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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

### ANGOLA

Early in the new millennium Angola was officially named by the Global IDP Project the worst place in the world for children to grow up. During a quarter century of war millions of people were forced to flee and hundreds of thousands were killed. In the past three years, however, following a peace treaty between government and rebel forces, several million people have returned home, including 900,000 people in 2004 alone. (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)

### COLOMBIA

There are currently between two million and 3.4 million displaced people in Colombia. Many live in sub-par shantytowns on the outskirts of the country's major cities. As a result of decades of civil conflict, Columbia is facing the worst humanitarian crisis in the Western Hemisphere. (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)

### ECUADOR

The Rt. Rev. Wilfrido Ramos-Orench will begin 1 June as provisional bishop of the Diocese of Central Ecuador, one of two Episcopal dioceses in Ecuador. The Diocese of Central Ecuador has twenty-nine missions, fourteen presbyters and two deacons. The administrative office is in Quito, Ecuador. Ramos-Orench, 65, is a native of Puerto Rico. (Episcopal News Service)

### INDIA

The government in Rajasthan, India, recently became the sixth state in India to enact an anti-conversion law. The Rajasthan Dharma Swatantraya (Freedom of Religion) Act outlaws any attempt to convert a person from one religion to another "by use of force or allurement or by fraudulent means." The punishments are a prison term of not less than two years or a fine of up to fifty thousand rupees. In other states with anti-conversion legislation, Christians have been the targets of widespread attacks from Hindu extremists. (Christian Solidarity Worldwide)

### PANAMA

Through providing food, clothing, school supplies, teaching materials and generators, Convoy of Hope (COH) helps enable more than three thousand Ngobe Bugle Indians to attend an annual conference in western Panama. The conference provides teaching for pastors, laypersons, youth and children. COH provided thirty-five thousand pounds of rice, beans, corn, pasta and dried fruit to both feed attendees during the conference and to send home with them. (Convoy of Hope)

### RWANDA

The Book of Hope has joined with Hillsong Church of Australia and many international Christian ministries for HOPE RWANDA: 100 Days of Hope. From 7 April through 15 July, they will provide the Book of Hope to every student and teacher in Rwanda, as well as eighty-nine thousand prison inmates. Hope Fest concerts, medial ministries and compassionate ministries will include messages presenting Christ to everyone across the entire nation. (Book of Hope)

### RUSSIA

Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) has been working in Russia since the early 1990s. Due to inaccessible

cities and villages across eleven time zones expansion has been difficult, despite the need. However, MAF is now expanding into Siberia. MAF's Dave Bochman says, "Every time we've looked and every place we've looked it just seemed that God wasn't opening the door, but then this past year God raised up a national pilot with a burden for missionary aviation. And the area that the Lord has placed on all of our hearts is Krasnoyarsk in central Siberia." Bochman says the new program is completely Russian. (Mission Network News)

### **SIERRA LEONE**

Wesleyan Church National Superintendent J.Y. Konteh reported news of a revival breaking out in the Kavalala District where The Wesleyan Church has been partnering with the Great Commission Movement and the JESUS Film Project. Thousands are turning to Christ and many new churches have been started. This partnership is handing over several new church plants to The Wesleyan Church of Sierra Leone. (Wesleyan Information Network)

### **UNITED KINGDOM**

A national survey in the UK shows that Christians are the happiest people in the nation. The survey was carried out by CommunicateResearch and was sponsored by the Evangelical Alliance and Premier Christian Radio. Findings show that seventy-five percent of churchgoers said they were happy, compared to fifty-four percent of non-churchgoers. When a parallel study was done with evangelical Christians, the happiness percentage rose to eighty percent. (Evangelical Alliance Press Office)

### **UNITED KINGDOM**

A poll commissioned by the Evangelical Alliance and Premier Christian Radio found that seventy percent people in the UK believe Christian principles are still valid in today's society, even though half of those who answered in the affirmative professed no faith. Seventy-four percent said children should be brought up with Christian values and seventy-one percent agreed that Christianity should continue to be taught in Britain's schools. Two thousand people took part in the poll. (Evangelical Alliance Press Office)

### **UNITED KINGDOM**

On 28 March 2006, a Thanksgiving service took place in Westminster Abbey to mark the 150th anniversary of The Mission to Seafarers. The Mission to Seafarers (formerly The Missions to Seamen) is a missionary society of the Anglican Church which cares for the welfare of all seafarers regardless of their nationality or faith. The United Kingdom became the first place to begin the work of the society which then dispersed to ports around the world where the main aim was to take care of the spiritual welfare of the seafarers. (Anglican Communion News Service)

### **UNITED STATES**

Twelve Christian leaders from the Middle East recently shared with nearly sixty Western Christian leaders on the state of the Church in the Arab World. The event was held 20-22 April at the Billy Graham Center in Wheaton, Illinois, USA, and drew leaders from Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Iraq. The event, called Sounds of Hope, gave the Middle Eastern leaders a platform where they could share with North American leaders the circumstances of the fifteen million Christians in the Arab World. (Sounds of Hope)

### **UNITED STATES**

The third annual Spring Conference for African-American Journalists of Faith was held 21-23 April 2006 at Morehead College in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. The keynote speaker was John W. Fountain, professor of journalism at the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign). The conference exists to bring together students and professional journalists of faith from across the nation. Participants were encouraged to integrate their Christian faith with their journalism practice. (World Journalism Institute)

### **UNITED STATES**

Pentecostal and so-called non-mainline Protestant churches show continuing growth in the United States, while mainstream churches continue to lose membership, according to the latest annual figures on US church membership. The largest Protestant denomination in the United States, the Southern Baptist Convention, showed a decline in membership, while the Roman Catholic Church, the largest single church body, showed a slight increase. The US National Council of Churches recently released the figures in the 2006 Yearbook of American and Canadian churches. (Ecumenical News International)

## UNITED STATES

Royal Rangers International (RRI) held an historic conference in Florida, USA in February. In Spanish, the conference was called Seminario de Actualizacion Latinoamericano (SAL, which means salt). The purpose was to introduce new evangelistic program resources to the national Royal Rangers leaders in the Spanish-speaking world. Royal Rangers is one of the world's largest and foremost Christian adventure-based mentoring programs. More than one hundred leaders from Spain, Italy, Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean attended. Reciting the first part of the Royal Rangers pledge, "With God's help I will do my best to serve God," the national leaders committed themselves "to an unprecedented effort of Ranger-evangelism." As a group they set a goal to grow the ministry in Latin America and the Caribbean from forty-five thousand people to over 250,000 people within the next ten years. (Assemblies of God News and Information)

## WORLD EVANGELISM & MISSIONS REPORTS

### A Contribution from the Latin American Evangelical Churches

By Norberto Saracco

**"You are part of the same Church,**  
*if you follow the Calvary path,  
if your heart is like mine,  
give me your hand and my brother you are."*

For decades the lyrics of this song have been sung by millions of Evangelicals all over Latin America. It has been something like a motto hymn in gatherings and activities where brothers and sisters from different denominations participated. Its ecumenical theology is simple: if you follow the Calvary path, you belong to the same Church that I do; if your heart beats together with mine, you are my brother.

The simplicity of this statement reduces centuries of ecumenical discussions to the minimum. But it has also hidden the reality of our divisions.

Diversity and plurality, those values we rescue from our Protestant inheritance, derived in fragmentation and polarizations. These have been the characteristics of Evangelical churches and, for Pentecostals, almost a sign of spirituality.

Nevertheless, the present is different. In later years, Evangelical churches and especially Pentecostal churches have been the ones who have worked the most in search of the visible unity of the Church. The strengthening of alliances, or of national federations of churches, the formation of pastoral councils in thousands of cities or the shared mission and evangelization projects are merely some examples of this fact. We know that not all contexts are the same and there is still a lot to be done. But not recognizing this truth would not be fair.

For Evangelical churches, unity takes place in faithfulness to the word of God and in mission. This is expressed in The Lausanne Covenant: "We affirm the Church's visible unity in truth is God's purpose. Evangelism also summons us to unity, because our oneness strengthens our witness, just as our disunity undermines our gospel of reconciliation."

For Evangelical churches, unity is not based on the recognition of a hierarchical authority, on dogmas, on theological agreements or in institutional covenants. We have to recognize that this ecumenism path has reached its limit. We know each other more than ever before, we have told each other everything we had to say and we fully understand the roots of our divisions.

What is the next step? The ecumenical agenda will need to stop being tied to the past and has to be open to the ecumenism of the future. In a living and dynamic Church, like that of Latin America, there is an ec-

umenism of the people of God which says, like the song at the beginning, "If you and I follow the cross, we belong to the same Church. Then, give me your hand; let's walk together; you are my brother." I am aware that this ecumenical simplicity may be disturbing, but it has no purpose other than breaking the inertia of a stagnant ecumenism.

Why do we not open up to the reality of millions of Christians who do not understand our divisions? In fact, in the last decades we have witnessed the weakening of confessional structures. There has been a globalization of the religious experience. The lines of authority, faithfulness and spirituality go across the different confessions. We do not ignore the dangers of this new situation, but we also wonder: Is it not, maybe, a blow of the Spirit? Is it not that God is creating something new and we have not been aware?

People ask us: How can you be related to churches like those integrating the World Council of Churches? Thus stated, the question is impossible to answer due to the diversity of Evangelical churches and to the diversity of the churches within the Council.

However, we can go forward along some lines, which will make this relation possible.

### **1. We need honest attitudes of mutual respect and consideration.**

In the past, Evangelical churches in Latin America have "evangelized" by exposing the weaknesses of the Roman Catholic Church. This is no longer so. Neither could we understand, in its time, the struggle of our brothers and sisters who, in the 1970s, put their lives at risk for being witnesses of Jesus Christ, of his justice and truth. Since then, more than once, we have repented in private and in public. However, unity becomes difficult when our brothers and sisters treat us like sects, see Pentecostals as a danger and interpret the growth of Evangelical churches as the advance of the bellicose right. It is not with caricatures and prejudice that unity is built up.

### **2. It is necessary to understand that the religious map of the world has changed and that the map of Christianity has changed.**

The potential of the Church has passed from North to South. Christians of this part of the world have the opportunity of making our unity in Christ visible in our daily commitment with the mission, and we cannot postpone it. Our impoverished peoples, our looted lands and our societies bound by sin are challenging us. An ecumenism of the mission is possible as long as Jesus Christ is proclaimed as Savior and Lord, and the gospel is presented with an integral perspective. We believe that the centrality of Jesus Christ marks the difference between the mission of the Church and religious compassion. Let us be clear: Latin America needs Jesus Christ and the liberating power of his gospel. We should be fulfilling the mission of announcing that truth.

### **3. We have to accept our diversity as an expression of the manifold grace of God.**

There are different ways of being the Church and, lately, such diversity has multiplied. A good ecumenical exercise will be to know the limit of diversity we are ready to accept. But it should be an acceptance without traps, without first and second-class churches. We should accept without ecclesiological plays on words (communities of faith, ecclesial communities, churches, etc.) which aim at hiding our capacity to recognize others as part of the Church.

Let me conclude with a question: How about trying with the Spirit? We have consumed seas of ink and tons of paper writing about unity. We have not wasted time, neither strength nor resources. But we have come up to here. Would it not be the time for a new Pentecost? Only a Church filled with the Spirit will see racial, sexual, economic and ecclesiastical barriers fall down. Only lives filled with the Spirit will stop calling "impure" and "filthy" that which God has sanctified, and will no longer consider "holy" that which is filthy. The unity of the Church will be the work of the Spirit or it will never happen.

(This edited article was originally an address given by Dr. J. Norberto Saracco in Spanish to the World Council of Churches Ninth Assembly, held in Porto Alegre, Brazil 20 February, 2006. The speech was translated into English by Norma Calafate de Deiros. See below for the original Spanish text.)

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## Original Spanish text for the above article

“De la misma iglesia tú eres,  
si detrás del calvario tú estás,  
si tu corazón es como el mío,  
dame la mano y mi hermano eres ya”

Durante décadas la letra de este coro ha sido cantada por millones de evangélicos en toda América Latina. Fue algo así como un himno lema en encuentros y actividades en las que se encontraban hermanos y hermanas de diferentes denominaciones. Su teología ecuménica es sencilla: si estas detrás del calvario, eres de mi misma iglesia; si tu corazón palpita con el mío, eres mi hermano.

La simplicidad de esta afirmación reduce al mínimo siglos de discusiones ecuménicas, pero también ocultó la realidad de nuestras divisiones.

La diversidad y pluralidad, valores que rescatamos de nuestra herencia protestante, derivaron en fragmentación y polarizaciones. Estas han sido características de las iglesias evangélicas y para las pentecostales, casi un signo de espiritualidad.

Sin embargo, el presente es diferente. En los últimos años han sido las iglesias evangélicas, y en especial las pentecostales, las que más han trabajado en la búsqueda de la unidad visible de la iglesia. El fortalecimiento de las Alianzas o Federaciones Nacionales de iglesias, la formación de Consejos Pastorales en miles de ciudades, o los proyectos conjuntos de misión y evangelización, son solo algunos ejemplos de esto. Sabemos que no en todos los contextos es igual y que queda mucho por hacer, pero no sería justo dejar de reconocer esta verdad.

Para las iglesias evangélicas la unidad se da en la fidelidad a la Palabra de Dios y en la misión. Esto está expresado en el Pacto de Lausana: “Afirmamos que la unidad visible de la iglesia en la verdad es el propósito de Dios. La evangelización también nos invita a la unidad, puesto que la unidad fortalece nuestro testimonio, así como nuestra falta de unidad menoscaba nuestro evangelio de reconciliación.”

