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

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WORLD NEWS BRIEFS

AROUND THE WORLD

A multi-lingual online database of training courses that will allow evangelical colleges, missionary training organizations, Bible colleges and non-formal training programs to input information about their courses online has been developed. The Evangelical Training Database is available online at www.trainforChrist.org and is searchable worldwide in all major languages. The database is a partnership between the Missionary Training Service, Trainers of Pastors International Coalition, the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) and member bodies of the International Commission for Evangelical Theological Education. (The Missionary Training Service)

CHINA

Few people are aware that China is a Bible-producing country, yet over the past two decades, forty million complete volumes of scripture have been produced by the Amity Printing Company alone, not counting Bibles produced for the Catholic market in China. During the recent groundbreaking ceremony for the new Amity Printing Press facilities, the existing press was hailed as one of Nanjing's most advanced printing companies with some of the finest Bible printers in the world. (Amity News Service)

CHINA

Members of Puqian Church in Fuzhou, China, have partnered with the Fuzhou Red Cross and the Fuzhou Daily for "Love in Action," a campaign designed to care for the poor and needy in a way that reflects Jesus Christ's ministry on earth. Through "Love in Action" countless pieces of clothing and bed quilts have been donated to disaster victims. According to Mei Kangjung, editor of Tian Feng, "The Church is not an exclusive community outside of society, but part of it, and in all its actions, whether individual or communal, the Church has to give testimony to Christ. Initiatives like 'Love in Action' will help to immerse the Church in society." (Amity News Service)

EL SALVADOR

From 31 March to 1 April a series of evangelism training sessions was held in El Salvador for the purpose of equipping leaders with new regional evangelism resources to help renew the emphasis on evangelism in the local church. Among those present were leaders from El Salvador and Honduras. Also present were district superintendents, Nazarene Youth International (NYI) presidents and evangelism coordinators from El Salvador. Among other things, participants discussed how to develop evangelistic programs within the church and how to incorporate new strategies and other tools for planting cell groups with the structure of church-type missions. (Nazarene Communications Network)

FRANCE

The decision by the two biggest Protestant denominations in France's eastern Alsace-Lorraine region to form a union of churches will strengthen Christian witness, says a World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) top official. "In the face of gross injustices in the world, the need for people to hear the gospel clearly and the calling on the Church to mediate fullness of life, churches have a responsibility to rise above divisions and give a clear witness," said WARC general secretary Rev. Setri Nyomi. (Ecumenical News International)

HONDURAS

In efforts to "make Jesus famous to the next generation of Hondurans," 274 El Salvadoran youth (ages

nine and up) and their leaders traveled to Honduras to minister in eighty-four Assemblies of God churches. The missions trip was known as Transformation Honduras 2006, and took place 8-15 April—the week before Easter. Don and Terri Triplett, missionaries to Nicaragua and El Salvador and leaders of King's Castle Ministries, recruited the young people for the mission. The purpose of King's Castle Ministries is to raise up an army of young, Spirit-filled warriors who will "invade Latin America with the simple message that Jesus saves and is coming soon." The teams held 373 services throughout the week with a total attendance of 48,289 people. (Assemblies of God News)

ISRAEL

For what is believed to be the first time, a Christian congregation in Israel is building its own church. Grace and Truth, a Reformed and Baptist church, is located in a Jewish area near Tel Aviv. The more than 450 congregants (of whom 150 are under the age of eighteen and 150 are new believers) are reaching out to Jews and Arabs. The building plan was hotly contested by Orthodox Jews; the property is now guarded twenty-four hours a day from those who would seek to vandalize the unfinished structure. Expenses for legal fees, security, insurance and changing demands of authorities have thus far made the completion of the building impossible. (Assist News Service)

NEPAL

Christianity is growing rapidly in Nepal, despite a ban on conversions. When Chuda Bastakoti became a Christian twelve years ago, the people in his remote village would taunt him, shouting "Christian" as an insult. "But that has changed now," Bastakoti said. "People do not look at me any longer with disdain when I go home." Bastakoti works as a high school teacher in Katmandu. (Ecumenical News International)

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

History was made in Papua New Guinea (PNG) in March as Nina Gunter, the first woman elected general superintendent for the Church of the Nazarene, ordained the first women in the Papua New Guinea Church. The three women, Pastor Clara Siune, Pastor Jenny Aisak and Chaplain Elis Kaui, were ordained 18 March at the Western Highlands District Assembly. This is a major historical event for the Church in PNG as the culture of the island nation is male-dominated. Commenting on the importance of the ordination, Kaui said, "Being one of the first three ladies to be ordained in PNG means a great spiritual breakthrough in the history of the Church of the Nazarene in PNG. This society is a male-dominated one, so being a woman in the ministry and being ordained is a great, great encouragement to the Church and to all women in PNG in the Church of the Nazarene." (Nazarene Communications Network)

SWITZERLAND

The World Council of Churches (WCC) says it is launching a three-year joint study project with the Vatican aimed at developing a shared code of conduct on religious conversion where charges of proselytising can trigger tensions in societies. According to Rev. Hans Ucko, head of the WCC's interreligious relations office, "The issue of religious conversion remains a controversial dimension in many interconfessional and interreligious relations. We hope that at the end of this study project, we will be able to propose a code of conduct that will affirm that commitment to our faith never translates into denigration of the other." (Ecumenical News International)

UNITED STATES

The Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) unanimously voted in Ken Behr as the new president. Behr began his post 1 May, succeeding Paul Nelson, who served as president for twelve years. In its 27-year history there have only been four full-time presidents of the ECFA. Behr had been serving as chief operating officer at North Way Christian Community, a 3,500-member non-denominational congregation outside Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA. (ECFA)

UNITED STATES

More than seventy college campuses in the United States are now conducting days or weeks of 24-hour prayer for revival and spiritual transformation, said Jeremy Story, president of Campus Renewal Ministries. Story volunteered his time to program a database backend for a computerized calendar listing, which allows any campus to list its 24/7 prayer rooms and to be part of an unbroken canopy of 24-hour campus prayer. Recently one hundred major university campuses in China joined the network as well. "God is taking this worldwide," Story said. (Youth Interceding for America)

UNITED STATES

More than seven hundred Christians of diverse cultural backgrounds convened 27-29 April at the Rehoboth Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, for the sixth Ethnic Workers' Summit, sponsored by the Ethnic America Network (EAN) and a local committee. The summit helped to equip and motivate North American Christians as they seek to reach out to those of different ethnicities in their neighborhoods. According to statistics from the US Census Bureau, by the end of the twenty-first century there will be no ethnic majority in America. (Atlanta Ethnic Workers' Summit)

WORLD EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS REPORTS

Nigerian Church Takes the Gospel Back to Jerusalem with Vision 50:15

By Timothy Olonade

The Nigerian Church is arguably the largest and most vibrant Church in Africa and one of the most dynamic in the world. Nigeria is home to the largest fifty thousand-seat single service auditorium. It also hosted one of the largest events in human history where over 2.5 million believers gathered for a Christmas celebration in one location. Despite the constant struggle with Islamic forces, Nigeria has a strong fervor and zeal for Christ. Recently the Nigerian evangelical mission movement announced its plan to mobilize fifty thousand Nigerians over the next fifteen years for its Operation Samaria, which seeks to take the gospel through the North African Islamic nations back to Jerusalem.

Aptly tagged Vision 50:15, the project seeks to include the entire North African, Arabian Peninsula until the gospel gets back to where it came from—Jerusalem. More than one hundred top missions leaders (representing eighty agencies, churches and organizations) who are actively involved in recruiting, training and sending missionaries from Nigeria affirmed this vision during the 3 November 2005 Nigeria Missions Executive Congress. Also at the congress were: Greg Parsons, general director of the US Center for World Missions; Gary Hipp of Mission Moving Mountains, and a member of Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association (IFMA) board; Dan Rabe, executive vice chair of New Tribe Missions; Bill Sunderland of visionSynergy International; and representatives from seven foreign missions serving in Nigeria.

Vision 50:15 is indeed a bold step for the Nigerian Church, which is currently dealing with its own Islamic, anti-Christian northern territory. However, there is unanimity in the Church that the time has come to re-launch the gospel in this fashion. No other African country carries the level of zeal, passion and aggression for evangelism as demonstrated by the Nigerian Church. No other country in Africa has survived the degree of religious upheavals that the Nigerian Church has undergone. There is a palpable feeling that the Nigerian Church is uniquely suited to fulfill this gigantic vision.

Vision 50:15 Outlined

This project has been initiated by the Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA), which presently has some ninety-five member bodies with nearly 5,200 missionaries in fifty-six countries. The association has commissioned various committees, task forces, forums and networks to help mobilize the Church, augment missionary training, locate the fields and put in place a strong missions base for the anticipated missionary breakthrough this vision anticipates. A study group has proposed there be at least sixteen tracks used across the nation to lead various aspects of this ambitious vision to mobilize, train and release fifty thousand Nigerians in the next fifteen years into fairly long-term cross-cultural ministries.

The period between 2006 and 2020 has been divided into five three-year phases. The first phase will focus on ownership development, spread of information and vision education within and outside of Nigeria. Both the Church and missions agencies are developing comprehensive, well-articulated plans to ensure the entire body unites to give the target nations the opportunity to hear the gospel. These plans will serve as resources for mobilizing and training missionaries to enhance the effective utilization of ministry opportunities available to the Nigerian Church.

Vision 50:15 and the 10/40 Window

Vision 50:15 provides the Church a focal point for its effort to reach the 10/40 Window. As a local initiative it enables every person to do his or her part within the vineyard and also work together to realize the goal of fifty thousand mobilized Nigerians by 2020. With this vision the multi-level efforts in mobilization, research and training may now find a specific target. Currently, Nigerian missionaries are serving in fourteen of the thirty-eight countries covered by this vision!

This vision implies that the Nigerian Church is seeking to face the hard part of the remaining harvest field with total and unreserved commitment. We cannot get back to Jerusalem without:

- Facing the enemy eye to eye. This vision calls for holy confrontation. The nations between Nigeria and Jerusalem are known to have overtly set themselves against the Lord and his anointed.
- Overrunning the enemy territory. We must look into this vision "like a lamb in the midst of wolves."
- Having a readiness to die. This requires a reappraisal of our theology of suffering. This vision will query and question the laid-back theology of ease that has characterized the Nigerian Church over the last few years.

NEMA helps member agencies, organizations and churches to be more effective and efficient in their missions enterprise both in their pioneering efforts and toward a fruitful outcome of current work in difficult terrains within and outside of Nigeria. NEMA offers important opportunities for strategic partnerships and alliances across denominational divides.

With the adoption of the vision by NEMA members and other participants, there is a wider platform to mobilize all facets of the Church and missions community in Nigeria. At the arrowhead of this vision is the critical need to sensitize, inform and motivate the Church nationwide to embrace the new phase of missionary enterprise. At the moment, high-level collaborative meetings between leaders of various networks have commenced to carefully examine the core element of the vision.

NEMA is presently expanding its joint training institute to accommodate more students. Faculty members are preparing for the full operation of the vision and missionary training evaluation is progressing. In some cases, the vision is helping some of the large denominations rethink their missionary candidate training to enable them to train Nigerians for out-of-Nigeria postings.

The most difficult part of the vision is the absence of adequate research. NEMA is currently working on a comprehensive research of the Nigerian harvest. Because of the need for a qualified research team, NEMA is seeking to mobilize and equip a team with the necessary Internet and computer resources so that they might supply the information needed to fulfill the vision.

The fulfillment of Vision 50:15 could move forward if all the Baptists in Nigeria (who have over 3,200 local congregations) commit to raising 4,500 missionaries in fifteen years. It could also be accomplished if the Anglicans (who have more than twelve million adherents nationwide) commit to at least three thousand missionaries.

The huge capital required for this vision must come from all stakeholders of missions in Nigeria, both missions agencies and churches. NEMA has recently invested in a functional operational base and is currently seeking assistance to make sure the centre has all the technology it needs to fulfill its task. We trust that the bulk of the funds for this vision will come from the Nigerian Church; however, since this is a global vision that seeks to put Nigerian missionaries in thirty-eight countries, we pray that friends of the Nigeria missions movement from around the globe will come alongside us as well. Our prayer is to see Vision 50:15 fulfilled by 2020. Our prayer is that many people will be ushered into the kingdom as we make our way back to Jerusalem.

Timothy Olonade is executive secretary for the Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA). He can be reached at tim.olonade@hisen.org. He is also a missions mobilizer and publisher. Olonade has authored and co-authored over a dozen books on discipleship, missions, evangelism, human resources and missions strategy.

Innovista: Reaching the Emerging Generation in Europe and Eurasia

By *Frauke Eicker*

Emma is doing well in life. At twenty-six she has a good-paying job, a boyfriend who loves her and a group of friends with whom she spends weekends. Yet she is not satisfied. Emma desires something more. She is seeking.

Carl's parents split up when he was eight. With nearly half of all marriages ending in divorce in most Western European countries, Carl's situation is normal, isn't it? For the most part, Carl enjoys life. He is studying for his degree and has the freedom that comes with being a young, single man. Why look for more?

You probably know people like Emma and Carl—they belong to the emerging generation.

Nearly 2.5 billion of the six billion people around the world are aged 15-35.¹ The emerging generation is a subgroup of this number. Typically raised in a Western context, this generation is the first to have grown up in a global culture defined by media such as television and the Internet. As a result they share common values (friendship, community, no absolute truth, discovery and consumerism) that may be expressed differently in various cultures.

Because many (like Carl) have seen their families break down, those in the emerging generation value friendship above all else. This results in a strong desire for community. It is this community of friends that plays an important role in helping people like Emma make sense of life.

Truth is not viewed as absolute by the young people today; instead, truth is subjective. Anyone claiming absolute truth will be met with suspicion. This profoundly affects how we communicate faith today.

The emerging generation also tends to approach subjects in a non-linear way. The inner search for something more is driving many young people to look into spirituality. They tend to find themselves on a journey of discovery that looks at the world from different angles. They want both experience and logic to speak to them.

The way the emerging generation goes about their spiritual search bears a strong resemblance to their consumeristic lifestyle. They pick, choose and mix according to personal preference. Sadly, the Church is not where most of them turn to for answers. Church numbers are declining while alternative religions and religious activities continue to increase.

The good news is that young people today are deeply and genuinely seeking. They are looking for practical and real ways to live life to its fullest. They are longing for answers to questions of origin and purpose. They need to be known and accepted by a community of friends. What they are really searching for, whether they know it or not, is God.

Innovista Seeks to Reach the Emerging Generation

Innovista is an organisation that is passionate about reaching this generation. With centres in the UK, the Ukraine and the US, Innovista helps the emerging generation engage with Jesus in the context of contemporary culture. This means seeing the good news bring change to people, churches and communities.

Seeing People Change

Helen treated her questions about life the same way she treated math equations. Things needed to follow a certain logic to make sense and have validity. Clearly, she thought, religion and spirituality did not fall into this category.

When Helen began attending the university, she made some Christian friends. One of them was Ruth. After several conversations, Ruth had a hunch Helen was interested in spirituality. She invited Helen to join a "Glad You Asked" (GYA) seekers group. This media-based, interactive, small group resource is built around the things the emerging generation values: friendship, spiritual search and a safe environment to share experiences.

Helen was taken by the idea. She later said, "It was a group of people with completely different beliefs

just wanting to explore their questions." She felt comfortable in the group. Participants would look at questions like "Does God matter?" from different angles. The group helped Helen discover her problems with Christianity and discuss them freely. She eventually concluded that Christianity did offer something beyond the logic she had been holding on to. When Ruth asked if she could pray for her, Helen found herself connecting with God. Helen discovered that she can be both a scientist and a Christian.

GYA explores the most frequently asked spiritual questions that young people in Europe and Eurasia have. In ten sessions people can discover the person of Jesus through expert evidence, stories and personal discovery. GYA includes a leader's guide and a DVD and is currently available in English, German, Norwegian, Swedish and Russian. For more information and session samples, visit www.gladyouasked.org/.

Seeing Churches Change

Living as a Christian among the emerging generation brings its own challenges. Oftentimes we do not know how to meet the needs of the young people around us, let alone know how to answer their questions. Even more foundational than these issues is that fact that we are faced with a need to redefine some of the basics of our own faith.

Alina lives in Russia. She is also a Christian. Some time back something in her heart had been urging her to spend more time with non-Christians. To Alina this just did not make sense. She had grown up believing that "clean" Christians should not mingle with "unclean" non-Christians, as the latter might cause the former to stumble. However, as of late, Alina could not quiet her heart.

During a relational evangelism training session, her heart resonated with the importance of sharing her faith in a friendship context. She started building genuine relationships with non-Christians and applied what she had learned in the training. As she met her friends as equals (and communicated both love and appreciation), she met openness to the gospel.

Alina wanted to help other Christians make this transition, too. She soon became a relational evangelism trainer. Since then she has been travelling through the Western part of Russian, sharing her experiences and helping students and church groups become more outwardly focused. This is called the "multiplier effect in action."

One person is changed. In turn, that person helps others change as well.

Seeing Communities Change

Marina, a member of the Ukraine Innovista staff, sees the multiplier effect at work as well. A local church in Kiev is not just taking the training to heart, but has entered a process of evaluating and re-focusing their entire approach to evangelism. This is an example of how an entire community can be powerfully impacted if the person transformed is a leader. Lasting change in leaders will have a lasting impact on the people they lead. A change in attitude toward evangelism will create a community that makes relational evangelism a priority every day.

