Holy Spirit of God is an indwelling intercessor (Romans 8:26-27) and knows how to lead us in prayer. When we sincerely make ourselves available to plead with God on behalf of persecuted believers, the Holy Spirit will take us seriously and spontaneously lead us praying for the persecuted.

**Pray sensibly.** Research, technology, and publishing of information abound in our time. The individual or prayer group that is serious about praying for the persecuted has a wide variety and resources, many through the Internet. Some of our favorites include:

- [www.operationworld.org](http://www.operationworld.org)
- [www.persecutedchurch.org](http://www.persecutedchurch.org)
- [www.secretbelievers.org](http://www.secretbelievers.org)
- [www.opendoors.org](http://www.opendoors.org)

At these and other sites, one finds country and people group updates, detailed reports and analysis, Bible study and teaching information, and links to groups who offer ways to get involved.

**Pray systematically.** Praying systematically means staying faithful to pray for persecuted believers on a regular basis. In light of spiritual conflict and the “day of evil” (Ephesians 6:13), we are urged to “...pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18). Most prayer resources and ministries provide a daily prayer calendar, with a systematic listing of nations and persecuted peoples. Many offer up-to-date online briefings and email notices with reported incidents of persecution.

**Pray strategically.** Evangelist D.L. Moody claimed that “every work of God can be traced to some kneeling form.” Prayer is not only a means to a strategy, it *is* God’s strategy. When we pray, God acts. When we pray, God leads us to strategic action, activism, solidarity with the persecuted, and involvement with ministries and groups that work to end suffering, injustice, and the abuse of human rights.

After the Day of Pentecost, it did not take long for the active evangelism from the early Church to be resisted with persecution. After being arrested, threatened, and released, Peter and John reported to the prayer group waiting for them. Then, they all “...raised their voices together in prayer to God” (Acts 4:23-24). They prayed for boldness in the face of threats and that God would stretch out his hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders. The meeting place was shaken, they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God boldly (Acts 4:29-31).

God is waiting for that kind of fervent, passionate, intense intercession on behalf of his suffering people. Together, with millions of our global Church family, let us “raise our voices together in prayer to God” on behalf of persecuted believers!

#### **Endnote**

1. McClung, Grant. 2006. *Azusa Street and Beyond: 100 Years of Commentary on the Global Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement*. Alachua, Florida, USA: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 269.

**Grant and Janice McClung** mobilize and train for missional involvement and intercession through [www.MissionsResourceGroup.org](http://www.MissionsResourceGroup.org). They also serve as international missionary educators with Church of God World Missions.

### **Catalyzing Student Mission Movements**

By Sampson Dorkunor

**The Holy Spirit is cultivating a profound thrust toward the global harvest around the world.** The opposition is stronger and the population greater than ever; yet, the resources to finish the job are more abundant than at any time in history.

The most important resource is committed followers of Jesus Christ who are obedient and surrendered to the will of God. The Holy Spirit is seeking those whose hearts are abandoned in their devotion to Christ. He desires to use us, his Church, to accomplish his purpose of bringing in the global harvest (2 Timothy 2:21). From where will these new message-bearers come? Although God is intently searching his entire Church, the Holy Spirit is focusing particular attention on the emerging generation of believers.

According to statistics, most people who become message-bearers make such a decision during their college or university years. Scripture and history prove the desire of God to partner with each successive generation, motivating them to develop a fervent love relationship with him and align themselves fully with his purposes on earth (Daniel 1:8-17).

We know there are still vast populations globally where a powerful, culturally relevant witness of the gospel is still non-existent. These are clearly identified by research:

- There are over two billion people in nearly six thousand unreached people groups (for near-exhaustive lists, see [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net)). These groups may have churches and some Christians, yet the indigenous local church is not large enough to reach the current generation and future generations on their own.
- There are over one billion people in unevangelized people groups (for near-exhaustive lists, see the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed.). In many of these groups there is some cross-cultural mission work going on, yet most of the people in the group are unlikely to hear the gospel in their lifetime.
- There are over 231 million people in 632 unengaged people groups ([www.finishingthetask.com/](http://www.finishingthetask.com/)). These groups have no workers and no churches—and no one targeting them with focused prayer and plans to send workers.