La unidad para las iglesias evangélicas no está basada en el reconocimiento de una autoridad jerárquica, ni en dogmas, ni en acuerdos teológicos, ni en pactos institucionales. Debemos reconocer que este camino de ecumenismo ha llegado a su límite. Nos conocemos más que nunca, nos hemos dicho todo lo que teníamos que decirnos y entendemos a cabalidad las raíces de nuestras divisiones. ¿Cuál es el próximo paso? La agenda ecuménica deberá dejar de estar atada al pasado y abrirse a un ecumenismo del futuro. En una iglesia viva y dinámica, como la de América Latina, hay un ecumenismo del Pueblo de Dios que dice, como la canción del principio: si tú y yo estamos detrás de la cruz, pertenecemos a la misma iglesia, dame, entonces, la mano, caminemos juntos, tu eres mi hermano. Reconozco que esta simplicidad ecuménica puede resultar perturbadora, pero no tiene otro fin más que el de romper la inercia de un ecumenismo estancado.

¿Por qué no abrimos a la realidad de millones de cristianos que no entienden de nuestras divisiones? De hecho, en las últimas décadas hemos asistido al debilitamiento de las estructuras confesionales. Ha habido una globalización de la experiencia religiosa. Las líneas de autoridad, fidelidad y espiritualidad cruzan transversalmente las diferentes confesiones. No ignoramos los peligros de esta nueva situación, pero también nos preguntamos: ¿No será, quizás, un soplo del Espíritu? ¿No estará creando Dios algo nuevo y no nos dimos cuenta?

Se nos pregunta: ¿Cómo pueden relacionarse las iglesias evangélicas con la comunidad de iglesias que integran el Consejo Mundial de Iglesias?

Planteada así la pregunta, la diversidad de iglesias evangélicas y la diversidad de las iglesias del Consejo, hace imposible su respuesta.

Sin embargo, podemos avanzar en algunas líneas que harán posible esta relación.

### **1. Necesitamos actitudes honestas de mutuo respeto y valoración.**

En el pasado las iglesias evangélicas en América Latina hemos “evangelizado” exponiendo las debilidades

de la Iglesia Católica. Hoy ya no es así. Tampoco supimos comprender, en su tiempo, la lucha de nuestros hermanos y hermanas que en los años setenta arriesgaron sus vidas por ser testigos de Jesucristo, su justicia y verdad. Desde entonces más de una vez nos hemos arrepentido en privado y en público. Sin embargo, se hace difícil la unidad cuando nuestros hermanos nos tratan como sectas, ven a los pentecostales como un peligro, e interpretan el crecimiento de las iglesias evangélicas como el avance de la derecha belicista. No es con caricaturas y prejuicios que se construye la unidad.

**2. Es necesario comprender que el mapa religioso del mundo ha cambiado y que el mapa del cristianismo ha cambiado.** El potencial de la iglesia ha pasado del Norte al Sur. El hecho de que esta asamblea se realice en esta ciudad no es casual. Tenemos, entonces, los cristianos de esta parte del mundo, la impostergable oportunidad de hacer visible nuestra unidad en Cristo en el compromiso cotidiano de la misión. Nuestros pueblos empobrecidos, nuestras tierras saqueadas y nuestras sociedades atadas por el pecado, nos desafían. Es posible un ecumenismo de la misión, en la medida en que Jesucristo sea proclamado como Salvador y Señor y el evangelio se presente en una perspectiva integral. Creemos que la centralidad de Jesucristo marca la diferencia entre la misión de la iglesia y la compasión religiosa. Seamos claros, América Latina necesita a Jesucristo y el poder liberador de su evangelio, y en la misión de anunciar esta verdad deberíamos encontrarnos.

**3. Aceptar nuestra diversidad como expresión de la multiforme gracia de Dios.** Hay distintas maneras de ser iglesia y en los últimos tiempos tal diversidad se ha multiplicado. Un buen ejercicio ecuménico será saber cuál es el límite de la diversidad que estamos dispuestos a aceptar. Pero, aceptación sin trampas, sin iglesias de primera y segunda categoría. Aceptación sin juego de palabras eclesiológico (comunidades de fe, comunidades eclesiales, iglesias, etc.) que pretenden ocultar nuestra incapacidad para reconocer al otro como parte de la única iglesia.

Permítanme concluir con una pregunta: ¿Y si probamos con el Espíritu? Hemos consumido mares de tinta y toneladas de papel escribiendo sobre la unidad. No han sido tiempo, fuerzas ni recursos perdidos. Pero, hasta aquí hemos llegado. ¿No será el tiempo de un nuevo Pentecostés? Solo una iglesia llena del Espíritu verá caer las barreras raciales, sexuales, económicas y eclesiales. Sólo vidas llenas del Espíritu dejarán de llamar "impuro" e "inmundo," lo que Dios ha santificado, y dejarán de considerar "santo" lo que es inmundo.

La unidad de la iglesia será obra del Espíritu o no será.

(Porto Alegre, 20 de Febrero de 2006)

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## **Movement for African National Initiatives 2006: Uniting African Church Leaders**

*By Chacko Thomas*

**M**any people are sceptical of Africa. The growing and large number of believers in Africa, though it does boost world Christian statistics, is seen by many as an inch deep and a mile wide. As for mission potential, some expect little from Africa. The Christian and secular media has influenced many of us in forming our image of Africa.

We may ask, "Can anything good come Africa? Can these dry bones live?" The answer to both these questions is yes and the second gathering of the Continental Consultation of the Movement for African National Initiatives 2006 (MANI 2006) provided the answer to how and why the African Church is so important to global Christianity. The MANI 2006 consultation convinced African church leaders that the Church in Africa is emerging as a viable, strong alternative leader of the continent. Already some Christians in the West have begun to look to Africa for leadership and one Anglican Bishop assured me that they "are ready to

give it." One example of how the African Church has stepped up is the Global Day of Prayer. An event initiated in Africa, Global Day of Prayer now includes over 150 countries joined together in prayer.

### **African Church Leaders Gather in Nairobi**

MANI 2006 was held at the Kenya College of Communication and Technology in Nairobi 27 February to 3 March. During the consultation, Ross Campbell, the MANI continental coordinator said, "You are among five hundred leaders of influence assembled at MANI 2006 from across the continent and around the globe. Delegates have arrived from forty-nine African nations and are joined by global leaders from eighteen countries beyond our shores. Together we exert leadership influence over hundreds of denominations and organizations, thousands of churches, tens of thousands of Christian workers and many millions of believers."

Suddenly I was aware that I was among world class Christian leaders. Each came at their own expense because they realized that Africa must stop looking elsewhere for resources and start being a giving church, especially one that gives to missions. Participants became aware that resources were accessible right there in Africa. Dr. Uzodinma Obed, one of the pastors at the conference, shared that his church, The Glory Tabernacle Ministry, in Ibadan, Nigeria, already supports three hundred missionaries. Two of the missionaries are leaders of large African missions, one of which, Calvary Ministries, has more than three hundred missionaries in twenty-seven countries in Africa and beyond.

### **MANI 2006 Showcases God's Work in Africa**

Most sessions were led and presented by competent and passionate African men and women. The sessions opened with singing and a time of honouring the Lord. The Africans' passion to serve the Lord and the spirit of prayer are second to none. The courage they have shown in the midst of persecution in many of their countries makes one feel they are ready to face the world for Christ.

One thing that was not African was keeping to a relatively rigid time schedule for each session. Although this was helpful, there was one session where I felt they should have been a little more flexible. The speaker was Dr. Tokunboh Adeyemo, general secretary of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa. During his exposition from Revelation 2:8-11 called "The Beatitudes of Persecution," he had his listeners hanging onto every word he said. When Dr. Adeyemo was made aware that he was running out of time, he quickly concluded his speech. "Persecution is a blessing," he told the delegates. He quoted a Jewish church leader as saying, "Fifty percent of the Bible is made of suffering and the other fifty percent the glory that follows it." All the devotional speakers sharing about the seven churches of Revelation alluded to persecution. The churches the Lord commended in Revelation were under some form of persecution.

One of the sessions under the "Critical Issues and Challenges" workshops addressed a topic that is not usually addressed at a missions conference. "Discipleship: Deepening and Enhancing the Quality of Christianity in Africa in the Twenty-first Century" was taken by Dr. Obed. His book, *Mobilising the African Church into Missions*, is one of the tools George Verwer uses in Missions Mobilisation Network. Other issues such as Islam, poverty, HIV/AIDS, corruption, leadership, children and women were also discussed. There was a strong sense that the Church, not the government, was the answer to transforming Africa. Dr. Reuben Ezemadu, director of Christian Missionary Foundation in Nigeria and the MANI regional leader for English-speaking West Africa, also spoke. He shared that the name "Africa" is of Celtic origin and means "pleasing" or "pleasant." He shared that there are five hundred references to Africa in the Bible. Reading Isaiah 19:23-25 (which speaks of a "highway from Africa to the Middle East"), Dr. Ezemadu pointed out that "the Church in Africa will play a key role in the discipling of the Middle East in the twenty-first century."

Sitting next to me for most of the conference was a brother from North Africa. Kamal oversees four hundred missionaries who work in the Middle East and North Africa. Asked to speak on the Arab World, Kamal's presentation on many of the countries in this area was a great encouragement and challenge for the African Church to meet the many spiritual needs of the Arab World. My own role at the conference was to network with many of my African brothers and sisters. I was glad to see that five hundred copies of an article ("12 Ways to Be an Effective Mission Mobiliser" by George Verwer) I placed at the literature table were gone in three days. I also left a few copies of "I Have Come to Help You Die," the story of my 17-year-old son Sunil, who went to be with the Lord in 2003. I also met many people from various countries in Africa who were faithfully serving the Lord.



## Inner Workings of MANI 2006

Our host for MANI 2006 was the newly-formed organisation "Finish The Task" (FTT). Campbell reminded us that the organisation was a result of an embarrassment the Kenyan delegation faced at a World Evangelical Alliance conference held in Malaysia. They were told at the conference that there were nearly twenty unreached peoples in their country. The Kenyan leaders responded, "Never again shall we be told that there are unreached people groups in our country." Upon their return they formed the FTT, which in a few years succeeded in engaging each of the unreached groups. Today the Church is growing among each of these groups.

Just before the closing worship, our African brothers and sisters honoured Campbell and his wife Avrille for their forty years of service to Africa. The Campbells came from New Zealand as WEC missionaries to Ghana. Since the early 1990s they have also been partnering with AD2000 and Beyond in mobilising the African continent toward its goals to have "a church for every people and the gospel for every person." The work included visiting each country in Africa. One year he visited thirty-eight countries. The Campbell's hard work has been greatly blessed and they can now look back and see a continent deeply committed to missions. There are multiplied numbers of missions leaders and missionaries coming from every African nation to complete the task of missions into all Africa and beyond.

As many came forward to thank the Campbells, they confessed that the honour belonged to God. Ross said, "To God be the Glory. He will not share his glory with another. He is a jealous God." He handed over the responsibility of the continental co-ordinator role to Dr. Ezemadu and a team of seven regional coordinators. At their request, Campbell will remain as a consultant for Movement of African National Initiatives.

Just as I was bringing this report to a close, I received an email from Dr. Ezemadu that was addressed to the global partners at the MANI 2006. He writes, "We give glory to the Lord for the success of the just concluded MANI 2006 consultation. The feedback from participants has been very encouraging. We are very grateful too for your presence, support and encouragement in several ways...We will continue to value your partnership especially as we understand that whatever the African Church can and will do in this bid to make her own contribution to world evangelization, will be a supplement to, and not in isolation from what the global Church is doing. We are excited about this new dawn of partnership and look forward to the rapid results that will now attend our joint efforts in world evangelization."

I thank God for MANI, for what I have seen, heard and felt. I thank God for this new breed of African Christian leaders. God is indeed blessing the world through the African Church. And this is only the beginning.

***Chacko Thomas** is coordinator of Missions Mobilisation Network (MMN). He is also a missionary with Operation Mobilisation, having served in India, and on three of OM's ships, the Logos, Doulos and the Logos II, in various ministry and leadership roles.*

## Training Evangelists in Manila through the Second Asian Advanced Institute for Evangelists

*By Kumar Abraham*

**T**he Bible mandates the spiritual gift of the evangelist (Ephesians 4:11; Acts 21:8). With everything God created, the Bible says, "And God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:10). I am sure he said the same after he gave every spiritual gift. However, the situation with enlisting, equipping, empowering and employing those with the spiritual gift of the evangelist today is not good. There are five reasons this is the case.

First, there is an appalling lack of training and equipping available for evangelists. Thus, evangelists have to develop their skills and ministries without any training. Second, there is a lack of scholarship in the church in regards to proclamation evangelism. This has resulted in a scarcity of quality teaching tools available to develop evangelists. While there may be thousands of books related to pastoral ministry, theology, counseling and education, books on evangelism lag far behind in numbers produced. Third, the lack of full-time evangelists has meant there are few who are qualified to train emerging evangelists. Fourth, it is also widely misconstrued that the ministry of the evangelist is easy and consists of simply traveling from place to place, preaching the same message at each site.



Finally, most denominations and local churches neglect the training and the office of the evangelist. I frequently hear denominational leaders say, "Kumar, we do not have evangelists in our denomination." This is the lame excuse of many. Why would training for evangelists be considered if the perception is that they do not even exist? What then happened to the "some" God gave to be evangelists (Ephesians 4:11)? The lack of vision for evangelists blinds leaders to the presence of evangelists in their midst. Unlike the ministry of the pastor, theologian, teacher, worship or music minister, counselor and others, the evangelist is not given equal priority in the local church or in denominations.

Senior evangelists, with very few exceptions, have failed to train and mentor junior evangelists. As a result, Roger Carswell says, "Few evangelists remain at their work for more than a decade."<sup>1</sup> Since the beginning of the Church, God's command to the evangelist is clear: proclaim the gospel to those who do not know the Lord Jesus. As the Church evolved, however, evangelists became an expendable commodity to the point that we find them today on the brink of extinction.

## **Second Asian Advanced Institute for Evangelists**

Because of our commitment to training evangelists, the GoodNews Evangelistic Association ([www.heralds.org](http://www.heralds.org)), in cooperation with the Billy Graham Center (Wheaton, Illinois, USA) and Luis Palau's Next Generation Alliance, will be conducting the Second Asian Advanced Institute for Evangelists 4-18 June 2006 in the Philippines. This training institute will enlighten, encourage and empower the lives and ministries of practicing evangelists from across Asia and the South Pacific. We will gather with one goal in mind: to know God and his heart for evangelists so as to increase our passion for the harvest of souls.