For this reason Innovista has a special focus on developing missional leaders. Through training events and relational mentoring, Innovista invests in seeing relevant evangelism on the agenda of the people, churches and communities it works with. Innovista also tries to provide the support young missional leaders need to stay strong.

In August 2006 Innovista will be holding "Leading for Life," its first European young leaders conference focused on the unique challenges and opportunities of leading mission today. Leading for Life will be a place where leaders can be equipped to take personal leadership to the next level.

Innovista seeks to bring change to people, churches and communities for good. We long for a day where every person of the emerging generation has a chance to hear about Jesus in a relevant way.

Endnote

1. New Media Communications Survey. 2000. Spring and Fall.

Frauke Eicker works for Innovista International in Oxford, UK. She has helped develop MONDAY, a training and outreach experience for teens. She is also the regional Lausanne prayer chair for Western Europe.

International Intercession for Germany During the 2006 FIFA World Cup

By **Bernd Oettinghaus**

“Come here and help us.” Acts 16:9

Participants in the kickoff2006.org Prayer Initiative are inviting intercessors from around the world to pray for Germany as the upcoming Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) Soccer World Cup series begins. During 9 June- 9 July World Cup soccer games from various German cities will be broadcasted daily on television screens throughout the world. The series opens in Munich and ends with the FIFA World Cup Final in Berlin. Prior to and during this time, Germany needs your prayer intercession.

German Christians are asking intercessors around the world to pray for spiritual awakening in our country. God has a deep love for the Germans and wants to see a change in our society, a change that will result in the kingdom of God shining its values again. The nation shall be transformed by the Spirit of God and his love. Germany shall find the calling of God for the country again.

In our spiritual need as a nation of God in the midst of the secular society, we urgently need intercession. God has entrusted wonderful prayer movements and initiatives to many nations. Please invest a part of your prayer movement for our country and include our nation in the requests of your prayer movements, especially during the Soccer World Cup.

Downloadable prayer requests will be available 9 June to 9 July at www.kickoff2006.org. They are also available in hard copy. Contact us at prayer@kickoff2006.org and we can mail these requests to you.

During the games, thousands of brothers and sisters from around the world will also be witnessing to the love of Jesus Christ to the millions of guests and inhabitants. We are thankful for believers from all over the world who will support us and will serve with their gifts and faith from God. The reality is that locals often are more likely to listen to foreigners than to fellow citizens.

We also invite you to be part of a local prayer team in our 740-hour central international prayer camp, hosted by The German Evangelical Alliance, which is based in Bad Blankenburg, central Germany. We invite you to come and lead one or more two-hour prayer sessions during this camp. Our hope is to come together with all nationalities for God.

We look to 2 Chronicles 7:14 for the promises of God through prayer: “If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sins and heal their land.”

We wish this for our nation, which was blessed so richly from God, but still lives at such a distance from him. We search for God’s help and ask Christians around the world to “come here and help us” (Acts 16)—especially in prayer.

***Bernd Oettinghaus** is prayer coordinator for the kickoff2006.org Prayer Initiative.*

The Dictionary of African Christian Biography: What it is, How it Began and Where it is Going

By **Jonathan Bonk**

Maverick economist **E. F. Schumacher** once stood on a street corner in Leningrad, Russia, trying to understand the map his Russian hosts had given him. He was confused. While there was some correspondence between what the map registered and what he could see with his own eyes (the names of parks, intersecting streets, etc.), several enormous churches looming in front of him were nowhere on his map. His guide soon pointed out that while the map did indeed include some churches, they were only on the map because they were museums. Those that were not museums were not shown. “It is only the ‘living churches’ we don’t show,” he explained.¹

Among the most astonishing religious phenomena of the twentieth century has been the growth of Christianity in Africa. As Lamin Sanneh recently observed,

"Muslims in 1900 outnumbered Christians by a ratio of nearly four to one, with some 34.5 million, or thirty-two percent of the population. In 1962 when Africa had largely slipped out of colonial control, there were about sixty million Christians, with Muslims at about 145 million. Of the Christians, twenty-three million were Protestants and twenty-seven million were Catholics. The remaining ten million were Coptic and Ethiopian Orthodox."²

Forty years later the number of Christians in Africa had multiplied by six to nearly 380 million, overtaking the Muslim population to comprise an estimated 48.37 percent of the approximately 800 million total population.³ Between 1900 and 2000 the Catholic population in Africa increased a phenomenal 6,708 percent, from 1,909,812 to 130,018,400. Catholic membership has increased 708 percent over the last fifty years.⁴

Yet, even the most recent attempts by mainline Church historians to help seminarians and church leaders locate themselves and find their way in the terra firma of contemporary world Christianity take scarcely any note of Africa.

Eleven years ago, while I was still a seminary instructor in Canada, the Dictionary of African Christian Biography⁵ (DACB) was an inchoate idea, little more than the agenda for a modest scholarly consultation convened from 31 August to 2 September 1995. Funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts and hosted by the Overseas Ministries Study Center (OMSC), this invitation-only event explored the need for an International Dictionary of Non-western Christian Biography, with Africa as the particular focus.

In 1999, two years after my arrival at OMSC, I embarked on the first of what would become annual DACB-related trips to Africa. Since 2000 Ms. Michele Sigg has served as the very effective project manager, and I have visited universities, seminaries and research centers in Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Zambia, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Namibia, Tanzania, Malawi and Egypt. Today more than one hundred seminaries, universities and research centers in many African countries are registered as official participating institutions, with designated liaison coordinators, and contribute to a steady flow of biographical materials for the dictionary. Biographers in Ethiopia compete to have their stories read publicly at the annual Frumentius Lectures in Ethiopian Church History. The top three researchers/writers are further honored with a gift of books.

Particularly heartening is the way in which the Dictionary of African Christian Biography is proving to be both the stimulus and model for similar data gathering initiatives elsewhere. The Centre for the Study of Christianity in Asia (Trinity College, Singapore) is using the DACB as a model to produce an Asian Christian biographical database, as are the Don Bosco Centre in Shillong, India, and the Trinity Methodist Church in Selangor Dural Ehsan, Malaysia. This year, for example, OMSC has served as hosting institution and "incubator" for The Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity. This ambitious project (<http://www.bdconline.net/>) is under the administrative oversight of Dr. Wright Doyle's Global China Center in Charlottesville, Virginia, USA. Senior associates Dr. Yading Li and Dr. Carol Lee Hamrin serve as project manager and project coordinator, respectively.

Awareness of the Dictionary of African Christian Biography continues to grow. We are learning that the dictionary is increasingly utilized by instructors who require their students to get into the habit of using the database for their African Church History assignments. As virtually the only readily accessible source of information on African Christian biography, the DACB website, <http://www.dacb.org/>, is experiencing steady and growing traffic.

Among the several ongoing challenges facing the dictionary, an obvious one is the unevenness of country, language and denominational content. While the number of stories in English are relatively plentiful, with French-language entries lagging far behind, the languages representing the other three lingua franca of Africa are not represented at all. This is due to neither oversight nor neglect, but to the linguistic limitations of the principals involved and to the fact that the dictionary reflects only those stories that have been submitted. DACB facilitators in New Haven, Connecticut, USA do not research, write or commission the stories. Participating institutions and their designated liaison coordinators are the key to dictionary entries.

Added to this is the somewhat patchy quality of the stories. Anyone browsing the DACB will at once be struck by the unevenness of both the quality and consistency of the nearly one thousand biographies that currently make up the database. Some of the stories are only one or two sentences; others have more than two thousand words. While scholarly exactitude mark some of the entries, a large number have been contributed by persons who are neither scholars nor historians. The stories are non-proprietary and belong to the people of Africa as a whole. Since this is a first generation tool, and on the assumption that some memory is better than total amnesia, the checkered quality of the entries has been tolerated and even welcomed. This being a first-generation attempt to ensure that there is some kind of memory to which scholars and leaders of subsequent generations will have access, it will be left for another generation to redress the weaknesses and deficiencies inherent in the present dictionary.

The stone scrapers and blades of our Paleolithic forbears, deemed to be functionally deficient in our age, were nevertheless the survival tools of their era. It is inevitable that any early tool should, by the standards of a later generation, be regarded as primitive and unsatisfactory. But lest this truism stifle the creative process, the reminder that it is often just such inadequacies which spark disgruntled users to develop better tools is reassuring.

Despite the DACB's laughably meager financial resources and minimalist administrative infrastructure, those of us most immediately involved are encouraged and delighted by its growing recognition as a unique and impressively useful source of information on the Church in Africa.

In his essay "Poetry and American Memory" (Atlantic Monthly, October 1999), Robert Pinsky, poet laureate of the United States from 1997-2000, observed that "a people is defined and unified not by blood, but by shared memory" and that "deciding to remember, and what to remember, is how we decide who we are." As Christianity continues its seemingly inexorable decline in the old heartlands of Christendom, it is vitally important that the emerging world Church be enabled to remember that it is much, much more than simply a religious footnote to the economic, military, and political ascendancy of European tribes!

Endnotes

1. Schumacher, E. F. 1977. *A Guide for the Perplexed*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, p. 1.
2. Sanneh, Lamin. 2003. *Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel Beyond the West*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, p. 16.
2. Johnstone, Patrick and Jason Mandryk, with Robyn Johnstone. 2001. *Operation World: 21st Century Edition*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Lifestyle, pp. 20-21. According to *Operation World* figures, Muslims constituted 41.32 percent of Africa's population in 2001. Annual growth rates for Christians and Muslims in Africa are estimated to be 2.83 percent and 2.53 percent respectively.
3. Froehle, Bryan T. and Mary L. Gautier. 2003. *Global Catholicism: Portrait of a World Church*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, p. 5.
4. I have related the story of the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* in more detail in an article appearing in the October 2004 issue of the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, "Ecclesiastical Cartography and the Invisible Continent," pp. 153-158. See the *Dictionary* online at www.dacb.org.

Dr. Jonathan Bonk is executive director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center in New Haven, Connecticut, USA. He is editor of the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* and a member of the *Lausanne Theology Working Group*.

Japan's Spiritual Change Over the Past Fifty-five Years

By **Kenny Joseph**

Today there are many seminars and books on the "mysterious mystique of the peculiar Japanese people and their country." I learned all about this during my fourteen days on the American President Line's ship, the *Wilson*, while sailing from San Francisco, California, USA to Yokohama, Japan in April 1951. We could bring 350 pounds of baggage plus everything we could fit in our bedrooms aboard the ship. There were twelve passengers.

My Own Journey to Japan

In the fourteen days I was aboard the ship, my tutor, Kiyoshi Togasaki, a Christian businessman and publisher of *The Japan Times* of today, educated me on the state of Japan.

He also learned of my own history. My parents were from the city of Nineveh (now Mosul, in Iraq), where Jonah went to preach God's judgment upon the Assyrians. After Jonah's plea, the king of Nineveh repented and made every living thing, human and animal, fast and pray for forty days to avert God's impending judgment. It worked. To this day, the Assyrians call themselves the "only Christian nation in the world." Four million Assyrians worldwide have no country today.

Mr. Togasaki soon said in response to my history: "Persians, Assyrians, Nestorians? Your people brought over to us three priceless treasures: the Bible's gospel, democracy and medicine." After telling me some of Japan's oral history, he said, "Japanese history is fairy tales, 'his story' (*setsu*) versus 'my story.' You must become a lifelong student of true history and a proponent of this magnificent unwritten Christian testimony. Yale University's Kenneth Scott Latourette called Nestorians 'the greatest missionary movement the world has ever seen.'" Dr. V. R. Edman, former president of Wheaton College (Wheaton, Illinois, USA), wrote the same thing.

In the course of eating and being aboard the ship with Mr. Togasaki for two weeks, I learned what it meant to be a true, upright Japanese individual. He told the gripping story of how he, as an important export businessman, or *boeki*, lost everything in the tragic San Francisco earthquake of 1928.

Because all records were burned, there was an amnesty that you did not have to pay anything you could not find the bill for. However, Mr. Togasaki said proudly, "I'm a Japanese Christian! I got in my horse drawn buggy and went to every single company or person I owed a dollar to. We wrote from memory all the bills and I paid every last penny. How could I do anything else before an all-seeing, all-knowing God?"

Then he showed me pictures of himself as an evangelist preaching to thousands of people before, during and after World War II. He hand-printed lengthy song sheets one by one. After the singing at each event, he preached the gospel. His favorite message was from John 14:6: "Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father in heaven except through me.'" Mr. Togasaki asked, "How could I preach God's pure gospel with an impure heart?"

To understand the deep significance of my meeting with Mr. Togasaki is to understand the background from which I came. My Assyrian Christian father and mother escaped a holocaust in 1917 when more than 180,000 Christians were massacred by Kurdish Turkish Muslims. They were "boat people" who ended up in Chicago where I was born. I grew up hearing horror stories from cousins and family friends.

When I told my parents that God had called me to Japan, my father fumed, "You're crazy! Those Japanese men walk around in kimonos with two swords, one big and one small. If they get mad, they'll kill you. Don't go near that place!" When I met this stately, godly gentleman, Mr. Togasaki, I was not fearful. I was overwhelmed.

We led two joint Sunday morning services aboard the ship. He led the singing and I preached. He also took the offering and dedicated it to my future work in Japan. That was the first offering I had ever received from a Japanese hand. This is how I have lived for fifty-five years—by faith, from "hand to mouth." From God's hand to my mouth. I learned many things from Mr. Togasaki, among them:

- Punctuality (*jikan genshu*)
- Neatness (*kichin toshite*)
- Frugality (*setsuyaku*)
- Integrity (*shinyo*)
- Knowing and repaying obligations (*giri-ninjo* and *on*)
- Filial piety (*oyakoko*)
- Respect for elders (*sempai sonkei*)
- Tighten your belt and go one more notch (*gambare*)
- Honesty (*shojiki*)
- Reality and phony spirituality (*honne* and *tatema*)

These qualities were evident in all he said and did. He was a man at peace with himself and with God.

Those ten lessons have stayed with me since I first stepped on Japanese soil in 1951. They have helped

me through the ups and downs of living, working, loving, suffering and surviving. This type of person is what a born-again Japanese Christian believer can become.

The Japanese Culture and Christian Ministry

Daily someone in Japan can read about and see on television the scandals of politicians, bankers, doctors, real estate agents, presidents, public servants, teachers, professors and more. This is what we see when looking at Japan with the naked eye. However, put on the "Bible's binoculars" and we can see something different. We can see past the outward and into what the inner person can become. We can then see the miracle of six million Christians in Japan. And if there are more Mr. Togasakis around, there will be more Christians. There is a saying that to tell if a stick is crooked, put it alongside a straight one. Mr. Togasaki was a "straight stick."

The sad truth is that what we see today in society does not mirror the characteristics of Mr. Togasaki. How could we explain to him what is happening to the 14 and 15-year-olds who are selling their bodies to dirty old men for a Gucci bag? Their guiding ten commandments are reduced to one: "Everybody's doing it, so what's wrong?" To combat this trend, I frequently give a one-hour PowerPoint message on "True Love Waits," using fifty slides. It ends with asking viewers to make a pledge to be a born-again Christian. Then, before God, parents, friends, future spouses and myself, they say, "I will keep myself pure until marriage."

After one such presentation, one mother in the audience said, "That's fine that you can use the computer to describe this, but you must also put something in our hands that we can use." So with the help of artist Madoka San and the International Chapel Ministries of Nara, we produced a 32-page colored manga (cartoon) titled, "True Love Waits" in English and Japanese. These are cheap enough (¥50) to distribute in front of schools. Already 100,000 have been passed out.

Every time I am discouraged or disappointed in a situation or a person, I remember Mr. Togasaki. I also remember the early Assyrian-Nestorian missionaries of the second century who spent six months on horseback, slept under the stars and ate the mutton—all in order to share the gospel with the Japanese.

So I carry on in my fifty-fifth year of bringing God's good news to Japan. My wife Lila and I have together accumulated 110 years of our labor of love (*muryo hoshi*) for Japan's wonderful people. Our son Ken also works in Japan with a helpline that sends volunteers to needy areas. Our other three sons, Bobb, Jim and Mark, and their wives are involved in various ministries as well.

Indeed, only six percent of the people in Japan are baptized Christians; however, I am heartened by a survey that showed that thirty-five percent of Japan's youth (between the ages 16 and 24) would choose Christianity if they had to choose a religion.

Only eleven percent would choose Buddhism and three percent Shintoism. I am encouraged that Bridal Industry News Weekly said that up to eighty percent of Japan's future brides choose a Christian wedding instead of a more traditional Shinto one. Why is this so? The future bride will answer, "Because it's trendy, bright (*kakko ii*), happy (*tanoshi*), light (*akarui*) and positive." She will also add, "I can understand the preacher when he says, 'Husbands, love your wives as you love your own body, and respect her.'"

This is Japan's bright future, to follow the *Amaterasu* (the "light that brightens heaven"), another name for the "luminous religion" (Ten shu) preached by Nestorian missionaries. Both are another name for the Lord Jesus Christ, "the light of the world," brought by the Nestorians all the way from seminary in Ctesiphon, Iraq, to Japan's Sakoshi, Kyoto and Nara some 1,800 years ago.

That "light of the world" is Japan's only hope for the future.

Reverend Kenny Joseph heads up *Reinforcing Evangelists and Aiding Pastors (R.E.A.P. Mission)*, a ministry based in Tokyo.