## **Student Volunteer Movements**

Student Volunteer Movement 2 (SVM2) is an informal, international network made up of unifying National Student Mission Movements (NSMMs). It is a grassroots, cross-cultural, mission mobilization initiative among today's emerging generation of believers toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission in our lifetime.

Over the last several years of listening, learning, and studying historical and contemporary networking models, it has been found that one of the best vehicles to accomplish a widespread, saturation-style, cross-cultural, mission mobilization effort is through the means of catalyzing and unifying NSMMs.

These are national networks made up of partner ministries representing four categories: Bible schools/Christian colleges, campus ministry organizations, denominations/church networks, and mission-sending agencies. NSMMs are indigenous, authentic, and culturally relevant.

Partner ministries integrate the use of the Four Core Components into their local student ministry. These four mobilization tools have historically been the primary tools God has used to align his people with his own heart for the unreached. They are simple and basic, yet if implemented with intentionality, reap tremendous fruit. Resources are available to enable student leaders and staff to integrate these mobilization tools within their ministry structure. These resources include:

1. **Group Bible studies on the biblical basis of missions.** As young people in small groups open scripture and are led to see God's purpose of reaching the nations, their hearts are enflamed to commit to this purpose as well.
2. **Global prayer teams.** Small groups of students committed to praying for revival on their campus and for the unreached have often been the incubator for developing a heart for cross-cultural mission.
3. **Student mission fellowships.** Sub-groups of a student fellowship entirely devoted to cultivating mission vision within the fellowship at large are critical to teach, educate, and inspire an understanding of the calling as Christ's message-bearers to the unreached.
4. **Go Declaration commitment card.** Spirit-led, faith-filled decisions (based on counting the cost, not on simply emotion) to serve Christ cannot be underestimated in the process of calling a generation.

As ministries focusing on the student generation begin to integrate these tools, it becomes easy to imagine the saturating effect taking place in particular national situations. Now multiply this across a large number of national contexts and we can see the potential for God raising up 100,000 new message-bearers across the emerging generation of believers among the 632 unengaged, unreached peoples of the world.

Find out more about the vision of Student Volunteer Movement 2 (SVM2) at [www.SVM2.net](http://www.SVM2.net) and join your local ministry to the network. Begin integrating the Four Core Components equipping materials to mobilize your ministry toward a biblical heart for the Great Commission. Don't miss the video at [www.SVM2.net/About](http://www.SVM2.net/About).



### Additional Equipping Resources

**Waking the Giant: The Resurging Student Mission Movement.** This book lays the foundations for why we need a renewed emphasis on mobilizing our college student ministries with God's heart for the world and what this movement might look like. [www.svm2.net/resources/253-2](http://www.svm2.net/resources/253-2)

**"Abandoned Devotion Gathering" Facilitation Pack.** This pack provides you with the materials and instructions to plan and host an elongated (usually three to five hours) worship and prayer event in your campus fellowship or local church with the purpose of seeking God through extended worship, uncompromising challenges, and radical prayer to see the message of Jesus spread globally in our lifetime. [www.svm2.net/events/abandoned-devotion-gatherings](http://www.svm2.net/events/abandoned-devotion-gatherings)

**"Where's Your Haystack?" DVD.** From the intercession and actions of five college students, a mighty wave of mission fervor sprang forth in America in 1806. This DVD includes a dramatic 13-minute docu-reenactment of the haystack story that can be used in a large group format. It also includes five short video clip "Lessons from a Haystack" for use in a four-week small group Bible study. [www.svm2.net/resources/wheres-your-haystack-dvd](http://www.svm2.net/resources/wheres-your-haystack-dvd)

**"Abandoned Times" Blog.** This weekly blog provides equipping articles focused on a wide range of issues pertaining to today's student mission movement. Biblically-based and challenging articles seek to impart deeper understanding surrounding the call to cross-cultural mission. <http://svm2.net/abandonedtimes>

**Student Mission Movement Internships.** Located in Chiang Mai, these 12-week internships exist to deepen one's spiritual life and empower partnering with God in the burgeoning student mission movement within the context of an unreached people group. [www.svm2.net/events/student-mission-movement-internships](http://www.svm2.net/events/student-mission-movement-internships)

**Sampson Dorkunor** is the Africa regional facilitator with the SVM2 Network and lives in Accra, Ghana.

### Report on Sixth Lausanne International Researchers' Conference

By Peter Brierley

**The first International Researchers' Conference (1987) was held in Holland**, the second (1996) in the U.K., the third (2001) in Thailand, the fourth (2005) in Cyprus, the fifth (2008) in Australia, and now the sixth (2011) has been held in Brazil. We are already making plans for the seventh in 2014!

