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A FREE monthly, online magazine that provides you with missions and evangelism news, information and analysis.

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## WORLD NEWS BRIEFS

### AROUND THE WORLD

With the enormity and increasing frequency of natural disasters, many people may develop a sort of "global desensitization" to the overwhelming amount of information they are receiving from media sources. However, according to Rita Guerra of Bible Pathway Ministries, along with the devastation comes a spike in requests for the Bible and other Christian resources. Many people are wondering if the end times are here and according to Guerra, this is the perfect opportunity to reach out to those affected by the natural disasters and who are seeking to learn more about God through them. (Mission Network News, <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/7970>)

### AFRICA

Teen Missions International is holding ten boot camps in sub-Saharan Africa designed to train teenagers from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Zambia, Mozambique, Uganda and Tanzania for ministry. Teens involved partake in projects such as building, orphanage work, agriculture, evangelism and other outreach in their native countries. Currently, about two thousand teens are involved. (Mission Network News, <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/8082>)

### ARGENTINA

A small church of only two hundred people reached nearly their entire community by distributing more than two thousand copies of the Book of Hope, a harmony of the four Gospels which tells the story of Jesus. Over a two-month period, Pastor Hugo and his congregants placed two thousand copies in the hands of students and visited 1,380 families. Because of this local outreach, several Catholic schools have added the Book of Hope to the curriculum. The two-month event ended with a festival in which three thousand people attended. (Book of Hope, <http://www.bookofhope.net/news/entirecommunityreachedinargentina.asp>)

### BURMA

A new report, put out by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners-Burma (AAPPB), reveals widespread torture occurring in Burmese jails. The report, based on interviews with thirty-five former political prisoners, includes details of poor prison conditions, deliberate medical negligence, severe beatings and electrical shock. Former prisoners also testify to being bound with ropes and shackles for months at a time. The report suggests many in Burmese prisons for political reasons have been arrested for simply expressing their opposition to the ruling military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). (Assist News, <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/s05110161.htm>)

### INDONESIA

Christian Freedom International (CFI) has delivered more than twenty thousand pounds of medicine, cooking utensils, tools and clothing to residents on Nias Island. Ninety percent of the residents here are Christian and many believe the Indonesian government has been discriminating against them because of their faith. The area has been devastated by the December 2004 tsunami and the March 2005 earthquake. Christians in the area claim they are not getting near the resources that places such as Banda Aceh are getting and believe it is due to religious discrimination. CFI's supplies are being distributed through local churches on Nias. (Assist News, <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/s05110088.htm>)

## **ISRAEL**

A census taken just before the state of Israel was founded in 1948 showed that eighty percent of Bethlehem's inhabitants were Christians. Today, Christians only make up forty percent of the town's forty thousand residents. According to reports, the town where Jesus was born is turning into a Muslim town. In the past few years, more than three thousand Christians have left the town due to economic, social and religious reasons. (Assist News, <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/s05110147.htm>)

## **MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**

SAT-7, the Christian satellite television network, will air a full schedule of twenty-three different Arabic programs in the Middle East and North Africa throughout the Christmas and New Year's season. Research indicates the network has five to six million regular viewers in the Arab world alone. The season's special programming will include programs telling of Christ's birth, demonstrations as to how the Lord is working today and presentations of the JESUS film, aired in four different Arabic dialects. According to Debbie Brink, executive director of the SAT-7 USA office, this all comes at a time when the Church in these areas is shrinking. (Assist News, <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/s05120036.htm>)

## **NIGERIA**

Nigerian evangelists say that a revival fire is sweeping the ranks of the police force in Africa's most populous nation as thousands of law enforcement officers are casting aside their weapons and surrendering their lives to Jesus. According to the evangelists, this has resulted in the establishment of the Police Christian Fellowship in Nigeria. (Ecumenical News International, <http://www.eni.ch/highlights/news.shtml?2005/11>)

## **PUERTO RICO**

The Church of God is only one of many denominations in Puerto Rico that has a growing burden for world missions. Although at one point the missionary zeal in the country seemed to diminish, in the past six to eight years there has been a renewed interest in world missions and church teams are increasingly traveling to other countries to do evangelism and construction work. Due to the freedom of worship, the economic prosperity and the language advantage, Puerto Rico has been especially active and mission-minded toward Latin America. (Faith News Network, <http://www.faithnews.cc/articles.cfm?sid=6272>)

## **ROMANIA**

The Bible League has reached a milestone in Romania with the establishment of 1,065 new evangelical churches since 1993, when the organization first began working with national Christians. In 2005, eighty-one new churches and more than 18,200 church members were added. However, the Bible League will continue to share the gospel in the more than 9,500 towns and villages that do not have an evangelical presence. (Mission Network News, <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/8026>)

## **SOUTH AFRICA**

Claudine Storbeck, a Nazarene from South Africa, was recently appointed as a World Federation for the Deaf (WFD) Expert in the area of education. Storbeck's role will include research, planning and implementing surveys and studies on specific areas pertaining to deafness. She will also prepare recommendations at the international, national and regional levels. (Nazarene Communications Network, <http://www.ncnnews.org/Article.aspx?id=2073>)

## **SWEDEN**

Swedish pastor Ake Green was recently acquitted of hate speech by the Swedish Supreme Court, the nation's highest court. The precedent-setting verdict upheld freedom of speech and religion. Green was accused of the crime after denouncing homosexual behaviors in a July 2003 sermon. The Supreme Court produced a sixteen-page ruling that stated Green's sermon was protected under the European Convention on Human Rights. (Assist News, <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/s05120035.htm>)

## **TAIWAN**

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and a prominent congresswoman in Taiwan have endorsed the distribution of the Book of Hope, a harmony of the four Gospels which tells the story of Jesus, to public schools in Taiwan. To date, more than 500,000 books have been distributed. According to Bob Hoskins, founder of Book of Hope International, these endorsements have paved the way for their ministry. Book

of Hope is currently sending out Nomad Teams, young people who are training nationals to do the work of evangelism, to Taiwan. Hoskins hopes to distribute 1.5 million copies of the Book of Hope next year. (Mission Network News, <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/8080>)

## UNITED STATES

The eighty-member First Baptist Church in Avondale, Louisiana, has seen two middle-aged women come to trust in Jesus Christ in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The first woman had a Roman Catholic background and wandered into the church on the first Sunday the congregation met after the storm. After several church teams helped the woman restore her flooded home, she came to trust in Christ. The second woman came to First Baptist after having visited several other churches. Even before the hurricane, the woman believed the Lord was drawing her to himself. (Baptist Press News, <http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?ID=22121>)

## UNITED STATES

U.S. churches say they have made significant advances in the fight against human trafficking in recent years, due in part to the opposition of faith-based groups. Lutherans, Adventists, the Salvation Army and the National Association of Evangelicals are educating their own members and directly intervening for victims and endorsing state and national legislative changes to thwart trafficking. (Ecumenical News International, <http://www.eni.ch/highlights/news.shtml?2005/12>)

## VIETNAM

Six ethnic minority Montagnards have been sentenced to between seven and seventeen years in jail for threatening national security, the Vietnam News Agency reports. The men, from the Central Highlands, are Protestants who follow an evangelical Christian church not sanctioned by the government. They claim their tribal lands have been taken to grow cash crops. The men were found guilty of inciting protests in 2004 which called for religious freedom. Even after imprisonment, the men face an additional five years of surveillance. (Assist News, <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/s05110109.htm>)

# WORLD EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS REPORTS

January 2006

## After the Attack: Finding Open Doors to Share the Gospel in Beslan, Russia

*Jason Catizone*

**B**eslan is a small town where people seem to know something about nearly everyone. It's a town where hospitality is treasured and where children walk the streets freely. Beslan is a town where cows can graze wherever they please. It's a town where one can often hear the rooster crow. Why did such tragedy happen here, of all places?

Last year, terrorists attacked one of the schools and held the people hostage for three days. In the end, more than three hundred people were killed, most of whom were children. Some were shot dead; others were killed when the ceiling collapsed in the building where they were being held. Now, more than a year later, so much hurt still remains. The besieged school is still standing and is easily seen throughout the community. Why the authorities still haven't thoroughly cleaned the ruins is a mystery. When you walk through the school gym, where hundreds were held captive for three days, you will see many photos taped to the walls--photos of fathers, mothers and little girls.

By God's grace, I'm serving here to help one of the churches in Beslan. I'm teaching English to believers and anyone who comes to the house where the church meets. I'm also teaching English to two young men who lost their brothers in the school massacre. Eighteen-year-old Zaur lost his 14-year-old brother Khasan in the terror attack. The very room in the family's apartment where I teach him overlooks the school gym. There is still a bullet hole in the room's wall. There are also numerous pictures of Khasan.

My other student is 15-year-old Khetag, who lost his younger brother Timor in the attack. Khetag has been through a lot. Occasionally, his mother seems to have completely forgotten about him. In Beslan, there is not only pain over the children who died, but there is also the hurt of survivors who now feel unwanted and depressed. Many parents spend much of their time thinking and speaking about the children who perished. Through the church, we are sharing with the surviving children and families that many people are praying for them and that they're not forgotten. They are all very thankful and many express that thankfulness by serving us food and tea. Ossetian hospitality is perhaps the best in the world. The church here is small and very young in the Lord. Although I have tried to start Tuesday evening prayer (and Wednesday and Friday evening Bible reading times), so far just about no one has come. Well, unfortunately the same situation occurs in the West, doesn't it? We all need prayer. If you have some extra time, please pray:

- for the Lord's church here in Beslan--for unity, love and growth;
- for Zaur, Khetag and their families;
- for the Totiev families – Taimuraz and Raya, and Sergei and Bella. Taimuraz and Sergei are Baptist pastors. Taimuraz and Raya lost four children in the attack; Sergei and Bella lost two. They are true examples of faith (modern day "Jobs");
- that God will continue to help me understand Russian and Ossetian--the two languages spoken here; and
- that our Father will glorify his Son Jesus Christ in all that I say and do.

Thank you so much, and all the glory be to YHWH!

*Jason Catizone is a missionary in Beslan, Russia. He is helping to plant the first Calvary Church in the area. He can be contacted at [jalazone7@yahoo.com](mailto:jalazone7@yahoo.com).*

## Sri Lankan Devastation Allows the Universal Church an Opportunity to Give

*by Adrian De Visser*

Sri Lankan beaches are the most picturesque in the world. Soft sounds of the waves lapping, an endless strip of white, sandy beaches contrasting with deep, blue waters and coral reefs that are home to many types of tropical fish--these are the wonders of the Sri Lankan coast ([www.triptosrilanka.com](http://www.triptosrilanka.com)). In December 2004 this beautiful island in the Indian Ocean was hit by a tsunami. In Sri Lanka alone, conservative estimates say that over forty thousand people died, 250,000 people lost their homes and over one million people were displaced. Those who survived lost their livelihoods and have not been able to regain their financial footing. Experts suggest that fifty-nine percent of the people in Sri Lanka have seen their income drop by more than fifty percent since the tsunami.

Nearly a year later, people still live in makeshift camps. According to Anisya Thomas, managing director of the non-profit Fritz Institute, [www.fritzinstitute.org](http://www.fritzinstitute.org), "Some had moved from tents into makeshift shelters with thatched roofs or open sides, while others were staying with relatives, but almost nobody in our survey was in permanent shelter" (statement delivered 06 December 2005).

It is in this context that the Church responded to meet the needs of the people. During the past few years the Church has been accused of helping people in order to convert them. More than two hundred churches were attacked when extremists carried out a hate campaign based on this non-factual accusation. One church leader commented, "We are accused, judged, condemned and punished on a perception that is not based on facts and reality; we are punished even without a trial."

However, the tsunami propelled the Church to the forefront of caring for the nation of Sri Lanka. Based on our theological belief to "love thy neighbor as thyself," the Church in Sri Lanka has done well. Caring for people with no strings attached has silenced some of the extremists to a certain degree; more important, the people who were persuaded that the Christian Church would only help in order to convert the poor have realized the fallacy of this idea. They have realized this because they have experienced the truth of what the Church has been doing to help those in need.

Helping people to rebuild their lives can be attributed to two important realities:

1. Our theological perception which is based on I John 3:17-18: "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."

2. The generosity of the global Church, who responded so sacrificially to the needs of the people. The loss of life and property within the nation caused the people of Sri Lanka to be deeply saddened. However, the response of the local church to the needs of the people thrills the hearts of those living on the island. The generous, sacrificial giving of the universal Church confirms the truth that we are indeed the body of Christ.

## **Fighting against Forced Child Prostitution in India: How Restore International is Seeking to Defend the Defenseless**

**by Bob Goff**

**I**ndia ranks high on the list of countries where commercial sexual exploitation of underage girls occurs. With the extreme poverty, religious traditions and societal prejudice toward women, thousands of girls are bought and sold in every state of India. The lenient law enforcement system has allowed for the flourishing trade. Once the girl is sold to a brothel keeper, she becomes a virtual slave of the industry. She is beaten, threatened, verbally abused and forced to have sex with many men every day. Although there are no accurate statistics of child prostitutes, experts on child trafficking agree the numbers lie between 400,000 and 500,000 children.

Restore International, [www.restoreinternational.org](http://www.restoreinternational.org) follows Christ's mandate to care for the poor and the orphaned and to bring justice for the oppressed (Jeremiah 22:3). It is because of this that Restore's team seeks the rescue and restoration of young girls like Darja and Asha<sup>1</sup> (whose stories are told below) who have been forced into prostitution.

Asha was sold into prostitution by her aunt at the age of twelve. When she refused to comply, she was beaten, whipped and had her arm burned by cigarettes. Asha tried to run away several times (once by jumping out a window in the brothel), but she was immediately re-captured and severely punished. "I tried to kill myself three times, by cutting my wrists and by jumping from the terrace," Asha relates. "I thought, 'It is better to die than live in such a place, where there is no one to help me.'"