World Evangelical Alliance Theological Commission to Meet in Africa for First Time

The annual planning and strategy meeting of the World Evangelical Alliance Theological Commission (TC) for 2006 will be held at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School in Kenya 20-24 September 2006. Even though some of its early founders (and current leaders) were from this continent, this will be the first time the TC has met in this way on African soil. The event will feature a mini-consultation and opportunities for networking, fellowship and ministry with theologians, churches, missions and other bodies in the area. The consultation theme will be "Theological Perspectives on Global Religious Fundamentalism." Another topic, "Poverty and Social Responsibility," will also be on the agenda.

This will be the first opportunity for those interested in the newly expanded membership scheme of the TC to participate. The new scheme, announced at the beginning of 2006, allows for three new categories—affiliates, associates and partners. Affiliates are Theological Commissions or like bodies affiliated with national and regional fellowships of the World Evangelical Alliance (or bodies nominated by such fellowships to represent them). The other two groups, associates and partners, are drawn from a wider circle and consist of individuals or institutions interested in the work of the WEA Theological Commission and desirous of supporting its objectives and programs financially, prayerfully and practically. Individuals are known as associates; institutions such as seminaries, theological associations, churches, denominations or mission bodies are designated partners.

The TC has planned these new categories to allow for greater involvement in its work. A spokesman for the TC said that it was particularly keen to contact national theological commissions wherever they exist so that a closer bond could be established for the sharing of resources and networking of personnel. The TC is also committed to encouraging the formation of national and regional TCs in areas where they do not yet exist. National evangelical associations are invited to contact the TC to be part of the 2006 meeting.

The event will provide an ideal opportunity to launch the new scheme and develop the TC global programme. The TC is particularly interested in making effective contact with evangelical theologians in Africa.

Further details will be announced as they are finalised. Details of the meeting, information about membership (and application forms) may be obtained from the TC Australian office. For information, email wef-tc@pacific.net.au.

(Source: WEA Theological Commission News)

AIMS Launches Vision to Reach the World through Six International Epicenters

After twenty years of cross-cultural ministry, Accelerating International Mission Strategies (AIMS) is refocusing its international mobilization efforts on six key regions. Churches within Africa and Asia are growing faster than ever before and more people have come to Christ in the past twenty-five years than in the entire history of missions. The Church is finally in a position to see the Great Commission realized in this generation, and through focusing resources on six epicenters (China, the Horn of Africa, India, the Malay World, Tanzania and the United States) AIMS hopes to create an international harvest force.

"We believe that these epicenters will be focal points through which the earth will be shaken and the unreached will be reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ," said Daniel Crosby, president of AIMS.

The epicenter focus is built upon the idea that reaching the heart of a region will enable AIMS to make a bigger impact in the area as a whole. AIMS's staff believe that these six areas are key regions out of which God will raise up the resources needed to complete the task at hand. As AIMS trains pastors and leaders in the focal centers, the word of God will spread throughout each region and claim hearts throughout the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

During the past twenty years AIMS has developed lasting partnerships with key leaders and organizations throughout these six regions that have the potential to greatly increase the kingdom of God. Throughout the next five years leaders trained through each epicenter will become strategically involved in advancing the gospel throughout their respective region. Leaders in Tanzania plan to initially focus on reaching the thirty-one remaining unreached people groups within the country and then begin reaching other groups throughout Central Africa. In China the growing house church movement has expressed a passion to take the gospel to the 456 unreached people groups within China and along the Silk Road.

AIMS will continue to use Equipping for the Harvest conferences to train key leaders and church networks within each region, but each epicenter will have its own unique strategy. Some of these regions have already seen great results on the mission field. In 2001 AIMS equipped one hundred top Ethiopian leaders to train others around the country to mobilize churches within their district. Since that time Ethiopian churches have sent missionaries to all sixty unreached people groups within their country and established a growing church in thirty-five of those groups. AIMS will focus eighty percent of its global mobilization efforts on developing these six epicenters, leaving time to develop partnerships and conferences in other regions around the world.

Since its beginnings, AIMS has: equipped more than seventy-five thousand national pastors and business leaders to minister more effectively; produced dozens of seminars; and launched Compassion Aid Network, a humanitarian outreach. As a result, twenty-nine million people have heard the gospel (many for the very first time), fourteen thousand churches have been planted in partnership with national denominations and church movements and more than 2.2 million people have received Jesus Christ.

(This article was edited from an Accelerating International Mission Strategies news release.)

Bible League Announces New Ministry and New Director in Chile

Manuel Diaz was recently named the national director of Bible League's newest Latin America ministry in Chile. Diaz brings academic, pastoral and church planting experience to his new position with Bible League. He is academic director of the National Bible Institute in Santiago, where he has taught and influenced pastors in Chile for eighteen years. Two years ago Diaz, his wife Sandra and his family established a new church, which now has more than eighty members.

His first responsibility as national director of Chile will be opening an office in Santiago. Diaz will soon begin training pastors and church leaders in using the Bible League's scripture placement programs. There is great need for God's word in Chile. According to the 2005 census, about twenty percent of Chile's sixteen million people live in poverty.

"There are about three million evangelical Christians in Chile, and we know of only about 120,000 Bibles going into the country each year," said Tim DeVries, the Bible League's vice president of ministry in Latin America. "That's not even enough for replacement, much less ministry to others or for evangelism. So churches are eager for us to begin ministry there. Please pray with us that the first container of materials will arrive without delay."

Including Chile, the Bible League has ministry in ten Latin American countries. During 2005 the Bible League provided more than 936,000 Bibles and New Testaments to people who completed Bible studies throughout Latin America. The Bible League also helped local Christian leaders establish 526 new churches.

(This article was edited from a Bible League news release.)

Evangelical Alliance Announces New General Secretary for Scotland

A Church of Scotland minister and Evangelical Alliance Scotland executive member has been appointed as general secretary of Evangelical Alliance Scotland. Rev. Fred Drummond is to assume this key role in July and will drive forward the organisation's mission to unite Scottish Christians to be more effective witnesses to Christ and to be a more influential voice to government, society and the Church. Rev. Drummond will replace Rev. Mike Parker, who is moving to the Middle East.

Rev. Drummond, 44, is minister of Perth Riverside Church, Perthshire, Scotland and is on the board of the local YMCA.

"I am excited by the opportunities and challenges that I have been called to at this stage in my life," Rev. Drummond said. "I'm looking forward to working with a wide range of evangelicals in Scotland."

Rev. Drummond started his career as an apprentice shipbuilder, studied English and theology and in recent years has become interested in "emerging Church" theology. He earned his doctorate of ministry degree from Columbia University in the USA and specialised in new church ministry. He is married to Caroline and they have two teenage sons. Rev. Drummond has published one book to date, *I Spy the Rainbow: Becoming like a Child to Deepen your Spiritual Life*, and is currently writing another book about Christian leadership in a postmodern age.

Rev. Graeme Clark, minister of Central Baptist Church in Paisley, and chairman of the appointment committee, commented, "Rev. Drummond brings to this post not only a deep passion for God but outstanding qualities as both a leader and a pastor. He has shown in his work at Riverside and through his wider commitment to the Church in Scotland a vision to see Christians shape the Church to how the world actually is, rather than how they would like the world to be, or remember it used to be. As an author and gifted communicator he will, I am sure, continue to grow the work of the Evangelical Alliance in Scotland in fresh and exciting ways."

Outgoing general secretary Rev. Mike Parker welcomed Rev. Drummond's appointment. He said, "I'm delighted to see a clear transition in Evangelical Alliance Scotland and that Mr. Drummond's gifts will become available to the wider Church. His experience of growing new churches and engaging with Scottish culture will be a great asset to us all."

Rev. Joel Edwards, general director of the Evangelical Alliance UK, said "We welcome Fred to the staff of the Alliance. His experience as a local pastor will be invaluable. He will make a significant contribution in helping shape Evangelical Alliance Scotland at this strategic moment in its history."

(This article was edited from an Evangelical Alliance of UK press release.)

WORLD PERSPECTIVES

Younger Leaders Mentoring Younger Leaders

By Grace Samson

Because it has been used as an oppressive means to promote self-gain and empowerment at the expense of others, leadership almost carries a negative connotation in Africa.

This has resulted in a lack of trust and commitment to authorities. This is increasingly evident in the rebellion and craze for freedom displayed in the young people living in South Africa. Instead, they look to peers for belonging, approval and leadership.

Effective leadership is all about relationships. When we look at the life of Jesus, we see that he was an ordinary man who walked the streets. He did not eat specially packaged foods, imported bottled water or wear a brand to effect his authority. He led people through his strength of character and compassion, genuinely showing interest in people. Society recognized his leadership purely because he positively influenced the lives of those around him. He inspired and encouraged his followers to find true meaning and fulfillment by pointing them to the Father. He was a friend and a role model to his disciples. Jesus clearly established a good example of being a peer role model.

Good peer role models are people who have developed effective habits of discipline and success in personal life. They are people who demonstrate leadership through selfless service. Leadership is not about positional authority; rather, it is about leading through influence and active engagement. People of influence are marked by compassion, commitment and courage. They are able to challenge, influence and inspire their peers.

There is a huge need for peer role models today. Sadly, many young people have looked up to the wrong examples due to the false sense of identity and safety they find. The encouraging truth is that everyone—whether a teacher, parent, friend or athlete—can become a peer role model. The question is, what kind of role model will they be?

We as young leaders need to feel challenged and face the reality that we can only be effective when we seek the best in others and allow the love of Jesus to inspire and transpire through our relationships. The outcome will be trust and respect from those who look up to us. We should ask ourselves the sincere and soul-searching question, “Why would any one want to be like me?” Let this be our guide.

***Grace Samson** is the public relations officer for Media Village, in Cape Town, South Africa. She also heads up the School of Video Production at Media Village, which equips young Christian communicators from different nations to use media to share the gospel.*

Total Recall: Staying Faithful by Being Relevant

By Krish Kandiah

I had my eye on Arnold Schwarzenegger as I travelled by bus from Singapore to Thailand in the summer of 1994. At that time, instead of using standardised, mass-produced film posters, each cinema would hire an artist to paint picture billboards to advertise the movies. One of the film star’s blockbusters was on general release and in Chinese-majority Singapore Schwarzenegger had distinctly Chinese facial features. On our way through Malaysia our bus passed many cinemas, all of which depicted him with a more Malay-looking disposition. When I finally made it to Thailand Schwarzenegger had a noticeably Thai appearance! It seems we want our heroes to look like us!

Upon coming home to the UK I looked through a book of images of Jesus Christ and it soon became apparent that Western Christianity had been doing the same thing for centuries with the greatest hero of all. The majority of the images of Christ, whether on canvas or on film, depict the Son of God as a blue-eyed, blonde-haired, Western male. It has sometimes been said, “God created us in his image and we have returned the compliment.” Indeed, this is what has happened.

These images of Jesus are an illustration of the very complex relationship between our cultures and the gospel. And we must consider this subject if we are going to relate the faith relevantly and faithfully to contemporary culture. The missiologist Andrew Walls has neatly summarised this relationship into two historical trends: the “Indigenising Principle” and the “Pilgrim Principle.”¹

Indigenising Principle

The indigenising principle is demonstrated when the Church seeks to connect with its host culture. For example, when the early Church, empowered by the Spirit, took the gospel to the nations, they were not afraid to translate the message into the Greek language and its thought forms. The brilliant prologue of John’s Gospel shows the author reappropriating the philosophical concept of the logos to help Greek speakers understand the truth about the person of Christ. However, when this indigenising principle is taken too far, as we have seen with the images of Christ, it simply co-opts Christianity into the norms

and social mores of the host culture. For example, in a materialistic Western culture, Jesus Christ is often marketed as the fulfilment of a dream of health and wealth. This danger is called syncretism.

Pilgrim Principle

To take advantage of the indigenising principle without falling into the trap of syncretism, we need Walls' counterbalance: the pilgrim principle. The gospel is a prophetic message and Christ and his Church are never fully at home in any culture. Each culture is a mix of the grace of God and rebellion against God; the gospel calls every culture to repentance and Christians are called to be "resident aliens" who both affirm and confront the culture. But again when this is done without sufficient humility or reflection, the gospel can be exported from one culture to another, along with the cultural baggage of the missionary. The West has a history of planting churches that exported their hymn book, dress codes, leadership structures and social norms along with the gospel. This danger is called cultural imperialism.

Every genuine communicator of the gospel seeks to make the message both faithful to God's revelation and relevant to the culture they are communicating to. Yet historically and from our contemporary experience we often fail in both areas. What help is there?

Jesus Christ

Jesus is God in human flesh, but not just generic human flesh; God became Jewish flesh. Jesus abided by Jewish customs and laws, spoke Aramaic and used the local idioms. Jesus used the everyday experiences of his audience (agriculture, fishing, eating) as a means to communicate the good news of the kingdom. Jesus' message connected with people because he connected with their culture. Yet Jesus' message is prophetic; Jesus finds safe language to deliver a dangerous message. He is criticised for getting too close to the outcasts of his society, to the social misfits and moral failures; and yet, even his enemies can find no sin in him. Jesus models for us a relationship with our cultures; he demonstrates a way to be in the world but not of it.

Canon

Scripture is both human and divine—written into a specific human context and yet the unfailing word of God for all time. Good Christian communication acts as a bridge between text and context as we expound and apply the timeless truth of God. Unfortunately our preaching is often more like a pier than a bridge. Some of us are good at finding appropriate links with popular culture and telling amusing stories that grab the attention. Others of us ground our message in the solid rock of biblical truth but fail to connect it to the everyday experience of our audience. The Bible provides the vital, authoritative and indispensable revelation of God—the source material for all of our communication about God. However, the Bible also models for us that we learn about God best through story, characterisation, history, songs, dreams and letters, not simply through a three-point lecture.

Counsellor

The Holy Spirit promised to lead the first disciples into truth and his presence with his people encourages us to believe that he is more than able to transcend our cultural location in revealing God to us. The simple act of praying before opening God's word or daring to communicate it to others is more than just a formality; it is a self-conscious attempt to submit ourselves to the leading of Spirit. Reliance upon God's Holy Spirit, who is at work both in God's word and in God's world, is our only hope for effective communication.

Community

Our openness to God's truth is affected by our cultural location as so often we inherit cultural blind spots in our reading of scripture. As a Western Christian I am aware that the individualism of my society shapes the way that I read the Bible and that the affluence of my culture, for example, makes it difficult for me to hear the challenge of God's word about caring for the poor. The most obvious way around this is to make use of God's provision of a worldwide Church. By listening to Christians from other cultures as they seek to interpret God's word we are provided with another perspective on scripture which can challenge or complement our own. To our shame Western Christians are often very willing to point out the theological flaws in the rest of the world but are often unwilling to listen to our brothers and sisters return the favour and critique the syncretism rife in the Western Church. This insults the global Church and weakens the Western Church.

Culture

C.S. Lewis argued that just as fish do not feel wet, we are often unaware of our cultures and their influence on us. However, culture is to be recognised as a gift from God. The Book of Revelation hints at the persistence of different languages in heaven and that this great diversity of cultures used to worship the lamb is particularly honouring to God. The Apostle Paul, while in Athens, is not afraid to connect with the pagan poets of his day and to use them as bridge points to help bring the gospel to the spiritually needy city. Culture is good and becoming a culture-watcher is a vital part of becoming an effective communicator of the gospel for two reasons: (1) because as we become aware of our cultures we are better equipped to see how they shape our own understanding of the gospel and (2) because we will be able to communicate that gospel more effectively both within our own culture and cross-culturally.

Let me offer three tips to becoming more aware of our cultures. First, spend some time outside of your culture or at least talking with people from different cultures. Second, find a part of your own culture that you enjoy and become as well informed as you can in it. Whether it is film, art, sport, literature, politics or music, listen to the culture and find things that you can thank God for as well as things you think God would challenge. Third, leave your armchair and listen to people, ask questions and be inquisitive. Learn about cultures at the grassroots level.

It is vital that we become both faithful and relevant in seeking to reach out with the message of Jesus Christ. By itself faithfulness can simply be a stale restatement of familiar truths, or even worse, an imposition of a past generation's cultural expression of the faith. By itself relevance can end up being faddishness, or even worse, an unwitting assimilation of the norms of our cultures. But coupled together relevance and faithfulness can allow us to become Christ-like in our communication and bring God's unchanging message to an ever-changing world.

Endnote

Walls, Andrew. 1996. "The Gospel as Prisoner and Liberator of Culture." in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 7.

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Developing Emerging Leaders Through Mentoring

By Steve Irvin

The massive shift of the Christian center of gravity from the North and West to the southern and eastern regions of the globe has been fueled by explosive church growth in many countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Increased numbers of converts and of local churches has not resulted, however, in a corresponding increase of competent and Christ-like leaders. At the 2004 Forum for World Evangelization, the Lausanne Issue Group on Future Leadership called for a movement on every continent to develop emerging leaders to meet this pressing need.

Formal educational models cannot possibly keep pace with the leadership needs of the burgeoning Church of the southern hemisphere. One strategy for developing emerging leaders in an informal setting is mentoring. A mentor can be described as a person who intentionally seeks to facilitate the spiritual and ministerial growth of another individual. Mentors come alongside mentees to help them achieve God's purposes for their lives. The mentoring relationship that results can bring benefits to both mentor and mentee, even as it serves as a catalyst for leadership development.