The training institute will be held in Antipolo City, Philippines. Subsidies are available for those with needs.

Expect the following:

- A challenging intellectual atmosphere as you hear from experienced teachers in the field of proclamation evangelism
- Stimulating and revolutionary discussion about the life and ministry of the evangelist
- Observing and participating in real evangelistic meetings
- Fellowship with those who share your calling as an evangelist
- Networking with other Asian evangelists
- Praying for Asia's lost

You may read more about this at [www.heralds.org](http://www.heralds.org). Experienced proclamation evangelism trainers Dr. Lon Allison, Dr. Tim Robnett and Dr. Kumar Abraham will be speaking.

The institute is open to evangelists from South and Southeast Asia and the Asia Pacific. However, only twenty-five applicants will be accepted so applications need to be completed as soon as possible. To register online, visit [www.heralds.org/aaie/apply.php](http://www.heralds.org/aaie/apply.php).

### **Endnote**

Carswell, Roger. 2000. *And Some Evangelists*. Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications. p.18

**Dr. Kumar Abraham** is president of GoodNews Evangelistic Association in the Philippines. He has ministered in the Philippines as a missionary evangelist and trainer for the past twenty years. His ministry has taken him to several countries of Asia.

## **China's Millions Website**

**By Tom Douglas**

**O**ver 140 years ago, Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission (now OMF International), wrote a small book entitled *China, Its Spiritual Needs and Claims*. The book introduced the Chinese people to the Western world and sought to mobilize more prayer and workers to reach this populous nation.

"They are perishing, a thousand every hour, a million every month," Taylor wrote, "while to me and to ev-

ery believer is given to ask in prayer whatsoever we will; to ask without limit in the name of Jesus." Following in Taylor's footsteps, OMF has recently produced a new media project focused on China. This project, called the China Resource Pack, includes a book, four videos, six PowerPoint presentations, a brochure, a 30-day prayer guide and the interactive website [www.chinasmillions.org](http://www.chinasmillions.org).

At OMF we are proud of our legacy. Taylor is known as a mission pioneer and key figure in the "faith mission" movement. But few may know of his innovative approach toward media and communication. Early on, the China Inland Mission published periodicals that included articles about God's work in China and, gasp, color maps! This was revolutionary back in 1870. The name of this periodical was "China's Millions."

## **Background of China's Millions Website**

You may have seen many headlines on China such as: "Special Report: China" or "The New China" or "China's Sleeping Dragon Awakens." In recent years China has been the focus of much international media attention. With 1.3 billion people and a surging economy, there is reason for this. Christians, too, are taking an interest in China. Reports of a great work of God in a communist nation have caught our attention. Stories of persecution of house churches have moved our hearts. And yet, even with the most generous estimates of the number of Christians in China, there are still more than 1.2 billion Chinese people—nearly one-fifth of the world's population—without Christ!

In light of this, OMF wanted to produce a new resource about China. In the fall of 2004, we decided now was the time. The purpose of the China's Millions website and the China Resource Pack is similar to Taylor's purpose in 1865. We hope this site will raise awareness of China and serve as an educational tool for those with an interest in this great nation.

Ultimately, however, we hope such knowledge leads to intentional involvement with God's purposes in China. Our desire is that God will use the China's Millions site to mobilize people for his glory. The global Church must be mobilized to minister to China, whether that means going to China, praying for China, giving to God's work in China or welcoming Chinese living abroad. These and other options for involvement are covered under the "Get Involved" section of the website.

## **Content**

The China's Millions website is arranged into five sections (in addition to the "Get Involved" section): History, Religion, People, Culture and Issues.

- **History**—an interactive timeline; stories about key figures from China's past; an article tracing evidence of God's grace toward China throughout its history
- **Religion**—overviews of the major religions in China—Daoism, Buddhism, Atheism, etc.; an inside look at Christianity's presence in the Middle Kingdom, both in the Three-Self (official) churches and the house churches; testimonies of house church Christians
- **People**—a breakdown (by region) of China's provinces; ethnic group profiles (Tibetans, Uyghurs, etc.)
- **Culture**—explores China's rich cultural tradition in the arts and Chinese holidays; looks at the effects of globalization and urbanization; overview of Chinese government and the growing economy
- **Issues**—stories about current events shaping China: 2008 Olympics, territorial issues with Taiwan and Tibet, construction of the Three Gorges Dam

## **Mission of the China's Millions Website**

OMF's mission statement reads, "To glorify God by the urgent evangelization of East Asia's peoples." Of East Asia's more than two billion people, more than 1.3 billion reside in China. The end goal of the China's Millions website coincides with OMF's larger vision. We want to see Chinese people come to Christ! But more workers for the harvest are needed (Luke 10:2), workers who will not only go to China, but who will be active in praying, giving and/or mobilizing others to share the gospel with those in this great nation.

*Tom Douglas (pseudonym) is the senior writer for OMF International's US mobilization team. He is co-author of the China Resource Handbook and the China's Millions website.*

# Tamil Nadu Pastors Conference and 55th Annual Convention

By James Kaiser

**T**he Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI), one of the biggest national alliances of evangelical Christians and organizations in India, has members from nearly forty-five Protestant denominations and more than eighty-eight church-related mission organizations. There are also thousands of individual members. EFI functions with the three-dimensional focus of networking, capacity-building and advocacy.

Every year EFI has one major national level convention and several regional level pastors' conferences. There is also a leadership training programme and several capacity-building seminars.

The theme of the 2006 EFI Annual Convention on 24-27 May 2006 is "I Know Your Deeds...You Have Kept My Word," taken from Revelation 3:8. This year the national level programme will be conducted in southern India. The Bishop of Tirunelvely, Rt. Rev. Dr. S. Jayapaul David, expressed his willingness to host the programme at Sarah Tucker College, Palayamkottai, Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu.

The purpose of the conference is threefold:

- To bring together servants of God to have mutual fellowship, love, encouragement and celebration in the victory of the Lord.
- To equip participants to be bold, strong and faithful in responding to the current challenges and to press on with the broader picture of mission in mind.
- To motivate and mobilize participants to have a synergy in their function in mission, evangelism and church-planting.

The meeting is for young pastors who pastor a congregation, second-line leaders of organizations, assistant pastors, women's ministry leaders, youth leaders, Sunday School leaders and cell group leaders. Participants represent many denominations, including Church of South India, The Evangelical Lutheran Church, Methodist, Evangelical Church of India, Baptist, Salvation Army and Assemblies of God, along with other independent pastors and evangelists.

Anointed speakers from national and international teams will be sharing and teaching in the conference. In addition, pastors and leaders will be involved in selected interest group learning. The pastors and leaders are encouraged to choose from the following relevant topics and attend the sessions regularly: leadership, Christian Education Department of Evangelical Fellowship of India (CEEFI), women, persecution, doubling the congregation, partnership and networking, urban missions, pastor's family and expository sermon skill.

Registration for the conference is Rs. 100/-. For more information, visit [www.efionline.org](http://www.efionline.org).

*Reverend James Kaiser is mission secretary of the Evangelical Fellowship of India.*

## Doubt and Amazement: ProChrist2006 in Europe

By Jan-Peter Graap

**O**n 26 March 2006, the European-wide evangelistic campaign ProChrist concluded after eight days. From 19-26 March 2006 approximately 1.5 million visitors at the central site in Munich, Germany and at local sites in many European countries were reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ, broadcast via satellite. The central event was held in the Olympia Hall in Munich and transmitted to over 1,250 sites in more than twenty European countries, with translation into eighteen languages. More than ten thousand persons also watched the event online, via livestream broadcasting over the Internet.

Reverend Ulrich Parzany, evangelist and main speaker at the ProChrist event, said he was pleased with the results. Throughout the eight evenings, it appeared that many were reached who had never had a chance to hear about Jesus Christ. More than forty-two thousand people followed the invitation to the "meeting point at the cross," which Parzany included every evening at the end of his message. The theme of ProChrist2006 was "Doubt and Amazement." The first ProChrist event was held in 1993 in Essen, Germany with Dr. Billy Graham as the main speaker. ProChrist2006 is the fifth event.

### **ProChrist Takes a Stand for Christian Convert in Afghanistan**

During the ProChrist event, Parzany referred to the recent political situation in Afghanistan. He called for Christians to take a stand for Abdul Rahman, imprisoned for his conversion to Christianity. Parzany stated that "the opportunity to change your religion indicates the legitimacy of religious freedom." He was referring to the 40-year-old Rahman, who was threatened with the death sentence for converting to Christianity. Many of the participating ProChrist sites in Germany became active on his behalf and contacted their parliamentarian. By God's grace, Rahman was released by Afghan authorities and later was given asylum by Italy. Parzany also issued a call for Christians in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina to take the lead with their example of reconciliation.

### **The Message: Changing Your Life**

Every ProChrist evening included an entertaining and diverse programme with music, drama, interviews and an evangelistic message preached by Parzany. Football player Zé Roberto, member of the Brazilian national team and under contract to Bayern Munich, was an interview guest one evening and spoke of his faith in Christ. "Although everything comes to an end, my faith is in an eternal God," he said.

The theme song for ProChrist2006, "Da kann man nur staunen" ("You can only be amazed") opened the satellite broadcast every evening. One verse of the song sings, "You are not alone; God wants to be with his people."

### **A Life-changing Week**

ProChrist offers a special follow-up course called "Living with Jesus Christ." Seventy churches were part of the local coalition for the central event in Munich. At all the sites the emphasis was on inviting both those interested in faith in general and those making a decision for Christ to a follow-up course where they would explore the basics of faith.

Pastor Siegfried Winkler, chairman of the Munich ProChrist coalition, emphasized, "The vision of ProChrist is to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ, to give people an opportunity to enter into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. But that's not all. Churches in Munich offer different possibilities in terms of follow-up after ProChrist to help people gain understanding about the Bible. ProChrist2006 is more than just an event, it's an invitation for anyone who has made a decision for Christ. We want to come alongside them and offer help for their first steps in faith, and help them to become part of the Christian community."

### **Special Programme for Children**

Before the official ProChrist evening programmes started, there was a special "ProChrist for Kids" evangelistic broadcast, targeting children and their families.

In the special pre-programme in Munich, over four hundred children between the ages of six and ten performed "Nebuchadnezzar," a special children's musical, on stage at the Olympia Hall. Then came the satellite broadcast programme under the theme "Da staunst du" ("You'll be amazed"). The young audience clapped, sang along and enthusiastically enjoyed the programme. After much laughter, it became quiet in the auditorium and the "absent-minded" Professor Dr. Theo Logie and his fantastic computer told the Bible story about Bartimaeus. Together with a crew of six eager children, the professor learned that miracles still happen.

At the end of the programme, one girl noted, "I am amazed at how my body is put together." Another boy added, "And miracles still happen!"

### **Two Million Kilometres for Faith**

A special initiative for ProChrist2006 was ProChristmobil, with the "smallest church in the world." Since

May 2005 a fleet of seventy two-seater "smart cars" was on a ten-month tour involving cooperation in evangelistic outreach with the local churches in each city or town visited. Nearly 3,300 drivers volunteered for a week, a month or the entire tour. Over two million kilometres were driven, covering the length and breadth of Germany and Austria, as well as several shorter outreaches in Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia. During that time, the drivers held an estimated sixty thousand conversations about faith.

Never before in the history of the Church in Germany has something like this happened. On 18 May 2005 the initiative was launched in Berlin. Together with the ProChrist board and leaders, Dr. Wolfgang Huber (chairman of the German Lutheran Council) sent the seventy orange-black coloured "smart cars" on their way to reach the world for Christ. The mobile church visited Wildschoenau (Austria), one thousand meters above sea level, as well as the mines of Auguste Victoria, one thousand meters below sea level.

### **Showing Flexibility and Reaching Out**

ProChristmobil had an important function in preparation for the ProChrist2006 event. According to Parzany, "Many people have never experienced church like this. Dialogue on the street, in marketplaces and shopping centres has been welcomed. A lot of people have questions about God and the Church, but have never had a chance to discuss their questions. The 'smallest church in the world' has offered space to discuss, laugh, pray and even make a confession of faith. People have reacted very positively to the initiative."

The commitment of the many volunteer drivers and helpers throughout the tour were remarked upon very positively by Dr. Raimund Utsch, chairman of the ProChrist board. According to Utsch, "Finding more than 2,200 volunteers locally in the different regions visited by the tour has not always been easy, but the commitment of various churches has shown that such a project is possible." The initiative as a whole left a positive impression in many places and shows that faith in God is still possible in our present times.

The "smallest church in the world" helped to make the Christian faith a topic in the public square. In every region, town and city visited, people looked, came and found what they had been missing when it came to religion. They found an open ear and a possibility for conversation, for prayer and for encouragement.

### **Last Stop: Munich**

The last stop for the "smallest church in the world" was Munich, to be part of the largest Christian gathering in Europe. The ProChristmobil project ends after the ProChrist2006 event. The smart cars, which had been leased for the duration of the tour, will be returned. Some local churches and individuals, however, have declared their intention to buy one of the "mobile churches."

*Jan-Peter Graap is responsible for public relations with ProChrist Germany. He is also a pastor and evangelist in the German Federation of Free Evangelical churches.*

## **Joining Together Across Church Divides: The Growth of Prayer Week in the UK**

*By Steve and Gill Houghton*

**I**n May 1999, like many others seeking to increase the prayer life of the Church, I suggested a week of prayer for our church, Prince's Drive Baptist Church in Colwyn Bay, North Wales. One of the suggested events during the week was a prayerwalk. I was disappointed to find only one woman who had shown up to walk our town and pray for it.

### **Beginnings of Prayer Week**

As I walked the town, God began to speak to me about standing in "Agreement in Prayer." It was almost as though I heard him say, "Stand with another church and I will expand it." Later, I suggested this idea to our church leadership, who in turn encouraged me to approach a church nearby, Bethel Christian Fellowship in Old Colwyn. In May 2000 we shared a week of prayer together. A team from Covenant Centre International in Florida, USA, taught us about prayer during this time.