Founded in December 2004, Restore International (1) rescues and rehabilitates children who have been forced into prostitution and (2) pursues the prosecution of the perpetrators. The Restore team coordinates investigators, police liaisons, advocates and local legal professionals to locate minor girls and then use the legal system to rescue them. After doing the investigative work, Restore works with local police to plan and initiate raids on a brothel to rescue the minors. The girls are then initially placed in government custody homes and later transferred to aftercare homes. Restore International provides counseling to the girls and assists local advocates who help navigate the criminal case through the courts.

Since its inception a year ago, the Restore team has investigated and assisted in raiding a number of brothels, which has resulted in the rescue of over seventeen minors and the arrest of their perpetrators. Restore International has also helped eliminate United States funding of an advocacy organization called SANGRAM, who's related entity, VAMP, is an organization whose members included brothel owners. These entities opposed Restore's efforts to free children located in the brothels.

Rescuing young minor girls from brothels is not without risk. In October 2005, Restore conducted follow-up investigations to ensure that previously-rescued girls had not been returned to prostitution by brothel owners. During this investigation, however, Restore's team became the victims of an attack by the brothel owners and sex traffickers. Restore's team had arrived at the location only two days before and were looking for a little girl named Darja. In the raid previously conducted in this red light area, thirteen brothel keepers had been arrested for selling little girls to their customers. The arrests enraged the brothel owners

and others in the red light area. For the first time in longer than anyone could remember, India's own laws against child trafficking were being enforced in the Sangli red light area.

Darja had been rescued from one of the brothels earlier; however, when the court prematurely released her to her parents, she was sent back into prostitution. This tragedy occurs from time to time and illustrates the need to educate the judiciary regarding the manner in which the victims of sex trafficking must be treated. Accordingly, Restore International's efforts include pursuing judicial relief and accountability through various appeals which Restore has filed, including one presently pending before India's high court in Bombay.

On the same day the team was attacked, Restore president, Bob Goff, and a team of investigators went to the tribal village where another released girl was supposed to be found with the family she was released to. The villagers were not pleased to see Restore's team as they had just sold the young girl to a brothel for US\$40. The eight-foot square thatched hut (which the authorities would have found had they done the mandatory home inspections required before release) was easily located. Had the girl not been released in violation of applicable laws, she would not have been swept back into the sex-trade cycle.

It is these kinds of tragic events that keep the Restore team focused on their mission. Girls like the one mentioned above need to know the promise of Isaiah 14:13: "And it shall come to pass that in the day that the Lord shall give you rest from your sorrow and your fear and from the hard bondage wherein you were made to serve."

In another incidence, members of the Restore team decided to attempt to locate a minor girl in the Gokul Nadar red light area and to gather evidence for local police, who would then bring her to safety. The team also sought to provide proof that some of the thirteen brothel owners who had been arrested in earlier raids were back in the red light area in violation of the court's orders. Such evidence would provide a further basis for Restore's pending request that the entire red light area be shut down.

Unfortunately, one of Restore's undercover operatives had his cover blown. When he hastily called on his cell phone for help, he indicated that he had been surrounded by a growing mob that had begun to beat him. The brothel owners who had been recently arrested and stripped of the young girls who they peddled were enraged that their trade had been disrupted.

Restore's team rushed in to rescue the operative from danger. Within two minutes, nearly a hundred people had gathered and had him on the ground. By the time Restore's team was able to get him in the car, the crowd had swelled to several hundred people. Although there was momentary safety inside, the mob soon began throwing rocks at the car.

Fortunately, one of Restore's operatives was able to make his way to the police station across town. The authorities soon arrived and the crowd quickly disbursed. The team came through with only a few minor scrapes and bruises.

These kinds of events, however, do not stop those involved with Restore International from fulfilling their mission to rescue these young girls who have been kidnapped and sold into brothels. By enforcing India's existing laws, bringing accountability to the system and bringing justice to the perpetrators, Restore's team believes that change can indeed occur in this system of modern-day slavery.

Standing up for the defenseless will exact a price; however, the rewards will be beyond measure. And these rewards are priceless. These rewards include freedom for young girls such as Darja and Asha.

For three years, Asha lived and worked in a brothel. This is what she says of her rescue:

"A man came to my brothel and was taken to my room. I thought he was a customer. He said, 'I won't do anything to you, just tell me about yourself.' A few hours later, the brothel was raided and the same man came again. After I was rescued and came to this Oasis home, I started to change. I saw [the movie] "The Passion of the Christ" and I realized how much God had done for me, and I started to believe in Jesus. I asked God to forgive my sins, and then I began to start forgiving others. I am a person who never said sorry, but now I can say sorry when I hurt someone else. I have forgiven my parents and my aunt."

In Matthew 18:10-14 Jesus goes out to find the one sheep that is lost. So too Restore International pursues the rescue of children who are being oppressed. Each one of these girls is a precious treasure. We search for the one girl who is being abused in prostitution until we find her, remove her from the brothel and place her in safety. This we will continue to do as we are commissioned by the Lord in Isaiah 1:17: "Seek justice, encourage the oppressed, defend the cause of the fatherless..."

**Bob Goff** is the founder and president of Restore International, [www.restoreinternational.org](http://www.restoreinternational.org). He is also the founding partner of a Washington D.C. law firm, Goff & DeWalt, LLP.

#### Endnotes

1. Names have been changed to protect identity

## Tough Questions Posed at the Anglican "Hope and a Future" Conference

By Doug Henneman

**U**nanswered questions regarding the social interactions of individuals and entire cultures require us to pause and look deeply at ourselves, our lives and our circumstances. Questions such as "Am I my brother's keeper?" and "Why can't we all just get along?" force us to decide what is important and what is not, what is permanent and what is fleeting, what is wise and what is worthless.

On Remembrance Day 2005 (known in the United States as Veteran's Day), Rev. Peter Jasper Akinola, a small, elderly African man who is also primate of the Anglican province of Nigeria and spiritual leader of eighteen million Christians, stood before a predominantly white, affluent crowd of 2,500 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA, and asked this question: "What do you want?"

After asking this, he paused, gestured to the six other Anglican primates on stage and said, "We can't tell you what you want. You have to tell us."

### The Anglican Crisis

The "Hope and a Future" conference, organized by the Anglican Communion Network (ACN), was held 10-12 November 2005 and it was there that Akinola spoke. ACN is an ecclesial organization of Episcopalian dioceses, parishes and clergy who believe national church leadership in ECUSA (Episcopal Church USA, the Anglican Communion's United States province) has drifted so far from historic Christianity that what church leaders practice and teach today bears little resemblance to the teachings of early Christian leaders. Although ECUSA leaders and the secular press routinely identify the disagreement as one based on differing views of human sexuality, this topic was almost never addressed by speakers or conference-goers.

Instead, those attending, including individuals from more than seventy dioceses, forty-five states and four Canadian provinces (as well as guest speakers from around the world), were concerned with three issues: (1) the role of the Bible as a rule of life, (2) the place of Jesus of Nazareth as the focal point of the Christian witness and (3) what relationship looks like if the Church is truly "one, holy, catholic [universal] and apostolic Church."

That relationship is now fractured, if not disintegrating entirely, in the eighty million-member Anglican communion ever since more than twenty of the thirty-eight worldwide provinces declared their relationship with ECUSA "impaired" or "broken" following the denomination's consecration of V. Eugene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire. Robinson had divorced his wife and was living in a same-sex relationship. The consecration followed the denomination's decades-long practice of ordaining homosexuals to the priesthood (despite repeated Anglican Communion policies which culminated in the 1998 Lambeth Commission report that found "homosexual practice incompatible with scripture").

The Windsor Report, issued in October 2004 at the request of Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams in an attempt to address the fracturing denomination, did not address the issues surrounding human sexuality since, it claimed, they had been addressed previously. What it did address was relationship and

authority, and it did so with clarity, simplicity and a brilliant command of the "facts on the ground." This report is now recognized as one of the unique documents that come along only every several hundred years.

The report stated that "the Anglican communion has always declared that its supreme authority is scripture" (Paragraph 42) and that "neither the Diocese of New Westminster (a province in the Anglican Church of Canada which has authorized same-sex blessings) nor the Episcopal Church (USA) has made a serious attempt to offer an explanation to the communion as a whole about the ... development of theology which alone could justify the recent moves" (Paragraph 33). Later, the report succinctly (Paragraphs 53-62) explained how scripture is to be read and understood.

What the report said about relationship was even more extensive: "We have reached the present impasse...[because] neither the Episcopal Church (USA) nor the Diocese of New Westminster, in deciding and acting as they did... went through the procedures which might have made it possible for the church to hold together across differences of belief and practice" (Paragraph 35). The sides apparently did this, the report says, because leaders believed that "the questions they were deciding were things upon which Christians might have legitimate difference ...[even though] other Anglicans around the world did not regard them in this way" (Paragraph 37). ECUSA and the Diocese of Westminster subsequently made decisions that the rest of the communion believe can only be made by the entire communion. The result was that trust was broken between the members (paragraph 41).

### **The Bonds of Global Affection**

Because most of those attending the ACN conference were familiar with the issues, conference leaders began with the broken trust instead of the underlying causes. Participants' feelings of alienation and abandonment were discussed.

According to conference attendee Bob Wyatt and others, expectations for the conference remained low. "My expectations were low as far as the conference went," Wyatt said. "I expected to reconnect with old friends since I've been in the renewal movement for more than thirty years."

But the seven Anglican primates from the southern hemisphere; laity and clergy within ECUSA and the Anglican Church of Canada; and speakers from outside the denomination (Rick Warren, pastor at Saddleback Church in southern California, USA, and Anne Graham Lotz, founder of AnGel Ministries) offered attendees a sense of global solidarity as they struggle with the future of their individual parishes and the larger denomination.

"We will stay with you," said Primate Datuk Yong Ping Chung, head of the nine-nation province of Southeast Asia.

Akinola added, "Many of you have one foot in ECUSA and one foot in the network. Let us know where you stand."

"The Anglican communion is being broken by their (ECUSA) stand," said the Most Reverend Bernard Malango, primate of Central Africa, which has 600,000 members. "[Yet], we will continue to uphold Scripture."

The message of relationship was welcomed by the audience and the primates' comments were repeatedly interrupted by applause.

Warren, founding pastor of the 80,000-member Saddleback Church, said he felt privileged to speak at the conference. The animated, red-haired author, minister and speaker paced the stage without his trademark Hawaiian shirt. He alluded to anticipated legal and financial disputes expected to occur within ECUSA during the coming year and attempted to encourage the audience with these words: "Jesus didn't die for facilities, he died for people. They may get the building, but you will get the blessing. Jesus is not interested in your facilities, but in your faith."

Warren was interrupted with several standing ovations.



He also noted that Saddleback was started in his living room “with me preaching to my wife.” For the first thirteen years, the church met in seventy-nine different locations.

### **The Unanswered Questions**

“It’s very clear God is doing a new thing in your midst,” Warren concluded. He then followed Akinola’s lead in asking, “What do you want?”

“What is in your hand?” Warren asked the audience as he mirrored the question posed to Moses in Exodus 17. “Remember, when God asks you a question, it’s not for his benefit.”

Warren believes this is the second most important question in scripture behind “What did you do with my son?” He said it is only when one lays down one’s identity—Moses had a staff in his hand, which both assured him and spoke to the world that he was a shepherd—that God can make it come alive.

“What is in your hand, Anglicans?” he asked again.

Anne Graham Lotz asked a familiar and equally important question: “Who is Jesus?”

“Who is this man that is so offensive and so controversial that would cause some of you to leave your church?” she asked. “Who is this man that the Romans crucified, and then acknowledged as king? Who is this man that the world’s greatest art, music and architecture are dedicated to?”

### **The Way Forward**

In addition to support from across the world and outside the communion, Rev. Robert Duncan, the bishop of Pittsburgh and the moderator of the ACN, spoke on the reconciliation of groups who had previously broken from ECUSA. The ACN is leading the effort to organize at the diocesan, parish and clergy level so that international dioceses and provinces can relate to the new group. Duncan termed it an “ecclesial body made up of ecclesial bodies.” Another group, the American Anglican Council (AAC) is membership-based and seeks to organize at the individual level—although there is some overlap between the two groups. According to president Rev. David Anderson, the council has the freedom to move across hierarchies in the communion.

Duncan told the audience that on Whitsunday 2004, six church organizations signed a letter of agreement which was delivered to the Archbishop of Canterbury in Great Britain. The Archbishop subsequently agreed to recognize ACN members as full members of the communion. The ACN, the AAC, the Anglican Mission I American (AMIA, a missionary movement of the Anglican province of Rwanda and Southeast Asia), the Anglican Province in America, Forward in Faith (a US-based ECUSA renewal movement) and the Reformed Episcopal Church became full members.

“We seek to gather the entire Anglican diaspora in North America,” confirmed Duncan. “We are standing on the cusp of a renewed, revitalized, robust Anglicanism. This is a *chairois* moment.” (*Chairois* connotes a broad, sweeping concept of time, such as an age or epoch.)

This vision won the hearts of many at the conference.

In reflecting on the conference, Wyatt said his expectations were more than met: “I’m coming away with a sense of newness. The young people here—the very committed people in their twenties and thirties who are appalled at what is going on in society—when you talk to them you sense a freshness and joy and excitement I haven’t seen in a long time. I didn’t expect that.”

“[Over the years] it has felt like we [those in the renewal movement] were the same group who had small victories, but were struggling. And now there’s a new sense of cohesiveness and [a sense] that young people will take the fight into the twenty-first century, long after I’m gone,” Wyatt continued. “There’s a sense that we’ve accomplished one of our critical goals, and that is that there’d be a contingent that would put the gospel first. I want these people to go home with a sense of strength and purpose and that they’re part of something much bigger.”