Scriptural Basis for Mentoring

A Colombian friend of mine with a vision for developing emerging leaders through mentoring gives a concise definition of mentoring when he is queried about it. He just responds, "Mentoring is discipleship the way Jesus did it." What he means is that it is relational, transmits knowledge in the context of life experience and is focused on God's purposes in following Christ. While written materials can be of benefit, mentoring is not about going through a book. The example of Jesus as a mentor is one of intentionality and focuses on individuals in order to see them grow in godliness, in effective ministry and in leadership. It is a model of servant leadership and sacrificial love that seeks to guide individuals into a deeper

knowledge of God and a deeper understanding of God's purposes in the world, even as it empowers them to fulfill those purposes.

When Jesus ascended into heaven he did not leave the disciples orphaned and alone. He sent the comforter, the Holy Spirit. Jesus called the Holy Spirit in John 14:26 the paraclete, or "one who is called to someone's aid." Paraclete is translated differently in modern versions as "comforter," "helper" or "counselor." The Holy Spirit teaches believers and guides them into truth (John 16:13). In the same way, mentors help, counsel and guide mentees in their pilgrimage in life and ministry, always bearing witness of Christ (John 15:26) so that the mentee grows in relationship with the Lord.

One can see mentoring principles in other biblical contexts. For example, Moses seems to mentor Joshua to succeed him as leader of Israel. Elisha was the mentee of Elijah. Paul's writings indicate his mentoring of his missionary colleagues, Titus and Timothy. Even Paul himself was mentored by Barnabas, who stood by him and sponsored him before the apostles. Barnabas opened doors for Paul in ministry that the Lord used to spread the gospel throughout the Roman Empire. These biblical examples give us insight both to the importance and to the practice of mentoring in the kingdom of God.

The Mentor's Heart

Mentors are not perfect. Some people may hesitate to mentor an emerging leader because they feel inadequate. Mentors are models for their mentees, and any human model is fallible. But the mentor's transparency will help the mentee to deal with his or her own struggles. Mentors need to be authentic God-seekers and Christ-followers who are willing to help others in their own development.

Biblical mentors seem to share some key values. They do not attempt to build their own kingdoms, but focus on the kingdom of God. Their leadership is based not on the manipulation of power, but on an attitude of servanthood. Brokenness before the Lord characterized by humility makes their lives compelling to others. They are not lone rangers; they are team players. They have decided to invest in others and make leadership development of others a priority in their ministry.

Putting Mentoring into Practice

Some organizations implement formal mentoring programs where more experienced members are teamed up with younger individuals in order to help them learn the ropes. Studies have shown, however, that informal mentoring based on mutual willingness of the participants is more effective in the long run. Mentoring relationships go through at least three stages.

The first stage is initiation or attraction. At this stage, mentors and mentees see characteristics that draw them together. Mentors may identify potential in an emerging leader and approach that individual to develop a mentoring relationship with him or her. On the other hand, emerging leaders may see individual qualities in a more experienced individual that they may want to emulate, or skills that they wish to develop. When I was in college, I was drawn to the dean of the college by his administrative skills, Christ-like character and steady demeanor. Without any formal agreement, he has become a life-long mentor whom I still seek out for guidance and wisdom.

A second stage in mentoring relationships is the cultivation stage. In the first stage, mentor and mentee often lay out the expectations they have of the relationship. Some commitments may be made as to frequency of communication and the level of transparency they wish to maintain. In the cultivation stage, the relationship begins to bear fruit as mentor and mentee share with one another and face challenges and opportunities together.

The third stage is separation. Most mentoring relationships last anywhere from three to five years. Some may last longer, but separation eventually comes, whether due to changes in assignment, location or the felt needs of the participants. Paul and Barnabas separated even after Barnabas had been used of the Lord to open great doors of opportunity to Paul. This stage can be painful, but it is necessary as the mentee continues to grow developmentally. Often, mentoring relationships will evolve into peer relationships marked by continued mutual support. Wise mentors will be sensitive to this need and will release mentees to pursue God's vision for his or her life.

Mentoring Tips

Mentoring is not an exact science, but there are some basic principles that can guide mentors in developing mentoring relationships with mentees. The following are six.

1. Mentors are role models. Mentees are often drawn to mentors because they want to be like them in some area. While communicating information and knowledge is important, mentors should first keep watch over their own lives and ministry so as to maintain an effective example for the mentee to follow.
2. Mentors should pray for and pray with the mentee. The Holy Spirit is the primary agent of spiritual development. Apart from his working in the mentee's life, the mentor labors in vain.
3. Mentors should seek to provide opportunities for the mentee to gain ministry experience. By sponsoring the mentee, the mentor can often open doors to new leadership development.
4. Mentors should learn to listen to the mentee. Sometimes well-meaning mentors have pat answers for life problems. Trust will grow in the relationship as the mentee senses that the mentor is truly seeking to hear and understand the mentee's needs.
5. Mentors should give guidance to the mentee. However, unless there are clear scriptural commands at issue, allow the mentee to make his or her own decisions before the Lord. For instance, in considering a change of ministry, help the mentee examine matters of spiritual gifting, call and future goals. But the final decision must rest upon the mentee as he or she takes responsibility for discerning and following God's will.
6. Mentors should be sensitive to cultural differences that influence the expectations that mentees have of mentoring relationships. Some cultures expect that mentors be more or less directive. Others may require the mentor to be much more paternal and to become much more involved in the mentee's family and personal life. Some mentors may want to keep a strict schedule, while the host culture may consider relationships far more important than schedules. Cultural sensitivity, wise transparency and a winsome spirit will go a long way in nurturing the mentoring relationship.

Mentoring Resources

Helps for mentors in the leadership development task are readily available. For example, Mentorlink International offers training materials for mentors in several languages, as well as "web-assisted mentoring" for those who cannot find a mentor in their own context. Another interesting site is Mentor and Multiply which offers a number of materials related to mentoring, as well as access to a number of experienced mentors who can be contacted via email for advice and encouragement.

Recommended Reading

Krallmann, Günter. 2002. *Mentoring for Mission: A Handbook on Leadership Principles Exemplified by Jesus Christ*. Krallmann is a Bible teacher with Youth With A Mission (YWAM) and presents mentoring within the context of world evangelization. He draws principles from Jesus' own mentoring ministry.

Sanders, Martin. 2004. *The Power of Mentoring: Shaping People Who Will Shape the World*. Sanders, professor at Alliance Theological Seminary and international leadership consultant, focuses on the key aspect of character development through mentoring.

Johnson, W. Brad and Ridley, Charles. 2004. *The Elements of Mentoring*. Johnson, a US Naval Academy professor, and Ridley, Johnson's former teacher at Fuller Theological Seminary, offer fifty-seven concise, practical chapters on the skills and traits of effective mentoring.

Steve Irvin *has been a missionary with The Christian and Missionary Alliance since 1982. After twenty years in Colombia, he and his wife now serve in Buenos Aires, Argentina in church planting and leadership development. Irvin is also mentor at large with Mentorlink International.*

Brother Flack: Missionary to India Offers Insight to Younger Missionaries

By *Chacko Thomas*

Brother Fred Flack will be one hundred years old in July 2007. He served for forty years in India with the indigenous church planting movement associated with Brother Bakht Singh. He and his twin brother are the oldest known twins alive in the United Kingdom today. Brother Flack is 98-years-old and still preaches without notes. The Bible he carries is typical; he is not yet in need of large print. He still travels from his home in Sidmouth in Devon (UK) to minister God's word. He is happy that God still gives him "fresh manna" for the ministry. After hearing Brother Flack speak several times, I had the chance to interview him in February 2006.

Q. Are you excited about your 100th birthday and getting the Queen's letter?

A. Well that is nice, but what is more important is that my name is in the lamb's book of life. I look forward to serving the Lord to the end. Recently he reminded me how at the age of sixteen, when I turned my life over to him, I sang with great sincerity, "Jesus I have promised to serve thee to the end." I think now I will make it. We could not serve one more worthy.

Q. How did you choose India for your mission field?

A. India was not my choice. While I was a student at the Missionary Training Colony (MTC), we were told about the Tuareg (people group) in the Sahara. A Colony man had been to them but he died there. I felt I could go to replace him. The Lord called me to his service overseas in August 1931 by Jeremiah 1:5: "Before I formed you in the belly I knew you, and before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified you, and I ordained you a prophet to the nations." That call was so clear and arresting that I left my secular employment to prepare for it. At once I asked the Lord for two things. First, that he would give me a companion, because he sent his disciples two by two. And second, that he would give me a church like Antioch in Acts 13:1-3.

I was advised by some elders to go to the MTC in Upper Norwood. It was not a Bible school or seminary. It was like an army camp to train men as missionaries for the un-evangelised lands overseas. It was a two-year course in which time the mornings were devoted to Bible instruction and the afternoons to learning practical skills such as hair-cutting, shoe repairing, gardening, woodworking and cooking. The Colony did not provide any direction for the future; we had to seek that from the Lord.

I thought my future was to be in Africa among the Tuaregs of the Sahara. In preparation for that I went to Switzerland to learn French. While there, the Lord answered my prayer for a ministry companion. I received a letter from an elder in the fellowship in London (which I had begun to think was to be my "Antioch") saying Raymond Golsworthy had spoken to them and that I would be hearing from him. Raymond and I were together in the MTC for one year and I knew him to be a very fine, gifted and spiritual man. He was expecting to go to the Eskimos in the Arctic, so I never thought we would work together. But after I received this letter I became excited. Was Raymond to become my ministry companion? After waiting for some time I replied to the elder that no letter had come from Raymond, but that in my spirit I believed he was to be the ministry companion for whom I was waiting. Two days later Raymond's letter came saying the Lord had shut the door on his going to the Eskimos and he believed the Lord was joining him to me. I was thrilled that this should be the Lord's answer to my prayer. I returned to London and we prayed together, thinking our future was in Africa.

We had learned the truth of the Church being the body of Christ. We understood that its members were to move together instead of independently. We therefore prayed that the Church would share our vision. However, the elders in the church at Honor Oak had no light about Africa for us. We waited and prayed. Eventually they said to us, "We believe you can find the will of God for yourselves, so go ahead and we will pray for you." But for us this was not the church described in Acts 13:1-3. We did what we had never done before or since—we gave the Lord a deadline. We said, "Please say yes or no to Africa within eight days." The Lord answered on the fifth morning. During one family prayer, the leader read Deuteronomy 3:26 when the Lord says to Moses, "Let it suffice you. Speak no more to me of this matter." That was all we needed to understand the Lord had said no to Africa. We told the elders. They were not surprised.

After some time had passed, a senior member of the fellowship said, "I see you two boys in Calcutta." I did not want to go to India, much less Calcutta. But for some reason the thought stuck. In my morning reading I read Jeremiah 37:17: "Is there any word from the Lord?" The answer was yes. A few days later I read Jeremiah 47:7: "How can it keep quiet, seeing the Lord has given it a charge?" We must tell others what we believed God was saying. When we did, the elders smiled and said, "When we were praying together two weeks ago the Lord said to us, 'Golsworthy and Flack for India.'" We had not prayed and waited in vain. Within eight weeks we were on a boat bound for India. We reached Bombay on 1 April 1937.

Q. It must have been easier being a missionary during the British Raj.

A. No, it was easier after Independence. When missionaries were there after the Raj was gone, it meant they were not agents of the British government. But there was never a real problem because with Brother Bakht Singh we were working under the Indian leadership. It was a truly indigenous work; we were fully identified with the people and the land. Brother Bakht Singh was not forced into starting the work and planting churches. He was a man apprehended of the Lord and had been given understanding of the spiritual nature of the Church.

My best days were spent with my brothers and sisters in India. I was in India throughout World War II. During that time I was conscripted by the British to serve in the army, which I did from June 1943 to July 1946. I refused to carry arms because I felt it was inconsistent to have a Bible in one hand and a gun in the other. I was put into the Royal Army Medical Corp where I served in North India, Assam and Burma.

Q. How did you meet your wife?

A. I was demobbed from the army after the war and returned to London. It was then I met Meg Spracket. She and her friend were in charge of a meeting place connected with the fellowship in Honor Oak in Glasgow. I was asked to go there to fulfil the ministry of what might be called a house church. The ladies knew I was coming. It was a dirty, damp and foggy night when I rang the doorbell. Meg answered. When she opened the door and saw me she said, "Oh, not him, Lord" (meaning, "Not him, Lord, for my husband.").

I was there for three months and began to believe that Meg was the one for whom I had prayed and waited for fourteen years. When the opportunity came to pop the question, there was no romantic environment. It was not a moonlit night; there were no palm trees. We were eating ice-cream and walking and I said, "I suppose you would not marry me?" Meg promptly said, "Yes, I will." I said, "Don't you want to pray about it?" She said, "I have." We were both nearly forty years old. Two days before I popped the question the Lord had spoken to Meg in her morning reading. Meg had fought the whole idea of marriage for a long time. Her parents had divorced and this had caused her misery during her childhood. After her conversion she learned that every member of the body of Christ should have a gift, so she had asked the Lord what her gift was. The only answer she received was to be a help-meet. She fought this for some time but eventually accepted this calling. I was the first to come along.

Q. Was it difficult to go to India after this adjustment to a late marriage?

A. The adjustment was only that now I had to think and provide for someone else. Bachelors can be very selfish and self-centred. I had already been in India for twelve years, but for Meg it was different and difficult. It was very hot and Meg's respiratory system did not work properly. She was lonely because she could not speak the language; I was so busy with meetings. We prayed the Lord would give us children but he did not. But the Lord was first in Meg's life and he helped her to endure as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. She was a wonderful help to me; she enriched my life tremendously and served the Lord with all she had. We were partners for fifty-one years.

Q. What did you hope to accomplish in India?

A. To be "a worker together with him" (2 Corinthians 6:1) in his programme of building his Church. My gift was not as an evangelist; my gift was to teach the word. I had no training, but the Lord gave me the gift of teaching and taught me how to use it. I travelled extensively throughout the land.

Q. What did you learn from your Indian brothers and sisters?

A. Yes, I learned about devotion to the Lord. Their zeal was something I had not seen in England. They delight in the Bible. They have none of the inhibitions such as we have. They kneel in the streets to pray. And their service one to another is precious. Their soul-winning zeal and all-night prayer meetings are remarkable.

Q. Would you have any advice for the Indian churches?

A. The biblical pattern is mentioned in Philippians 1:1: "Saints ... bishops (elders) and deacons." This is the order seen in the early Church. The missionary should seek the maturity of the local church and be on the lookout for "fathers" who are begetting children in the congregation. These are the prospective elders. The congregation will have noticed them and have confidence in them. They can be brought forward, commended to the congregation and appointed elders. Ordaining elders was what the apostles did in Acts 14 and what Paul instructed Titus to do in Titus 1.

Senior, mature members of the congregation recognising the need and time may call the congregation's attention to those in their midst who have their confidence. Hands may be laid on these men to acknowledge they are being set apart as overseers or elders. The laying on of hands is a representative act. Those who are marked out and set apart as elders are not elders for life. There is an age limit for the Levites (Numbers 8:23-26) which shows a principle for all engaged in the Lord's service. There is a time to "retire" or step down. These men can continue to help, but the responsibility of elder passes to younger men.

Q. You said you do not take sermon notes to the pulpit. What advice would you have for preachers?

A. Jeremiah 48:10 says, "Cursed is the man who does the work of the Lord negligently." First, every preacher must prepare diligently. Second, pray until God drops a word, thought, text or subject into your heart. Third, study the context carefully. Fourth, ask God to guide you to other relevant passages. Fifth, decide carefully how you will begin your sermon. It is important to capture the attention at the beginning. Sixth, get all your material in order and know where you are going and how you expect to get there. Last, remember you are to be the "Lord's messenger in the Lord's message" (Haggai 1:13).

I once asked a colleague what a certain brother's ministry was like. His reply was, "It was a bit bookish." If we are reading our message to our audience, it will appear bookish as well. Our mind, heart and spirit must be in the message. That is why I do not preach from my notes. Paul says, "May the word of God dwell in you richly" (Colossians 3:16).

Q. What kind of missionary training would you suggest?

A. I can think of no better training than I had myself: to become a person of God and a worker who need not be ashamed (2 Timothy 2:15). The Missionary Training Colony provided excellent training for missionary work. There was Bible study and practical training. The Bible is the missionary's manual. Read it and study it. Accept discipline in the service and welcome advice or criticism. Learn from your mistakes and failures. Your aim is excellence, not good or better.

The meekness and gentleness of Christ are the "weapons of our warfare" because our service is indeed warfare (2 Corinthians 10:1-5). At the Missionary Training Colony we had an evangelistic trek each year when twelve men set out on a four-hundred-mile trip. We preached from place to place and slept in tents or whatever else the Lord provided. It was quite strenuous and we sometimes had to walk up to twenty miles a day. We were all very immature preachers, but it was a good exercise. If we are prospective missionaries we must learn everything we can before we go. The Missionary Training Colony only accepted as students those who had already led souls to the Lord. There must be some evidence of our calling before we go.

Q. What advice would you have for missionaries going to the mission field?

A. Go as a learner. Be prepared to learn from the national people and from the culture of the country. Do not try to make the churches like the one in your own country. Do everything you can to develop indigenous growth. Do not be masters; be servants. Identify in every way you can with the people God puts you among. You are there to establish self-supporting; self-governing and self-propagating churches.

Do not go first to the villages. The Lord and the apostles started in the cities and towns. They were less conspicuous there. When missionaries are mostly among the poor, their converts will be "rice Christians" and any developing leadership will be "yes men." This is fatal for spiritual development. I was asked to attend a missionary conference in India on one occasion. Missionaries were gathered to pray and confer about the work. They had many Christian workers, but not one of them attended that conference. Everything was being done without one of them present. The work was being directed by "remote control" somewhere outside the land. Brother Bakht Singh established self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating churches.