Other churches soon heard about what we were doing and asked if we could join together in prayer the following year. In May 2001 more than twelve churches and prayer groups stood together for our nation.

In addition to having our central venue in Colwyn Bay, we sent out teachers, intercessors and worship groups to towns where churches wanted to hold a meeting of their own.

Soon after this week of prayer, ministers from other towns and villages across North Wales asked if they could join for 2002.

We contacted other network leaders and were soon sharing what God was doing with prayer leaders across the nation. After one particularly significant meeting in Cardiff, most of the recognised prayer ministries across Wales supported this weeklong gathering of unified prayer.

We invited speakers from around the nation to come, share and teach about prayer. Much of our vision is to see the nation pray for the light of the gospel to shine brightly again in our land. Denomination heads have been supportive and eager to offer help wherever needed.

In May 2002 Prayer Week grew into the "National Week of Prayer" for Wales. Between two hundred and four hundred churches participated. In May 2003 over 1,400 churches across the British Isles, Ireland and seventeen other nations stood together in prayer for our nations. Participants understood the importance of joining in one accord for the purpose of seeing the lost reached, the gospel shared and the harvest of souls.

In May 2004 we prayed for ten thousand churches. We saw over four hundred villages, towns and cities across Britain commit to join together in prayer. Churches in over fifty different nations worldwide registered as well.

In May 2005 we ceased counting and simply trusted God to enlarge the place of our tent accordingly. With the inclusion of a Global Day of Prayer we can see that what God has orchestrated is coming to pass before our eyes. And it is awesome.

We look forward to May 2006 in anticipation of what God will do. Prayer Week continues to be a tool to gather people in prayer across denominations, cultural barriers and national barriers.

### **Importance of Prayer Week**

Some may ask why we have Prayer Week. From this, many other questions flow: What purpose does it have? Shouldn't we be praying all year round? What do I do? How do I encourage others around me to participate? Will this week of prayer actually make a difference?

With the growth in Prayer Week, we sometimes find it difficult to keep up with the demands that come with organising and encouraging people to participate in the week's activities. Our foundation lies in testifying to what happens when people take the time to pray. And not only to pray, but to join together and pray across church divides. We must enter into ways of praying that we may not always feel comfortable with. We must press on for the purpose of moving God's heart to respond to the cries of the people.

### **Participation in Prayer Week**

When we join together in prayer, something we cannot understand, comprehend or take hold of happens and we are forced to say, "This happened because we prayed." Although prayer is often a thankless task, God hears every prayer and cry and responds in his timing. My greatest encouragement is knowing that when I stand before God, he will have heard everything in my heart. He will know it all: every moan, groan, laugh and tear. And I am sure that many of my prayers will be answered long after I am gone. It is God's will that we pray. It is his will to respond. It is his will that we join together for prayer. Prayer Week provides a stimulus to gather those who do not usually involve themselves in prayer each week. It provides the focus to bring churches, towns and even whole regions together to pray and gain strength from one another. It helps us learn more about each other. Through unified prayer, barriers fall, fears dissolve and more prayer rises to heaven.

### **Focus During Prayer Week**

Joel 3:11-14 says, "Come quickly, all you nations from every side, and assemble there.

Bring down your warriors, O Lord! Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Je-

hoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side. Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full and the vats overflow—so great is their wickedness! Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.”

These verses have been our focus for some time. They express the only prayer request we have ever asked people to include during Prayer Week, namely, to pray for a great harvest. Beyond this, we ask that those who gather in prayer will know their region, town, church, family and self. We then respectfully suggest participants ask the Holy Spirit what they should be praying for.

Prayer Week is what you make it. It is whatever God lays on your heart to do. For some this means a prayerwalk through the streets with Christians from other churches and denominations. In our home church last May, we opened a prayer center that was open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Other local congregations took the opportunity to hold their weekly prayer meetings in our church. This was a great blessing to all.

The imagination and creativity of God’s people never ceases to amaze me. One of our elders and his wife organised twenty-four hours of the reading of the scriptures. Every minister in our town took part by reading in thirty-minute time slots. The testimonies that came from this time moved us all to tears. Many said of this time, “I didn’t want my time to stop. It all seemed to go so quickly.” Many stayed in the room we were using for hours at a time, listening to God. We followed this time with twenty-four hours of nonstop worship through song.

Participants in other towns invited the public to send in prayer requests; some went to the streets to ask if passers-by needed prayer. One team even had a prayer stall in the local market for the week. There are countless ways to encourage others to join you in prayer. Our DVD, “Your Kingdom Come,” shows a variety of ways people took part in Prayer Week 2005. In Gloucester people from various churches gathered on top of a cathedral tower to pray. In Newcastle organizers hired a coach and had a prayer bus tour the city, stopping at strategic points as they went. In York there was a nighttime torch light parade. Another team climbed the mountains on the Isle of Man with a God-given strategy on how and what to pray. The CD is available at [www.prayerweek.com](http://www.prayerweek.com).

There are different ideas to get people of all ages praying. It takes just one person with the drive, passion, fortitude and God-given heart to galvanise people in entire towns, regions and even nations. You could well be a person like that. Dare to believe that what God has given you is what he wants to happen in your church.

For the past seven years I have been standing on the words of Romans 4:17b: “...the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.”

Although people still question the importance of Prayer Week, I can testify to the fact that what we are doing throughout this nation and surrounding nations is vital. Prayer Week can be anything we want it to be. It is what you make it.

### **A God-given Initiative: Prayer Week 2006**

Prayer Week 2006 will be held 7-14 May. Alistair Cole, prayer coordinator for Elim Pentecostal Church, told me about the plans birthed in one man’s heart for his home county of Derbyshire during last year’s celebration. This man, Greg Hall, saw people gathered in the top corner of his county, on the border with Yorkshire. There they began a weeklong journey across their county, praying along the way. They stopped every night for a “Prayer Celebration” that was hosted by a local church in various towns. By the next morning, the group was larger than when it began.

For this year’s Prayer Week, Hall said to me, “It would be very good if we could link to other county [prayer] walks in the area. It would be good if we could have a common start with people in South Yorkshire. Then, they would go north and we would go south. The overall purpose would be to stimulate and encourage a wave of prayer and mission throughout the county, as well as all of the normal aspects of prayerwalking.” To partner, contact Hall at [gf.hall@virgin.net](mailto:gf.hall@virgin.net).



Many others have a vision to prayerwalk their home county as well. What will you be doing for Prayer week 2006? For ideas on beginning or participating in the week, visit [www.prayerweek.com](http://www.prayerweek.com). There you can download Prayer Week logos and leaflets for your own use. There are also many testimonies of what God has been doing through this even over the past few years. Our prayer is that God will inspire you to participate in this unified week of prayer.

**Steve and Gill Houghton** are organizers for Prayer Week 2006.

## StreetLevel 2006: Changing the Course of Homelessness in Canada

By **Timothy Huff and Julia Goodhew**

**F**rom 29 March to 1 April 2006 nearly 350 individuals, representing some seventy organizations from across Canada gathered at the Westin Hotel in downtown Ottawa, Canada, to participate in StreetLevel 2006, a conference for people who are passionately engaged in finding solutions to poverty and homelessness

Participants represented ministries and agencies of all sizes from around the nation. Frontline workers, agency leaders, board members and church representatives, who daily serve God's people on the streets, gathered to resource, network, challenge one another and seek inspiration. The gathering also included both those who serve in public life and those who serve in the dark and lonely streets of Canada. Some were seasoned in street ministry; others came seeking to learn how best to come alongside, befriend and minister to the homeless and street-involved members of their communities.

The conference was presented by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's, a group which includes fourteen significant Christian organizations committed to working National Roundtable on Poverty and Homelessness among poor and/or homeless youth and adults.

### History of StreetLevel

This was the third StreetLevel conference. StreetLevel was initially born of a vision to bring together street workers from across Canada. The mandate of StreetLevel in its early days was to "affirm the dignity and significance of those serving Christ among his people on the streets of Canada. The conference will bring together street workers for theological reflection, resource sharing and mutual encouragement."

The first conference, which held the theme "You Are Not Alone," was held in April 1994 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Rick Tobias, president and CEO of Yonge Street Mission served as chair. This first conference drew 250 delegates together, and was noted by Christian Week, a bi-weekly Christian national newspaper, as one of the most significant national Christian events in 1994. It featured many well-known speakers on street ministry and poverty issues, as well as renowned author and spiritual leader Father Henri Nouwen as the conference devotional speaker.

In October 1996 a second conference was held in Calgary, Alberta. For this event, Pat Nixon, executive director of the Mustard Seed Street Ministry served as chair. The theme of this conference was "Reclaiming the Future" and included the importance of giving hope and a future to those who call the streets of Canada their home.

Both conferences achieved their goal of nurturing and caring for the spiritual and emotional needs of front-line staff and volunteers. Both had a profound and lasting impact on the lives of those who were present.

### A New Beginning

The most recent StreetLevel gathering was chaired by Tim Huff, director of Light Patrol and Homelessness Initiatives for Youth Unlimited (Toronto Youth For Christ). As with the first two conferences, delegates came to network with their peers, learn from one another and resource and be resourced.

The mandate of the National Roundtable on Poverty and Homelessness is "United Voice, Dynamic Response," which was echoed clearly in the theme of the conference, "Truth-tellers and Peacemakers."

By being truth-tellers, we mean that it is critical we:

- Understand the issues in all their complexity
- Bring clarity to those issues in communicating them to others
- Speak with boldness the truth about poverty, homelessness and our responsibility to act justly in these matters

By being peacemakers, we mean that it is critical we:

- Affirm the dignity of all participants in such conversations and activities
- Speak and act with humility as we advocate for the powerless in the corridors of power
- Behave generously as we seek to build bridges between people or groups with opposing views

Conference organizers and delegates stood together to say to God, to those we work among, to government and to each other that we were rededicating our efforts to ensure that the status quo regarding homelessness in Canada can no longer continue. In his welcome speech, David Adcock, chair of the Roundtable, called those gathered to be of one mind: "We as followers of Christ commit ourselves to learn and advocate for and with our friends who are homeless to ensure that all have a place, all have standing and all have a voice."

### **Conference Highlights**

On the opening day of the conference several members of the Roundtable, including Huff; Greg Paul, chair of the Advocacy Working Group of the Roundtable and executive director of Sanctuary; and Bruce Clemenger, president of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, held a press conference on Parliament Hill to present the "Ottawa Manifesto," a statement developed by the Roundtable. This statement is a call and commitment to a shared vision of Canada in which no person is denied the reality of "home."

The Manifesto was formally presented at the opening banquet of the conference. Nineteen members of Parliament accepted the invitation to attend the opening night, and official greetings were given by representatives from all four federal parties. The evening highlighted the national issue of homelessness that has reached crisis proportions. Guests were offered an introduction to the important work already being done by church and ministry organizations. The night served as a launch pad for a constructive, ongoing dialogue between "street level" ministries and government in seeking solutions.

The Manifesto, endorsed by conference delegates, was printed in the Ottawa Citizen newspaper on Monday, 3 April—the day the 39th Parliament convened in Ottawa. It was subsequently made available online at [www.streetlevel.ca/manifesto](http://www.streetlevel.ca/manifesto). Since posted, a steady stream of individuals from across the country have been adding their voices to those of the Roundtable and delegates of Street Level 2006 in calling the nation to place a high priority on addressing issues of poverty and homelessness.

Tobias gave the opening plenary address entitled "Worthy of Respect: The Mark of Great Nations and Their Leaders." He challenged listeners to be bold in their truth-telling, and not to be passive in their peacemaking. Two-time Juno award winning singer/songwriter Steve Bell led in times of inspiration and celebration throughout the conference.

Sister Sue Mosteller, international coordinator of L'Arche, spoke on intimacy with Jesus during our morning devotional times. Participating alongside Sister Sue was Bill Van Buren, a member of the L'Arche Daybreak community.

There were twenty-three workshops on a range of street-relevant and leadership issues. Experts and seasoned frontline workers led workshops covering topics such as public policy, vision casting and accountability and hardcore street issues.

During one of the final sessions, one frontline worker handed a note to the conference chair which read, "We are not going home from this conference the way we came. We have been uplifted, we have been changed."

### **Looking Ahead**

StreetLevel 2006, an event more than two years in the making, created a national turning point. It is lead-

ing us to understand and act in new ways in changing the course Canada takes regarding homelessness. This in turn will be a model for other nations as they deal with similar issues.

The week following the conference was filled with queries from media, interested individuals and other faith-based groups actively involved in addressing issues of poverty and homelessness in Canada. The momentum is growing and the potential is immeasurable. StreetLevel 2006 secured the foundations of an ongoing coalition of like-minded ministries and agencies from across Canada committed to working together to raise the level of life—physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually—for those in our communities who are poor or homeless.

The National Roundtable on Poverty and Homelessness will be meeting in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the first week of June to discuss further plans and strategies which include the timing, structure and growth for the next national StreetLevel conference.

*Timothy Huff is chair of Street Level 2006.*

*Julia Goodhew is research and project coordinator for the National Roundtable on Poverty and Homelessness.*

## Second Annual Global Day of Prayer Seeks to Unite Millions Worldwide

*By Bob Bakke*

**O**n Pentecost Sunday, 4 June, Christians from over two hundred nations will approximate the day foreseen by Habakkuk when “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14). This will day be the second annual Global Day of Prayer (GDOP).

Last year, the GDOP had its gravitational center in the non-Western world and its main offices were located in Cape Town, South Africa. An estimated 200 million participants from 156 nations met at ten thousand venues (small villages and major stadiums) worldwide to pray. There were also four international telecasts (Taipei, Taiwan; Jakarta, Indonesia; Cape Town-Cairo, Egypt; and Dallas, Texas, USA). The GDOP, which is under the theological umbrella of the Apostle’s Creed, has encouraged remarkable partnerships. Stories abound of prayer unity between Protestant and historic churches. During the last GDOP Charismatic, Evangelical and Orthodox Christians in Cairo helped comprise an effort among all seventeen denominations of Egypt; the first time this had occurred. Similar phenomena were reported in other places around the world.