Rev. Paul Sutcliffe, a priest in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, added, “What I wanted was for faithful, orthodox

people to see that they are not alone, and to be encouraged in their faith.”

Linda Newton, a staff member of the AAC, echoed the same thoughts: “I wanted more orthodox [Christians] to recognize that they are not alone, and be more willing to stand for their faith. I wanted them to sense that they are part of something that God is doing.”

In his closing remarks, Duncan closed the conference with this reminder: “No one who God has called has not been asked to make a choice. Our choice is against idolatry. Our choice is for the new day. Our choice is for one another. Our choice is for mission, courage....worship, Scripture and God’s plan for us.”

He paused before asking one final question: “Will you choose anything else?”

***Doug Henneman** is a writer based in St. Paul, Minnesota, USA. He is a member of Messiah Episcopal Church.*

## **Portable Dentistry – A Leader in Medical Missions**

*By Doug Kazen*

**T**hese are encouraging times for mission organizations and workers committed to serving the health needs of suffering people. Never before have there been more opportunities to reach non-believers with pain relief and the caring gospel of Jesus Christ.

Several factors are making medical/dental missions increasingly more successful not only in relieving pain and suffering, but also in terms of being publicly acknowledged as part of emergency and disaster relief. First, technology allows for smaller, lighter-weight portable equipment. Second, improved global logistics and more efficient transportation increase efficiency and protect missions organization from wasting valuable time and resources. Emergency and relief efforts provide missions organizations the opportunity to apply their expertise and compassion to helping millions cope with loss, pain and suffering.

In medical/dental mission, we look to Jesus’ own earthly ministry. He relieved pain and suffering while also sharing the gospel message. Since then, many individuals and organizations have been using medical/dental care in similar ways. The opportunity to combine pain relief and evangelism is becoming more available for missionary dentists who have the opportunity to serve what many describe as the number one healthcare problem in the world--the toothache!

“Toothache” can indicate a variety of problems; however, toothaches are typically so painful that an oral infection or impacted tooth renders the sufferer completely distracted, often helpless and sometimes in a life-threatening condition. Dentists who accompany medical missions or who travel with a doctor report that lines to the dental chair are generally quite long.

Dr. Dean Stacy is a mission dentist from the Mission Hospital Dental Program in Asheville, North Carolina, USA, and has traveled extensively in Africa and Central America. Stacy reports of one travel to Mexico with a physician colleague:

“Invariably, when we arrive in a village, people start lining up for care and the quickest (line) to form is for the dentist. Dental care is the most acute need among under-served populations. And, once their dental pain is relieved, which often creates a trust relationship, people are much more likely to seek the medical care they needed, but might otherwise have not received.”

This sentiment is shared by many seasoned dental mission outfitters, including Dr. Sam Molind, director of Global Health Outreach, a division of the Christian Medical and Dental Associations, and Dr. Ron Lamb, founder of World Dental Relief. Both believe portable dentistry is often the gateway to reach otherwise distrustful or skeptical populations.

Lamb has been training and equipping medical/dental practitioners for more than thirty-five years. He recently remarked, “Nowhere has technology and service been more effective in introducing modern medical care to suffering people who live in remote, under-served locations than in dentistry.”

## **Converging Factors of Technology, Logistics and Perception**

Recent developments of high-tech dental equipment are changing how dental care is delivered both on the mission field and within the most developed societies. Today's dental equipment is significantly smaller and lighter-weight than ever before and portable units operate on 110 and 220 power levels. Some portable units supply the United States military serving in Afghanistan and Iraq and contain a complete dental operatory in a rugged suitcase on wheels which is small enough to fit in an airline's overhead compartment.

Improved transportation and logistics (air and water traffic) allows for easier delivery of equipment and people who can take it to remote populations, nearby under-served populations and disaster relief locations. This can be done within a few hours. Dennis McCutcheon, director of MedEquip Missions, a ministry of Helps International Ministries, advises that working, field-tested, portable equipment is always preferable to the latest equipment that needs highly-technical back up and regular maintenance. "Often, the best equipment solution is simple low-tech devices," McCutcheon said. "Needs should be studied and met by the best means possible for the situation."

News of the success stories of how mission workers have contributed to relief of human suffering caused by recent natural disasters, such as the December 2004 tsunami and Hurricane Katrina, are occasionally being told in the mainstream press. Mission organizations were responsive and efficient in providing much-needed leadership in recent disaster relief areas.

The general public can now get a glimpse into the enormous contribution dental missions has in serving the otherwise overwhelming needs and circumstances of under-served populations. Because of this, the world has witnessed the leadership role being assumed and carried out by well-equipped and trained mission organizations. In spite of the tragedy of these disasters, the world once again has seen, in undeniably graphic detail, God's love and compassion as expressed through followers of Jesus Christ.

## **From Extractions to Modern Care**

In the past five years, delivery of needed healthcare services has improved more than ever before. Recent advances in portable dental equipment design and manufacturing has dramatically lowered costs and improved quality. This has allowed mission dentists to not only relieve pain, but to provide modern dental care, previously exclusive to Western countries, to the remotest areas of the world. Because of portable equipment and improved logistics, dental care can be rapidly delivered to isolated and underserved areas within the United States and other modern societies as well. According to Molind,

"We have gone from a time when mission dentists would only do extractions and care for infection and pain, to a time when we are able to provide more complete oral healthcare. That means everything from treating gum disease to fillings, crowns and replacement of missing teeth. This is encouraging dentists to go into the mission field where they can contribute and train nationals to also provide care. We need to undertake new initiatives and train more indigenous dental healthcare workers who can serve large populations. We also need to promote proactive wellness so that service providers and patients can use the latest portable dental equipment to bring about a sense of well-being for their own dental health, in both appearance and function."

## **Early Missions Support: A Personal Story**

Many years ago the management of Aseptico ([www.aseptico.com](http://www.aseptico.com)), which provides dental equipment to those on the mission field, received a cryptic message from a group of missionaries in Africa. The missionaries said they were in possession of a dugout canoe, and were preparing to use it to travel up and down a section of the Congo River. They would, of course, call on local villages as they traveled the river. They were contacting Aseptico to request a portable dental unit that would fit in the bow of the canoe. They gave no dimensions for the boat, no weight specification, no information as to how they hoped to power the system and no input as to the scope and range of dental treatment they hoped to provide. The unit was built by using a "best guess" philosophy and portable dental equipment technology. The unit was sent off to Africa and fit the needs of the missionaries perfectly. For years after, Aseptico would receive a message from these travelers each Christmas that said, "Dental unit still working perfectly. Praise the Lord!"

## **From the Congo to Next Door**

Just as dental missions are penetrating the most remote populations and isolated locations, there are also emerging opportunities in communities in more developed countries.

The flexibility of portable dental equipment is helping domestic mission dentists deliver improved dental care within rapidly growing institutional living environments such as: hospitals, assisted living facilities, nursing homes, schools, small rural healthcare clinics, prisons and factories. It is now simple for domestic mission workers to bring care and equipment to any patient having difficulty getting to a dental office.

## **Responding to Mission Needs**

There are a growing number of dental equipment manufacturers that are marketing a variety of new, portable solutions. These include lightweight chairs, stools, lamps, trays and the high-tech hardware (instruments) dentists use to repair and replace teeth.

Portable dental products can be used on the mission field in many ways: (1) as primary equipment in developing areas where health clinic office space must be multi-purpose and requires periodic equipment removal and return; (2) as back-up equipment where power and other stationary services are unreliable or where supplemental portable services are provided to patients and easy transportation is desired; or (3) as portable service equipment needed in times of isolation, emergency or military necessity.

For mission applications, equipment must be designed specifically to be easily transported by hand, car, boat, dugout, helicopter, motorcycle or bullock cart. Unlike mobile equipment that is often stationary equipment fitted with handles, portable systems today are akin to a laptop computer that performs the same functions as a desktop model but is uniquely designed for portable use and rugged wear.

*Doug Kazen is founder and chairman of Aseptico, [www.aseptico.com](http://www.aseptico.com).*

## **Finishing the Task Partners Committed to Reaching UUPGs**

*by Marcus Vegh with Becky Hill*

**W**orld renowned mission agencies have challenged local churches to work with them in **Finishing the Task (FTT)**. This vision, to launch indigenously-led church planting movements to targeted groups around the world, was presented 14-17 November at the Billy Graham Training Center, in Asheville, NC, USA. The strategy targets 639 unengaged, unreached people groups (UUPGs) with populations over 100,000. These people groups represent 535 million people who have no known evangelical church planting work underway. Many also do not have evangelical resources in their native language.

Although these people groups have not been forgotten, many are quite difficult to reach. Spiritual and political forces are creating strong resistance among many of these groups. Some are located in remote places where one has to travel for days just to enter the town limits.

The eighteen FTT partnering agency leaders (including presidents from four of the largest mission agencies: International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC) and Youth With A Mission (YWAM)) realize that even though their organizations have mobilized many missionaries, thousands of new missionaries are still needed to launch church planting movements among these people groups. Therefore, the agencies and pastors desire to follow the New Testament pattern by having local churches around the world lead the effort in sending out missionaries. However, leaders also understand that these local churches and missionaries will need to be equipped for this daunting task. This is where the partnering agencies can serve the local churches—by training workers, providing resources and making vital connections on the field.

This is clearly a new way of working together. Mission agencies are serving the local church as these churches take the lead in reaching the unengaged, unreached people groups.

By the end of the November conference, forty-one of the fifty-nine churches represented immediately responded by choosing a total of seventy UUPGs to work with. Nineteen churches indicated they would host a regional Finishing the Task conference within the next thirty-six months. The purpose of these regional events is for these churches to influence other churches in their area to reach the remaining UUPGs.

Pastors from US churches like North Point Community Church in Atlanta, Georgia; Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California; Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Belmont Church in Nashville, Tennessee; Real Life Ministries in Post Falls, Idaho; and Northwood Church in Fort Worth, Texas, were part of the gathering.

### **Serving Churches**

To serve the churches better, FTT partnering agencies have trained "brokers" to assist partnering churches. Each broker will become an expert on the strengths of each of the eighteen FTT partnering agencies. They are trained to strengthen each church as it seeks to fulfill its goal. Brokers gain a wealth of knowledge to share with partnering churches, including human resources; tools; print, video and audio media resources; contacts in the field; leadership in hosting regional training events; and support in training churches for cross-cultural communication.

As a church engages with any broker, it gets everything that the partnership has to offer. For example, a missions pastor can phone a FTT broker and tap into the best resources every one of the eighteen agencies has to offer.

### **Partnership between Churches and Agencies**

Engaging one of these people groups begins with prayer. However, this effort goes beyond simply praying for a people group. The church will go to the people group to seek out national partners within a nearby culture (or even within the region) and work together to reach the people group. Most groups have no scripture in their language, so the challenge of launching a church planting movement where there is no Bible is great.

According to Paul Eshleman, CCC's vice president of Global Coverage and a member of the FTT strategy team, "From a human standpoint, you would look at it and say, 'That's ridiculous, you need professionals to do this.' But from scriptural guidelines, we recognize that from within the church there are people God will prepare and send who have the ability to go into these peoples. Our agencies are going to serve them and help to train them and equip them. [We will] get those personnel mobilized out of the local church in North America and particularly from in region-national church partners, under the church's direction and guidance."

Eshlemann, who is also chair of the Lausanne Strategy Working Group, went on to say that each church would need to develop customized strategies for reaching a certain people group. "For instance," he said, "If it's a Muslim group in a very difficult terrain and hard to access, that's going to take one strategy. If it's in a mega people group in China, that's going to take a different strategy. Whatever it is, our agencies are committed to serving the churches to help them launch indigenously-led church planting movements."

OneStory, a partnership of the five largest FTT agencies (IMB, YWAM, Wycliffe, TransWorldRadio and CCC), trains two person teams to work with translators in order to share fifty to sixty Bible stories in chronological order in the language of the people. They do a worldview study within that particular people group and then work over a two-year period to formulate and audio record sixty core stories that address the life issues of that people group. This can be used to launch a church planting movement among the people in their native tongue.

Some of these groups may never have the complete Bible translated in written form, so oral recordings are made and distributed among the people so that the stories can be shared within the members of the group. Wycliffe is partnering to craft these stories in the hopes that they can one day translate the scriptures in the language. This may indeed be one of the biggest missiological breakthroughs of our generation.

## Unprecedented Cooperation

FTT is a movement birthed of the Spirit, across denominational lines. Southern Baptists, Pentecostals, Methodists, Presbyterians, non-denominational, westerners and non-westerners are coming together. The four largest organizations in FTT represent a combined total of more than fifty thousand full-time staff working in over 180 countries.

FTT conference speakers included Henry Blackaby; John Piper; Jerry Rankin, president of IMB; Bob Creson, president of Wycliffe; Steve Douglass, president of CCC; and Loren Cunningham, founder of YWAM. Many pastors from around the country also spoke, including Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Woodstock in Georgia; Durwood Snead, director of World Missions from North Point Community Church; and John Marshall, pastor of Second Baptist in Springfield, Missouri. Other speakers included Paul Eshleman; David Garrison, author of Church Planting Movements; Avery Willis, chairman of the International Orality Network; Grant Lovejoy, director of Oral Strategies for the IMB; Mark Anderson, international director for YWAM; Marcus Vegh, strategy team leader for FTT; and Bob Varney, facilitator of Table-71 (the core group of FTT agencies).

A concert of prayer during the conference was led by Steve Fry, pastor of Belmont Church in Nashville, Tennessee, during which Christian leaders from Vietnam, the Middle East and India facilitated focused times of prayer for the UUPGs. Worship was led by Scott Wesley Brown.