Missionaries must be prepared to live a very simple lifestyle. Only then will the people feel we are one of

them. National believers who are sent away to Bible school abroad for training are of little use when they return because they have developed a different lifestyle. Our Lord Jesus and the apostles did not establish institutional centres, Bible colleges or schools.

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.

Dalit Education Centers: Delivering Emancipation and Building Leaders

By Joseph D'Souza

Looking deep into 8-year-old Susmita's eyes, anyone can tell that hers is a difficult life. The clothing on her back is ripped, dirty and worn. Her slightly jaundiced face reflects the illness caused by a lack of medical care. She has learned to live with the constant toothache she has had since she was six. She sits in front of her small hut, made from grass, broken bricks and scraps of heavy plastic, and watches as children in her village make their way each morning to school. She admires their clean, pressed uniforms and wonders what it must be like to attend such a great institution of learning. However, Susmita knows she may never darken the doorway of a school. She may never carry a backpack filled with books. As a tear rolls down her face, Susmita realizes hers is a life unlike those of other children. It is a life of despair, poverty and injustice. It is the life of a Dalit.

The Dalit people of India are victims of centuries-long, socially-sanctioned bigotry. Nearly three hundred million people fall into this lowest caste of the Hindu caste system. Because of the Dalit's low social standing, affluent parts of society deny them basic human rights. Unable to access education, and because of the social stigma of "untouchability," society forces Dalits to take low-paying jobs that provide inadequate income. They cannot afford food, clothing, shelter, medical care or education. Society denies Dalits human rights and shackles them to a social and religious system that removes personal freedom.

Dalit Leaders and the Christian Church Join Together

However, after centuries of caste-based oppression, Dalit leaders are asserting themselves. Often this assertion is met with violent hostility. Yet the Dalit leadership across the nation is committed to the abolishment of caste and to an end of inhumane discrimination. In 2001 many of India's Dalit leaders entered into an alliance with Christian leaders for the emancipation of Dalits. The Christian Church in India is nearly eighty percent Dalit/Tribal and so it was natural that this movement of solidarity began.

Dalit leadership invited Indian Christians to give their children an English education which included a biblical worldview that touched on the dignity of men and women, creation, salvation and union with God. This historic decision to educate Dalit children in the English medium—the language of the ruling elite—was the culmination of more than fifty years of intense struggle. Dalits insist that the best way to change lives, achieve measurable results in the community and escape the plight of oppression is through education that serves the whole person and includes community and spiritual development. Indian Christians enthusiastically accepted this invitation, pledging their solidarity with the Dalits. Christians agreed to provide this education, knowing that it would result in a life-changing transformation in the Dalit people.

Susmita is now one benefactor of this tremendous opportunity for education. Today, thousands of children like her are in schools specifically created for Dalits. These schools are the method by which Dalit emancipation will be delivered in the new generation. They are building tomorrow's Dalit leaders and are building a hope and a future for the Dalits that never before existed. Already fifty such schools are operating across the nation. The hope is to have a thousand in the next few years. All this is being done under the auspices of the Dalit Freedom Network (DFN). The DFN works in four areas of Dalit emancipation: education, human rights, medical care and economic enterprise. Each component is necessary to end the caste system stigma.

Why is an English Education so Important to the Dalits?

For three thousand years, Dalits have been denied access to education by the upper castes. Because

they are uneducated, they cannot get jobs reserved for them in the Indian affirmative action/reservation system.

This also means that very rarely do any Dalits get an education in the English language, the language of the ruling elite in India. English education is private and expensive in India. And because Dalits cannot speak English, they have been denied right of entry to the globalization process which is impacting the world. The Dalits have been kept in ignorance, denied their rights and become victims of yet another injustice.

Many argue that India has changed and developed exponentially in the fifty years since independence from British rule. India will likely be another major superpower with its growth in economics, technology, medicine, engineering, bio-technology, nuclear power and sheer population numbers. Surely, these people say, this tremendous growth must have had a trickle-down effect on all parts of society, including those in the lower strata of the culture.

However, a closer look at India's movers and shakers is eye-opening. By and large, those in the limelight are the elitist and educated upper caste, many of whom who are also fluent in English. These are the ones who have accessed English education over the last fifty years because they have had the financial capacity. They have also known that English is the language of global economics, medicine and the Internet.

The world sees the apparent commitment on the part of India's leaders to economic, social and political growth. The deception, though, comes in the fact that India's Dalits remain in oppression under the upper caste rulers. Access to an English-based world class education for the Dalits will mean the death of upper caste domination. Therefore, the upper castes seek to fool the world into believing that the entire nation is achieving new heights and is growing stronger. National marketing campaigns such as "India Shining" have no realistic bearing on the plight of the nation's low caste and Dalits. India is not "shining" in the slums, in the villages that still apply extreme segregation or for the children who are bonded in labor to their upper caste landowners. It is estimated that forty to one hundred million children are in child labor in India, the vast majority from the low and oppressed castes.

The dichotomy facing India today is incredible. The rich are getting richer and the poor are sinking deeper and deeper into an unbreakable cycle of poverty. The educated have access to the world, while the opportunities for the uneducated become less and less. The upper castes shine, while the lower caste and Dalits remain in their dull, lifeless existence.

Take, for example, the stories of Sushma and Lakshmi, neighbors living in the North Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. Both women are 21-years-old. Sushma comes from a high-caste family background. Her father studied abroad and served in the Indian military as a dentist making a significant wage. Sushma's mother enjoyed the benefits of being a homemaker. She kept their large home clean with the help of lower caste servants, and her children were well-educated and immaculately dressed. Sushma is now privileged to attend one of the top universities in the nation and is studying to be a doctor. She knows that someday her parents will find her a handsome and successful upper caste man to marry. He will love her and help her raise beautiful children who will be afforded all the luxuries Sushma enjoyed as a child and as a young adult. Sushma's future is certainly bright.

Lakshmi, however, is from a Dalit background. She lives in a small makeshift hut in the vacant lot immediately adjacent to Sushma's mansion. Lakshmi's parents were too poor to send her to school and thus, Lakshmi is uneducated and illiterate. Already married to a man who is an unemployed alcoholic and beats her, Lakshmi sits from sun-up until sundown on the side of the busy highway. There she crafts cricket bats out of wood to sell to passing motorists. Her four children do not go to school. Instead, they play alongside the road in the oncoming traffic. Everyday Lakshmi watches as Sushma and her younger siblings leave their upper caste home in their imported vehicle and go to university, to coffee houses, to bookstores, to nightclubs. Lakshmi, however, knows nothing of Sushma's world. Lakshmi knows nothing of global news events. She will never experience the latest in fashion or computing. Lakshmi's children will inevitably fill their parents' roles in the lowest rung of society and will likely remain in the seemingly unbreakable cycle of poverty.

India is not shining for Lakshmi. Lakshmi and her children need an education. They need the English language and they need to be empowered.

Despite how obvious it is that English is the way forward for India's Dalits, upper caste political leaders have thrashed and maligned the English language and English-based education, charging it to be the language of the colonial rulers even as all their own children have been educated in English schools and institutions. And this denial of empowering Dalits through education guarantees the future of upper caste power in India. Take, for example, the Woodstock School in Mussoorie, North India, which has been one of the world's premier boarding schools for decades. It has top of the line academic and extracurricular facilities. Its graduates attend prestigious schools abroad. It draws its student body from both an international and domestic pool of potential candidates. Naturally, however, it is filled with wealthy upper caste children. Woodstock School is not a possibility for the Dalits. What was once a Christian institution for children of missionary children is now filled with children of the powerful upper caste elite in India.

In addition to international boarding schools, English-based international standard primary schools are popping up across the nation and are filled with the upper echelon of Indian society.

The strategy to deny Dalit rights has gone so far that the upper castes have even convinced some international and domestic non-profit aid agencies offering education to poor Indian children that the state/village/tribal language is the only and best (contextualized) option for the Dalit children of India's villages. They claim that children who know English will be alienated from their families and will eventually become a new class of children no longer accepted by their own heritage. We know this is not true. English education combined with a learning of the local vernacular language or mother tongue is the way forward. Bi-lingual Indians throughout the world are involved with commerce, technology and politics. And none of them claim to have lost their cultural heritage because of it.

Empowering Children through Dalit Education Centers

Thankfully, Dalit leaders have seen through this upper caste deception and are seeking to empower their children through Dalit Education Centers (DECs).

Global partners of the Dalit movement like the Dalit Freedom Network offer equal-opportunity education to Dalit and low-caste children across India. It is not a compassion-based movement/program; it is a justice-based movement. The Dalit movement follows closely the old adage, "You can give a man a fish and feed him for a day, but if you teach a man to fish you can feed him for a lifetime." The Dalit movement seeks to empower Dalits to provide for themselves now and in the future.

Only justice for the Dalits will bring about true change and life transformation. This justice must be evident in every part of Dalit life. They must obtain full human rights and be considered equal to their upper caste peers. Dalits want full participation in the control of power in India.

Dalits are not asking for compassion. They are asking for justice. To get justice, Dalits across India must eliminate or break free from the caste system and loosen the stranglehold caste has on India's education system nationwide. They want to claim their right to a world class, English-based education.

Casting Off Caste

The statistics are staggering:

- Less than twenty-five percent of Dalit men are literate, while only ten percent of Dalit women are literate. Of those who are literate, less than eight percent are educated and even fewer are English-educated. Computer literacy is but a dream.
- Nearly half of all Dalit children drop out of school at the primary level, while two-thirds drop out in junior high school and more than three-fourths of all Dalit children never make it past high school.
- Only two percent of seats in higher education institutions are filled by Dalits (despite reservation status allocating a greater number of seats) because they are unable to legitimately reach this academic level and compete in an English-based education standard.
- Over seventy percent of all children bonded in labor are Dalits. More than sixty-five percent of all young girls used in female prostitution trafficking are from the depressed Dalit castes.

The Dalit Education Centers seek to change these statistics, to end child labor, to end child prostitution and to bring justice to a new generation of Dalit children.

A top goal of the DEC program is to create a caste-free environment where children from all castes, religions and walks of life are encouraged to study, work, play and eat together. It is built on the worldview that all men and women are created equally in the image of God and all are equally loved by God.

Justice Becoming a Reality

The small village of Papaiahpet in Andhra Pradesh, South India, is a beautiful example of how these goals are being fulfilled. Plagued by extreme caste division, Papaiahpet was one of the first villages to construct and fully develop a Dalit Education Center. For the first time, Dalit children went to school and were afforded the same educational privileges as the upper caste children in the village. They wore uniforms and carried school bags. The boys carefully shined their school shoes and the girls proudly wore red ribbons in their long, black hair. The teachers at the school worked diligently to provide an excellent educational atmosphere for these oppressed children. The result was a genuine transformation.

Shortly after the DEC opened, the upper caste residents of the village noticed the excellent academic standard by which the school was run. They saw the Dalit children's behavior improve. They noticed that Dalit parents were taking an active role in their children's education. As a gesture, the upper caste leaders of the village invited the Dalit residents to dinner in an upper caste home. Never in the history of the village had the upper caste and lower caste eaten together, let alone in the home of an upper caste member.

Dalit Education Centers are places of equality and love. DEC managers are often thrilled to admit high caste students into the DEC schools. Teachers treat all students with love and respect regardless of their family background. There are legitimate enrollment allotments for high caste children in some of the DECs because the enrollment reflects demographic distribution of the community. In addition, because of the high quality of education offered at each school, upper caste parents beg DEC staff to enroll their children.

Despite the schools' apparent popularity and positive reputation in each community, there remains high caste opposition in many places to the emancipation of the Dalits through the education the DECs offer. Yet, the DECs and those committed to seeking the empowerment and freedom of the Dalit children will continue to work until the task is fulfilled.

***Rev. Dr. Joseph D'Souza** is president of Operation Mobilization India and president of the All India Christian Council (AICC). He also serves as president of the Dalit Freedom Network, whose mission is to empower India's Dalits.*

Lausanne Younger Leaders Gathering 2006

By Larry Russell

I'm just a little cynical these days about all that is being written on Christian leadership. And perhaps my American cultural bias is showing through. I subscribe to a variety of Christian magazines and often browse through local Christian bookstores. Sometimes I am just a little overwhelmed at the multitude of resources available in the area of Christian leadership. There is both good material as well as pulpy books that seem to be produced in the "wake" of leadership interest within the evangelical community. How does one sort through this plethora of information?

In 2005 I was asked to become a part of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and focus on leadership development for "younger" leaders. Younger leaders are between the ages of 25 and 35 and are emerging Christian leaders in the Church, in ministries and in the global marketplace. Lausanne has a rich tradition of convening world Christian leaders that dates back to 1974 when Billy Graham and John Stott worked to bring several thousand leaders together in Lausanne, Switzerland to fellowship, pray and commit themselves to world evangelization. Out of this came the Lausanne Covenant, a document that became a key rallying point for evangelicals during the last thirty years, and is still a goldmine of enduring principles for Christian leadership.

The Lausanne Covenant and the Younger Leaders Gathering 2006

The Lausanne Covenant is a collection of principles that identify how the Christian world could unite in

world evangelism. The initial 1,500 leaders who participated in the first Lausanne conference signed the document; subsequently, thousands more have adopted it in their approach to ministry. It addresses fundamental tenants of faith such as: Christian social responsibility, the Church and evangelism, cooperation in evangelism, partnership and cultural sensitivity. Although only ten pages long, the document is a wealth of information and is as relevant today as it was in 1974. You can read and download a copy of the Lausanne Covenant by going to www.lausanne.org/Brix?pageID=12891. The Lausanne Covenant is the basis for the development of the Younger Leaders Gathering 2006 (YLG '06). In September 2006, 550 hand-selected younger leaders will converge on Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to focus on world evangelism in the new millennium. Coming from over 107 countries, participants will bring a new spirit and passion for reaching their world. They will pray together, worship together, be briefed on the state of the world, be inspired by key international Christian leaders and will humbly lock arms in the task of reaching out to a lost and desperate world.

The group of younger leaders coming to YLG '06 is often referred to as the X-generation and includes those who are now in their mid-twenties to those in their early forties. This group is less interested in institutions and a hierarchy of leadership than their predecessors; instead, they are interested in leadership by "influence" rather than by "position." This "emergent generation" is less interested in creating big structures and organizations and are more inclined to work in cooperative ways to accomplish a mission. This is an enormously encouraging development; it also fits extraordinarily well with the tenants of the Lausanne Covenant that heavily stress the humble coming together of Christian leaders in the pursuit of world evangelism.

Influential leadership must come from modeling oneself after Christ, how he lived, how he dealt with people and what was important to him. It is a little arrogant to think that a person can be just like Jesus Christ. There is no leadership book (other than the Bible) that a person can memorize that will make him or her into a Christ-like leader. It all boils down to a willingness to allow the Holy Spirit to dwell in one's life in ever-increasing ways so as to reflect the fruit of the Spirit.

YLG '06 is only the beginning of the next wave of younger leadership development. In 2007 and 2008 those attending YLG '06 will be leading thirty-three regional younger leaders gatherings and thousands of younger leaders will be challenged to "lead like Christ" by allowing Christ to lead them. I am indeed very hopeful about this next generation of Christian leaders.

Larry Russell is coordinator of younger leader's ministries for the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. He has over thirty years of leadership experience with Youth for Christ and served for ten years in Europe in a partnership ministry between Young Life and Youth for Christ.

Do We Need the Younger Leaders Gathering-06?

By Marcell Silva Steuernagel

Since I am on the planning team for the 2006 Younger Leaders Gathering (YLG-06, www.ylg06.org), my obvious answer to the above question is, "Yes, we do!" However, it isn't as simple as saying we need this gathering. It isn't simple for young leaders to realize exactly what it is they need at any given moment. And it isn't easy for senior leaders to recognize needs that go beyond their fundamental paradigms of what leadership itself is about. These are only two of the things that need to be talked about. Do we need the YLG? If so, why do we need it? Why is it so different, so essential and so anticipated by those already involved? Let us explore this from a young leader's own perspective.

Today's Generation and Today's Challenges

Open up any weekly news magazine. Check the headlines. Even though the world we live in is changing at a rapid pace, some issues endure: globalization, international trade and politics and the reshaping of the world's religious layout. Frequently, the perspective we get in any given magazine article is one of comparison: "In the 1970s...and today..." or "As opposed to twenty years ago, today's global market..." As my father constantly reminds me, a point of view is a view from a point. If a writer says, "I remember the late 1960s," he belongs to a generation older than my own. I was not alive in the 1960s; I don't remember this time.

I grew up with the concept of a global village, electronic herds and the computer as a home appliance. For me a personal computer looks about as scary as a toaster. It is part of my life, and it finds its way into the conversations I have with fellow young leaders. We have not experienced modernity as the generation before us has. I remember studying modernity in school as a past event, not as a present reality.

Many of the older leaders were at Lausanne '74 . I've read about it in books and articles. YLG-06 will gather a different group of people, one that does not look for what they need in books in their seminary libraries or pastoral offices because it is found on an Internet blog. This is my generation! If I want information on anything, I will google it. For my father, the concept of "google" as a verb seems rather creepy.

Challenges for the Younger Generation

During the planning sessions for the YLG-06 we talked about many things and bonded around the common needs and challenges of our generation. And the challenges are many; let me outline just three of them:

1. Hierarchy, to us, seems a bit suffocating. We like horizontal networks, virtual networks, relational networks and ministry networks. The concept of thousands of people on the street protesting is scary to us. Orkut or MySpace is not scary. We do not want to have bosses because we like connecting in our work. A strict, vertical structure wears out our enthusiasm for any given project.