### Overview of the Global Day of Prayer

Some may think the Global Day of Prayer is an event. It is not. It is an annual, five-year, 101-day process, the fountainhead of which is Pentecost. It creates allies among pastors, churches, marketplace leaders and civil servants. It unites the worlds of churches, non-profit organizations, businesses and government. The GDOP gives local church leaders a vision of transformation and multiplication by using the book of Acts and a “10.1.90” model.

### 10.1.90 Model Defined

In Acts 1 the disciples prayed for ten days between The Ascension and Pentecost. In Acts 2:1, when the Holy Spirit came, the whole city took notice. In Acts 2:42ff, those transformed by the Holy Spirit into a global Church (i.e. from “every nation”) proceeded to transform the city of Jerusalem. The first Church did this through praying in unity and with fervency, planting churches, creating intimate fellowship (small groups), remaining devoted to truth (discipleship), sharing their possessions, giving to the poor, filling the streets with awe and wonder and adding to their number those saved (evangelism).

The GDOP presents to local church leaders a new, simple, comprehensive model that aims at exalting God and transforming both people and places. Local leaders are a part of something almost eschatological, yet altogether measurable. The GDOP is preceded by ten days of intercession and fasting (millions of partic-

ipants worldwide registered for this in the first GDOP). There is one day of public-venue praying, which gives way to "Ninety Days of Blessing," or collaborative ministry, in communities. These days of blessing arise from the dreams and visions of local leaders and can include distributing Bibles, evangelizing, building low-income homes, refurbishing homes, sending out medical and dental teams and feeding the poor and vulnerable.

The GDOP is global and exciting. Although there is great freedom in this gathering of prayer, there are also firm parameters. By having the gravitational center of the GDOP in the developing world, the GDOP can act as a bridge to various Christian universes. It includes the latest communications technologies, yet can be implemented more simply among tribal peoples.

### **The 2006 Global Day of Prayer**

To date, eight hundred cities in India are mobilizing; one hundred cities and the national stadium in Jakarta, India are organizing; churches in Singapore have secured their national stadium; and the sports stadium in Nairobi, Kenya and the Cave Church in Cairo, Egypt will connect by satellite. Houston, Texas, USA reports a coalition of five hundred churches at work, and Hong Kong's coalition exceeds three hundred ministries. In North America over two hundred cities and towns across Mexico, the US and Canada are expected to participate. In addition to large cities, small towns take part as well. The handful of Christians gathered in a living room in a country where it is dangerous to follow Christ is as pleasing to God as a stadium filled with thousands free to be prayer warriors in the open air. Check the website, [www.globaldayof-prayer.com](http://www.globaldayof-prayer.com), to make sure your nation is registered.

The Global Day of Prayer casts vision among local, national and international leaders and provides the multimedia graphical and text resources needed to pray, organize, raise funds and collaborate. Our goal with the GDOP is a new era in the Church where the Spirit of God is poured out; where men and women are reconciled to God and to each other; and where a revolution is birthed regarding how Christians relate to their community—all within the contexts of the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. As the first GDOP proved, our goal to "cover the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord" is not wishful thinking. The timing is ripe.

*Dr. Bob Bakke is executive director of the Global Day of Prayer North America, under the auspices of the National Prayer Committee. He is also a member of the International Prayer Council and the executive producer of the North American broadcast originating from Dallas, Texas, USA.*

## **Head of UK Evangelical Alliance Backs Weekend of Prayer for Children at Risk**

**M**ore than two million Christians in over one hundred countries are expected to unite in an unprecedented weekend of prayer for children at risk on 3-4 June 2006.

"With half of the world's children 'at risk', we need God to intervene," said Reverend Joel Edwards, general director of the Evangelical Alliance. "Join in the World Weekend of Prayer for Children at Risk in 2006, as God's people unite on their behalf."

After ten years of success with the World Wide Day of Prayer for Children at Risk, this year will see record growth and expansion in the annual event. Viva Network in partnership with Oakseed Ministries and the Global Day of Prayer movement, will facilitate a unique worldwide prayer event for children at risk.

The weekend of prayer will highlight the terrible plight facing millions of children around the world. Last year more than 1.2 million people prayed during the World Wide Day of Prayer for Children at Risk, resulting in more than three million hours of prayer.

Many Christians will pray because of testimonies of answered prayer from previous years. HIV positive children have been healed, child soldiers have been released and governments have improved children's lives through changes in legislation.

This year's prayer theme is "Transform," based on God's promises in Isaiah 61. Viva Network has produced resources around this theme to help people pray over the weekend using stories, statistics and children's activities—including a PowerPoint presentation and a service plan to help churches and individuals organizing prayer events.

Whether you pray with your family over breakfast, hold a special prayer meeting at your church or meet in a football stadium, Viva Network would like to hear about it! Log on to [www.viva.org/pray](http://www.viva.org/pray) to register what you are doing and see what else is going on around the world.

"UNICEF called 2005 a year of unprecedented disasters for children," said Edwards. "We must keep seeking God for protection and change in their lives."

For more information on this year's World Weekend of Prayer for Children at Risk, please go to [www.viva.org/pray](http://www.viva.org/pray) or email [pray@viva.org](mailto:pray@viva.org).

(This article was edited from a Viva Network news release.)

## WORLD PERSPECTIVES

### The Importance of Prayer in Evangelism

By John Godson

**J**esus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit" (John 3:5-6).

Prayer is communion with God. It is going into God's presence to be with him. Prayer is bringing God and his resources into our earthly realities. Prayer is drawing upon divine resources to influence human reality. Prayer is breathing the breath of heaven. It is the master key to everything we have been called to do. Without it, our activities are empty, human and lack the breath of heaven. Our works will be temporal and will never last.

In evangelism, the need is even more acute. Evangelism is snatching souls from the grips of Satan and bringing them into God's kingdom. This means conflict between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. Without deep, fervent and intense prayer, the results of our efforts will be meager and beggarly. Why should we pray? Why is prayer so important in the work of evangelism? Here are eight reasons.

**1. The knowledge of God.** The most important reason we need to pray is not just to evangelize; rather, it is to get to know God. Those who spend time with God know him better. Those who know their God shall be strong. Those who abide in God's presence are those who bear fruit. Jesus said in John 15:5, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit. Apart from me you can do nothing."

**2. Release of laborers.** Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 9:37-38, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." True laborers are released into the harvest through our prayers.

**3. Evil forces opposing the harvest are bound.** Evangelism is frontier spiritual warfare. It involves physically going into enemy territory and releasing prisoners. Satan is not just going to sit down and watch us do that. He is going to do everything in his power to stop us. That was why Jesus said in Mark 3:27, "No one can enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house." Jesus has given us power such that whatever we bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever we loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matthew 18:18). He also said in Luke 10:19, "I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you." Greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world.

**4. Release of God's presence and power for evangelism.** Prayer, one of the greatest tools God has given us, is also the one that is the most neglected. Prayer releases God's presence in our lives and empowers us as we reach out to others. A very modern illustration would be the mobile phone. If we use it continuously without charging it, there will come a time when the battery will die. No matter how expensive and how modern it is, it is useless unless you recharge it. Similarly, if we do not get charged, we are useless as a force in expanding God's kingdom. A praying Christian is filled with God's presence, power, boldness and unction. It is the anointing that breaks the yoke, not our eloquence and logic.

**5. Prayer prepares us to receive answers.** When we pray, we are brought to a spiritual level where we can receive answers to our prayers. A mass conversion of souls to a dead and worldly church is worse than if they had never heard the gospel. God touches and changes our hearts as we passionately pray for the harvest. We are prepared to love them and make sacrifices. Our coldness and indifference are turned into passion and enthusiasm for the lost. This creates a warm and loving spiritual atmosphere where these spiritual children can grow and flourish.

**6. The fruits are lasting.** Souls won through prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit are different from souls won out of human ingenuity, logic and wisdom. Such souls have come into a place of being born again spiritually. Jesus said in John 3:6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." We can use all the human and material resources we want and get results, but these results will be temporal and have no lasting spiritual impact. Prayer changes this reality.

**7. We can also evangelize by praying for people.** Do you know what will happen when we begin to really pray for our friends, neighbors and family? Do you know how they will feel when we ask them what we can pray for them about? Do you know what a testimony it will be when they receive answers to our prayers? Prayer is not just an indirect tool in evangelism, we can also evangelize by praying.

**8. The example of Jesus.** Jesus prayed and preached the gospel. It was his habit to wake up a great while before it was day to go to a solitary place to pray. He sometimes spent all night in prayer. He often separated himself to be alone with God. Jesus is our example. If Jesus, being the Son of God, needed to spend so much time in prayer, how much more do we need to spend time with God?

It is not enough to talk, write and read about prayer. We need to pray. The men and women God used in the annals of history had different qualities and came from different backgrounds; however, they had one thing in common: they prayed. We are living in a generation that has all the material resources needed to evangelize the world. So why have we not completed the task? Why has twenty-seven percent of the world never heard the gospel? Because we do not pray. Much evangelistic effort and money is wasted in the name of missions. We cannot accomplish what God has committed into our hands unless we make a full use of the resources (including prayer!) that he has put to our disposal.

Let us make prayer a conspicuous part of our lives. Let us cry out to God for help. Let us humble ourselves and declare our spiritual bankruptcy. Let us seek him with all our hearts. God will hearken. He will send revival. May God teach us what an infinite resource he has placed at our disposal. May he give us the faith and tenacity to take hold of him for our generation.

E.M. Bounds once said, "We are constantly on a stretch, if not on a strain, to devise new methods, new plans, new organizations to advance the church and secure enlargement and efficiency for the gospel.... What the church needs today is...men whom the Holy Spirit can use—men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Spirit does not flow through methods, but through men."

Let God work through us in prayer.

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# Prayer and Fasting for Evangelism

By Helene NSIN OUM

## What is World Evangelism?

Evangelism is a way to gain unbelievers to God. We cannot evangelize without prayer. Prayer is the key ingredient in evangelism; we must pray before, during and after we tell others about Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Fasting is choosing to remove the distractions, giving the Lord God our full attention and asking him to be at work as we evangelize. Combining prayer with fasting connects the natural to the supernatural.

World evangelism is the war between light and darkness. It is the war between Christ and antichrist. In the Bible Satan is described as the prince of this world. World evangelism is an attack on Satan's kingdom; it is releasing people from his kingdom into the kingdom of God. To combat supernatural evil forces we need both prayer and fasting. Although regular prayer has power, fasting brings added power which shines the light on Satan and his activities. We need both in certain cases: "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting" (Mark 9:29).

When believers seek God by praying and fasting, they are acknowledging that this is God's world and his battle. It will be his hand that moves the world to accomplish his plan. Prayer and fasting in world evangelism is prayer evangelism. The outcome will be seeing the world evangelized. Victories in the spiritual battlefield and success in the spiritual harvest can only be accomplished by God. Jesus' task on earth was to preach the kingdom of God (Mark 1:14-15). It is critical to note that he began his earthly ministry of spreading the kingdom of God with prayer and fasting.

When believers pray faithfully and fervently (James 5:16) for those outside the kingdom, wonderful things happen. Evangelistic praying births in the heart of the intercessor a Christ-like and Christ-engendered love that motivates the believer to reach out to lost persons and look for faith-sharing opportunities.

## Benefits of Prayer and Fasting

- Fasting and prayer helps to focus your heart on God who alone can release his supernatural power in your life. He will give you wisdom and direction.
- Jesus encourages fasting and prayer for deliverance from evil spirits.
- Fasting and prayer breaks the darkness that overwhelms and hinders the nations and defeats the territorial spirit that hinders word evangelism (Daniel 10:13).
- God will take our problems as we fast and pray in humility. Our battle becomes God's battle (2 Chronicles 20:15).

## Types of Fasting

(Always consult your doctor before taking part in any fast.)

- The complete or absolute fast (a.k.a. the total fast) allows for no food or drink. The maximum time for a total fast is three days and three nights. See Ezra 10:6, Esther 4:16 and Acts 9:9. - The supernatural fast, lasting forty days and forty nights, does not allow for food or water. Moses took part in this type of fast, as did Jesus. It requires supernatural power. Only God can help you keep this fast.
- The normal fast consists of fasting from sunset to sunset. Only liquids can be consumed.
- The partial fast consists of refraining from eating certain foods such as desserts. See Daniel 2:3 and 10:2-3.

## How to Observe Times of Prayer and Fasting

Fasting and prayer are commands of God with eternal promises. There are many ways to go about prayer and fasting:



- Fast a normal fast or a partial fast.
- Fast one day or two days a week, or whenever you can.
- Spend more time in prayer and memorize special portions of scripture. Think upon John 6:25, where Jesus said, "I am the bread of life."
- Read through the four Gospels.

## **Recommendations to Accelerate Prayer and Fasting for Evangelism**

- Set a national day of prayer and fasting in the country for which you are praying.
- Make the first Friday of each month a fast day for the Muslim world and for Christians living in Muslim-dominated countries.
- Select a time as a group to commit to pray silently for two minutes. Pray the same requests simultaneously to God through Jesus our Lord. This is united and persistent prayer.
- Pray for four homes in your neighborhood. This is called "neighborhood praying." Pray specifically for those people to come to know Jesus Christ.

God is opening the doors for world evangelism as we engage in prayer evangelism on our knees with fasting and prayer. Look to the Bible. It is constantly challenging us to pray.

*Helene NSIN OUM is a member of Full Gospel Mission Yaoundé, which collaborates with other groups of prayer working with Open Doors Missions Cameroon. She also works with a ministry in Cameroon that prays for and evangelizes young girls and women.*

## **Prayer, Evangelism and Human Methodology**

*By Phil Miglioratti*

**A**fter a lifelong ministry devoted to evangelism, Dr. Bill Bright, as quoted by Eddie Smith of the US Prayer Center, said, "I am waiting for the day when I can retire from Campus Crusade [for Christ] and be promoted to intercessor."

Is it possible that Dr. Bright has given to us the secret to successful evangelism? Does this simple quip actually have much to teach us about the relationship between prayer, evangelism and human methods? Is this legendary leader an illustration of how talking with God about people and talking with people about God are meant to relate to one another?