The conference was held in Atibaia, a town just outside São Paulo, the fifth largest city in the world (with nineteen million people) in the fifth largest country. More than fifty participants were registered. Twenty different nationalities were present. Eighteen papers were presented and two keynote addresses were given.

Bertil Ekstrom, general secretary of the Missions Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance, gave a majestic opening keynote address on "Mission in the Second Decade in the Third Millennium," noting that missions is changing with a fast-changing world, taking his definition of missions from Chris Wright's work on the primacy of redemption. He focussed on two key elements—*contextualisation* and *risk-taking*—which he rephrased as *incarnation* and *obedience*. "What this sorry world needs today is life,

welfare, and non-violence,” he said, focussing on the prophet Jonah who would not take a risk. “Mission is not just one aspect of the management of the Kingdom of God,” he insisted. “It is the Kingdom of God.”

Todd Johnson gave the second keynote address, outlining some of the major features and findings of the *Atlas of Global Christianity* and the implications for church and mission. Some of his statements were particularly challenging: “Eighty percent of Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus in the world have never met a Christian person,” he said. Additionally, the global South has sixty percent of all the Christians, but only seventeen percent of Christian resources. He also illustrated that while the global South is growing in numbers of Christians, it is often growing with many of the characteristics of northern culture. He indicated there were now forty-five thousand denominations in the world, most of them Protestant.

Papers covered a variety of subjects, including:

- A Kazakhstan church survey
- Brazilian disabled people groups
- Global religious trends
- The best ways of church planting in Muslim communities
- The importance of narrative to explain research findings
- The current beliefs of U.K. evangelicals
- Diaspora missions
- Using Sinus Milieus in church development
- Bible engagement
- Trends in Australian family life
- Natural disasters
- Muslim discipleship
- Consumerism in the Christian faith
- Young people’s attitudes to the Bible

Many of these papers can be found at [www.lrin.org.au](http://www.lrin.org.au). While the basic language used was English, all proceedings were also translated into Portuguese. Everything was also filmed, and all presentations are on DVD; purchase details are available by emailing [h2oviva@terra.com.br](mailto:h2oviva@terra.com.br).

It was a worthwhile time, with many of us anxious to repeat the experience in 2014. These kinds of international gatherings facilitate fellowship, give new thoughts on methodology, focus on key findings which are relevant in a much wider context, and challenge us to continue to seek to understand more of the ways in which the Lord is building his Church.

**Dr. Peter Brierley**, a church consultant, is the Senior Lausanne Associate for Church Research. He attended Lausanne I in 1974 and has been involved with the Lausanne movement since 1984. He is former executive director of Christian Research, a UK charity which produces resource volumes like *Religious Trends* and the *UK Christian Handbook*. Brierley can be reached at [peter@brierleyres.com](mailto:peter@brierleyres.com).

### Global Diaspora Network Meets for First Time in Paris

**The Global Diaspora Network (GDN) was formed in October 2010 in Cape Town, South Africa**, by Joy Tira, the Lausanne senior associate for diasporas. GDN is a catalytic movement that motivates and mobilizes diaspora Christians to partner for global missions.

The GDN met for the first time on 21 February 2011 in Paris and was hosted by LifeAgape through the leadership of Henri Aoun, LifeAgape president (and GDN advisory board member).

Two decisions of the event included the need for the GDN to call a global diaspora (missiology) congress in 2015 and to accelerate the use of technologies in evangelism and discipleship for the “people on the move.”