2. We think locally, but our "locally" includes satellite images of anywhere in the world, email, MSN and Skype chats. I have friends in over fifty countries who I consider real friends, not penpals. These are real people in real places. There are many options, contacts and available possibilities. People older than me cannot really advise me on how to deal with so many options because they were not brought up to deal with all this information on such short notice.

3. Reality and truth, for us, are much more fragmented than they were twenty years ago. The concept of a linear thread of thought, time or planning seems thin. We like wireless broadband transmission. And we like it in our brains, not on machine-typed paper. You cannot put paper into a flashdrive.

The above examples reconfigure the way we relate to each other and reshape the pattern of behavior of the people we know and want to reach with the gospel. Our hearts burn for all the lost souls around us just as much as our father's hearts burned for their friends and contemporaries. But we cannot use methods that were handed down to us to accomplish the same goals. Things are moving and changing too quickly.

A century ago a father could tell his son, "Son, this is what you do if that happens." This is harder today. The rhythm in which practically everything we consider "normal" changes every day. Our generation must deal with these issues and we must do so because it is our responsibility. We cannot expect our parents to do it for us. It is we who must cope with the new challenges we face. It is we who must find new ways to tell the "old, old story" over and over again until the entire world has met with Jesus through our telling of the gospel.

Challenge to Mature Leaders

So all you older ladies and gentlemen might be thinking, "Okay, so what is left for us to do?" The answer is threefold:

1. Keep doing what you do as well as you do it! You inspire us. We look up to you. Do not think your job is over or your time is past. It is not! Our God reigns over all time and there is a place that for you and the way you do things.

2. Mentor us! Disciple us, talk to us, have time for us. We need you to rub our backs every once in a while and tell us that "this isn't the first time this has happened." We need someone who has been there, done that and come out alive. We need examples of patience, kind and attentive listening and firm, Christian character. Why? Because all these things are in short supply in our own generation.

3. Support us! We need you to say "Okay, this Younger Leaders Gathering thing is good. We are with you on this. We are praying and giving and pushing you forward." Often when we look brave, we are really scared. If we are the ones to tackle the challenges of the Church for the next generation, we need you to support the ideas and concepts that we are inventing as the challenges present themselves.

This is why we need the YLG-06 this fall. It will be a starting point for us to get together, talk, be comforted and be challenged. We need to feel part of a history that is bigger than ourselves and our own generation. We need to feel part of the body of Christ in history. Being there in September will mean being part of something bigger than my own selfish plans. It will mean being where God wants me to be at the right time. And that is reason alone to do anything in life.

Marcell Silva Steuernagel is on the planning committee for the 2006 Younger Leaders Gathering (YLG-06, www.ylg06.org).

Structural Necessities for the Evangelistic Enterprise of the Church

By Jerry Root

I have had the privilege of teaching evangelism for many years. The topic is complex for at least four reasons. First, it is central in the biblical narrative. Second, it is fed by two thousand years of Church history and tradition. Third, there are a variety of ways the good news in Christ can be made known (personal evangelism, proclamation evangelism, mass communication, etc). And fourth, every encounter where the gospel is presented is unique. Nevertheless, there are at least four basic elements that are as structurally necessary to the evangelistic enterprise of the Church as a foundation is to a house, or roots are to trees, or pylons are to a bridge.

1. Evangelism is a necessary feature in personal spiritual growth.

It could be said that nobody reaches spiritual maturity if sharing the good news is not part of his or her character. One may be wise, one may be a brilliant biblical exegete, one may be a leader in prayer and worship, but one is still underdeveloped spiritually if telling lost people about Jesus is not part of the individual's life.

Luke's Gospel contains the account of Jesus coming to the country of the Gerasenes (Luke 8:26-39) where he meets a demon-possessed man who is living like a madman among the tombs. Jesus speaks a word and immediately the man is delivered. The restored man wants desperately to follow Jesus. However, instead of inviting the man to join him in his travels, Jesus says, "Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you" (v. 39). Jesus' follow-up method was to encourage this healed man to start sharing his new-found faith with others. It appears that Jesus believed evangelism is vital if a person is to grow in their faith.

Similarly, Paul also argues that telling others about Christ Jesus is necessary for spiritual development. In a letter to his friend Philemon Paul writes, "I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you may have a full understanding of every good thing you have in Christ" (Philemon 6). According to Paul, the person who puts his or her trust in the Lord and then begins to share Jesus with others will grow. Such advice is still true today; anyone who tells another person about Jesus will be asked many questions by seekers. As the evangelist studies and searches for answers, his or her faith will certainly grow. The questions that other people ask can lead to growth in our own faith.

Furthermore, people will scrutinize the life of the evangelist. Have you ever had a perfectly pure motive for anything you have ever done? My guess is that nobody has had a perfectly pure motive; indeed, if we wait until our motives are pure, nobody will ever do anything which is kingdom worthy. Our best efforts are like Andrew's five loaves and two fish for the feeding of the five thousand (John 6:8-10). Andrew's efforts appeared miniscule in light of the large nature of the task at hand. And though the need was great, God took Andrew's feeble offering and did something great with it. So too, our efforts may seem very small in light of the work that needs to be done; however, God will use us—flaws and all—to do his work. Indeed, in the very act of sharing the gospel with others we will learn about our own failures and deficiencies, as well as those of the Church throughout history. People will scrutinize our lives whenever we share the gospel, but in the midst of criticism we can grow. We can correct our failures, confess our sins and thereby adore the gospel with authenticity. Such growth often eludes those who neglect to share the gospel with others. Every student of evangelism can benefit by remembering these things.

2. Evangelism is sacramental.

Throughout Church history there have been some who believed that the sacraments are those practices of the Church in which it is believed God exhibits his presence in a unique way and thereby ministers grace to the participants. In light of this, evangelism can also be viewed as a sacrament. We do not take Jesus to anyone; he is already there. We go to make known what he is already doing in a person's life. Evangelism is participating with Jesus in a work he is already doing, much as we find the disciples doing in John 4. After Jesus ministers to the woman at the well, she returns to her village to tell others about what she has experienced. As people stream out of the village to meet Jesus, he says to his disciples, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white unto harvest...in this case the saying is true, 'One sows, and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor" (vv. 35-38).

If Christ is already present and at work in the life of those we seek to lead to faith, then it is necessary for the evangelist to discover what God is already doing. God woos others to himself in a variety of ways. Ask questions and prayerfully listen to the answers seeking to discern how God is wooing uniquely in each person's life. Begin with basic questions. What is the person's name? Where is the person from? Perhaps ask about a shared experience (Jesus asked the woman at the well for water). Listen; let the answers given provide the direction for asking deeper questions. Often enough, an individual will take you to the very places where God has been speaking into his or her life. The felt needs of individuals are places where the gospel naturally attaches itself to a person's life. God made that person; he made him or her with needs. Work confidently with the elements God has built in to the person as you prepare to make the gospel explicit.

3. Evangelism is strategic.

God sent his son into our world that he might reconcile us to himself through Christ. John 1:14 says, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The incarnation was strategic; God invaded our world. So too, we must be strategic about entering into the world around us to cultivate relationships with others. One well known preacher used to say, "God told us to be fishers of men, not keepers of the aquarium." Another person put it this way: "If God made us to be salt in the world, then we must get out of the salt shaker and into the world." Just as God is already present in the lives of the lost and we go to make his word explicit to them, God is at work in us as well.

Part of God's strategy in determining where we should work in the world relates to the passions he has placed in us. All are called to evangelize and make disciples; however, the venue for this work is unique for each believer. How has God made you? What are your unique passions, gifts and aptitudes? Go do those things in the world, and as you do, notice the people who are in the same environment. This is the specific and strategic world he has called you to. Let God love those in your world to himself. Jesus came in the days of the historic Incarnation. Before he ascended into heaven, he said he would send the Holy Spirit to guide us. There is a new kind of Incarnation in our world; it is the incarnation of the Holy Spirit in the Church, the body of Christ. He is seeking to win others to himself and he is doing it strategically right where you live. All of us are strategically placed for kingdom purposes.

4. Evangelism is full of significance.

Few activities connect us more with a sense of significance and purpose than evangelism. We will only do two things that will last forever: have children and lead others to Christ. Paul proclaimed in Philippians 1:22, "If I am to live on in the flesh this will mean fruitful labor for me." In essence he was praying, "God give me fruit or take me home to heaven." Breath in one's lungs should be seen as a synonym for fruitful labor; it is a sign that God has purposes for your life. Commitment to evangelism brings a sense of eternal significance and purpose to a person's life.

Conclusion

Dawson Trotman once observed that a person is physiologically mature when he or she can reproduce biologically and that a person is spiritually mature when he or she can reproduce spiritually. Evangelism is evidence of spiritual maturity. Furthermore, it is sacramental, strategic and full of significance. Whatever heartaches might be in store, there is real joy in participating in Christ's evangelistic ministry to the world.

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Contextualizing a Parable for Creative Teaching in Africa

By Suraja Raman

Families in Africa are confronted in their relationships with each other as they live lives in accordance with the scriptures. Pastors and educators encounter families in crisis during their teaching and nurturing sessions in the church. The difference between the cultural world of the Bible and the culture of contemporary/traditional Africa requires the contextualizing of our teaching of scripture. According to John Mbiti, contextualization is that of teaching scripture with an understanding and appreciation of African thought and beliefs.¹ During such learning sessions, families appreciate receiving relevant illustrations fitting their everyday lives. Contextualization is important for the families to handle the problems of home, society, school and personal interaction.

For pastors and educators in Africa, the effectiveness of our teaching depends in part on our ability to understand how scripture can influence daily life in Africa. A recent study addressed the attitudes and practices of current leaders enrolled in the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST). These leaders/students represent the Church in Africa, with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa. More than thirty African pastors/fathers were interviewed. These pastors/fathers gave their interpretation of the parable of the prodigal son with regard to their own cultural world. They also gave their perspective of teaching the parable of the prodigal son through contextualization.

Jesus Christ used the parable of the lost son (Luke 15:11-32) to reinforce the principle of God's love and forgiveness. The characters in the story (the father, the younger son and the older son) portray powerful ideas in the dynamics of a family in its cultural context. Jesus draws our attention to the image of the heavenly Father through the act of the earthly father. The actions of the younger son and older son are reminders of our compromising actions in daily living. Nevertheless, the parable ends well with the return of the younger son. It is indeed every parent's desire to have the family members back home.

Luke 15:11-32 from an African Cultural Context

In the African context, it is unthinkable for a son to request for an inheritance while the father is alive. The son will be cursed by the father and other family members. Moreover, an African father is looked upon as a fool if he decides to give away the family's plot of land or finances to a rebellious son. If the rebellious son decides to return home, a celebration will not take place in most homes.

In Ethiopia the community will go to the extent of slaying the foolish young man to prevent a whole society from being cursed. The Bamasaaba tribe in Eastern Uganda prepares every young man to be circumcised at the age of eighteen to avoid any rebellious attitude or disobedience. To the African, one's culture and tradition are important, for they provide an identity for the present relationships and for the future with regard to one's status in society.

Interpreting Luke 15:11-32 in the African Context

To interpret this parable in the African context we must apply three educational principles to the passage: the teacher, the learner and the teaching-learning process.² With reference to the parable the pastor/teacher is viewed as the father, the learner is viewed as the two sons and the teaching-learning process is viewed as the encounter between the father and the two sons. These principles are important in the contextualizing of the parable for creative teaching.

The First Principle: The Pastor/Teacher. The parable of the lost son teaches God's forgiving and merciful attitude toward sinners and his yearning for the lost. The parable also describes the actions of the father, the younger son and the older son. The scene at home becomes a stirring moment when the father welcomes the younger son back.

The details in vv. 20-24 reveal the feelings of the father. The anxious father waited patiently for his son to return. The son's return brought immediate happiness and forgiveness on the father's part. The father's desire is to bless his son; the agony, the waiting moments and the pain of separation are over. In each other's presence there is joy, love, reconciliation and healing. They hear each other's voice and experience each other's presence.

An African pastor would teach the congregation the importance of respecting and obeying the father figure in the household. A biblical principle from Ephesians 6:1-4 is a strong injunction for "children to obey their parents" and for fathers to "bring (children) up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." This would imply that the father should discipline his children. Therefore, the African father will not easily give in to the son's demands for an early inheritance. The father must explain to the children that the family's inheritance will be shared equally among them upon his death. A request for an inheritance prior to his death would indicate a curse and a desire that the father die early.

Another area of teaching imparted by the African pastor is that of the biblical concept of forgiveness on the part of the father toward the return of the prodigal son. A proverb from Burundi is a powerful teaching for all fathers: "Even the worst child rejected by society must be taken care of, whatever he has done, and he must be accepted as a son." Christian fathers who have experienced the pain of a lost child are taught to accept their sons upon their return and to nurture them to become responsible adults in the home, church and society.

Apparently, the concept of celebration to welcome home a rebellious son is not within African culture or tradition. To receive one's lost child back home is a major step for the father. Therefore, a feast of any nature is redundant. Instead, the father will be wise to utilize this time to counsel and guide the son in the way of the Lord. The following proverb from Rwanda reinforces the importance of teaching and reconciliation: "The one son who does not sit to listen to his father will not know what the grandfather had already said."

Jesus did not conclude the story in v. 24; instead, he went on to describe the reactions of the older son (vv. 25-30). There was complaint because obedience and duty had become a burden. Service to the father and to the household was no longer a joy. His thinking was ungracious and judgmental. Could the older son be lost although he was home? What kind of act is portrayed here by the older son?

Jesus remarked to the Jewish leaders that an individual cannot rely on good works. The older son may have erroneously considered his own good works as a sufficient basis for inheriting his father's property. The love and unmerited favor of God are for all sinners. We are redeemed by this grace and not by our own good works (Ephesians 2: 8-9).

In the African context, a believer may have one's roots in tribalism or in a religion such as Islam. Comparing our heavenly Father to an earthly father may not be appropriate. Africans may have had experiences from childhood of fathers who did not relate to their children through outward expressions of affection. In some homes, the mother is often seen as the more intimate parent. Hence, the parable of the lost son may need some added explanation for the scriptural teachings to be relevant in the African context when taught in an African environment.

The Second Principle: The Learner. The second principle is that of the learner represented by the lost son and the older son. The parable of the lost son should especially motivate those in the teaching ministry to seek out the learners desiring to experience the love and forgiveness of the heavenly Father. The gospel story needs to be proclaimed to those who enter our church schools. Bible teaching includes the message of God's love for all people and the idea of forgiveness needs to be emphasized. The good news calls for a response from the hearers/learners. Scripture needs to be taught regularly so that the learner is encouraged and ready for the many challenges he or she will face.

The older son portrays the picture of an unforgiving family member toward another family member. Christian education concerning the home is essential in any church so that issues pertaining to family development can be discussed. There need to be opportunities to help young people build relational skills and right attitudes toward one's parents. We have heard some younger children say, "My parents do not understand me." There is a generation gap! Before the family disintegrates, the pastor/educator and the parent need to meet so that healing can take place. To the African learners the Christian story is distinctive if the adult is there for comfort and to provide a listening ear. For the learner to identify with the biblical message the teacher needs to utilize creative teaching to make the message come alive.

The Third Principle: The Teaching-Learning Process. In the parable the father is seen as an active teacher during the encounters with both sons. When the younger son returns the father makes a deliberate attempt to welcome him home. This is a warm and loving process. The younger son will

remember this experience during his development and his time with the family. But to the disappointment of the father, the older son views this return as repulsive. The father uses this opportunity to teach the older son the importance of having both sons at home and that both are equally important. The father's reply to the older son is looked upon as an opportunity in which the teaching-learning process is crucial. The patience of the father toward both sons should be emulated by all African adults.

Contextualizing for Creative Teaching

The teacher, the learner and the teaching-learning process are important and urgent principles for any African leader working with people in the home, church and society. An African pastor/educator and parent is an effective "carrier" of the word to another African. As a respected leader of the church and the home, the pastor/educator and parent have many opportunities to teach the word of God to their families and friends. These leaders are effective witnesses through their lifestyle to the African continent and to the world.

The late theologian and educator Byang H. Kato took on the challenge of training and equipping pastors and leaders to be effective teachers of the word of God to their members.³

The African Church must stand alongside the families and believers in the battle against the attacks of Satan and the world. The Church needs to become strong through creative teaching of the truth. Families and believers need to be on their guard against false teachings through a deep and accurate understanding of the word of God. A consistent study of scripture that begins in the home and is followed by regular teachings in the church is an encouragement to people desiring to grow spiritually.⁴ My prayer is that God will give us strength and wisdom so that through us "the message might be fully proclaimed and all the people might hear it" (2 Timothy 4:17).

Endnotes

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The Emerging Church – Then and Now!

By Leighton Ford

We are hearing a great deal these days about the "emerging Church"—though no one seems able to say exactly what is emerging. Perhaps that is because we are going through a huge seismic change. A friend suggested recently that the Church is entering a third era. The first was the apostolic Church through the third century AD and the second was the institutional Church, expanding and dividing from Constantine through the Reformation until now.

And who quite knows what is emerging? Will the "seeker" Church movement last? Will there be a new "monasticism"?

This week I read with chastened conscience and hopeful spirit of the Church that emerged after Easter and Pentecost: a Church marked by "great power" and "great grace" as they witnessed to the resurrection (Acts 4:32-35).