## Resources and Training

A FTT CD-ROM with all 639 groups has been developed to help churches select an UUPG. Also, a customized FTT deck of cards was created to assist a church in determining the seven criteria that best fit their particular church, including country, macro-religion, population, evangelical resources, threat level, freedom index and physical exertion. Audio and video resources from the conference will also be available to partnering churches and agencies 1 January 2006.

FTT Champion's Training, will be conducted 14-16 March 2006 at the International Learning Center in Richmond, VA, USA, for any person wanting to be the "champion" for one of the FTT UUPGs for their local church (be in contact with the broker, assemble a team, etc.).

To read the FTT strategy, learn how to engage your local church with a broker, join your agency to the FTT partnership or register for the local church "champion" training event, visit [www.finishingthetask.com](http://www.finishingthetask.com).

***Marcus Vegh** is the president of Progressive Vision a partnering agency in Finishing The Task, [www.finishingthetask.com](http://www.finishingthetask.com), and served as executive producer for the event. Vegh also serves on the Lausanne Strategy Working Group*

## InterVarsity Makes AIDS a Priority Issue for Urbana 06

*by Kristine Whitnoble*

**T**he United Nations reports that nearly forty million people in the world are infected with HIV/AIDS. In some countries in southern Africa, one third of the population is infected. In light of this suffering, InterVarsity will offer an AIDS track at Urbana 06, the student missions convention to be held in St Louis, MO, USA, 27-31 December 2006.

The track will be led by Dr. James Thomas, director of the Program in Public Health Ethics at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill (US). The leadership team includes Emmanuel Katongole, associate professor at Duke Divinity School and Grace Tazelaar, missions director for Nurses Christian Fellowship.

Dr. Thomas and Dr. Katongole have developed a program outline that includes medical and historical background about the HIV/AIDS epidemic and a response Christians may make individually and through their church. Participants will look at the AIDS epidemic as a means of fostering mercy, compassion, justice, reconciliation, humility and unity, characteristics that God desires for his church. Drs. Thomas and Katongole understand that AIDS offers American churches an opportunity to relearn biblical views concerning sexuality, the role of women in society and racial reconciliation. Track participants will be encouraged to approach the suffering of their brothers and sisters with humility, sensitivity and God's love.

Grace Tazelaar brings a rich background in AIDS work to the Urbana 06 track. In the late 1980s, when the AIDS epidemic was first evident in Africa, Tazelaar was working as a public health nurse in Uganda. She was invited by government officials to help develop a response to the illness and the result of their work was the well-known ABC program, which emphasizes abstaining from sex outside marriage, being faithful to your spouse, and using a condom. However, Tazelaar is convinced that even a successful program like ABC is not the only solution and that the war against AIDS is a spiritual battle. When advances are made against this disease, glory should be given to God.

The Urbana 06 AIDS track will emphasize that there are no quick fixes to solving the problem of AIDS. But we can learn, pray and act to support those who are suffering. For more information on Urbana 06, visit [www/urbana.org/\\_u2006.cfm](http://www/urbana.org/_u2006.cfm).

***Kristine Whitnoble** is a writer for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, [www.intervarsity.org](http://www.intervarsity.org). She also teaches medical ethics and theology as an adjunct professor for Marian College, Fond du Lac, WI, USA.*

## **Tales from the Gulf Coast: American Bible Society Delivers Nearly One Million Bibles and Scripture Portions to Katrina Victims**

**T**he American Bible Society's response to the need for Bibles for Hurricane Katrina evacuees was swift and coordinated with churches and like-minded organizations throughout the United States Gulf Coast area. Volunteers working on the frontlines have given out nearly one million Bibles, scripture Portions and booklets, in English and Spanish, to dislocated individuals and congregations of demolished churches.

"The American Bible Society was in the same region of our country in 1927 when another hurricane flooded and devastated vast areas where people lived," said Paul Irwin, president. "And now, in 2005, the Bible Society is back with the same mission!"

The Bible Society worked in cooperation with organizations including Convoy of Hope, Operation Compassion and Safe Harbor International. The Bible Society granted 100,000 Bibles to The Salvation Army. Hundreds of members of Lakewood Church, in Houston, volunteered to distribute Bibles and offer counsel. A special version of the American Bible Society booklet, *God is Our Shelter and Strength*, was printed for Katrina victims and distributed.

## **Tales from the Gulf Coast: American Bible Society Team Assesses Damage to Church Communities**

by Paul Savage

A team of four New York-based American Bible Society staff spent three days in Mississippi and New Orleans, in mid-October, to assess the impact of Hurricane Katrina, to gauge its effect on churches and to help the Bible Society properly allocate its resources in an ongoing recovery plan for the church community. The team visited the Mississippi towns of Waveland, Gautier, Pascagoula, Gulfport, Ocean Springs and Biloxi. They were escorted by Rev. Darryl Worley, who is senior pastor of Christian Life Assembly of God in Picayune, Mississippi, and a member of the disaster response team of Convoy of Hope.

The team witnessed entire neighborhoods that had been smashed to ruins by the force of the wind and water. Some of the scenes were almost surreal—boats in trees, houses straddled across railroad tracks, acres of trees uprooted or snapped in two. In Biloxi, Mississippi, people stood in lines in the midst of all the wreckage to receive food, clothes, water, showers and shelter. Even after so much time they still seemed profoundly shocked. Except for the sound of the relief vehicles, the town was silent.

Church and Christian ministries were doing the majority of relief work, along with a National Guard presence. Urban Life Ministries, from New York City, was still on site as they had been from day one. Convoy of Hope, a ministry of compassion of the Assemblies of God, manned distribution sites from Lake Charles and New Orleans, Louisiana, to Gautier, Mississippi. Victory and Praise Outreach, a Church of

the Nazarene, was distributing supplies, food and clothing to the people of Pascagoula, Mississippi. The six churches of the southeast zone of their Mississippi district were either severely damaged or totally destroyed by the storm.

Pastors, ministers and caring Christians came from as far north as Wisconsin and as far south as Hawaii to help cleanup, rebuild and repair homes and churches. The team spoke with pastors of churches that had been damaged or destroyed by the storm who had the burden of their own loss as well as the weight of their congregation's losses. Their courage and strength was astonishing.

People were so grateful to receive the scriptures the American Bible Society sent in response to the hurricane that several people wept as they thanked the team. Many spoke of how, even in the unbelievable tragedy they suffered, the power and the presence of God through the Bibles and scripture portions the Bible Society provided kept them going and gave them hope.

Churches and ministries in and around the hurricane zone worked with the Bible Society to compile lists of their neighbor churches that were destroyed by the wind or swept away in the tidal wave of destruction. The devastation in the Gulf is so acute that the task of recovering, repairing and rebuilding these churches and congregations could easily take years.

## **Tales from the Gulf Coast: American Bible Society Bibles to the Rescue**

By David Singer

Looking like a beached whale, the small motor launch had come to a stop against the broken front door of a Nazarene church in Pascagoula, Mississippi. It sits just where it was when the waters receded following Hurricane Katrina.

Christopher L. Coleman, an ex-Marine who served as its temporary skipper during the height of the storm, calls the boat his Noah's ark. At first he chose to ride out the storm in the sturdy brick home of his neighbor Trina, a fellow worker from the nearby shipyard who lived with her two daughters and mother. But, with the storm surge water rose chest high and furniture began to float around them. They managed to ferry Trina's kids, mother and pets into another neighbor's house across the street until it, too, began to flood. And then an empty boat appeared.

"I don't know how this boat got there, but from the time the house started to flood and we had to get out that boat just appeared out of nowhere," marveled Coleman. "There's no way that boat could have gotten in front of our house. I know it was the Lord that did that."

Amid swirling debris, a howling gale and a rocking boat, both families climbed aboard; thirteen people, two dogs and a cat. With Coleman pulling and the father from the neighbor family pushing, they struggled against the wind to reach the only safety they could see, the two-story worship center of the Nazarene Church, a block and a half away.

"I don't know now how I had the strength to move the boat," Coleman said.

A broken window allowed them access to the second floor, which served as their home and shelter for the next two weeks. Coleman commented, "There's no better place to be than at church during a storm."

The church gym is still serving as a distribution center, providing essentials, such as scriptures from the American Bible Society, to survivors trying to get their lives back together. Joey Condon, distribution coordinator for the church said, "We send out eighty to one hundred volunteers daily on work teams, helping people to rebuild. We find they all need Bibles."

"When you pass through deep waters, I will be with you; your troubles will not overwhelm you." Isaiah 43.2a (GNT)

We are mindful that the need for Bibles will continue for months as victims hunger for post-disaster hope and as churches rebuild. Please visit [www.americanbible.org/gulfcoast](http://www.americanbible.org/gulfcoast) to see the many ways you can contribute. To download a free copy of the American Bible Society booklet, *God is Our Shelter and Strength*, please visit [www.americanbible.org](http://www.americanbible.org).



# WORLD PERSPECTIVES

## The Biblical Response to Disaster Requires Surrender

by Michael Barrick

**C**hristians can look to the example of Nehemiah to respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by disasters, but they must first “surrender all.”

More than one hundred years ago, Judson W. VanDeVenter and Winfield S. Weeden collaborated to write the Christian hymn, “I Surrender All.” The lyrics capture a most fundamental lesson of what it means to be a Christian. A song of commitment, the first verse claims, “All to Jesus I surrender, All to him I freely give; I will ever love and trust him, in his presence daily live.”

As one examines the state of the Christian Church today, one must wonder, do we mean it when we sing it? And, even if we don’t sing it in our churches regularly due to worship style changes, do we grasp the message as revealed in scripture? Paul wrote, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:1-2b).

While we must surrender all if our Christian witness is going to be effective – especially in times of tragedy and terror – it is arguable that many in the church have not done so. Consequently, we are often unprepared to respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by the disasters occurring almost daily around the world.

While such a claim is a stinging indictment, the evidence is convicting. Researcher George Barna, through years of studies and surveys of the state of the modern Christian Church, has essentially discovered that many churches (and those within their pews) are failing Sunday School 101.

In August 2005, a Barna survey revealed that a vast number of American Christians acknowledged they lack a biblical worldview. In June of the same year, Barna noted that many Christians admitted being biblically ignorant. He reported in September 2004 that Christians were as likely to divorce as non-Christians. A few months earlier, a significant number of Christians revealed that their faith really didn’t impact their behavior. And in January 2004, Barna found that only half of Protestant pastors have a biblical worldview!

The evidence is clear. Far too many Christ-followers simply do not surrender all. Consequently, they are not equipped to respond to the challenges and opportunities that accompany disasters, for they are not equipped to deal with tragedy themselves because they do not take biblical precepts – especially complete surrender—seriously.

Consequently, before believers can share our hope, we must examine both our own hearts and scripture. In doing so, our godly repentance will prepare our hearts and lead us to a biblical response of prayer, care and share.

### A Biblical Response

Nehemiah offers Christians a step-by-step process on how to respond to disaster in a righteous, godly manner that, despite tragedy, will lead to kingdom expansion. The first step, prayer, seems to be the hardest, especially when we are overwhelmed with heart-wrenching scenes and repeated appeals for help. Still, as with Nehemiah, our challenge is to acknowledge and confess, especially publicly, that we are unable to deal with the disasters (and opportunities they present for sharing our faith) without God’s guidance. In doing so, the honor and glory will go to God from the start instead of to people or the programs.

So then, acknowledging the power of unified prayer is the first challenge facing the Church. Indeed, it is the proper first response so that we can know how to care for those in need and earn the right to share the hope found only in Jesus. When we do pray in one accord we have an incredible opportunity to allow

God to demonstrate his presence in the midst of the storm.

It was not until he totally and fully surrendered to God that Nehemiah was directed to inspect the damage of the walls or go about any business of doing anything (Nehemiah 2:11-16). Once he assessed the damage, he then asked God to show him what it would take to rebuild the walls.

Nehemiah offers an example we should follow. However, too often we do not follow it. Instead we regularly rush to the work before God's empowerment has come. When we do this, we do not deliver on our promises because we do not have the strength or the heart to follow through on what we said we would do. For Christians, a major challenge we face is uniting in one accord first and allowing God to use all parts of the body, rather than merely offering assistance on our own.

When Nehemiah received the promises of key leaders to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, the ink was not even dry before the grumbling started. He faced unrelenting opposition to holding them accountable for their word (Nehemiah 4:1-23; 6:1-14). He was faced with the challenge of leaders that had not counted the cost for themselves nor had sought wise counsel before they committed to the task. Ironically, Nehemiah was personally held to blame because others had not honored their commitment to surrender their lives to God.

How does this biblical account relate to Christians as we consider the challenges and opportunities that accompany disasters?

Before we rush off to care, we must heed the steps God has designed for his people to respond. This model will provide us with the opportunity to embrace and demonstrate the truth of scripture, namely, that no trouble can separate us from Jesus. Romans 8:35, 37 says, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."

Additionally, each Christian has a conversion experience that is personal and noticeable, as evidenced by certain characteristics, including love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Paul also pointed to the characteristics of love (1 Corinthians 13). It is these characteristics – patience, kindness, humility, truthfulness and hope – that we must embrace. When we do this, we grasp the opportunity to demonstrate the truth of the gospel in any circumstance.

Then, in times of trouble, when the inevitable question is raised of "Where is God in all this?," Christians will have the opportunity to point to why there is calm in the storm. Our Lord himself explained, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

### **The Sacrament of Service**

Oswald Chambers characterized the Christian life as "the sacrament of service." In his book, *My Utmost for His Highest*, Chambers wrote, "Our Lord's teaching is always anti-self-realization. His purpose is not the development of a man; His purpose is to make a man exactly like himself, and the characteristics of the Son of God is self-expenditure."

Chambers added, "It is time now to break this life, to cease craving for satisfaction and to spill the thing out. Our Lord is asking who of us will do it for him." Chambers effectively leaves us with only one answer – "I will!" That is the challenge and opportunity that is before us in the times in which we live.