GDN replaces the Cape Town/Lausanne III event-specific Lausanne Diasporas Leadership Team (LDLT) and functions under the umbrella of the Lausanne Movement. Members of GDN are as follows:

### **Advisory Board**

- Mr. Henri Aoun, president, Life Agape International
- Rev. Dashzeveg Dashdendew, executive director, Mongolian United Bible Society
- Dr. Tom Harvey, dean, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies
- Rev. Kim Hun, director, Korean Diaspora Research Institute
- Mr. Jack Klemke, chair, The Klemke Foundation
- Dr. Grant McClung, president, Missions Resource Group
- Dr. Elias Medeiros, professor of missiology, Reformed Theological Seminary
- Mr. Doug Nichols, founder, Action International Ministries
- Dr. Cindy Perry, senior consultant, Himalayan Region, Development Associates International
- Mr. Mark Sosmeña, CEO, LifeChange Publishing Co.; chair, GDN board of trustees Manila Office
- Dr. Sadiri Joy Tira, senior associate for diaspora, Lausanne
- Dr. TV Thomas, director, Centre for Evangelism and World Missions
- Rev. Arie Verduyn, president, Alliance World Fellowship
- Dr. Enoch Wan, president, Evangelical Missiological Society (USA/Canada)
- Dr. Ted Yamamori, LCWE senior advisor

### **GDN Regional Diaspora Educators**

- Dr. Tereso Casiño (North America chair), professor of missiology, Gardner-Webb University
- Dr. Miyon Chung (Asia chair), associate professor of systematic theology, Torch Trinity Graduate School of Theology, Seoul
- Dr. Tom Harvey (Europe chair), dean, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies
- Rev. Paul Sydnor (Europe), ITeams missionary, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies

### **Diaspora Catalyst**

- Dr. John Baxter, professor of missions and practical theology, Cebu Graduate School of Theology, Philippines
- Rev. Cody Lorange, church-planting strategist, North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention

## **International Board of Reference**

- Rev. Doug Birdsall, executive committee chair/CEO, Lausanne Movement
- Dr. Daniel Bourdanne, general secretary, International Fellowship of Evangelical Students
- Dr. Samuel Escobar, renowned Latin American theologian and missiologist
- Dr. Patrick Fung, president, Overseas Missionary Fellowship
- Dr. Peter Kuzmic, Eva B. and Paul E. Toms distinguished professor of world missions and European studies, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
- Dr. See-Young Lee, former ambassador to the United Nations, Republic of Korea
- Dr. Geoff Tunnicliffe, secretary general, World Evangelical Alliance

## **GDN Subject Matter Experts**

- Mr. Sam George, executive director, PARIVAR International
- Dr. J.D. Payne, associate professor of church planting and evangelism, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
- Dr. Tuvya Zaretsky, international coordinating committee president, Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE)

## **GDN Executive Board of Trustees, Manila HQ Office**

- Mr. Mark A. Sosmena, chair, GDN; CEO, LifeChange Publishing, Inc.
- Atty. Michael Reysio-Cruz, secretary, GDN; legal counsel, The Law Firm of AB Salumbides
- Mr. Bach Johann Sebastian; treasurer, GDN; economist, SVP & Chief Business Strategist of JG Summit Holdings Inc.
- Atty. Jojo Lacanilaom, trustee, GDN; former Philippine diplomat; Manila field officer, International Justice Mission
- Dr. Jonathan Exiomo, trustee, GDN; president/CEO, Alliance Graduate School, Philippines
- Mr. Art Medina, trustee, GDN; presidential director, FusionExcel Philippines
- Ms. Andrea Roldan, trustee, GDN; international facilitator, Serve Asia, OMF International
- Dr. Sadiri Tira, trustee, GDN; senior associate for diaspora, Lausanne

# **LEADERSHIP PROFILE**

## **Ryan Shaw, Student Minister, Evangelist, Trainer, International**

### **Q. Tell us about your family.**

**A.** I have a wonderful wife, Kelly, who is the most servant-hearted person I know. We have two very cool kids: Noah, 5, and Emma, 2. Our family has lived in several locations over the past five years. We began in London, then moved to Ontario, where we helped develop a student mission mobilization initiative before relocating to Istanbul, where we lived for two years before moving south to Izmir, Turkey. We are now en route to Chiang Mai to serve the student mission movement from this strategic Asian city.

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

**A.** I serve as international lead facilitator of Student Volunteer Movement 2 (SVM2). We started SVM2 in late 2002 and have seen the Holy Spirit develop and clarify the vision step by step. SVM2 is an

international network of Bible schools, campus ministry organizations, local churches, and mission agencies committed to calling the emerging generation of believers to wholehearted devotion to Christ which results in them being catalyzed into the harvest by the thousands. I get the joy to serve by inspiring, encouraging, casting vision, teaching, training, and empowering others to go hard after God with all their heart and to align their lives with God's heart for the unreached.