The "great power" of their proclamation was matched by the "great grace" of their community. Not only did they share the gospel; they also shared their possessions. In verse 32 we read, "No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own." Those who owned real estate sold and shared the proceeds. The startling result of this was that "there were no needy persons among them" (v. 34).

We long for the great evangelistic power of the early Christians. But do we also want the great economic grace?

I remembered and reread what the great Methodist evangelist E. Stanley Jones wrote of this first "Christian socialism" in his insightful *Mastery*. This book tells about how the early Church was mastered by the true master, namely, Jesus.

Jones was not an advocate of socialism. In his epigrammatic style he wrote that these early believers were "right in seeing that distribution should be according to need." However, Jones continued, "They were wrong in thinking that having everything in common was the method of providing distribution. They were fundamentally right and marginally wrong."

Having all things in common, he wrote, has been tried through the centuries, both by Christian groups and Communism, and has failed.

But neither is individualism the answer. Beyond individualism and Communism is the kingdom, marked economically by distribution according to need. People need what they need: not less, not more.

These thoughts challenge me, especially living in the United States where in 2005 the pay of the average Chief Executive Officer was 430 times that of the average worker! In such an economy, can the model of the first emerging Church be relevant? Can it be practical?

Max DePree thought so. While heading Herman Miller (one of *Fortune Magazine's* ten "best managed companies"), this Christian executive leader advocated "inclusive capitalism" and insisted that the highest paid executive in his company would be paid no more than twenty times the lowest paid worker. That was grace in action.

Perhaps our post-Easter prayer leading to Pentecost should be, "Spirit of God, descend again upon our hearts. Fill your Church once more with great power to preach the gospel and great grace to practice kingdom values."

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The Evolution of Evangelism: Ideas for the Road Ahead

By Mark Russell

Recently my wife and I moved back to the United States after spending several years abroad as missionaries. Upon our return I conducted a survey at a large church. After looking over the results, I reflected on other surveys I had conducted in eight countries on five continents. I recognized that the unfortunate results of my present survey matched my findings in the others, namely that Christians are not too excited about, dare I say even afraid of, evangelism.

Perhaps few have documented this through systematic research; however, it is something that many of us have intuitively perceived. The solution of many evangelism trainers has been to reduce the insecurity level by providing the laity with a surefire, time-tested, well-proven method for presenting the message. The result has been an unhealthy fixation on a single way of doing evangelism, even though this "single way" may vary according to faith tradition. Sometimes it is a tract; other times it is a memorized recounting of one's testimony. Although such remedies may be helpful in making the future evangelist more comfortable, these same remedies will not necessarily be successful in making one truly effective.

Therefore we have to be innovative and create dynamic forms of evangelism that are flexible and adaptable to various situations. We need to be imaginative in our conversations with those who are not Christian. We have to seek new ways to discuss the timeless truth of our Lord. Most importantly, we have to train our people to understand that we are living in times of rapid, discontinuous change and there is no way we can be satisfied with a single method or approach. We should not be afraid of evangelism; instead, we should be fearful of being unheard. We must evolve and adapt to our new circumstances lest the Church become an endangered species.

There are two paradigms of evangelism that will help the Church evolve effectively in the changing world. While looking at the road ahead, it is often helpful to look back at those who have gone before.

Conversational Communities

In late fourth-century Britain there was a young man named Patrick. At the age of sixteen a group of Celtic pirates invaded his land, captured Patrick and took him to Ireland. After being enslaved for several years, Patrick had a dream in which he was shown a pathway of escape to a passing ship. The next morning Patrick lived out his dream and returned home a free man.

At the age of forty-eight Patrick had another dream. He was told to go back to the land of his enslavement and tell the good news of Jesus Christ to the people who had once ransacked his house, removed him from his family and required him to work incessantly. The next morning Patrick began the task of returning to the Celtic pirates. He was ordained a bishop and commissioned to Ireland, becoming history's first missionary bishop.

What makes Patrick so interesting (and so applicable for our discussion) is how he went about proclaiming the gospel to the Celts. First, despite the fact that the people had enslaved him, he did not condemn them. Rather, he shared life with them. Second, despite the fact that he desired to teach the truth to them, he was also determined to learn from them.

Patrick formed communities made up of believers and unbelievers. They learned from one another and journeyed through life together. The believers worked together as a team and were partners in conversation with the unbelievers. This is a case study for the concept that people belong before they believe and that faith is more caught than taught.

This is significantly different than many of our current methodologies. According to George Hunter, "In significant contrast to contemporary Christianity's well-known evangelism approaches of 'Lone Ranger,' one-to-one evangelism, or confrontational evangelism or the public preaching crusade, (and in stark contrast to contemporary Christianity's more dominant approach of not reaching out at all!)...The Celtic Christians usually evangelized as a team—by relating to the people of a settlement; identifying with the people; engaging in friendship, conversation, ministry and witness—with the goal of raising up a church in measurable time."¹

As a missionary in Chile several years ago, I started to think through how I could help people evangelize more effectively. The aforementioned anxiety issue continually perplexed me. Most people just did not want to evangelize. I soon stumbled into what I have coined the "conversational community." I formed a group of Christians and we invited several non-Christians to join us. The original idea was to demonstrate evangelism to them so that they would do it later. However, I realized that in a group setting many people's apprehensions regarding evangelism fell away. The same people who had sought to avoid evangelizing now explained the gospel message lucidly and effectively. Their anxiety had come from the perception of evangelism as a solitary exercise. It was not long before fruit was produced in our small humble group and we had increasing numbers of people who desired to be a part of our community.

Later we moved to Germany and I sought to intentionally implement this strategy. Germans were not so quick to respond. This convinced me all the more that evangelism has to be of a progressive, ongoing nature, as opposed to a draw-the-line-in-the-sand-and-now-it-is-your-time-to-cross-over nature, as I had previously learned. In a conversation we need only share our story; we do not need to provide all the answers. In a community we do not need to do everything; we only need to do our part. In an age where experience is valued over truth, the conversational community creates a context for people to experience truth.

Creative Communication

The next paradigm we need to develop is one of creative communication. Our world is going through extensive change. Businesses that relied on certain methods are struggling. Successful organizations realize that the goal is not to develop a new process; rather, it is to have a new attitude which recognizes that true capability comes from being continually adaptable and flexible. This means constant creativity.

The same is true for the Church and evangelism. In my country and many others, we have seen the Church develop several different ways of "doing church." Many churches have transitioned from a

traditional approach to a contemporary, cell-based or house church model. In many cases these changes have been justified and implemented appropriately. However, there are some cases where people believe that their way is the only right way to "do church." We are not to put our minds together and come up with an overarching model that would work everywhere. Rather, we need to stay in a state of constant creativity. We need to continually seek new ways to communicate the old story that has transformed our lives.

One creative way is to simply tell the story of our own individual journey with Christ. No one else came to Christ like you did. No one else has learned from him the same things in the same way. Your story is always unique because you are unique. I have been in many settings where the willing evangelist has been taught a method for sharing his or her testimony in a way that strips the originality from it and makes each incomparable story sound something like a plagiarized tract.

Instead of seeking ways to make our stories sound the same, we need to let them be different. In the inherent distinctions of our journeys the focus will drift to the one who has changed us. This is an essential element of creative communication. We each tell our own unique story so that the transcendent nature of Christ becomes increasingly clearer to the earnest seeker.

There are also people who believe their story is largely uninteresting. Perhaps they were never drug addicts or served time in prison. It does not matter who you are, where you come from or what you have done; if your journey is not a wonderful, beautiful story of defeat and victory, trials and jubilation, marked by an ever increasing amount of joy and peace, then you need to ask yourself what kind of journey you are on. If your story is not worth sharing, perhaps you need to reevaluate your journey. Such honest and earnest self-evaluation can be liberating. Life with Christ is not boring and dreary, it is a dream come true for those who have tasted the sweetness of living water.

Endnote

1. Hunter, George. 2000. *The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity Can Reach the West...Again*. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 47.

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Respecting Muslims While Sharing Christ

By Keith Swartley

I had just been treated to a wonderful dinner by a group of eight Muslim high school teachers and our conversations had been warm and engaging. However, when we returned to their apartment, things turned ugly. They had prepared objections to the gospel and studied the Injil (New Testament) to formulate questions designed to prove that Islam was superior to Christianity. It was a difficult evening. Fortunately, I did not lose my temper; I was gracious and patient with them as I attempted to answer their questions. I sympathized with their growing frustration until I left. Gone was the memory of the initial enjoyment of the evening. I felt battered as I took a bus back to my hotel. The evening had taken me through the tempest of warfare.

"Church-ianity" vs. Jesus Christ

Being a disciple of Christ is not meant to be like going to summer camp. The call of Christ is the boot camp preparation for war, not against Muslims, but against Satan. The role of the Church is in some ways like an elite hostage rescue team: we rescue some people from materialism and narcissism and others, including many Muslims, from the evil of suffering under poverty, disease, oppression, illiteracy and not knowing Jesus Christ.

Since the terrorist bombings on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001 and the tsunami in Southeast Asia in 2005 Muslims have intrigued us more than ever. With all the upheaval, we may have felt uncertain about the Islamic faith at times. However, Jesus is not apprehensive about today's turmoil. His gracious love and willingness to quietly suffer indignation has not changed. He continues wooing Muslims to follow him.

Likewise, we must not fear or blame Muslims; they are victims of Satan's global war of oppression. As such, Muslims and Christians are equals. Compared to Christ, neither meets God's standard of perfection. We should not engage in raising walls which only lead to stereotypes based on ideology, politics and nationalism. Rather, with empathy we should tear down barriers by building lasting relationships, just as Jesus Christ unilaterally initiated relationship with us.

Speaking Out in Love

Yet, as an evangelical I have something I desire to share—the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. Sharing hope does not constitute proselytism or coercion. Forms of witness which are argumentative or disrespectful should be discouraged. However, I am obligated to share my faith in Christ. I choose to exercise my fundamental human right to share my faith in Christ even where not invited by speaking with love and not on condition of response. 1 Peter 3:15 says, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect." This must be our guide.

Sadly, too many Christians have preached fear in response to terrorism or have been uncritical of Western political and economic agendas. Others have disparaged Muhammad or Islam without recognizing the deep debt that all societies owe Islamic civilization. Muhammad was a great political leader and religious reformer who unified a pagan feudal society under monotheism and the rule of law. Deficiencies in his character are no different than many Christian leaders.

Likewise, Muslims have made huge contributions to our society today. Arabic words such as algebra, azimuth, zenith and zero permeate the English language. Personally, I am grateful that I do not balance my finances in roman numerals. Until the Renaissance, the gathering and advancement of knowledge was centered in Islamic Spain and the universities of the Middle East. Modern scientific methods, advancements in medicine, mathematics, architecture and law are all rooted in contributions made by Muslim scholars.

Through the Caleb Project's course, Encountering the World of Islam, Christians in a number of churches have responded constructively to the local and global community of Muslims. Students have heard Muslim leaders thoughtfully explain Islam without an aimless blurring of Muslim/Christian distinctions. Participants have read from the Qur'an and Muslim authors. Palestinian Christians have given these congregations a more balanced view of the Middle East and Christians have had open productive dialogue with Muslim acquaintances which have led to lasting friendships.

Seeking to Understand Muslims

Christians can begin to immediately experience the honor and joy of befriending Muslims. It is important for Christians to understand their Muslim neighbors, co-workers and students. Regrettably, numerous Christians still hold prejudices against Muslims because they lack personal knowledge of Islam.

Even after feeling beat up in my interaction with the Muslim high school teachers (see opening paragraph), I decided to send general emails to say hello to many of them. However, when I did visit their country again, I was hesitant to call them for fear of being taken through another spiritual meat grinder. When I did call they said, "We have been waiting for your call. We have been discussing what you said for months, and we have a lot to talk about." My heart sunk as all remaining energy drained away. When we met in a garden overlooking the sea, they began by apologizing! They regretted mistreating me with their superior attitude and had come to see me as a true believer in God. Relationship was key.

When we learn to ride a bicycle, we do not read a book. We get on our bicycle. When we want to fish, we do not go to a conference. We get out our fishing pole. So too, many books refer to the Bible as being better than the Qur'an, Christianity as being better than Islam and Jesus being better than Muhammad. Instead of starting with these types of books, how about if we start building relationships with Muslims? And the less capable we feel, the greater the opportunity we have to depend on Christ. This is called faith. Few people are persuaded or convinced by knowledge alone and debate more often than not entrenches each side within their own preconceptions. Willingness, however, to step off the [swimming pool's] diving board is a prerequisite to getting wet.

I was amazed at what God had done in those relationships with my Muslim counterparts. Gone was any

vestige of hostility between us. My jaw hit the floor as they told me that they had new questions; not questions to prove their beliefs were superior, but questions to learn and understand my beliefs so they could be closer friends and better believers in God. I would love to say they immediately believed in Jesus Christ. They did not. We continued to talk and share for more than three hours. There was excitement, interest and discovery in their faces. "It makes sense," they would say. "We see it. The Bible's message is consistent." Jesus Christ had created unity and fellowship where I least expected it. These men heard the gospel again, this time without hostility. And they understood it.

God has affirmed the importance of relationship again and again with my Muslim friends in Turkey, Indonesia, South Korea and the United States. It has not been the strength of my words which God has used to demonstrate his power; rather, it has been my vulnerability, sharing how God has loved me quite in spite of myself. God's word rings true, "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power" (1 Corinthians 1:17).

Faith, Hope and Love

We must have faith that Christ is good news for both Christians and Muslims. Likewise, we must believe that Muslims will be attracted to Christ. Many people, including myself, were so loved by a Christian that we could not resist turning to faith. We cannot change another person's mind; only the supernatural action of God can do this. Loving them is our goal, not because they are any more lovable than us or have petitioned us to love them, but because Christ first loved us and his love ought to overflow out of us to them. Unconditional, unmerited love cannot be bestowed by short bursts of information; it requires the intimacy of friendship. Muslim walls raised by a history of hurt and pain are lowered through trust built over meals and time spent praying with them for God's intervention. Will you trust that God will use you powerfully to bring peace in relationships with Muslims? Let us follow Ephesians 2:14: "For he himself is our peace ... and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility."

Keith Swartley is course editor and developer for Caleb Project's Encountering the World of Islam. Since 1983 he has been motivating Christians around the world to reverently and gently share the love of Christ with Muslims.

PEOPLES OF THE WORLD

It Takes More Than Just Churches

By Justin Long

In the 1980s and 1990s, the AD 2000 & Beyond Movement had this slogan: "A church for every people and the gospel for every person by the year 2000 and beyond." This was a masterful way of both stating the goal while keeping the rallying point somewhat flexible. The problem was that most workers rarely stopped to think deeply about either the goal or what was required to reach it. Similar to how we give a cursory glance at scripture and think we understand it, many just gave a cursory glance at the goal and thought we understood it by our "first impression."

If we are going to finish the Great Commission, churches will indeed be a natural part of the process. A congregation in which believers fellowship together is a key part of Christian life. At the same time, we also want to be careful that when we say "church" we do not carry our own baggage with us. It might be better to say "a fellowship for every people" or some other phrase that makes us really think about what we mean. However, we are going to need more than just a church for every people if we are to effectively share the gospel with those around the world. Here are seven additional things that are needed:

1. A prayer for every people. Prayer is the foundation for mission. Yet we lack organized prayer for most of the least reached peoples. We have global prayer strategies such as Operation World, Praying through the Window, Ethne's Global Prayer campaign and so forth, but each people group needs a small, globalized core of consistent intercessors praying that God would raise up workers and resources. Additionally, those who pray for specific people groups are more likely to become involved in specific ways.

2. A strategy coordinator for every people. The term may be somewhat dated, and the role may today be filled more by a network than a single individual person, yet the fact remains that we need to have at least one point person for each unreached people group. This person would be someone who is passionate about the people group and is actively seeking ways to bring the blessing of the good news to this group.

3. A gateway for every people. There is a "route" to every people group: a path that can be walked. Perhaps it is another people group, a city or an industry. Some good work has already been done in the past (i.e. Praying through the Window II: Gateway Cities), but these initiatives focused on larger urban areas. We need to do more to identify specific gateway peoples and cities for each unreached people group.

4. A preacher for every people. Many groups, even to this day, have little or no gospel proclamation amongst them. In the past three issues of Mission Frontiers, different research teams have printed their list of "priority peoples." Many of these have no one among them proclaiming the good news. This is substantially different from peoples in, say, Latin America or Europe, who have a significant amount of proclamation effort. One thing we need to remember is that although the preacher has to cross cultural boundaries, he or she does not necessarily need to come from the West. More on this in a moment.

5. A business for every people. The unreached peoples of the world are among the poorest of the poor. By helping establish businesses we make it possible for a newly reached group to improve their quality of life, sustain local churches and reach out in turn to other cultures nearby. Helping groups develop economic resources can lead to the proclamation of the gospel.

6. A school for every people. Teaching new believers about their missionary responsibility will lead to the formation of new mission agencies and the deployment of new workers. I have recently learned of several small, quick schools for believers and leaders that specifically mobilize workers who will focus on unreached peoples. For five thousand unreached peoples, perhaps we need five thousand such schools.

7. A mission for every people. The final goal is for each people group, as it is reached, to join in the task. This will open up new resources and spread the remaining task among more workers. At this stage we see new intercessors, researchers, preachers, church planters, business-savvy individuals and teachers for every people.