**Michael Barrick** is editor of *Christian Emergency Network*, [www.christianemergencynetwork.org](http://www.christianemergencynetwork.org). CEN was formed in 2001 by Mission America Coalition partners to respond effectively through a united pray-care-share media and ministry response to national disasters. CEN has over seven thousand ministry and media organizational partners and 47,000 church partners across the United States.

# One Year Later: Tsunami Devastation and Changed Lives

by Stephen Goode

**Y**outh with a Mission (YWAM, [www.ywam.org](http://www.ywam.org)) teams have been working in war zones, crisis and natural disasters for the past twenty-six years. However, nothing has impacted us more than the 2004 tsunami. A red flag in Aceh was a sign to the military or the police that there was a dead body under the rubble needing to be recovered. In Sri Lanka, a white flag was a sign of mourning. Flags continue to fly over the Indian Ocean a year later as we remember those who died in the horrific event.

Jesus, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, has been our model to love even when the pain of seeing others hurting overwhelms us. Although the generosity of the world has also shown that people do not go through tragedy alone, crisis is also an opportunity for the Church to be the Church.

## Unknowingly Walking into Tragedy

Nine of us left Bangkok at 5 a.m. on 26 December 2004 to drive to Phuket, Thailand, for a much-needed rest at the beach. Marie, my wife, had been trying for six weeks to get us a hotel room near the sea; however, all rooms were full and we had to settle for a place inland, far away from the beaches of Phuket. It looked like Thailand was finally recovering from the 1997 economic collapse, the SARS epidemic and the Avian Flu crisis. The Thais had high hopes that this would be the year for significant recovery. It was a good sign that tourists were returning.

The last two years had been especially difficult for us as Marie and I returned to the United States six times for the illness and subsequent deaths of three parents. In early December 2004, we also had three friends in Thailand and Uzbekistan suddenly die, one in a plane crash, one from a heart attack and one from a brain aneurism. Uncertainty and grief were common.

We were returning to Phuket to spread the ashes of a co-worker who had lost a two-year battle against cancer. Our friend was only 48-years-old. She taught us much about loving God and worshiping him for who he is in the midst of pain and suffering. She also loved the beaches and sunsets in Phuket and according to her wishes, we, along with her husband, were going to spread her ashes in the land she cared so deeply for.

We arrived at the Sarasin bridge that connects Phuket Island at about the time the third wave of the tsunami hit. Little did we know what had happened in Sumatra, which is south of Phuket, only a few hours earlier. At 7 a.m., the most powerful earthquake to strike in more than forty years began deep under the Indian Ocean, 160 kilometers off the coast of Sumatra.

This 9.2 magnitude earthquake triggered massive tsunami waves that demolished entire villages and cities in a dozen countries, killing hundreds of thousands of people and displacing hundreds of thousands more from Indonesia and areas of Africa. No one will know how many actually died, but estimates say as many as 500,000 may have perished on that fateful day. One mass grave near the airport in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, contains 36,000 bodies.

With the tsunami, floods in China, landslides in South America and the earthquake in Pakistan causing some of the greatest loss of life in history, 2005 could easily be called the Year of Disaster. Hurricane Katrina and those that followed are said to be the costliest natural disasters to ever impact the U.S.

These victims are people with names, with family, friends and neighbors that are still missing. They have lost homes, livelihoods and dreams. Many are still traumatized. Would you pause for a moment from reading this article and pray:

- that God will be with them;
- that he will walk with them through the dark valleys of death and of recovery;
- that he will be all that each one needs at this time; and
- that we will remember those who continue to serve.

These people are not over the disasters and some will never be. Even though the disasters may be long

gone from media attention, many individuals and communities will never be the same. They are Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Animist, Christian and more. May God's love be real to them.

### **An Opportunity of Love**

This has been an incredible opportunity for the body of Christ to love God and to love our neighbor. Doing this has been a powerful witness of self-less work, prayer and service. By rebuilding houses and boats, providing loans for new businesses and offering care and counseling, Christians have helped many get back on their feet.

Particularly in times of crisis, people need to see the gospel before they can hear its message. This thought was confirmed at a recent Micah Network consultation in Thailand which reflected on integral mission and what we have learned and are still learning from the tsunami. According to Dr. Melba Padilla Maggay, at least seventy percent of communication occurs non-verbally. He added that in some cultures up to ninety percent of communication occurs non-verbally. When there is a conflict between verbal and non-verbal communication, people usually believe the non-verbal.

An alliance of 2,600 Thai churches and more than twenty Christian relief and development agencies came together under the banner, "We Love Thailand" (WLT). Christian volunteers, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and others responded immediately with much-needed relief items. Christians, however, did something many governments and larger organizations did not do.

After the victims had their basic relief needs met, many had a need to tell their story. A Christian witness occurred by spending time with the people, listening to their stories and entering into their pain, grief and suffering. Many wept, prayed and shared losses together. Today, many of these relationships continue. Christians have loved their neighbor by listening to and walking with those in need through each phase of relief, reconstruction and long-term recovery.

### **A Story from Thailand**

A WLT driver found twenty-nine Muslim fishermen who had lost their boats (and thus, their livelihoods) standing near the end of the airport runway in Phuket. Although their village was inland and no one died in the tsunami, two months after the disaster no assistance had been offered to them. These fishermen had no way of earning a living.

However, with materials and tools supplied by WLT, the men began rebuilding twenty-nine larger boats. Each boat took a month to construct, and during this time there was an increasing measure of hope in each of the men.

I met with the fishermen four months after the tsunami hit and we talked about the fish they caught and the fishing methods they used. We talked about a future celebration when all of the boats would be finished and we would eat some of the fish they caught together. During each visit, I saw an ever-increasing hope of a different and productive future.

In November 2005, me and several others visited the seventy-plus WLT projects that were taking place in thirty Thai communities. When we went to visit the fishermen, we were excited to see that there were no boats on the beach. They were out fishing in the bay. Through an alliance of Christians who loved their neighbors, life after destruction and loss was returning to normal for these men and their families.

When the men had come in, we asked them if they had time to eat some fish with us. They said yes and we went to a Thai market where the head fisherman's wife was selling the night's catch. We gathered the fish and headed to a local friend's food stall to celebrate.

When we sat down to eat, the head fisherman asked, "What is WLT doing in Pakistan?" Recently a massive earthquake had destroyed many parts of the country. I told him that WLT was formed for work in Thailand after the tsunami. "Oh," he said, with a little disappointment. "We have been watching the TV and the terrible earthquake in Pakistan. Some of us fishermen can build houses, too. We thought that if WLT were working in the Pakistan earthquake area, we could...help rebuild some houses that were destroyed."

We were witnessing how the mustard seed of the kingdom had taken root in the hearts of Muslim men

who had lost their livelihoods. They wanted to love their neighbor in the same way they had been loved. We had a relationship that was built on trust. Despite the fact that these fishermen were not doing as well as they had in the past (they had made their living selling fish to hotels and guesthouses and the area still has only a tenth of the usual amount of tourists), they still wanted to help.

### **A Story from Aceh**

Ae was with her eleven-member family on the second floor of their home near the sea when they saw the wave coming. Seeing the graveness of the situation, Ae's older brother said, "We can't outrun the wave, so let's gather around and we'll all die together." The siblings put their mother in the middle of the circle and stood with their arms around each other. The wave then struck.

Unable to swim, Ae was carried a kilometer and a half away. Amazingly, she survived. Ae woke up alone and noticed all the clothing was ripped from her body. To date, she has not found any of her twenty-five extended or immediate family members.

All the homes in the neighborhood were destroyed as well, so Ae gathered a few pieces of wood for a makeshift shack, which she piled at the top of five concrete steps, all that remained of her family home. The team will never forget the heartbreaking sight that greeted them when they arrived at her new "home." Ae was on her hands and knees, cleaning those five steps.

They asked her what she was doing and Ae replied, "My mom and I used to clean these steps every day. We would talk together and watch the sunset. Cleaning them helps me to remember my mom." On Easter Sunday, we were in a village in Aceh that had twelve thousand people living there prior to the tsunami. After the tsunami only one hundred people remained. As we prayed in that village, we felt as though we were on holy ground.

How does God come near those like Ae who have lost everyone they love? What does the resurrection power of Christ look like for such a place as the village that lost more than eleven thousand people? Questions like these remind us that there are many challenges of faith in the midst of disaster. The following are four things we, as Christians, must do in times of crisis:

- Hold on to God when things seem impossible.
- Trust in God's character, that he is good, kind, loving and faithful to a thousand generations, even when one does not see it in present circumstances.
- Partner with others to multiply our efforts.
- Remember that when another crisis hits, we must love God and love our neighbor, for this is the gospel of Christ.

The nine of us who left for Phuket on 26 December 2004 were unable to spread our co-worker's ashes due to the tsunami. However, in August 2005 we returned to an isolated Phuket beach, to an incredible sunset, to worship God, to remember a life well-lived and to mourn with all who had lost someone in the devastation.

***Stephen Goode** and his wife Marie joined Youth with a Mission (YWAM, [www.ywam.org](http://www.ywam.org)) in Europe in 1973. They have lived in Bangkok, Thailand, for the past twenty-six years. Goode is vice-president of YWAM, Mercy Ministries/ Relief and Development and is a member of the Steering Group of WLT.*

## **The "Small" Problem of Leprosy is Bigger than We Think**

*by Zannah Kearns*

**I**n the face of devastating diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, and global needs such as poverty and trade injustice, the relatively "small" problem of leprosy can often be forgotten.

Many people see leprosy as an ancient, biblical disease instead of a real problem that still exists today. In the Bible, the term "leprosy" described a number of skin conditions, rather than the specific Hansen's Disease that is recognised as leprosy today. The number of leprosy patients may indeed seem negligible

on a global scale--407,791 new cases were recorded by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2004.<sup>1</sup> And yet, stories of how this curable disease can destroy lives send a compelling message that even one person's life and well-being is worth fighting for.

Take Sita, a young school girl with leprosy. Sita was cured and doctors had ensured the surgery done on her hands during a holiday break would not keep her from missing school. However, when administrators at Sita's school discovered she had leprosy, they didn't want her to return. Her family, worried they would be shunned by neighbours, also asked her not to come home. She is now being cared for by a girl only a little older than herself and her father comes to visit her just once a month. Sadly, in Sita's community, leprosy is considered a punishment for misdeeds in a former life. All Sita has had is some counselling from The Leprosy Mission (TLM) staff.

TLM representatives applied to five new schools on Sita's behalf, providing doctors' reports to prove she no longer has leprosy. Although one school has accepted her, it is an hour's walk from where she lives. Because of the nerve damage the leprosy has caused, the trek is difficult.

### **Can Leprosy be Eliminated?**

This figure of less than half a million people diagnosed with leprosy is both helpful and misleading. Since Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT) was developed in 1981, the number of leprosy cases has rapidly declined. In India, the number of cases went from fifty-seven per 10,000 people in 1983 to only 2.4 per 10,000 people in 2003. This is encouraging and these falling rates should certainly be celebrated.

According to the WHO, "elimination" is reached when the rate is just one case per 10,000 people. Globally this figure has been reached. However, leprosy is still prevalent in nine countries: Angola, Brazil, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania. Leprosy is nearly always found among those living in extreme poverty (defined as living on less than US \$1 a day).

Although a nation can say they have reached elimination country-wide, if particular areas still have three cases per 10,000, does that country still have true elimination? Nearly seventy percent of leprosy cases today are found in India. Given its population size, even if India were to reach the WHO target, that would still mean 100,000 new cases are diagnosed every year.

And these figures are only the cases that are known. Leprosy is a disease that stigmatizes and so it is a disease that is often hidden and denied. For fear of ostracism, people will cover up the first physical signs of leprosy (sometimes for decades) with little understanding of the permanent damage being done to their bodies.

### **The Truth Behind the Myths**

The truth is, if treated in the early stages, leprosy is curable and leaves no disfigurement or disability. However, leprosy is surrounded by myth and many people are still convinced it is either a curse or a divine judgment for individual sin. People assume it is highly contagious; however, ninety-five percent of people in the world are naturally immune.

Sadly, the fear of rejection can cause an individual to hide the initial pale, numb patches that appear on the skin. Often times, leprosy patients will not seek treatment when they have lost feeling in their hands and feet. Shame and fear often prevent a person from admitting their condition. They know that as a result of being identified with leprosy, they might lose their job, be turned out of their home and village, forfeit any possibility of marriage or be excluded from school. If a person feels no pain and has a family to support, it is hard to convince him or her to stop working and go to a hospital.

Numb hands and feet also mean that people do not notice when they injure themselves. Additionally, the skin, having lost feeling, does not sweat. This means that people get ulcerated wounds or sustain broken bones without realizing it. Continued use of numb hands and feet means people risk inflicting permanent injury on themselves. They risk a lifetime of disability and disfigurement that will forever hinder their ability to perform basic tasks. Of the fourteen million people who have completed MDT in the last twenty years, approximately thirty percent have irreversible disability; over four million have permanent impairments and over two million have visible deformities. Most, if not all, could have been prevented.

## **Practical Solutions**

TLM brings practical, holistic help for dealing with the physical, social, emotional and spiritual needs of patients. Today, governments carry out the majority of case detection and medical care. The Novartis Foundation, [www.novartisfoundation.com](http://www.novartisfoundation.com), provides MDT free of charge. Fifteen organizations, of which TLM is the largest member, are part of the International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP). ILEP works with governments to implement leprosy control programs. This involves technical support teams who provide training, advice and encouragement for government health workers.