**Q. What is your favorite quote?**

**A.** I have many. One that is strongly resonating with my passions at present and that has helped give expression to my inner convictions is by Hudson Taylor: "We must concentrate on deepening of the spiritual life in the church so that consecration to service will follow." To see a revolution among the emerging generation of believers where they are empowered and sustained in their role in the great harvest requires a new paradigm related to the depth of spiritual life being taught and called for among them. We must raise our vision and standards of what it means to follow Christ.

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

**A.** Again, there are many. My wife, however, has consistently been this for me. Her humility, godliness, clear perspective, understanding, and child-like faith are a great testimony as we go through the ups and downs and challenges and victories of life and ministry together. Her counsel on matters large and small is incalculable as she often provides a word "in due season" that is necessary to move ahead. Above all, she is a woman of prayer who faithfully brings all issues boldly before the throne of grace, including me and projects on which we are currently working.

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

**A.** The greatest barrier is believers who are not consistently digesting and experiencing the power of the gospel in their own lives. Message-bearers are called to be possessed by a burning message of love characterized by clarity, focus, and boldness. This message is only communicated with power when it is alive and real inside us. It springs forth and touches others with powerful results because it comes from a heart which is encountering God on a regular basis.

**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.** One time that comes to mind was while traveling in Nigeria. I was in the northern part of the country, which is heavily Muslim. I was speaking at some meetings with Christian groups. While in a taxi to one such meeting, I started talking to the driver (a young man in his early 20s) and asked him several questions about his life, family, and faith. He told me he was Muslim because of the specific people group he was from, but that he really didn't believe.

I asked him what he knew about Jesus Christ and he responded with many of the pat responses Muslims

It has been said that today's generation is the most biblically illiterate generation of the modern era. This provides enormous problems as believers are more spiritually superficial and less aware of the multi-faceted ways of God in scripture and of the power of the very message we've been called to declare among the unreached.

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

**A.** The list is long, depending upon the specific issue. Generally, however, I often recommend Andrew Murray's *The Key to the Missionary Problem*. Although the book is

over one hundred years old, it is as relevant to current issues being faced today as it was then. Murray discussed timeless issues that hinder the work of God gaining momentum. One of these is the need for deep spirituality characterized by abandoned devotion to Christ according to his standard in the Gospels. Every believer has a role in the mission movement and the book details how we can become involved and the need to do so if we will seriously pursue Jesus' goal of discipling all nations through the church.

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

**A.** My hope is to see the united student mission movement that SVM2 is helping to catalyze serve many more national contexts. Currently, the network is serving nine national contexts. I believe this will increase greatly over the next five years and that the Body of Christ would be moving forward with the vision of seeing 100,000 new message-bearers raised up for the neediest of the unreached people groups.

I hope to see a training center with a day and night house of prayer established which hosts multiple internship programs annually, as well as a School of Global Harvest. This training will enable mobilizers to be empowered with a new paradigm for mission mobilization for today's challenges.

**Q. How can people be praying for you?**

**A.** Pray for a greater measure of hunger and thirst for the Lord as I continually want to go deeper in intimacy with Jesus. Pray for a spirit of wisdom and understanding to understand the biblical perspective on the times we live and to discern the mind of the Lord regarding ministry decisions and leadership. Ask him for more of his powerful presence to rest upon my life so that I would work for his glory's sake.

**Sampson Dorkunor, Trainer, Outreach Coordinator, Church Planter, Ghana**

**Q. Tell us about your family.**

**A.** I am married to Janet Dorkunor, a child evangelist who has been very supportive in the ministry. We have three young ladies who live with us (though not legally adopted)—Anna, 24, Patience, 24, and Emefa (Debora), 12. We have several spiritual children and have been supporting many through their education.

are taught from a young age. I then asked him if I could pray for him and use Jesus' name. He said he didn't mind. As I laid my hand on him and prayed slowly and deliberately, I could see a visible change in his demeanor. I prayed for God to encounter the man's heart and the man responded that he felt something during the prayer he had never experienced before.

A flood of peace came over him and he said he instantly knew that Christ was the only way to God. We then pulled up to the meeting location. I put him in touch with some Christian leaders to faithfully lead him to Christ and disciple him.