According to Dr. Bright, "Successful evangelism depends on prayer." It is instructive that he does not credit human methods, resources or training as the source of success in witnessing to others. Referring to the worldwide ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ, a strong and strategic source of methods, resources and training for the Church, Dr. Bright states, "It was born in prayer, its growth has been through prayer and its future depends on prayer." We all concur, but we must understand this indicates something beyond merely adding more prayer to our personal lives and ministry meetings. The challenge is to discover the biblical relationship between prayer and human methods as we seek to obey the Great Commission to make disciples of all peoples by communicating and sharing the good news of God in Christ.

Though I had flown in jet airplanes many times, it was not until I surveyed the six-seater airplane that was about to take me deep into the bush villages of Zambia that I made an obvious and elementary observation. For the first time I thought about the need for an airplane to have two wings. Had the pilot pondered our journey with only one of the wings, I would not have needed any counsel to wait for the next plane! This is a silly notion to make a serious point.

Prayer and human methods are the two wings required for the airplane of evangelism to successfully get off the ground, fly safely at the appropriate altitude and arrive at its intended destination. Prayer without evange-

listic objectives, goals and plans produces personal piety but little witnessing activity. Human methodology that fails to precede and proceed from prayer, is merely human effort and hence, ineffective. As Dr. Bright states, "What is the greatest thing you could do to help somebody else? The answer...is obvious: To introduce them to Jesus Christ." The answer is obvious. It is the method of introduction that is not.

It is my contention we operate evangelistically with an overrated reliance on human methods and an undervalued partnership with prayer. For some, progress has been to add a prayer support team to an already planned activity. Serious training in intercession or spiritual warfare has become a newfound goal in many circles. Our leaders are beginning to see the need to spend more quality time in prayer, hence, the rise of Prayer Summits and Pastors' Prayer Groups. These are good and each indicates a growing awareness of the greater role we must afford to prayer. But we must go further.

### **Looking Biblically at the Importance of Prayer**

The first recorded prayer in the Bible is closely linked to human methodology. In Genesis 1:27-30 we are told the Lord created man in his own image (presumably so that relational communication could take place). After blessing both the man and the woman (or, possibly as a sign of blessing them), God spoke to them, assigning them the role of stewarding their environment. By speaking, God initiated a conversation between the creator and the created which we define as prayer. By assigning, God issued the authority and responsibility to decide how to creatively apply themselves to the accomplishment of his command.

In other words, prayer, the conversation between God and man, was the means by which God revealed his will. How could it be any other way, not only at that time, when the written word of God did not yet exist, but even now, when that written word of God is intended to authoritatively guide and guard this holy conversation (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17)? As we approach God's word (the text), prayer must be both pretext and context. Prayer must precede human plans and strategies and must also be the environment in which they are sought, adapted and implemented. Prayer that leads to successful evangelism, both one-to-one and on a large group scale, must become more than the opening and closing ritual of our strategy meetings. As many have said, prayer is the strategy!

Moses, in Numbers 20:2-12, is both a good example and a warning to us. He brings the expressed need of the people to the Lord in prayer (Verse 6 reads, "Moses and Aaron went from the assembly to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and fell facedown, and the glory of the LORD appeared to them."). He receives specific instruction on how the Lord will solve the problem and he even blesses those who were in opposition to God's appointed leaders (Verse 8 reads, "Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink."). Moses, even after having inquired of the Lord and receiving specific instruction, proceeds to, shall we say, improvise. He strikes rather than speaks (v. 11), but more importantly, he takes credit for the result and makes no mention of God (v. 10). What was found in prayer was not followed-through in prayer. This was a sign of Moses' lack of trust and regard for the Lord's honor (v. 12). Starting in prayer does not give the evangelist permission to act in accordance with his or her own ideas for implementation.

Joshua encounters the Lord himself (Joshua 6:2) as he scopes out Jericho for the ensuing battle (5:13). Is this, as some suggest, the first prayerwalk? Does the Lord appear as a response to Joshua's inquiring prayer as he walks onsite to gain insight into the stronghold of the city (6:1)? We do know the Lord reveals a strategy (6:2-5) that proves to be very effective (6:20). We also know Joshua then gave precise instructions to the people regarding their silent marching, the number of times around the city each day, the blowing of the trumpets, the rescuing of Rahab the prostitute and the importance of devoting the city to God (6:6-19). Our real lesson, however, is when we see the victorious leader take a shortcut in the very next conflict by accepting a strategy that he did not receive directly from the Lord while in prayer (7:2). The report of the men who spied out the next city, Ai, was probably accurate and their strategy sounds reasonable. However, it was based upon what they could see and hear with their natural eyes and ears. God did not empower his people; they were routed by the enemy (v. 4), with the result that "the hearts of the people melted and became like water" (v. 5). As Dr. Bright has said, "We cannot depend on any human methodology. If ideas are not born in God and energized by his Spirit, we are wasting our time." How then must we wed prayer and methods?

## Looking at the Book of Acts for Prayer Guidance

It has been said that if we want to see a Book of Acts revival, we must reinstitute the Book of Acts prayer meeting. The Lord's command for the early Church to wait in the Upper Room (Acts 1) was a way of preparing them for the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon all believers. But was it also meant to be a first command for all congregations who follow in their steps? Should not we also gather in unity, in expectancy and in faith that the Holy Spirit not only can, but will make God's will known and direct our steps? In Ephesians 5:18 Paul's command to be filled with the Spirit is plural; it is an imperative for the congregation, not merely the individual. Pentecost, while being a unique event, is meant to be perpetually remembered when the body of Christ, individually and corporately, bears witness out of prayer-birthed opportunities, prayer-based ministries and prayer-bathed activities. Then the Lord will add to the Church those who are being saved (Acts 2:47).

We must remember when Paul took his first step in planting a new church in Philippi, his first thought was to look for the place of prayer (Act 16:13, 16). May I suggest he did so, at least partly, so that he could partner with those who were already faithfully inquiring of the Lord?

We must also not forget the Council in Acts 15 when they declared their decision by saying "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" (v. 28). We must not forget the church at Antioch in Acts 13 who set apart Barnabas and Saul because they heard the Holy Spirit speak while they were worshipping the Lord and fasting. This is a description of prayer that is all too unfamiliar to our planning meetings, boards and committees. The Jerusalem Council and the church in Antioch are examples of both the balance and the sequence of prayer and human response.

Several times Paul exhorts the church in the city to pray toward evangelism. The church in Colosse is challenged to be devoted to prayer that opens a door for the gospel to be shared personally with those who do not yet know Christ (Colossians 4:2-6). The Ephesus Christians are told to pray that the evangelist will have the proper words to fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel (Ephesians 6:19). Believers in Philippi are told to do everything by prayer (Philippians 4:6). This includes receiving and casting vision, assessing needs and resources, planning a strategy, choosing tactics and evaluating successes and next steps.

When Jesus turned the tables in the Temple, it was not primarily because the vendors were selling t-shirts and tapes in the lobby. He was angry because they had blocked the path and drowned out the sounds of worship (praise and prayer) that would draw unbelievers to investigate the one true God. The religious establishment had taken their focus off their responsibility of connecting people and God (evangelism) because they thought they could trust their traditions and methods without constant conversation (prayer) and modification (Holy Spirit inspired methods and ideas).

Sadly, even the commitment to prayer is not a guarantee of balance. The church in Jerusalem earnestly prayed to God for Peter, who had been thrown into prison (Acts 12:5). However, they were incredulous when the servant girl Rhoda said he was standing right outside their door. The church was praying strenuously but not strategically. Strategic prayer expects God to work and asks to be prepared for his often-surprising answers. Strategic prayer decries the problem and expresses the need, but also seeks the solution, which is a God-ordained strategy and methodology.

### Now What?

I would suggest that the answer to balancing prayer and human methods in evangelism is to be found in prayer. This is the asking-waiting-listening-obeying type of prayer experienced when one inquires of the Lord. There must be the depth and patience in prayer that many of us may know as individuals but few know as congregations, ministry teams or 501C-3 (non-profit) organizations. This is not mysterious or complicated prayer. It is the simple, be-still-and-listen-to-your-God kind of dependence, one that refuses to press on until and unless we hear the familiar voice of our good shepherd. This kind of prayer will leave us filled, not with human might or methods, nor by the power of our plans and programs, but by his Spirit.

(This presentation was originally presented at the Billy Graham Center Roundtable. This article may not be reproduced in any form without the author's permission.)

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# Prayer – The Secret to an Open Door

By David Morel

**H**ave you ever wondered why people are indifferent to the gospel of Jesus Christ? Scripture says that the gospel is a mystery which has been hidden for ages and generations (Colossians 1:26-27). The Apostle Paul understood that the gospel is a mystery and confirms this in Ephesians 6:19, “and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel” (emphasis mine).

The American Heritage Dictionary gives one definition of “mystery” as follows: A religious truth that is incomprehensible to reason and knowable only through divine revelation. Therefore, the gospel of Jesus Christ is knowable only through divine revelation, not through reason. In Matthew 16:15-17 Simon Peter recognized that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. But Peter did not come to that realization through his own reason. God the Father revealed it to him by divine revelation. Jesus confirms this in John 6:44: “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.”

## Evangelism Founded in Prayer

The result is that roughly ninety-five percent of all Christians in the US have never led anyone to accept Jesus Christ as their savior. Our approach is too often man-centered and based on reason. We need God-centered evangelism. This first and foremost includes prayer. Psalm 126:5 says, “Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy.” If we passionately cry out to God for the lost, we shall see many come to Christ. It is well documented that every great revival or awakening has been birthed out of prayer.

In 1 John 5:14-15 we find that “if we ask anything according to his will...we have the petitions that we have asked of him.” God will give us what we ask if our prayer is according to his will. The following two scripture passages clearly tell us God’s will for the unsaved:

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:3-4).

Since God is not willing that any should perish, and God answers prayers that are according to his will, we simply need to pray fervently for the lost. John 16:24 says, “Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.”

Paul was one of the greatest evangelists of all time. He had many open doors to share the gospel:

“Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles” (Acts 14:27, emphasis mine).

“But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great and effective door has opened to me” (1 Corinthians 16:8-9).

“Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord” (2 Corinthians 2:12-13).

Many people came to know Jesus Christ through these open doors. When God opens a door, people come to Christ. Why did Paul have so many open doors for the gospel of Jesus Christ? We can trace these open doors directly to Paul’s prayer life as exemplified in Colossians 4:2-6: “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”

This passage clearly shows us the importance of prayer in evangelism. Verses two and three tell us to be earnest and vigilant in prayer. If the Bible tells us to pray a certain way, then we are praying according to God’s will and we can expect God to hear and answer our prayers. This is evident in 1 John 5:14-15.

Verse three tells us one of the things for which to pray: "that God would open to us a door for the word." This is why Paul had so many open doors for the gospel. God simply answered his prayer. If you and I pray this way, we too will have open doors for sharing the gospel with unbelievers. Prayer is the secret to an open door.

Verses three and four tell us to pray that we may "speak the mystery of Christ" and "make it manifest as I ought to speak." In other words, we are praying that God will give us the very words that will unveil or reveal the mystery of the gospel. Since God must reveal the gospel to the unbeliever, it is vital that God put his words in our mouth, just as he did for Moses in Exodus 4:12 ("Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.") and Jeremiah in Jeremiah 1:9 ("Then the LORD put forth his hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: 'Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.'").

God will still do this for us today according to John 14:26: "But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." Finally, verse six enhances this prayer for our speech to be always with grace and that we would know how to answer all of their questions.

### **Testimony of Prayer**

One day I boarded a plane and prayed the above Colossians prayer. Within minutes a young man sat in the seat next to me. The plane took off and I soon found myself engaged in a pleasant conversation. The young man seemed very bright. I said, "You sure have your head screwed on right for a young man." He replied, "No, you don't know me very well," and he began to pour out his heart.

He was besieged with personal problems and was hurting deeply. I pulled out a New Testament and after some discussion, shared the plan of salvation with him. He looked at me and said, "God put you next to me, didn't he?" I said, "Let me tell you what I prayed as I got on the plane," and I quoted the Colossians prayer. Tears began streaming down his face.

This could not be orchestrated. This was the handiwork of a sovereign God in answer to specific prayer. Prayer is indeed the secret to an open door.

*David Morel is founder of Biblical Evangelism Ministries, Inc. Through various ministries he has recruited more than four thousand people worldwide for evangelistic outreach.*

## **Practical Prayer Evangelism**

*By John Edmiston*

### **Praying for the Lost Works**

In 1993 I led a Bible study series with a group of twenty or so rather boisterous university students who asked to be taught about prayer. In the process we had a book for the prayer points. This book contained three columns: Request, Date Entered and Date Answered. The students started praying for their friends' salvation, and within a couple of weeks the answers began, two or three people coming to know the Lord every week, and then often ending up at the Bible study. Every person whose name was in the book for prayer eventually came to Christ. The prayer journal became known as the "book of life." If memory serves me correctly, about twenty-five people came to Christ through prayer alone that semester. Prayer worked. Even with inexperienced believers who hated witnessing, prayer worked and people were saved.

### **Key Ingredients to Successful Prayer Evangelism**

- A group of believers gathered in unity (Matthew 18:19-20)
- Being taught how to pray (Luke 11:1)
- Praying in faith (Matthew 21:22, Mark 11:24)
- For the lost (Romans 10:1-3, 1 Timothy 2:1-8)
- Who are their neighbors (Luke 10: 25-37)
- Lovingly by name (Exodus 33:17, Isaiah 43:1)
- Regularly and persistently (Luke 18:1-8)
- And recording the answers and building faith (1 Chronicles 16:4)

## Why Prayer Evangelism Works

- Prayer wrestles against powers and principalities (Ephesians 6:10-20)
- That keep people in spiritual bondage (Ephesians 2:1-4, 4:17-19)
- And that can deceive them away from the truth (1 Timothy 4:1-4)
- Prayer also opens people's spiritual eyes (Colossians 1:9, Ephesians 1:17-19)
- And assists with the Holy Spirit's work of convicting them of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8)

## How Can a Local Church or Home Church Begin Prayer Evangelism?

First, teach your people how to pray (Luke 11:1). Christians generally have to be taught how to pray. It is a process of learning about who we are in Christ, our spiritual authority and how the promises of God can be claimed in faith. Free material on how to pray can be found at [www.aibi.ph/prayer](http://www.aibi.ph/prayer).