TLM has twelve hospitals in India, many of which provide general healthcare, as well as special referral care for leprosy patients. TLM surgeons carry out reconstructive surgery that can repair damaged limbs. Physiotherapy and teaching self-care are also part of patient services. Once a person has damaged the nerves, the loss of feeling is permanent; therefore, ex-leprosy patients need to be taught (and encouraged to continue with) self-care routines such as regularly soaking in water, oiling and exercising anaesthetized feet.

Much of what TLM does today involves work with long-term rehabilitation and development. Each region (Africa, South Asia and South East Asia) operates a variety of programs focused on socio-economic needs: self-help community groups, vocational and skills training, micro-credit schemes, health awareness and advocacy work.

All projects embody TLM's vision for a world without leprosy and TLM's goal to eradicate the causes and consequences of leprosy. Tackling the causes includes enabling early detection, teaching health awareness in communities and addressing issues of poverty that make people vulnerable to disease. Eradicating the consequences means confronting the social repercussions of leprosy: reconciling families, facilitating community projects, encouraging income generation through micro-credit schemes, providing education and low-cost housing and equipping people to advocate for equal rights and opportunity.

All ventures encourage genuine participation and give the individuals a voice. TLM staff and their projects work to promote dignity within each individual, empowering them to demonstrate their capabilities. Often the simplest thing (i.e. being able to work again because a micro-credit loan has enabled a person to buy a sewing machine) can be enough for that person to regain the respect of fellow villagers. Equally often it can be a more complex struggle. A person might be given the opportunity to set up a kiosk but neighbours may not buy food from someone they perceive as infectious. The need for continued advocacy efforts that gain the support of local governments is key to changing attitudes that stigmatize.

## **Gaining a Sense of Self-worth**

The psychological effects of having leprosy can be challenging as well. The term "self-stigmatization" is often used to describe leprosy patients who develop very low self-esteem. Due to distress, depression and hopelessness, patients do not continue with treatment or physiotherapy. Imagining they will be ostracized by their community, they choose to ostracize themselves. TLM employs counsellors to help people deal with these issues. Much prayer and encouragement is needed through staff building relationships with leprosy-affected people and their families, demonstrating through their actions and attitudes that everyone is equal and that leprosy doesn't necessarily mean total devastation.

## **Spreading the Good News**

As a Christian organization, TLM doesn't only want to spread the good news that leprosy is curable and treatment is free. It also wants to share the ultimate good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. This is a challenge for TLM and many other Christian Non-Governmental Organizations. Through the goodwill of governments, TLM is allowed to do its work in many countries. Some of these countries do not welcome the Christian message. Evangelism may be forbidden and individuals of different religions may engage in disagreements regularly. If an organization is perceived to have a "hidden agenda," it may be asked to leave. The primary goal of TLM is to work with people affected by leprosy, to bring healing and long-term positive change in their lives.

However, as an organization founded and motivated by faith in Jesus Christ, TLM understands that true transformation can only take place when a person comes to know Jesus as Lord. In TLM-run hospitals, Christian services and prayer meetings welcome anyone who would like to attend. Christian staff are encouraged to share their faith when appropriate and students at the vocational training colleges are

taught the gospel. About twenty-five percent of students come to know Christ and continue in their faith after graduation.

Much of the spiritual direction of the organization is focused on teaching and nurturing staff, with the view toward encouraging them in their personal faiths and motivating them to use opportunities to share their faith with patients and community groups.

The very fact that TLM exists is a testament to its Christian ethos. There have been a number of incidents where, for example, Hindus have been deeply moved by the care and friendship they have received from Christian staff. They are excluded by people of their religion, and yet are offered help and friendship by Christians.

Prayer is a vital part of TLM's spiritual ministry. Many staff teams begin their days with prayer. Supporters are encouraged to pray over every project and issue with which TLM is involved with.

### **What Can All Christians Do?**

It is distressing the number of times incorrect and prejudicial comments are made in the West about those with leprosy. Make it your policy never to use the word leper. A person should never be defined as a disease. You would never call a cancer patient a cancer. Become informed. Visit TLM website at [www.leprosymission.org](http://www.leprosymission.org) to find more ways you can help.

*Zannah Kearns worked as communications officer for The Leprosy Mission, [www.leprosymission.org](http://www.leprosymission.org), for two years. She now works on her church's ministry team in South London.*

### **Endnote**

1. [www.who.int/lep/](http://www.who.int/lep/)

## **Motives for Mission**

*by Andrew Kenny*

**T**he mission of the Church may be defined as "what God has sent the Church into the world to do." This includes both evangelistic and social responsibilities. Many speak of our mission, but what about our motivations for mission? Scripture has much to say about not only our actions, but also about the reasons and motives behind these actions. It is God who tries (Jeremiah 12:3), knows (Psalm 44:21) and searches (Jeremiah 17:10) the heart. He does not judge by outward appearance. Indeed, even in our worship he discerns whether we are worshipping with both our hearts and our lips (1 Samuel 16:7; Matthew 15:8). In 2 Corinthians 13:3, Paul declares, "If I give away all I have and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing." In Philippians 1:15-17, he acknowledges that the gospel can be preached from motives of goodwill and love as well as from envy, rivalry, selfish ambition and insincerity.

### **The Love of God**

It should be understood that the Church's mission is more than a good or even a great activity that the Church does. Christian mission springs from the very heart of the Godhead. Both the Old and the New Testament have much to say regarding the *missio dei* and both reveal God's love for humankind in both its spiritual and physical dimensions. The "love of God," as a motive for mission, contains at least three elements significant for mission:

- (1) God's love for us,
- (2) our love for God, which is proved by our obedience to God (John 14:15) and
- (3) God's love working through us to reach others.

The love of the missionary God is seen in the act of the Father giving up his only begotten Son in the incarnation, and his Son being willing to live a life of self-sacrifice and ultimately to die on the cross for humankind (John 3:16; Romans 8:32; Matthew 20:28). In 1 John 4:19 we are also reminded that "we love because he first loved us." If our response is to truly love Christ in return for what he has done for



us, we must obey his commands. God expects his disciples to be motivated by his love. We can do this because God's love has been poured out in our hearts (Romans 5:5). Jesus, who commanded us to love one another, also promised that if we obeyed him, the world would know that we were his (John 13:34-35).

This love is more than just a fleeting emotional feeling; it is an act of the will and a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:1). This love also compelled Paul in his mission. (2 Corinthians 5:14). Jesus Christ said to his disciples "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21). As disciples, we are obliged to follow his example. Our love for God must be shown in "incarnational mission." We are to identify with those we seek to reach, entering their worlds, their pains and their sorrows.

Many Christians list obedience as being a primary motive for fulfilling the missionary task. I would agree; however, obedience should necessarily flow from our love for God. John R. W. Stott once said that "loving obedience to God and his Christ is the first evangelistic incentive" as obedience is "the fruit and proof of love."<sup>1</sup> If obedience does not come from a heart motivated by the love of God, there is a danger of the missionary task becoming legalistic and lacking God's blessing.

## **The Fear of God**

It is sometimes perceived that the "fear of the Lord" (meaning, to be concerned with a God of judgment) is not relevant for those living after the first and second centuries AD. It is true that the fear of the Lord seems more prominent in the Old Testament than the New Testament. Nevertheless, the New Testament still concerns itself with this important subject. God is still holy (Hebrews 12:14; 2 Corinthians 7:1) and there is still a final judgment (Matthew 25:41).

The fear of the Lord means living our lives to please the Lord. While on earth, Jesus sought to please his Father. Christians must also seek to please God and live a life worthy of him. (Colossians 1:10). In 1 Corinthians 5:9, Paul writes that it was his goal to please God. Why was he motivated as he was? Verse 10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." As a result, Paul encouraged his readers to "persuade men" (v.11).

Michael Green notes, "This fear of which he speaks is not the craven fear of the underdog, but the loving fear of the friend and trusted servant who dreads disappointing his beloved Master."<sup>2</sup> He goes on to write, "This fear was a contributory factor in the ceaseless evangelistic activity of the apostle Paul."<sup>3</sup> In seeking to persuade men, we can begin to understand Paul's concern for those who were not in Christ. Paul saw himself as similar to the prophet Ezekiel, who had been called to be God's watchman. Similar to Ezekiel, Paul declared to the Ephesian elders, "Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:26). He believed he was "an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God" (2 Timothy 1), a herald and teacher (1 Timothy 1:11) and an ambassador of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20).

He was like Isaiah, who having seen God in his awesome majesty, could not refuse his invitation to "go and tell this people" (Isaiah 6:9). Like Jeremiah, Paul could not hold in God's Word. This holy compulsion was a combination of both the love of God for the people and a grave concern that the trust committed to Paul should be discharged (1 Corinthians 9:17). The Church's mission should still be motivated by a healthy appreciation of the fear of God, which will give to the Church a sense of its own holy calling to reach the lost. The Church will then become fearless in the midst of fierce opposition. Paul the great missionary had to endure great sufferings in order to fulfill the ministry to which God had called him to.

## **The Glory of God**

Perhaps the greatest motive for mission and evangelism is for the glory of God. As with the love of God, the glory of God can have more than one dimension. The first is that we evangelize in order that God would be glorified. The second is that we evangelize in order to receive glory and praise from God (as opposed to man). Both motives are important and biblical. First, we will look at evangelizing to receive glory or praise from God.

John said of the Pharisees that "they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43). Jesus himself declared that he did not receive glory from men (John 5:41); rather, he was approved by his Father at his baptism (Mark 1:11) and exalted because of his obedience on earth (Philippians 2:9-

11). The idea that we should not strive for a reward from God is unbiblical. The Bible is clear that all will be judged by Christ (Daniel 12:3; Romans 14:10,12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:12,15). Though there is "no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1), it would appear that judgment for believers is for reward instead of punishment. Luke 19:17 implies there may be different degrees of rewards for believers for service rendered. Paul in his ministry was careful to build with quality material so he would not be put to shame when God put his work to the test (1 Corinthians 3:15). Whatever our reward may be, it should be a strong incentive for evangelism and mission.

We will now look at what I believe to be the purest motive for mission: that God himself would be glorified and honored. God the Father "exalted (Jesus) to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Philippians 2:9-10). Paul instructed the Corinthians that even ordinary things should be done for God's glory (1 Corinthians 3:1). How much more should we seek to honor and glorify the name of Jesus Christ in the work of evangelism! The Church also seeks to win over those under the control of Satan, that they may serve and honor the true and living God. As Elijah declared himself to be "very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts" (1 Kings 19:14), so Paul also claimed that his own ministry was "for (Christ's) name's sake" (Romans 1:5). Likewise, the missional Church as the bride of Christ must be spurred on with a holy jealousy to bring honor to his name. M. Thomas Thangaraj rightly points out that "an adoration of God leads to a profound sense of love and gratitude to God, which in turn motivates us for engagement with others in mission."<sup>4</sup>

## Conclusion

The prophet Jeremiah warns us that "the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure" (Jeremiah 17:9). It is not surprising that an assessment of motivations for mission should prove to have a sobering effect on the Church. The Church should therefore be prepared to listen to both the Word and the world in its criticisms of it, so as not to become self-deceived (Hebrews 4:12; Proverbs 18:13). The three positive motives for assessing mission listed above naturally intertwine like a threefold cord (Ecclesiastes 4:12). Mission and the motivation for mission should be seen as originating from God and should result in the Church following the example of Jesus, who in holy obedience, love and seeking to glorify the Father, came "to seek and save what was lost" (Luke 19:10).

## Endnotes

- 1 Stott, John. 1967. *Our Guilty Silence*. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 18.
- 2 Green, Michael. 1995. *Evangelism in the Early Church*. Guildford: Eagle. 29.
- 3 Ibid. 297.
- 4 Thangaraj, M. Thomas. 1999. *The Common Task*. Nashville: Abingdon Press. 149.

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## On the Frontlines of Disaster: Operation Blessing a First Responder to the Hurting

by Sarah Pate

**T**he residents of the upper and lower ninth ward in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, never expected to hear the cracking sounds of the levee that gave way to the rushing floodwaters brought on by Hurricane Katrina. They never expected to smell the stench of corpses or see the debris-choked streets and communities that surfaced when the waters receded.

Similarly, families in Niger never expected to see their sun-baked land hardened by drought, their crops ravaged by locusts or their children crying with hunger pangs. But these were the sights and sounds of a nation of 2.5 million people facing starvation.

On 26 December 2004, villagers in Indonesia and Southeast Asia never expected to watch a fifty-foot wall of water tear into their coastlines, forcefully claim their loved ones and leave them with nothing but barren beaches.

No one expects disaster. No one expects disaster to come to them. But unfortunately, it disaster happens. Disaster is not a respecter of persons, nations or lands. Its nature is unruly, loud, forceful and overwhelming. Its mark is one of destruction, pain, suffering and sometimes death. And yet for all its tragedy, disaster offers an opportunity like no other. It offers an opportunity to demonstrate compassion in action.

For the past twenty-seven years, the mission of Operation Blessing International (OBI), a non-profit humanitarian organization, has been to break the cycle of suffering. Through medical missions, hunger relief, educational and vocational training, wells and cisterns projects and more, OBI has extended the arm of humanitarian aid and Christian compassion to more than two hundred million people in ninety-six countries. Most recently, OBI has increased the scope of their disaster relief programs in response to an unprecedented year of natural disasters in 2005, including the Southeast Asian tsunami and the worst natural disaster to strike United States soil, Hurricane Katrina.

## **Helping Hands**

"For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you took me in." Matthew 25:35

Before Hurricane Katrina made landfall on the Gulf Coast of the U.S., Operation Blessing dispatched their fleet of tractor-trailer trucks loaded with food, water and emergency supplies to staging areas near the Gulf Coast. Within a week after Katrina's fury, they had delivered 958,284 pounds of food, drinks and relief supplies.