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

**A.** I am the founder and general overseer of Living Bread Missions, an indigenous missionary agency committed to training, outreach, and church planting. We have a staff of sixteen serving in Ghana and the Republic of Togo in various church-planting projects. We run a missionary training school to raise and release workers.

We have been actively involved in community development projects, one of which is a Christ-centered and character-building educational complex known as Precious Kids Academy. This is located in our base location of Ashaiman, a slum community in Ghana. We are also involved in a 20-acre farm project to help raise support for the work we do in missions.

I have also been involved in the national mission movement and was the immediate past president of the Ghana Evangelical Missions Association. I was the World Evangelical Alliance’s national representative and associate who did the REMAP II research into missionary retention in 2003.

In collaboration with Student Volunteer Movement 2 (SVM2) and Ghana Fellowship of Evangelical Student (the national wing of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students), I have been involved in student mission mobilization. We have successfully initiated and worked on awareness conferences in Ghana and held ignite conferences in universities across the country. I am currently the national chair for the SVM2 advisory committee and newly appointed as the African regional facilitator.

I also provide supervision for the missionary endeavors of the Association of Community Missionaries based in unreached people groups of northern Ghana and northern Togo. My work covers field visits and administrative support for the 22 missionaries who are working with over 130 churches. This work is done in collaboration with Reaching the Unreached based in Lincoln, Nebraska, USA.

**Q. What is your favorite quote?**

**A.** John 10:16: “I have other sheep which are not of this fold. I must bring them also. That there may be one sheepfold with one shepherd.”

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

**A.** Margaret Anthony, who confronted me with the gospel of Jesus Christ and disciplined me. I learned at her feet in my juvenile years to be a faithful Christian of integrity. She also counseled me up to the point when I was called into active ministry.

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

**A.** The best piece of advice I received was an encouragement to accept the call to ministry and not look to others’ criticisms and accusations. I was told not to fear even what the future would hold, even though I was leaving my professional field to enter ministry.

**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.** I have this tremendous story of an elderly man

In a very frustrating moment when I was to move into missions full time, my mentor reminded me, “I am standing with you in prayer and the will of the Lord for you shall be done.”

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

**A.** The greatest barrier to evangelism is the Church’s apathy to the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. It has led to a lack of adequate support for the core function of the Church globally. However, the issue can be traced to nominalism (lack of adequate discipleship and commitment of membership in our churches). Church membership is the greatest asset of the Church; if the membership is not supportive of the core function, then this is a hindrance.

who was the captain of an idol worship cult. He refuted the gospel any time I introduced Jesus Christ as Savior and the need for this man to admit, confess, and accept Jesus as such. He would protest, saying that the devil was the elder brother of Jesus and that idol worship was the ideal for the African.

He would contest that Christianity came to rob the African of his authentic religion. This challenge went on for some years, but I was persistent concerning his salvation and would go back time and again.

During one visit, I continued to persist with the gospel message. On this day, I saw God work entirely by his grace. This man accepted Christ, raising his hands and saying the sinner’s prayer! He quickly grew in the reading of scripture, distanced himself from the dangerous cult, denounced the gods, burnt the idols, stood his grounds in faith, and held on to his confession.

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

**A.** Apart from the Bible, my recommendation is *Disciples Are Made Not Born* by Walter Henrichsen and Howard Hendricks. It brings forth a key element in church growth—the making and multiplication of disciples for the work of ministry. It also puts the onus of disciple-making on the individual and not on an assumption that “if God wills, Brother Joe will mature.”

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

**A.** I would love to be in master coaching and mentoring young and emerging leaders who have a missionary focus.

**Q. How can people be praying for you?**

**A.** First, for the growth of Living Bread Missions and the Association of Community Missionaries’ work and missionaries in Ghana and Togo. Second, for physical and family health to enable me to continue to be a good witness. Third, for financial support for the work of the ministry.

## INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING

### Glimpses of the Power of the Pen and Christian Publishing in Asia

By Ramon Rocha III

“Christian publishing is foolish!” “You know, you're kind of stupid.” “Why did you join that publishing house? You are wasting your time!” These brutal words from friends rang in the ears of the newly-installed managing director of a start-up Christian publishing house in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

“People here don't like to read. You are young, educated, and can speak English well. You are better off landing an important and high-paying position in one of the many multinational, non-profit



organizations in Cambodia!” This director is one of many publishers in Asia whom I have met in my ministry as a publishing trainer.