Second, get a prayer journal and use it. Faith is built when we see prayer answered. It is good to record the deeds of the Lord. Get a large notebook and rule it into three columns, a wide column for the prayer request and two narrower columns for date entered and date answered. Make the prayer journal part of every prayer meeting and weekly bible study group.

Third, pray regularly and persistently. Pray each week at the Bible study or home church meeting. Pray for all the unanswered items each week. Be faithful; God desires for people to know him.

Fourth, pray in faith and expect answers (Matthew 21:22, Mark 11:24). The scriptures tell us to (1) pray "believing we have received" faith and (2) pray with holy expectation that our prayers are reaching heaven.

Fifth, pray lovingly by name for people. Names are important to God who "knows us by name" and "redeems us by name" (Isaiah 43:1, Exodus 33:17). Prayer that is directed personally and lovingly in faith, on the basis of redemption of a soul, is powerful.

Finally, pray for "neighbors who are lost." God has put us next to certain people for their salvation. There is often a divine purpose in whom we meet and whom the Lord places on our hearts. Ask God to give you a prayer burden for specific people, whether they be family, friends or neighbors.

Any group of three believers can do this. It does not require you to "be an evangelist," hand out tracts or knock on doors. If someone wants a gospel presentation you can direct them to an online gospel presentation such as [www.aibi.ph/articles/gospel1.htm](http://www.aibi.ph/articles/gospel1.htm).

You don't even need to form a committee! Just get your notebook, your Bible, a couple of friends—and pray for the lost. You will see God move hearts.

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

## PEOPLES OF THE WORLD

### Dwindling Water Supplies Around the World a Cause for Concern

*By Justin Long*

**W**ater is required for life, and fortunately the earth has a lot of it. Unfortunately, most of it is saltwater, unusable for consumption. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Environment Programme, only 2.5% of the 1.3 trillion cubic kilometers (km<sup>3</sup>) of water on earth is fresh, usable water.

Much of this is unevenly distributed and located far from human populations. Two-thirds of all fresh water

is stored in glaciers and permanent snow cover, virtually inaccessible and unusable by the vast majority of those who are thirsty. The remaining one-third is found in groundwater (soil moisture, swamp water, permafrost and deep underground water reserves), as well as lakes and rivers. (This table gives an overview of water supplies by region.)

To look at it differently, we are stuck with one-third of 2.5% to support a world population that is adding one person every second. The water supply is not increasing, but the number of people who need to drink it is. Add to this the fact that many groundwater resources are shared between various countries, particularly between ones that are already water-stressed and which have rapidly growing populations. To illustrate this, two internationally-defined standards are shown in this same table.

The first, IRWR, totals each country's Internally-owned Renewable Water Resources. These are water supplies generated by surface run-off and groundwater recharge inside the country's borders. This is caused by the natural water cycle.

The second, ARWR, shows the Actual Renewable Water Resources that are theoretically available. This includes IRWR as well as water from upstream countries and volumes from agreements or treaties between countries. For both IRWR and ARWR, a "pc" column is given to show the per capita (per person) amount of water available. The "Sh%" is the shared percentage or the percentage of the actual water supplies that come from outside the country. Globally, twenty-one percent of all water supplies are shared, which means they are subject to disagreements, tensions and even wars.

Scientists slot countries into three categories (water-scarce, water-stressed and water-abundant), depending on how much water is available for withdrawal each year (based on ARWR per capita). Nations are water-scarce when available water is less than one thousand m<sup>3</sup> per person per year and water-stressed when water is under 1,600 m<sup>3</sup> per person per year. Nations having more than 1,600 m<sup>3</sup> are water-abundant. Some twenty-five nations are considered water-scarce; another thirteen are considered water-stressed.

Column seven in the table, WW, represents Water Withdrawals, the amount each country uses yearly from its water supply. Some of this is lost forever; however, much of it can be reclaimed. Some water used to process waste (dishes or laundry for example) passes into sewers and from there into water treatment systems. It is then cleaned and put back into use again.

Column eight in the table, WW %, is Water Withdrawal as a percentage of the ARWR. Since some of this is lost forever, when WW% becomes too high it is a matter of concern. This table shows examples of this type of loss (from Vital Water, published by the UNEP), including the virtual loss of the Aral Sea, once one of the largest inland lakes in the former Soviet Union. This was caused by rerouting the rivers that fed it in order to irrigate cotton-producing lands. As a result, there has been significant environmental damage in the area.

Finally, column nine in the table, Acc%, shows the percentage of each country's population that has access to safe drinking water (this is taken from the World Christian Database). Today, more than a quarter of the world has no access. Given current trends, it is estimated that two out of every three people will live in water-stressed areas by the year 2025. In Africa alone, twenty-five countries will experience water stress by 2025. Further, water-borne diseases from fecal pollution of surface waters continue to be a major cause of illness in developing countries. Polluted water is estimated to affect the health of 1.2 billion people and contributes to the death of fifteen million children annually.

So far there have been no wars fought over water supply. This happy state is not likely to continue. Water is a sticking point between Israelis and Palestinians. Debate in North Africa over vital water supplies is often sharp and pointed. The devastation of the Aral Sea illustrates how water management can alter the future of a region. If one nation were to do this to another, it might be cause for war. Already there are accusations of water theft.

This is particularly critical for the unreached peoples of the world, as they are often found in places where water is particularly unavailable. The nations of North Africa and Asia are among the most water-stressed. It is ironic that those lacking water are also lacking the gospel of Jesus, who called himself "the living water."



Christians should be engaged in issues related to water provision. They should be involved in finding new ways to provide safe, clean water for drinking, cooking and sanitation to the world's poor. Surely, the Jesus who was concerned enough at a wedding to turn water into wine would be equally concerned with turning dirty water into clean water so people could simply survive. This is indeed an important issue.

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## Into Their World...The Malay of Malaysia

*By Laurie Fortunak*

**M**aking up over half the population of Malaysia, the Malay nonetheless are settled primarily on the eastern coast of the peninsula of Malaysia and in the Malaysian part of the island of Borneo. The Malay speak their own Malayo-Polynesian language called Bahasa Malaysia. The majority of Malay are Muslim, indeed, according to the Malaysian constitution, a person cannot be a Malay without claiming to be Muslim.

However, many Malay are considered "poor Muslims" because they practice many of their pre-Islamic Hindu and Buddhist rituals, including commemorating important birth, marriage and death rituals, and using shamans (witch doctors) to treat illnesses. It is also common for Malay living in more rural areas to believe in ghosts and spirits.

These ancient beliefs date prior to the AD 1400s when the Malay were converted to Islam. Shortly after their conversion, they were divided into sultanates (small, competing kingdoms). This lasted for nearly five hundred years until the groups were united by British influence into one federation in 1909. Since the late 1970s Malaysia has had one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Despite this, most Malay remain poor farmers and fishermen. Over eighty percent struggle to make a living and are forced to deal with poor healthcare, a lack of clean water, no electricity, inadequate education and poor transportation. They are often dominated by the Chinese that live in the land.

Although some Malay have moved to larger cities, many dwell along the coast or near rivers and roads. Houses often have thatched roofs and are built on pilings four to eight feet off the ground. Wealthier Malay have houses with tiled roofs and wooden floor planks.

There are few Christian Malay. In the western region of Malaysia witnessing to Muslims is forbidden and the government has imposed numerous restrictions on the churches there. In eastern Malaysia there is more freedom to share the gospel. Nonetheless, more than ninety-nine percent of Malay remain unevangelized.

For information on the Malay of Malaysia, visit:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malay\\_people](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malay_people)

[www.allmalaysia.info/msiaknow/ethnicity/malay\\_ethnicity.asp](http://www.allmalaysia.info/msiaknow/ethnicity/malay_ethnicity.asp)

[www.apeopleloved.com/mm.html](http://www.apeopleloved.com/mm.html)

[www.ksafe.com/profiles/p\\_code4/1892.html](http://www.ksafe.com/profiles/p_code4/1892.html)

[www.thefellowship.info/Global%20Missions/UPG/Malay%20of%20Malaysia.icm](http://www.thefellowship.info/Global%20Missions/UPG/Malay%20of%20Malaysia.icm)

(Information compiled from <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.)*

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## STRATEGY, TRENDS AND STATISTICS

### Roman Catholics in Mission: An Update

By **Mario Cappello**

**A few years ago, a term such as “evangelisation” would have been unusual in a conversation about the Catholic Church’s sense of mission and purpose.** Since Vatican II, however, the impetus of renewal has introduced the term into the very heart of the Church’s discussions of itself and its mission.

The lack of readiness of Catholics to evangelise is not simply a cultural phenomenon. The answer to this issue can be partly given by understanding the reason and motivation behind those who fervently evangelise: it is the appreciation for what Jesus has done for them, the realisation of the eternal consequences, the clarity of the gospel message and a personal love for Jesus as Lord, saviour and friend.

The elements that underpin the successful and enthusiastic evangelism by Evangelicals are the very elements that are often missing in the life of the average Catholic. Consequently, there is a notable lack of evangelisation among Catholics. This lack of evangelisation needs to be treated as a consequence rather than a cause. Professor Peter Kreeft, the Catholic philosopher,<sup>1</sup> comments that, “Most Catholics in America simply do not know how to get to heaven, how to be saved. Most Catholic students do not even mention Jesus Christ when they answer the question of how they expect to get to heaven. They think they’ll get in if they are good enough. This means quite simply that the single most fundamental lesson of the entire Christian religion, the most important thing anyone can ever know on earth, they don’t know...And this is not simply a lesson it would be nice for us to learn; it’s a lesson absolutely necessary for us to learn. Eternity is at stake.”

When Pope John Paul II was speaking to a group of American bishops,<sup>2</sup> he stressed that, “Sometimes even Catholics have lost or have never had the chance to experience Christ personally; not Christ as a mere ‘paradigm’ or ‘value,’ but the living Lord: ‘the way, and the truth and the life’” (John 14:6).

Cardinal Godfried Danneels of Belgium, in commenting on the inroads of the New Age movement among Catholics, pointed out how an imbalanced emphasis on certain aspects of the Church, rather than on the personal encounter with Christ, has made Catholics vulnerable to such deception.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout the centuries, the Holy Spirit has raised several movements and associations of lay people within the Catholic Church to foster evangelisation, holiness and acts of mercy. This work of the Holy Spirit is evident through the second Vatican Council which gave birth to a wave of new movements and associations of lay people dedicated to the Great Commission.

Nowadays it is impossible to speak of new evangelisation without referring to ecclesial movements. During the unforgettable meeting of the ecclesial movements with the late John Paul II on 30 May 1998, the Pope referred to the movements and ecclesial communities as “a response, given by the Holy Spirit, to this critical challenge at the end of the millennium.” During this unprecedented event that fell on Pentecost 1998, the Pope drew the lay movements to the heart of the Church and launched them into the world with the commission to discover, know and love Jesus and make him known to all peoples. The powerful evangelising potential of movements was discovered by John Paul II as Archbishop of Krakow. He not only encouraged them, but sustained and promoted them in the Church. At the same time he was demanding and expected them to aim high.

When referring to this phenomenon of lay movements, Pope John Paul II defined this move of God as a "hope for the Church and all humankind." The Pope saw in these lay movements the fruit of a springtime for the Church—a work of the Spirit that gives new life to the Church in a world that is increasingly secularised.

### **Lay Movements in the Catholic Church**

A typical example of these movements is the Charismatic renewal that started in 1970 when a group of students in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA, got together to pray for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Today this movement is present in about two hundred countries. It is a Christ-centred movement that brought to the forefront the importance of Catholics to surrender their life to Jesus Christ and to trust in the grace of God for a complete transformation in Christ through the person of the Holy Spirit.

Another example is the Focolare movement, founded in 1943 by Chiara Lubich, which numbers about four million people throughout eighty-one countries. This movement brings to the Church a great gift—that of helping people open their lives to Jesus Christ through a way of life characterised by selfless love.

In the year 2000, Millennium Films International initiated from the Vatican a worldwide distribution of the JESUS Film, which is undoubtedly an effective tool for evangelisation. The response was phenomenal. During the World Youth Day, an event sponsored by the Vatican which gathered about two million young people around Pope John Paul II, hundreds of thousands of video cassettes were given out. Cardinal Alfonso López Trujillo, president of the Pontifical Council for the Family, commented that the JESUS Film is a useful instrument for evangelisation and wished that it would spread rapidly. Indeed it did. Since then, more than 6.5 million copies in different formats and languages have been distributed worldwide. Today, our challenge is to meet the demand.

The Neocatechumenal movement was founded by layman Kiko Arguello, a former artist. This is one of the largest worldwide Catholic movements, with millions of members and several thousand full-time evangelists. This movement is radical concerning conversion and a total surrendering of one's life to Jesus Christ. It places emphasis on an uncompromised walk of discipleship. It has also established many seminaries to form priests according to this radical Christ-centred spirituality.

### **Evangelisation and the Catholic Church**

On Sunday 24 April 2005, Pope Benedict XVI was chosen to lead the Catholic Church. In his inaugural homily, the new Pope quoted John Paul II's own inaugural exhortation: "Do not be afraid! Open wide the doors for Christ!4 It is only in this friendship (with Christ) that the doors of life are opened wide. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation. Christ takes nothing away but he gives us everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors of Christ—and you will find true life. There is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the gospel, by the encounter with Christ. There is nothing more beautiful than to know him and to speak to others of our friendship with him. Faith is strengthened when it is given to others!"5

God is opening before the Catholic Church the horizons of a humanity more fully prepared for the sowing of the gospel. Consequently, no believer in Christ, no institution of the Church and no member of the Church can avoid this supreme duty, namely, to know Christ and to proclaim him to all peoples.