During the first week of September 2005, OBI's brand new fifty-three-foot mobile kitchen arrived in Slidell, Louisiana, USA, and began churning out thousands of hot meals every day for hurricane victims. On one particular day, they served 6,600 hot meals to victims and volunteer teams. This was enough meals to draw the attention of city officials and the federal government. Seeing how quickly and efficiently OBI responded, Slidell mayor Ben Morris and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) officials requested OBI's assistance with their "blue roof project," which involved securing blue tarps onto damaged roofs to help protect homes from further damage. Within hours of their request, Operation Blessing obtained two hundred tarps; purchased ladders, saws and hammers; and mobilized two volunteer teams of fifty to one hundred people each to begin tarping homes.

"We're able to handle those jobs and respond to the needs quickly," said Sam Constantine, construction coordinator for Operation Blessing. "Every day is different from the next and we are increasing in our ability to help even more victims."

Unfortunately, for many people, help comes at a hefty price. Local contractors were charging residents nearly four times the normal cost to remove trees or install electric poles to restore power to homes and FEMA-donated trailers. After a contractor quoted a Louisiana school teacher \$11,000 for a single tree removal, Operation Blessing obtained her work order and cleared her property--free of charge.

## **Strategy of Commitment**

"And let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart." Galatians 6:9

On 26 September 2005, Operation Blessing put their commitment in writing by signing a lease on a 22,000 square foot warehouse in Slidell. The facility serves as the command center for OBI's hurricane relief and recovery efforts in the Gulf Coast. It is here where they receive work orders, house volunteers and distribute aid. A similar site is planned for Metairie, Louisiana.

"It will take months, perhaps years, before normalcy is restored to the lives of the people in this region," said Jody Herrington, Operation Blessing's disaster relief manager. "But, we are committed to these people."

Being committed means continually adapting to the community's needs. Roof tarping hit a snag when debris-clogged streets prevented work teams from reaching victims. In response, OBI purchased an eighteen-ton capacity rough terrain crane to help in tree and debris removal. This move has helped pave

the way for 22,000 FEMA trailers to be delivered to victims whose homes were destroyed.

“Operation Blessing has impacted our whole community,” said Marcell, whose home in Slidell was cleared of debris and tarped by OBI. “When most organizations have already left, this is when we need them the most.”

Bill Horan, president of Operation Blessing, added, “We are here to meet the needs of the people. We are market-driven, not profit-driven.”

Being a market-driven relief agency means staying the course until the course runs out, that is, until the community is able to thrive and function independently of outside resources and support. For OBI, meeting the needs of the people includes even the most basic needs, namely, communication. To help connect those returning to the devastated areas with friends, family and the outside world, OBI set up a satellite Internet café at a mid-city church in New Orleans – one of the few places in the city to offer Internet access to victims.

In the end, no need is too small or too big. OBI has fed hundreds of thousands; cleared trees and debris from over two thousand homes in Slidell and surrounding areas; installed temporary light poles for residents without power; and started a new phase of recovery, treating and removing mold from victim’s homes.

### **Robert’s Story**

“Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” 1 Corinthians 13:7

His eyes welled up with tears when the four-vehicle convoy of Operation Blessing volunteers rolled up to his house. It was now a shell of a house. Hurricane Katrina had forced dozens of trees onto his roof and pushed ten feet of water into his home, condemning it. For now, Robert’s home is the 1992 Nissan red pickup parked next to his house.

“If Operation Blessing would have never come, I would have given up,” he said.

And Robert calls OBI volunteers who worked tirelessly to remove the trees and debris and to gut out his home his “angels.” His stove, bathtub and refrigerator are now piled on a heap of pink insulation and slabs of drywall. Despite all appearances, this is a sign of progress. They left him with a cleared yard and the encouragement to continue to rebuild his life.

“The fact that people have come and assisted in demolition and repair work gives you a boost,” added Tom, a neighbor of Robert’s who also received help from OBI. “It gives us a great deal of encouragement and emotional energy to go on.”

And a boost is exactly what Robert needed. At age 66, he suffers from diabetes and a bad back, but that doesn’t keep him from attempting to rebuild his property with materials donated to him – even if he can work for only twenty minutes at a time. “It might take me awhile to rebuild, but thanks to Operation Blessing, I at least have that desire,” he said.

Robert also has hope in knowing that there are still those willing to freely give and expecting nothing in return. “I don’t blame the government for not being able to respond to all of our needs,” he stated. “I am just thankful that Operation Blessing sought to help the whole community without strings attached.”

### **A Faith-based Approach**

“For we are laborers together with God.” 1 Corinthians 3:9

Effective disaster relief is not built by an army of one. The success of Operation Blessing’s outreach has been largely based on their ability to leverage resources, partner with other non-profit organizations and tap into local networks of faith-based organizations. Along with OBI’s mobile kitchen, their Hunger Strike Force (a fleet of fifty-eight tractor-trailers) has delivered over nine million pounds of food and relief supplies and has supported both OBI’s outreach activities and the mass-feeding programs of the Salvation Army and the Southern Baptists.

They have also managed to recruit groups of diversified volunteers and skilled tradesmen. Teams from AmeriCorps, the Christian Contractor's Association (CCA), the Mennonites and other non-profit, governmental and/or faith-based groups are now working together to achieve a singular goal: help the hurting. When Operation Blessing can't be there, these groups work through the hands of those who can – local churches and faith-based groups who can effectively assess their community's needs.

Through OBI's fast-track cash grant program, church groups and organizations receive the monetary push to jumpstart their relief and recovery efforts. "Each stricken area has a different set of needs," said Horan. "Food, furniture, construction materials, gasoline, debris removal, medicine, mold remediation, household necessities and so much more. Cash grants enable local churches to meet the needs specific to their own area. It's grassroots relief in the most effective way possible."

To date, Operation Blessing has awarded cash grants to hundreds of faith-based organizations in the Gulf Coast region, totaling over \$3.5 million. And they are not done yet. Disasters are never a question of "if" but rather a question of "when." Disasters will come and they will be forceful, unruly and destructive. But there will always be those who come on the heels of a disaster to bring life, hope and healing to its victims. In the end, disaster relief is not about pointing the finger of blame, but about being ready and able to answer its call.

"I don't believe that God sends hurricanes or earthquakes or tsunamis," concluded Horan. "But I do believe that he sends his people to help heal the wounds."

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## Christian Partnership amidst and after the Tsunami Devastation

by *William Sunderland*

**W**here were you when the tsunami of 2005 devastated huge portions of Southeast Asia? I was celebrating the birth of Jesus, creator and savior of humankind, on a bright, sunny morning. However, it was not long before I began learning of the tsunami's impact via reports on television. After listening to the first bits of information from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the number of fatalities seemed too low. As the days wore on, however, the numbers were undeniably catastrophic.

The outpouring of help was also enormous. Billions of dollars were donated to hundreds, if not thousands, of organizations. Military forces from Singapore, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, the United States and others were mobilized as first responders in order to deliver life-saving necessities to victims of the disaster. It seemed the world's heart was pouring out to those in need. The Church responded magnificently, sending people, goods, services and money through a variety of church-related ministries.

And we know this was not and will not be the last natural disaster to affect our planet. In the ensuing months, we have seen hurricanes, earthquakes, droughts and landslides cause immeasurable anguish.

### Hope

As members of the body of Christ, we know that pain and suffering were not part of the created order that God established. Jesus came that we might have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10). We know that love is the greatest expression of our Christian life in Jesus (1 Corinthians 13).

Part of Jesus' prayer as he was preparing to return to his Father was concerning this love and what it would mean to the expansion of his kingdom here on earth. John 17:20-23 tells of how Jesus' love for the world will be heard, listened to and felt because of the unity of believers. John 17:23 says, "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." His prayer is that we will be one (united), just as he and the Father are one. The result will be the expansion of the kingdom.

## **Can We Work Together?**

Working together is not optional. As believers, disciples and followers of Jesus Christ, we should be working together. This is especially true when we have the role of proclaiming our faith through service, love and caring for the needs of widows, orphans and victims of natural disasters. Natural disasters like the tsunami provide an opportunity for Christians to work together. However, there are unique obstacles we will face as well.

**Motivation.** As Christians, we usually do not work together for many reasons. Yet, when disaster strikes, we are motivated to help; however the task is often so large that we intuitively know we cannot do it alone. The following are a few examples drawn from a host of possible stories about the successes and also the short-sightedness of our collaborative efforts. The first example is what happened in Singapore immediately after the tsunami struck.

A local ministry which helps to connect medical resources with health needs throughout Southeast Asia met the next day and pulled together six different Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). This level of collaboration was extremely encouraging. Over the next thirty days there were four such collaborative meetings. After three months there were fifteen NGOs and church groups working together. The original ministry then passed the facilitation of the work on to the Singapore Center for Evangelism and Mission (SCEM), which formed an email group called Disaster Hope. Throughout this period, a large amount of information and resources were shared.

These ministry leaders knew the demands were much larger than what any of them could have responded to alone. One of the key hindrances this group observed to working together was the lack of collaborative experience within local churches. Staff and/or volunteers appointed to represent the many churches did not understand the principles and methods of working together. It was a new skill set for them. This same group is now involved in efforts to help the Northwest provinces of Pakistan as well.

**Organizational Pride.** Aceh, the northern province of Indonesia, was nearly completely destroyed. There is no accurate count of the dead, however, it most certainly tops 200,000 people. Aceh was known as one of the most resistant places to hearing the gospel. Christians were persecuted and outside Christian workers were banned.

Now one year after the disaster, the majority of the tsunami victims are still in temporary tents or shacks. One interesting dynamic is that in this nearly one hundred percent Islamic region, survivors are amazed that over eighty percent of the workers and funding have come from Christian countries and communities. One of these important efforts included the establishment of AcehTeam, a cooperative venture of over a dozen organizations seeking to make a difference in Aceh province. It is their desire to become advocates for the community as they seek to stand alongside tsunami victims as they rebuild their lives and community. What a great witness to those who have for centuries persecuted the very people who are now helping them now.

Yet old habits are hard to break. John, an expatriate relief worker, has commented that some work in Aceh is like a field full of silos. Each organization is working on its own, for its own credit and with little if any communication with others in the area. The urgency to produce tangible results for the organization's management and donors has led to tremendous competitiveness and wastefulness of resources. Within the AcehTeam, it is different. John recently reminded leaders in the group that their open collaboration was rare not only in Aceh but also in the missions world.

With the influx of outside resources came many promises and hopes. But a new reality has now set in. The rebuilding process is long and arduous and many long-term workers are left picking up the pieces of broken promises. Organizations and individuals rushed in with great intentions and many promises to help; however, as everyday operational problems arose and time constraints mounted, many left without keeping their promises.

It is also evident that "crisis" as a catalyst for intentional cooperation is not practical. In most instances it actually leads to more chaos and isolated, individualistic ministry.

Through this experience many agencies have learned that cooperation is more than a concept and that collaboration doesn't just happen because you go to a meeting. It requires diligence and commitment to principals that are beyond an individual organization's own agenda items. Still, each organization's agenda is included in the collaborative effort. We must be intentional about working together. We must understand the principles in order to make a collaborative effort work, whether for six months or six years. And planning for cooperation must take place before the "crisis" takes place.

What about your ministry? Does your staff understand collaborative principles? Do you know when to collaborate? Do you realize that working together will produce more fruit in the long run than doing your own thing?

We should praise God for what has been accomplished for his kingdom despite and through these horrific circumstances, while continuing to pray for all those affected by these disasters. At the same time, we need to learn how, as the body of Christ, we can work together for his glory so that the world will know that just as the Father loved and sent the Son, so too he has sent and loves us.

For more information about collaboration, visit:

[www.interdev.org](http://www.interdev.org)

[www.globalconnections.co.uk](http://www.globalconnections.co.uk)

[www.powerofconnecting.net](http://www.powerofconnecting.net)

[www.christianemergencynetwork.net](http://www.christianemergencynetwork.net)

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## PEOPLES OF THE WORLD

### Into Their World...The Hazara of Pakistan

by Laurie Fortunak

**The Hazara of Pakistan, numbering over 110,000 people, are refugees from Afghanistan.**

Many fled Afghanistan after the civil war of the 1800s, however, Hazara refugees are still entering Pakistan due to the current civil war in Afghanistan. The Hazara are thought to be descendants of soldiers left in Afghanistan by Genghis Khan. Because of their Mongol descent, the Hazara have distinct physical and language characteristics, one of which is the use of Hazaragi, an Indo-Iranian tongue with words borrowed from Mongol. Dari Persian is the second most common language of the Hazaras.

The Hazara live in and around Quetta, a city in the southwestern province of Baluchistan. Although traditionally nomads and herders of sheep, goats and horses, many now earn a living through farming grains such as wheat and barley. Many men also work as cobblers, porters, water carriers and trash collectors. These jobs have given the Hazara a reputation as hard workers, however, they have also been discriminated against because they hold what some consider very humble jobs. Although the Hazara are known as warlike people, they are also widely recognized for their hospitality, warmth and generosity. In Hazara culture, only boys can have a formal education, which lasts no more than two years. This education centers on the teachings of Islam and poetry memorization. Illiteracy is very high among this people group.

Marriage ceremonies follow traditional Islamic patterns and most Hazara marry within their own communities and ethnic groups. When a girl reaches about the age of fifteen, she is usually married to the man of her parent's choice who is often a first cousin.

Islam is by far the dominant religion in this people group, but unlike most Pakistanis, the Hazara follow the Shi'ite sect of Islam. They shun the most stringent Muslim customs but are devoted to the faith, praying five times each day while facing Mecca and fasting during the month of Ramadan. Religious authorities

called Sayyids play an important role in the Islam of the Hazara and their prayers and good favor are believed to bring blessing upon the Hazara people. Sayyids claim descent from Mohammad and although originally Arabs, the Sayyids have intermarried with the Hazara and have become like them in appearance and culture.