### **Challenges of Publishing in Asia**

These comments capture the world's assessment of young Christian publishers in Asia and the difficulties they face in choosing that career. Local leaders who pursue Christian ministry through the written word are confronted with significant challenges as well as opportunities. They work in largely Muslim, Buddhist, Animist, and Hindu nations with small markets for their publications.

- **Financial priorities.** Many Asian people have little interest in reading and wages are low in countries of the Majority World. Families may budget income for food, housing, and the education of five or more children. Buying Christian books and magazines lies near the bottom, if at all, in the list of family priorities.
- **Free literature.** Furthermore, for decades different denominations and Christian groups have distributed free literature as tools for evangelism and church planting. Evangelistic tracts of all kinds flood the continent. We thank the Lord that thousands of genuine conversions have resulted from this strategy, but people have become so used to receiving complimentary Christian reading materials that they consider purchasing Christian books and magazines absurd. A struggling Christian publishing house that wants to wean away from dependence on donations and become “self-sustaining” will find it difficult to obtain steady and growing revenues from book sales to attain its mission and vision.
- **Printing costs.** Printing costs also pose an obstacle to effective Christian publishing in Asia. Going back to the example of the publishing house in Cambodia, they can sell a maximum of five hundred copies of a new title in its first year. A 500-copy print run means a high printing cost, necessitating a retail price that is far above the affordability level.

More often than not, publishing houses, not only in Cambodia but also in countries such as Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Myanmar, Thailand, and others, opt to print one to two thousand copies to keep the printing cost low. Then, excess inventory builds, destined to gather dust in the warehouse for at least two to four years. In such a scenario it is very difficult for publishers to maintain a healthy cash flow.

Of course, the challenges facing Christian publishers within Asia differ greatly with this vast and diverse region, including westernized nations of Singapore, Japan, and South Korea; Muslim countries like Indonesia and Pakistan; emerging superpowers China and India; “closed” countries such as Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam; and impoverished Bangladesh and Nepal (see sidebar on China).

### **The Written Word at Work**

But publishers in all these places have stories to tell of how God is using the written word to draw men and women to himself.

In a closed Southeast Asian country, a quarterly Christian magazine for women (with underground distribution) became so popular that print runs ballooned from two thousand on the first issue, to three thousand on the second, four thousand on the third, and eight thousand on the fourth. The magazine is run by a team of local women writers and editors who are mentored by a Singaporean editor—one of

the highly-skilled volunteer trainers linked with Media Associates International (MAI). The magazine features dramatic true stories of conversions and testimonies that often illicit tears from readers.

Another success story is Miknia's Doll, the first children's book written and illustrated by a Cambodian, Lina Pao. The book, released in 2008, marked a milestone of the startup publishing house mentioned above, now in its sixth year.

Local Filipino writers like Dr. Melba Maggay, Evelyn Miranda Feliciano, Rev. William Girao, Dr. Isabelo Magalit, Dr. Luis Gatmaitan, and Grace Chong have significantly contributed to the growth of the Philippine Church over the years. Through their insights and wisdom, the evangelical voice has gained respect in the country, and their views on current issues are sought by the general public. We hope to see the same exciting development spread to other countries like Singapore, India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia.

### **Heeding the Clamor for Asian Writers**

Admittedly, translations of books from the West will continue to play a role in helping evangelize and disciple believers in the East. In fact, the translation route offers a faster and less costly way of making Christian materials available.

- **Utilizing local writers and editors.** Developing and nurturing local authors requires more work. But there is a growing clamor from Asian readers for materials written by fellow nationals who speak their language and know their history and culture. So much is lost in translation, and the impression that Christianity is a Western religion is exacerbated by the huge amount of translated Christian materials in the Majority World. As a nation's Church matures, their appreciation and preference for locally-written Christian books increases.

In order to effectively pursue this goal, Christian publishers must tackle the task of raising the quality of locally-produced Christian books to par or even higher levels than their secular counterparts. This requires the training of local editors who play a major role in cultivating writers to produce excellent manuscripts.