#### **Endnotes**

1. National Catholic Register, 24 April 1994.
2. Oss. Roman English Edition, 24 March 1993.
3. Christ or Aquarius? Exploring the New Age Movement. Veritas Publication, 1992.
4. John Paul II inaugural homily, 22 October 1978.
5. Pope Benedict XVI inaugural homily, 24 April 2005.

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# Prayer in Evangelism

By *Glenda Weldon*

**“Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.”** These words from the prayer Jesus taught his disciples express God’s plan and purpose in this world. They bring together in the simplest and most powerful way “prayer in evangelism.” The compelling vision of the Kingdom of God fully realised on earth draws us into a deeper commitment to Jesus as Lord of our lives. It calls us to truly repent, turn from our own agenda and fully embrace his. We are challenged to open our hearts to the renewing and empowering of his Holy Spirit, to be transformed into his likeness and to be equipped to go into the world and make disciples.

This prayer is a declaration of our sure and certain hope that the day is coming when the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and that he will reign for ever and ever. When we truly pray this prayer, God gives us his eyes to see the need of the world from his perspective and he begins to birth in us the strategies to reach them.

In the “Prayer and Evangelism” 2004 Lausanne Forum for World Evangelization Issue Group we explored many different ways in which God uses prayer in the task of making disciples of all nations. We looked at not only the biblical and theological perspective, but also the practical information that would help us better engage in prayer in evangelism.

The paper this group produced was written with the local church in mind and seeks to provide material to inspire, encourage and educate Christians in the why and how of prayer in evangelism. Each section includes stories and illustrations from around the world.

This is a very significant time to be examining the whole question of prayer in evangelism. God is calling people to pray at every level of church life—in local churches, across cities and nations and as a global community. The “Prayer in Evangelism” Lausanne Occasional Paper (LOP) provides an excellent opportunity to understand more of why and how we can pray as we seek to engage “the whole Church in taking the whole gospel to the whole world.”

There were forty-four participants from twenty-five countries in the Prayer in Evangelism Issue Group. They represented every continent and are involved in a wide range of ministries. We benefited from an exciting and diverse pool of experiences, cultures and theological backgrounds as we sought God for his strategies and action steps to share with the Church around the world.

The issue of prayer and evangelism is extremely important for the Church today. If the two do not work together, the Church will not see the full fruits of ushering souls into the kingdom.

## **Evangelism Without Prayer**

The Church has long sought to engage in evangelism. However, it has not always integrated evangelism with prayer in the way God intended. This oversight may account for much of the failure of many well-intentioned evangelistic efforts. Attempts to be involved in evangelism with little or no prayer have been discouraging and have yielded limited fruit. Without prayer, God’s people often lack the compassion and the conviction to be effective. If God does not take the initiative in the life of the unbeliever (as he promises to do in response to our prayers), we are limited to human resources and human understanding. It takes the supernatural power of God to release those who are in Satan’s grip (Matthew 17:21) and to open the eyes of those blinded to the light of the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4). God will act in response to our specific prayers.

## **Prayer Without Evangelism**

Throughout history, the Church has always engaged in prayer. However, it has not always related prayer to evangelism. This failure results in imbalance. It results in a church’s prayers and activities being inwardly directed toward the needs and concerns of God’s people and seldom or never outwardly directed toward the world that God loves (John 3:16). In our Issue Group, we sought to provide creative and practical steps toward understanding and addressing this imbalance. Here is a summary of the topics covered.

## **Theology and Motivation of Prayer in Evangelism**

**1. God summons us to pray in the pursuing of his purpose to evangelize the world.** Article One of

the Lausanne Covenant states, "We affirm our belief in the one eternal God, creator and Lord of the world, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who governs all things according to the purpose of his will. He has been calling out from the world a people for himself, and sending his people back into the world to be his servants and his witnesses, for the extension of his kingdom, the building up of Christ's body and the glory of his name."

**2. Prayer is essential for the work of world evangelization.** We must address the three components of the mission of the Lausanne Covenant: the whole Church, the whole gospel and the whole world. First, everyone is summoned to join in the work of praying for the world and for others (2 Chronicles 7:14; Matthew 28:18-20; John 17:20-21; Acts 2:42-47). Second, the gospel reaches out to the total needs of humanity—physical, emotional and spiritual. It is a whole gospel that is to be related to our prayer in evangelism. As the Lausanne Covenant (clause 5) states, "The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities." Third, in 2 Thessalonians 3:1 Paul asks for prayer: "Finally, brothers and sisters, pray for us, so that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified everywhere, just as it is among you." We ask for God's gracious provision that the gospel will have a continuing transforming effect locally, nationally and globally.

### **Principles and Guidelines of Prayer in Evangelism**

Four things happen to those we pray for:

- hearts are softened and changed;
- people are convicted of sin and turn to God in repentance;
- people are delivered from bondage and Satanic deceit; and
- strongholds are broken such that individuals and communities are transformed.

Four things happen in the church:

- people come to Christ, churches grow, new churches are planted and the kingdom is advanced;
- more labourers are released and sent into the harvest;
- the body of Christ is built up as all believers learn to pray and work together;
- there is increased awareness of the power of prayer and increased discernment of God's vision and guidance.

Five things happen to those who pray:

- they have the joy of partnering with an awesome God;
- they become channels of God's love birthed in their hearts by the Holy Spirit;
- they learn to use the weapons of spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5);
- their faith increases as they see the word of God accomplish that for which it was sent;
- they grow spiritually and learn to be increasingly dependent on God.

We should pray that members of the whole Church—every man, woman and child—be equipped and motivated to play their part in the Great Commission by utilizing prayer as the key to effective and creative evangelism.

Implementing prayer-in-evangelism action plans for the global Church will require the combined effort of all God's people whatever their place or position in society and the church. Those in positions of leadership are vested with God's authority to teach and lead the church in prayer evangelism. They have a prime responsibility to train, mentor and be models for believers in prayer and evangelism. Church members in touch with non-believers daily are in a unique position to be Christ's "living epistles" and to share the good news with those around them.

Those in positions of leadership and authority nationally are urged to:

- encourage leaders in the church to unite in prayer for their communities, cities and nations;
- encourage leaders in the church to mobilize all their people to pray for revival and then work together in joint evangelistic initiatives;
- bridge the gap between the workers in evangelism and the intercessors by bringing them together in relationship and collaborative evangelistic initiatives;

- promote existing training materials and produce additional materials for prayer in evangelism;
- recognize and utilize existing prayer networks for use in world evangelism.

Those in positions of leadership and authority locally are urged to:

- embrace and model a lifestyle of prayer and understand its importance in evangelism;
- identify, recognize, affirm and activate others who have leadership gifts in this area;
- creatively teach and transfer the principles and practices of prayer in evangelism to the current and next generations;
- implement and organize prayer for all forms of evangelistic ministries;
- consciously encourage children and youth in prayer evangelism ministries.

The Prayer in Evangelism LOP also deals with the following six topics from a biblical and practical perspective: (1) spiritual warfare prayer in evangelism, (2) healing and prayer in evangelism, (3) the role of prayer and fasting in evangelism, (4) children and prayer in evangelism, (5) strategies for prayer in evangelism and transformation of communities, cities and nations and (6) a life prayer for world evangelisation. This last one is a daily prayer plan for personal use to assist Christians in becoming involved in prayer for world evangelisation.

## **Stories that Illustrate the Effectiveness of Prayer in Evangelism**

**1. Church planted in South Asia through prayer.** In 1981 a couple returned from Bible college to plant churches in my capital city. The first step in their pioneering effort was a week of fasting and prayer. As they fasted, the Lord guided them to plant the church among the poorest people in our city. They then went prayerwalking in this area full of criminals, drug addicts, pickpockets and prostitutes. They made friends with the people, introducing themselves and sharing about their purposes for being there. God had already prepared a young man's heart to receive Jesus and his mother welcomed the couple into their home. The couple found the woman's 18-year-old son to be mute and very short. His mother asked the couple to pray for him. In answer to prayer, God performed a miracle and the young man was able to speak. This opened the door to start Bible studies. As God added people to the Bible study, participants gave their hearts to the Lord. Within four months the group started a church. The young man who was miraculously healed became the pastor of the church. He was a midget who grew to a height of 5'5."

**2. Canadian neighbourhood changed through spiritual warfare prayer.** The Vancouver Eastside Salvation Army Mission (known as the 614 Mission, in reference to Isaiah 61:4) is committed to win the world for Jesus starting in Vancouver's downtown eastside. In one slum hotel, 614 has had a non-stop prayer meeting since late February 2004. Some mission members committed to daily prayerwalks through the neighbourhood. They walk in pairs and pray blessings over the few remaining legitimate businesses. They also pray prayers of restraint over illegitimate businesses and prayers of protection and restoration for hurting people and relationships. Many individuals read scripture and pray together each morning for thirty minutes. So far, as a result of prayer, two marijuana shops have closed. The most notorious corner in the country is now unrecognizably cleaned up. People have been saved, delivered and healed. God has given some individuals prophetic gifts for intercession and often leads people into worship as they intercede for the neighbourhood.

**3. Story from Bulgaria.** Today, we hear numerous accounts of intercessors using physical means which result in unique answers to prayer. One such report describes how thirty young people from America prayed in a large park in Central Sofia, Bulgaria in July 1988 while communism was still alive and well. The team, at the direction of one of their leaders, felt led to dig little holes in the soil of the clearing and plant imaginary seeds of God's glory. They were then encouraged to praise God that these seeds of glory would grow to produce such fruit that the Communist government of Todor Zhivkov (in power for more than thirty-three years) would fall and doors would open to spread the gospel freely. Within four months of that unique time of prayer, a revolt took place in Bulgaria that did lead to the fall of Zhivkov. Amazingly, according to the Los Angeles Times (13 November 1989), the revolt literally began in a clearing in that same park in Central Sofia where a group of Bulgarian youth began a petition-signing drive against the then-Zhivkov government. The drive began with just a handful of young people (about the same number as had prayed four months earlier) who signed the initial petitions. The signing of those petitions soon led to many thousands protesting. Within a few days the Communist government had fallen as a direct result of what began in that park.

## Stories that Illustrate the Tangible Nature of Healing

- A woman with HIV/AIDS was healed in India after a prayer session. She is alive and serving the Lord and has led seven people to the Lord.
- A sick woman in Ghana was laid on a stretcher on a platform during a crusade. By a command of the ministering priest, she was raised back to health and carried her own stretcher out. By the next day there were three times as many people at the crusade. One third of those in attendance surrendered their lives to Christ. Hallelujah!
- The healing of a traditional Muslim leader who had a stroke in Nigeria led to the turnaround of an entire village to God. It also led to the subsequent expulsion of the Imam and conversion of the existing mosque to a church. To the glory of the Lord, the village has remained under the tutelage of the Lord through the ministry of his church.

(The material in the LOP has already been used by a number of groups. It is hoped that an even wider distribution and use will be achieved as the paper is printed and distributed in booklet form. The entire paper is found at [http://community.gospelcom.net/lcwe/assets/LOP42\\_IG13.pdf](http://community.gospelcom.net/lcwe/assets/LOP42_IG13.pdf).)

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## LEADERSHIP MEMO

### The Interwoven Tasks of Prayer and Evangelism

By Lon Allison

**A**t first glance it may not appear that evangelism and prayer are related. Evangelism focuses on reaching pre-believers. Prayer is primarily an activity of believers. The first is about outreach; the second concerns spiritual growth. This is how I used to think. Not so anymore. I now see these two spiritual disciplines as inseparable.

Evangelistic-praying is necessary. John 6:44 reminds us that no one will come to Christ apart from the work of the Holy Spirit's drawing power. No manner of personal persuasiveness, perfect theological presentation or amount of friendship can save anyone. Although these things may lead someone to pray a prayer of salvation, this is no guarantee of regeneration. In evangelism we work with God, under God and in full dependence on God. Therefore, a life of prayer is essential for the believer in reaching the lost. We must remember that as we reach out to lost people, we are in a spiritual war for souls. Satan (the god of this age) blinds the mind of unbelievers so that they are not able to see the light of the gospel (2 Cor. 4:4).

We also learn from Paul how to ask for prayer in our task as witnesses and evangelists. In Ephesians 6:18-20 and Colossians 4:2-4 Paul asks the churches to pray for open doors, courage and clarity of speech as he witnesses. It seems the great apostle was fully aware of his need for divine leadership in evangelizing. The prayers of others were his avenue for that anointing.

As I write this article, I am looking out the window at our neighbors' homes. We are new to this community and only now getting to know the neighbors. The couple who live to the right of us is wonderful. The husband and wife come from different ethnic groups but have a common yet somewhat nominal Christian background. My wife and I do not sense much devotion or commitment to Christ. It is probably safe to assume they do not know the risen Christ as Savior (rescuer) and Lord (king). It is part of our calling as believers to love them deeply by evangelizing them. It is the best gift we can give. However, before we begin evangelizing, we must pray. Please do not get me wrong. I do not minimize the verbal witness. In six months we have been to their home a couple of times and they have been to ours. We are in spiritual conversation on a regular basis, but even that is sporadic and limiting. In many ways it is easier to share once at length with a stranger than to orchestrate several conversations over time with a neighbor or friend. This is why we must pray every day, at any time and from any location for our neighbors. Prayer evange-



lizes when our words are absent.

Our neighbors to the left are more difficult. We know the husband's name but have never met the wife. We have not been invited into their home, and they did not respond to an invitation to come to ours. It seems the door of witness is presently closed. However, this would be a wrong conclusion. The door to verbal witness is closed, but the door of prayer is wide open. I often tell people that if a person does not want to listen to what you have to share, just devote yourself to prayer, prayer, prayer.

I have also learned that prayer saves evangelism from manipulation, while evangelism saves prayer from isolation. The life of prayer gives us Christ's love for the lost. Since his love is an active love, we are, as Paul wrote, compelled (2 Cor. 5:14) to enter their lives. The life of evangelism on the other hand, gives us an urgency and passion for our prayers. The evangelism lifestyle stops any temptation to withdraw from the world in solitude and silence to the exclusion of reaching out to people dying without our Lord. Indeed, prayer and evangelism are not strangers, but friends.

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