The Hazara are some of the poorest people in Pakistan and suffer from many health problems, including eye diseases, leprosy and tuberculosis. Christians in Pakistan are rare and often live in fear of persecution or martyrdom. Despite this, there are several Christian radio broadcasts and viewings of the JESUS film available.

For more information on the Hazara of Pakistan, visit these sites:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hazara>

<http://www.hazara.org>

<http://www.hazara.net/>

For ministry-related information on the Hazara of Pakistan, visit these sites:

[www.ksafe.com/profiles/p\\_code2/14.html](http://www.ksafe.com/profiles/p_code2/14.html)

[www.peopleteams.org/agencies.html](http://www.peopleteams.org/agencies.html) and click on People Team Selection.

(Information compiled from [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net))

(Note: The website links above are intended to provide you with more information about this people group. Some of the links are to groups that are not religious in nature but who provide information and background that may be helpful in researching this people group. The content of each of the websites linked to is the sole responsibility of the linked-to organization. Views expressed on these websites do not necessarily reflect the opinions and beliefs of the staff or writers of Lausanne World Pulse or those of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, Institute of Strategic Evangelism, Evangelism and Missions Information Service or Intercultural Studies Department.)

## TRENDS AND STATISTICS

### USA Evangelicals/Evangelicals in a Global Context

by *Todd M. Johnson*

**O**ver the past one hundred years global Christianity has experienced a profound southern shift in its geographical center of gravity. Whereas in 1900 over eighty percent of all Christians were from Europe and North America, by 2005 the proportion had fallen to under forty-five percent. It is no surprise then to discover that the center of gravity of the Evangelical Movement, with roots in the United Kingdom and the United States, has also been steadily shifting south for over one hundred years. This is also true of evangelicals (a more broadly-defined term that includes Roman Catholics—see glossary below). Thus, though the number of evangelicals worldwide is estimated to range from 250 million to 688 million, most are increasingly found outside of the Western world.

Table 1 illustrates this shift by highlighting the cultural traditions in which Evangelicals and evangelicals are currently found. In both cases, Europeans (including Americans of European descent) are in the minority. The difference is less pronounced among evangelicals because of the large number of Roman Catholic evangelicals in Europe. Nonetheless, Africans, Asians and Latin Americans are more typical representatives of evangelicalism than Americans or Europeans.



Cultural tradition	Population	% of world population	Evangelicals	% of all Evangelicals	evangelicals	% of all Evangelicals
AFRICAN (Bantu, Nilotic, Sudanic)	590,722,000	9.2	77,204,000	30.8	74,091,000	10.8
AFRO-AMERICAN (USA Black, Creole)	148,325,000	2.3	18,512,000	7.4	22,619,000	3.3
ASIAN (Chinese, Indo-Malay, Korean)	2,437,331,000	37.8	37,559,000	15.0	169,311,000	24.6
EUROPEAN (Caucasian, Germanic, Slav)	938,180,000	14.5	53,257,000	21.2	293,909,000	42.7
INDO-IRANIAN (Davidian, Iranian, North Indian)	1,527,652,000	23.7	14,768,000	5.9	23,577,000	3.4
LATIN AMERICAN (Mestizo, Amerindian)	389,981,000	6.0	33,020,000	13.2	41,219,000	6.0
MIDDLE EASTERN (Arab, Berber, Ethiopic)	404,014,000	6.3	14,698,000	5.9	23,577,000	3.4
OCEANIC (Fijan, Melanesian, Papuan)	17,423,000	0.3	1,758,000	0.7	21,122,000	0.3
WORLD POPULATION	6,453,628,000	100.0	250,776,000	100.0	687,807,000	100.0

Table 2 puts Christianity in the US in a global context and shows the changes that have occurred over time to evangelicalism in its various forms. Several trends are immediately apparent:

1. Since 1900 Christians (Lines 2 and 3) have been declining as a percentage of the US population.
2. Evangelicals (Line 8) have been declining since 1900 (forty-two percent to fifteen percent today).
3. There are at least four ways to measure evangelicals (Lines 4, 5, 7 and 8) ranging from forty-five million (fifteen percent) to Gallup's forty-two percent or 126 million.
4. Pentecostals/Charismatics (Line 6) have been growing steadily since 1900.

Religious Category	1900		1970		2005		2025			
	USA adherents	% Pop.	USA adherents	% Pop.	USA adherents	% Pop.	Global adherents	% Pop.	USA adherents	% Pop.
Total population	75,995,000	100.0	210,111,000	100.0	300,000,000	100.0	6,453,628,000	100.0	358,030,000	100.0
Christians	73,270,000	96.4	191,182,000	91.0	250,000,000	83.3	2,133,963,000	33.1	280,150,000	78.2
Affiliated church members	54,425,000	71.6	153,324,000	73.0	195,000,000	65.0	2,020,248,000	31.3	213,150,000	59.5
Born again or evangelical (Gallup 2003)	—	—	—	—	126,000,000	42.0	—	—	—	—
Evangelicals (evangelism/foreign missions involvement)	11,000,000	14.5	45,500,000	21.7	102,000,000	34.0	687,807,000	10.7	110,000,000	30.7
Pentecostal/Charismatic/Neocharismatic	46,100	0.1	34,479,000	16.4	79,000,000	26.3	587,002,000	9.1	100,000,000	27.9
Yes to three questions* (Gallup 1995)	—	—	—	—	57,000,000	19.0	—	—	—	—
Evangelicals (belonging to NAE; self-identification)	32,068,000	42.2	35,248,000	16.8	44,000,000	14.7	250,776,000	3.9	52,000,000	14.5

\* 1) Born-again experience?  
2) Witness for Christ?  
3) Bible as literal Word of God?

Table 3 gives a detailed breakdown of Evangelicals by major Christian tradition. Note that although Baptists represent the largest number of Evangelicals, the fastest growing are found among the Independent immigrant churches. The number of Evangelicals is calculated by determining whether or not a denomination belongs to an Evangelical council or whether individuals within a denomination identify themselves as Evangelicals.

**Table 3. Christian traditions of USA Evangelicals, mid-2005**

<i>Tradition</i>	<i>Affiliated</i>	<i>%Evangelical</i>	<i>Evangelical</i>	<i>% of all Ev</i>	<i>EvGr%pa</i>	<i>Ev projection 2010</i>
Adventist	1,150,000	17.8	205,000	0.5	1.4	220,000
Anglican	2,226,000	15.5	345,000	0.8	0.9	361,000
Baptist	23,870,000	49.6	11,850,000	26.9	1.0	12,454,000
Black Baptist	19,700,000	17.8	3,510,000	8.0	1.8	3,837,000
Brethren	400,000	43.5	174,000	0.4	1.7	189,000
Congregationalist	668,000	70.8	473,000	1.1	1.2	502,000
Disciple	3,500,000	40.1	1,405,000	3.2	1.0	1,477,000
Fundamentalist	3,470,000	95.8	3,325,000	7.6	0.3	3,375,000
Holiness	2,020,000	91.6	1,850,000	4.2	0.6	1,906,000
Independent Asian	510,000	7.8	40,000	0.1	4.0	49,000
Independent Black	2,826,000	9.0	255,000	0.6	2.5	289,000
Independent Latin American	367,000	95.6	351,000	0.8	2.7	401,000
Independent White	24,500,000	13.6	3,320,000	7.5	1.6	3,594,000
Lutheran	8,088,000	33.1	2,680,000	6.1	0.5	2,748,000
Marginal Christian	9,500,000	1.1	102,000	0.2	2.0	113,000
Mennonite	666,000	39.0	260,000	0.6	2.1	288,000
Methodist	16,370,000	26.0	4,250,000	9.7	0.6	4,379,000
Orthodox	6,000,000	1.0	60,000	0.1	1.5	65,000
Pentecostal	5,822,000	86.4	5,030,000	11.4	1.7	5,472,000
Presbyterian	5,545,000	43.3	2,400,000	5.5	0.4	2,448,000
Quaker	94,000	26.6	25,000	0.1	0.6	26,000
Roman Catholic	65,900,000	2.0	1,350,000	3.1	0.7	1,398,000
Salvation Army	505,000	94.1	475,000	1.1	0.9	497,000
United church	1,770,000	15.0	265,000	0.6	0.3	269,000
<i>Doubly-affiliated</i>	<i>-10,467,000</i>		-			
<b>Total</b>	<b>195,000,000</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>44,000,000</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>46,357,000</b>

Evangelicals or evangelicals continue to grow globally, whereas in the US they are declining as a raw percentage of the population. Nonetheless, immigration continues to transform the evangelical landscape. In twenty years, African, Asian, and Latin American Evangelicals/evangelicals will likely be at the forefront of both these global movements and within the US.

## Glossary

**Adherents.** As defined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a person's religion is what he or she professes or confesses or states that it is. Totals follow the methodology of the World Christian Encyclopedia, Second Edition (2001) and World Christian Trends (2001), using recent censuses, polls, surveys, yearbooks, reports, websites, literature and other data. See the online World Christian Database [www.worldchristiandatabase.org](http://www.worldchristiandatabase.org) for more detail.

**Christians.** Followers of Jesus Christ, enumerated here under Affiliated Christians, those affiliated with churches (church members, with names written on church rolls, usually total baptized persons including children baptized, dedicated or undedicated). Doubly-affiliated are Christians who are baptized members of more than one denomination.

**Evangelicals/evangelicals.** These two designations cut across all of the six Christian traditions (Anglican, Independent, Marginal, Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic). Evangelicals (with uppercase E) are mainly Protestant churches, agencies and individuals that call themselves by this term (for example, members of the National Association of Evangelicals); they usually emphasize five or more of seven, nine or twenty-one fundamental doctrines (salvation by faith, personal acceptance, verbal inspiration of Scripture, depravity of man, Virgin Birth, miracles of Christ, atonement, evangelism, Second Advent, et al). The lowercase term evangelicals refers to Christians of evangelical conviction from all

traditions who are committed to the evangel (gospel) and involved in personal witness and mission in the world; it includes Evangelicals but also all who do not belong to specifically Evangelical churches or agencies, nor give their primary identity as "Evangelical," yet remain committed.

**Independents.** The term here denotes members of Christian churches and networks that regard themselves as post-denominationalist and neo-apostolic and thus independent of historic, mainstream, organized, institutionalized, confessional and denominationalist Christianity.

**Marginal Christians.** Members of denominations who define themselves as Christians but who are on the margins of organized mainstream Christianity (e.g. Unitarians, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science and Religious Science).

**Pentecostals/Charismatics/Neocharismatics.** Pentecostals are church members, churches or organizations affiliated to a Classical Pentecostal denomination (e.g. Assemblies of God). Charismatics are church members affiliated to non-pentecostal denominations who have entered into the experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit (e.g. Catholic Charismatics). Neocharismatics are church members similar to charismatics but unconnected with mainline pentecostal or non-pentecostal denominations (e.g. Vineyard Churches).

## LAUSANNE REPORTS

### Changes in Leadership and Venue of the German Lausanne Committee

by **Hartmut Barend**

**T**he Board of the German Lausanne Movement elected **Birgit Winterhoff** 14 November 2005 as the new chair of the German Lausanne Committee, also known as the "Coalition for Evangelization." Rev. Birgit Winterhoff lives in Halle and is a full-time pastor of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia. Winterhoff follows Rev. Ulrich Parzany who is unable to hold position any longer due to age restrictions.

Apart from her pastorate ministry, the 52-year-old Winterhoff is also deputy chair of "Evangeliumsrundfunk" in Wetzlar ("ERF – Good News" Evangelical Broadcasting). She also served as chair for seven years of "Arbeitsgemeinschaft Jugendevangelisation," an association that joins evangelistic youth ministries, and contributed regularly to the planning and carrying out of the "Christival" (the largest German Christian Youth Congress) in Dresden in 1996 and in Kassel in 2002. Winterhoff has also done morning radio devotions for thirteen years and has contributed to different projects of the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft Missionarischer Dienste, AMD," an organization that initiates evangelistic projects within the Evangelical Church in Germany.

#### Other Newsmakers

Hartmut Barend, general secretary of the AMD, and Hartmut Steeb, general secretary of the German Evangelical Alliance, have been elected as deputy chairs once again. The German Lausanne Committee also announced that the Network will be led by an executive committee consisting of Winterhoff, Barend, Steeb and the following leaders: Wilfried Bohlen, head of the Missions Department, "Bund Evangelisch-Freikirchlicher Gemeinden" (Baptist Church); Klaus Jürgen Diehl, head of the AMD - Evangelical Church of Westphalia; Erhard Michel, head of the "Inlandmission im Bund Freier Ev. Gemeinden" (Evangelical Free Church); Dr. Roland Werner, head of Christustreff-Fellowship and chair of Christival since 1993.

#### Office moves to Bad Blankenburg

With the changes and growth in the leadership structure, the German Lausanne Committee office will move to the German Evangelical Alliance headquarters in Bad Blankenburg (Thuringia).

The "Coalition for Evangelization" operates as a network of ministry leaders of evangelistic and mission-orientated movements in Germany. The goal is to further evangelization in Germany, to initiate and carry

out mission projects and to search for new ways to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

At the most recent board meeting, Barend reminded members of the committee about the key points in the Lausanne Covenant, which he summed them up in the following ways::

- A clear affirmation of the death of Jesus Christ as the ransom for the sins of men.
- A clear affirmation of the authority of the Bible as the one Word of God.
- A passionate focus on world evangelism, including the central task of inviting people to (1) a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and (2) being members of his church.
- A clear affirmation that evangelization and social responsibility are both part of our Christian duty.
- A clear call to follow Christ.

**Hartmut Barend** is deputy chair for the German Lausanne Committee. He also serves as general secretary of the AMD, an organization that initiates evangelistic projects within the Evangelical Church in Germany.

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