According to Australian editor and trainer, Owen Salter, many Christian editors in Asia operate based on self-training. They learn by experience; this is not intrinsically bad, but they consequently face significant limitations.

"Many aspiring editors make unfortunate mistakes, lack skills, end up reinventing wheels, waste time (and money) working by trial and error, and operate in a vacuum, with little or no interaction with competent editorial mentors and peers," Salter said. He affirmed both the need for technical training and cultivating constructive community among editors.

- **Encouraging reading.** Encouraging reading in the general population is also vital. Many Asian governments now acknowledge the role of developing reading habits as a way to compete in the global economy. Publishing houses have the opportunity to partner with these state-initiated reading campaigns, working to produce attractive books that meet readers' needs.
- **Incorporating new technologies.** The onset of new technologies augurs well to keep costs down. Publishers hope that print-on-demand services will become available in emerging Asian economies soon. They would no longer need to keep a thousand copies of each title. A few

hundred would do, or they could even print solely based on orders. Also, more electronic delivery of content will give readers instant accessibility as well as cutting costs. Cheaper versions of iPads and Kindles are just around the corner.

Although it will take time, attaining self-sufficiency in Christian publishing in Asian countries is not impossible. Heightened professionalism in operations, a highly trained and motivated staff, and excellence in product development are the essential areas of growth. Progress will contribute to the goal of meeting the needs of readers through a spiritually-mature pool of local authors.

To strengthen emerging Christian publishers in hard countries of Asia, MAI and other groups are providing training and encouragement. Many Asian Christian publishers seek help in two key areas:

- **Marketing.** What good does it do to publish excellent books and magazines if nobody knows they exist or how to get them?
- **Editorial.** How can we develop local authors if we lack skilled editors who will find and nurture talented writers?

In response, MAI will provide marketing and editorial training with up to eighty Asian Christian publishing staff at the MAI-Asia Publishing Forum 7-11 November 2011 in Hong Kong.

The main goal of Christian publishing is to proclaim Christ and God's word in this darkened and sinful generation. The printed page (paper or electronic) will continue to impact peoples and nations in the region where sixty percent of the world's population resides. Asian Christian writers, editors, and publishers must remain faithful. The results are in the hands of God.

**Ramon Rocha III** is the international literature development coordinator for OMF International and a trustee of MAI-Asia. He is the former CEO of OMF Literature, Philippines.

### **Publishing for China's Millions**

By John Maust

**Quality Christian books are being legally published in China, despite the obstacles.** Only state-run publishers in the world's largest nation of 1.3 billion are granted ISBN numbers by the government. So Christian and other private publishers must negotiate for, or buy, unused numbers from the state publishers.

Even with an ISBN number, publication is not assured since content must be approved by government censors. Christian publishers say books having the best chance of getting approval and an ISBN number are: (1) marriage and family titles; (2) biographies; and (3) and church history (though not *Chinese* church history).

ZDL, one of half a dozen main Christian publishers in China, has a goal of developing national authors. But so far, most published Christian books in China are translations. These include classics by C.S. Lewis, G. K. Chesterton, and John Calvin, plus contemporary works by Philip Yancey, Gary Chapman, Rick Warren, and others.

(There are two kinds of groups are publishing books about Christianity: (1) academics, who publish Christian classics to help Chinese leaders understand the Western mind and worldview; and (2) Christians who want to nurture the church and draw readers toward personal faith.)

Thanks to the Beijing-based distribution company Baojiayin, readers across China may order from hundreds of legally-published Christian books through the company's print and online catalogues. Recently, Baojiayin also received permission to sell Bibles and books published by the Three Self Church that until previously could only be obtained at one of the registered churches.

Some of China's larger house churches are publishing magazines. These typically do three things: (1) provide a training ground for new writers; (2) address timely issues from a biblical perspective; and/or (3) foster interaction with readers. Because these magazine are not registered with the government, they are usually given away and do not accept paid advertising.

In China's volatile political environment, volunteers know their magazines could be shut down at any moment—just as nearly two hundred Chinese church leaders were denied permission to travel to Capetown for the Lausanne conference. Yet they go forward from their sense of calling and service to the church.

Any long-range Christian publishing strategy in China will need to embrace the new digital technologies: an estimated twenty-five million Chinese read books only on their mobile cell phones.

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