It is at this point that a "circle" has been completed and the people group joins the rest of the family of God in bringing the good news to those who have not yet heard it. Through this kind of multiplication it is possible to see the Great Commission completed. We must ask ourselves if it is possible that the Great Commission will be fully obeyed if we do not complete this circle. We cannot simply leave the task of missions to one or two parts of the world; we must become family in this task of missions.

Justin Long manages strategicnetwork.org and is senior editor for Momentum, a magazine devoted to unreached peoples.

Into Their World...Saharawi of Morocco

By Laurie Fortunak

Originally desert nomads who traveled from place to place because of land and government issues, the Saharawi can now be found in southern Morocco, the western Sahara region, north of Mauritania, Algerian refugee camps and the Canary Islands. Conflict between Arab rulers and Berbers between 1300 AD and 1600 AD led to the beginnings of the Saharawi, who are descendants of these two groups and their slaves. The Saharawi of Morocco speak an Arabic dialect called Hassaniya and are a sub-group of the Moors.

From 1904-1976 Spain controlled many areas of Morocco, leading to a significant change in the nomadic lifestyle of the Saharawi. Some are still herdsmen, traders and warriors; others, however, have gained quite a bit of wealth through various trades. Although there is great variety in the Saharawi society, most families live in small homes and sleep on skins covered with blankets. At meal times, the men eat before the women and children.

Because the Saharawi of Morocco live in an area which receives only two inches of rainfall per year, agriculture is limited and exports are restricted to livestock.

There are four main groups in Saharawi society: warriors; marabouts (holy people); tribute payers who pay taxes to the higher classes; and black slaves. Craftsmen and musicians form separate, low-caste groups. For years many of the social classes were at odds. Different Saharawi tribes would engage in fighting, robbery and revenge in order to survive drought, plagues and robberies. Today, social classes serve as a means of identification rather than as a way of life.

Although the Saharawi think of themselves as pure Muslims, many also incorporate pagan beliefs into their religious practices. To this day, West African Islam, with its mixture of beliefs, is more tolerant than Islam found in other places.

Most Saharawi live in areas of war and political turmoil. The desire for political recognition and independence is strong. Few Saharawi know Christ. Pray that believers both in this region and around the world will share the peace that comes through knowing Christ with the Saharawi of Morocco.

For more information on the Saharawi of Morocco, visit:
www.ksafe.com/profiles/p_code6/2154.html
<http://arabvision.gospelcom.net/>
(Information compiled from 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

The Growth of Ethnic Churches in the UK

By Peter Brierley

It may appear all doom and gloom on the church horizon as we look at declining United Kingdom church attendance; however, there is one area in which this is absolutely not the case—the churches which are attended by those in “ethnic minority” groups. In whatever race or culture these growing churches occur, we, as the global body of Christ, need to come alongside the leaders and learn as much as we can from them.

Demographics of the Ethnic Churches

Non-white churches are growing and are starting new congregations in many places. And these churches are made up of peoples as diverse as can be imagined. The largest and most well known are the many so-called “Black churches” which are primarily of West Indian or West African (especially Nigeria and Ghana) origin. These are invariably charismatic churches and generally fall under the Pentecostal denomination.

However, there are also other churches which serve particular nationalities. The Chinese and Korean churches are well established, having been in the UK for several decades. There are also others from Asia, sometimes grouped together in the Asian Christian Fellowship, which bring together those from Japan, the Philippines, Cambodia, Malaysia and other countries in Southeast Asia. These are mostly non-charismatic and are usually included in the “Protestant Overseas Nationals” churches in the “Smaller Denominations” grouping.

A number of churches serve those of Indian descent, of which the Tamil and Swahili are the largest, but including some whose nationality is predominantly Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Kenyan or Tanzanian. These too are included with the "Protestant Overseas Nationals" churches group.

In the UK there are a number of Lutheran churches serving those who come here, usually from other European countries. Here, the Scandinavian countries are especially strong. Lutheran churches are also part of the "Smaller Denominations" category.

Orthodox churches are also well represented in the UK; the Greek Orthodox Church is by far the largest. It is six times the size of all the others combined. The smaller Orthodox churches include the Antiochan, Armenian, Assyrian, Bulgarian, Byelorussian, Coptic, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Latvian, Romanian, Russian Orthodox (in two groups, inside and outside Russia), the Serbian, Syrian and Ukrainian, as well as the British Orthodox. The majority of these clearly serve nationalities other than British, even though many British people attend the "foreign" Orthodox services and enjoy doing so.

Catholic churches serve their overseas nationals living in the UK. The Croatian, German, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Slovenian and Ukrainian Catholic churches exist in the UK, and are growing. For example, seven new Croatian Catholic churches have started in England in the last five years.

Other groups, where non-white people are in the majority, are not easily separated. The Seventh-Day Adventists, for example, have a significant proportion of their attenders who are black. Whereas this group is growing, their white congregations are declining.

The common feature of all these groups (with the exception of the Lutherans) is that their Sunday attendance is growing. Another feature is that many of their services will be in their mother tongue, which is not English.

Ethnic Mix in Congregations

In 1998 roughly fifty-nine percent of all churches were entirely composed of white people (some of whom nevertheless would be of non-British nationality, such as the Polish or Irish) and three percent of churches were entirely composed of black people. Of the remaining thirty-eight percent, thirty-one percent of the congregations had an ethnic mix of between one percent and twenty percent (in practice mostly between one percent and five percent), while seven percent had an ethnic mix between twenty-one percent and ninety-nine percent. In practice, as the pie chart shows, the majority of churches are either all white or are less than twenty percent mixed. The number of congregations with a good mix of nationalities is actually very small.

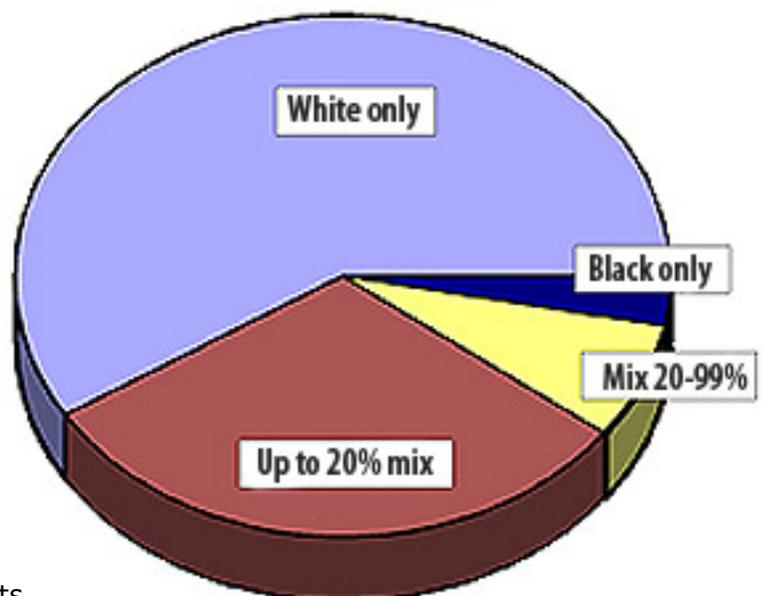
Ethnic Growth

Collectively between 1998 and 2005 the various non-white ethnic churches listed above saw their congregations grow by forty percent in their numbers coming each Sunday, a huge increase against the general decline of many white-only churches. If these congregations are growing, how much have they grown and why? The bar chart on the following page indicates their growth insofar as separate groups or denominations can be isolated and their Sunday attendance figures known. The chart indicates that most have been growing for years, so this growth is not something new. It also shows the huge dominance of the "Other African" or "West Indian" churches.

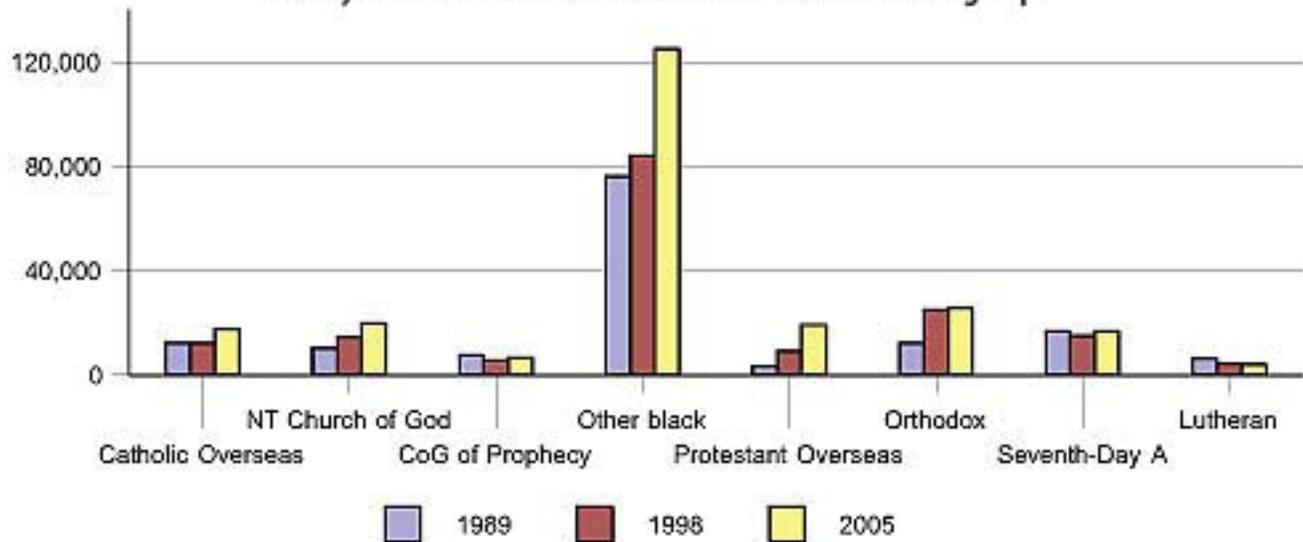
This growth can be traced to a variety of factors. Below are five.

1. Since the mid-1990s especially, many immigrants

Ethnic mix in English congregations, 1998



Sunday church attendance for different non-white ethnic groups



have come to the UK, some as refugees or asylum seekers. They have added one million to the English population in seven years. Some of these come from Christian countries and wish to attend church. Many form a church related to their homeland.

2. Many of these groups had a culture of Sunday church attendance at home and naturally expected to do the same in their new land. In 1998, for example, twenty-seven percent of the black population of inner London went to church every Sunday. Their numbers are higher partly because their consistency in attendance is greater than those who are native to England.

3. Most of these denominations are evangelical and are actively seeking to evangelise both their own people (especially the Chinese and Koreans) as well as those of other nationalities. There is an atmosphere of enthusiasm and commitment in many of these congregations.

4. Some have grown because other members of their families have joined them from their home country. However, especially among those who have been in the UK for many years, these are the groups which tend to have more children than the average white British household – and they expect their children to go to church with them.

5. The preaching of many of their pastors is urgent, powerful and relevant. The largest of these churches, such as that headed up by the Nigerian Matthew Ashimolowo at the Kingsway International Christian Centre, attracts up to ten thousand people every Sunday. Those attending find Ashimolowo explains the Bible “so that I know how to live my Christian life.”

All of these reasons are important, and some could well be imitated by the white congregations who find growth so difficult. There is, however, another factor which is partly behind the burgeoning numbers of these churches. These numbers are difficult to break down into individual denominations because many of these churches are denominations of just one or a small handful of churches. Some have been established in England as missionary outposts of large denominations in Nigeria or Ghana where the expectation is for several congregations to form, even though at the present time they are just the one group.

May this enthusiasm to evangelise not only the UK, but other countries as well, spread throughout all churches, regardless of their ethnicity.

Dr. Peter Brierley is the Senior Lausanne Associate for Church Research. He attended Lausanne I in 1974 and has been involved with the Lausanne movement since 1984. Formerly a government statistician, he is currently executive director of Christian Research, a UK charity which produces resource volumes like *Religious Trends* and the *UK Christian Handbook*. Brierley can be reached at admin@christian-research.org.uk.

LAUSANNE REPORTS

Mentoring Young Women Leaders in the Lausanne Women's Network

By Robyn Claydon

Sometimes when we begin a ministry, that ministry evolves in ways we never expected. When I became the Lausanne Senior Associate for Women in World Evangelization (a mouthful whenever I am introduced!), my aim was to build up a network of Christian women around the world and encourage them in their ministries. I was willing to speak at conferences, preach in churches, speak at evangelistic meetings, lead Bible studies, take seminars on Christian leadership and generally encourage Christian women to share the gospel with both those around them and in the wider world. I started this women's network after Lausanne II (Manila, 1989) and since then have been encouraged as I have traveled to over fifty countries and met many wonderfully gifted women who are using their gifts and opportunities in world evangelization.

Two of my aims include: (1) identifying, encouraging, challenging, training and mobilizing women for the task of evangelism and (2) putting women from one part of the world in touch with like-minded women in other countries. This has resulted in women being invited to minister in another part of the world and thus gifts and enthusiasm for the gospel have been shared.

One aspect of my ministry I had not initially considered has been the mentoring of young Christian women leaders. As I have traveled I have met many outstanding young women who are passionate about sharing the gospel and who are seeking ways to use the special gifts God has given them. Some of these young women have opportunities in their own country and in their own church to share the gospel; others are limited in the expression of their gifts. I have been able to both encourage them to use whatever opportunities they already have—no matter how limited—and to network them with young women in other countries. This has meant organizing regional conferences so that young Christian women leaders can meet each other, be encouraged themselves and encourage each other.

One such conference was in Berlin in 2000 when young women from different countries met for a conference with older women mentors who had many years of ministry experience. This was a most stimulating time and as a result, most of the women have kept in touch with me and with each other. In some cases they have invited each other to come to their country and minister there. A consequence of this is that women have felt more empowered, encouraged, challenged and motivated to seek in a fresh way God's leading for their future.

Mentoring is a privilege for those who can come alongside another person, usually someone younger, and have intentional input into their lives. Christian mentoring is an awesome responsibility. It is also one of the great joys of ministry to see someone else develop his or her gifts and move toward using those gifts for the kingdom of God.

The word "mentor" comes from the story of Ulysses who, as he set off for the Trojan wars, appointed someone to care for his son, Telemachus. This person was to educate and guide the boy, listen to his dreams, give wise counsel and stand alongside him as he grew to manhood. The man's name was "Mentor."

Mentors are often, though not always, older people who are happy to give time to another by providing support, friendship, wisdom and advice. A mentor makes his or her personal strengths, experience and knowledge available to another to help that person reach his or her potential. Let me tell you about some of the young women who are part of the Lausanne Young Women Leaders Mentoring Network.

Evangeline started a school under a tree in the slums of Hyderabad, India. Today she is principal of the school (which now numbers 560 students). Evangeline has also started a ministry for women and children in a nearby village for those who have leprosy and has recently started a church there. I had the privilege of speaking to hundreds of children during one Vacation Bible School (VBS). Evangeline organizes a

VBS each year for the Hindu, Muslim and Christian children from her school and from the surrounding neighborhood.

Elke has a vibrant Bible teaching ministry in Germany and is a preacher and convention speaker in many parts of Europe. She is also an author and is currently the Lausanne International Deputy Director for Western Europe. Elke and I have ministered together in many different parts of the world.

Christel, a German Christian and a young mother, is a speaker and editor of a German women's magazine. I have twice spoken at women's conferences which she has organized in north Germany.

Eva is from Croatia. She is an excellent speaker and Bible teacher. She and her husband are ministering in a church they have recently built. My husband and I were privileged to be at the baptism of a group of people who had recently come to faith through her ministry. Many of these individuals had drug-related backgrounds.

Hilda is from Tanzania and has recently been ordained. Her thesis was on the role of women in the Church of Tanzania. She is currently lecturing at the Bishop Madinda Christian Formation Centre. I first met Hilda when she was working in women's ministry in Dodoma and invited her to the conference in Berlin. After the conference she decided to go to theological college to prepare for the ordained ministry.

Olga is from Russia and has just finished her doctorate. She is dean of students at a theological seminary in Moscow. She is also a speaker, Bible teacher, author and has recently spoken on the importance of theological education for women ministers at an international women's forum. I look forward to ministering with Olga in Moscow later this year.

I met Irina in Moldova where I was ministering at a women's conference. Irina was a young Christian woman with great leadership potential. I invited her to the mentoring conference in Berlin; as a result of that time she decided to go to Prague to get a master's degree in theology. She is now back in Moldova teaching at the College of Theology and Education in the capital, Kishinev.

There are so many more: Xiaoli, who is preparing to minister in China; Charlotte, who is preparing for ministry in Sweden and has an outstanding music ministry in Europe; Christina, who is about to go to Africa for ministry with her husband; and Jolly, who is in Kolkata involved with a ministry called Word Made Flesh which works in the red light district of the city.

These and hundreds of other outstanding young Christian women are the future leaders of the Church worldwide and each one of them is committed to using the gifts and opportunities the Lord has given them to share the good news of the Lord Jesus with others and to equip leaders younger than themselves to do likewise. And so the mentoring goes on as older leaders stand alongside those preparing to take the reins in ministry. May God bless, sustain and guide them.

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LEADERSHIP MEMO

Being Mindful and Deliberate in Training Younger Evangelists

By Doug Birdsall

In today's world there is a dizzying array of messages and competing voices, but one voice that cannot be ignored is the voice of the younger generation. With (1) the exponential expansion of global migration and mobility, (2) global communication and information technology and (3) global problems and epidemics, the youth are not only one of the most affected, but also the primary

means of impacting the future. The area of Christian world evangelization is no different.

As vision sets the trajectory for any movement, leadership provides the very energy and momentum to move in a specific direction. Thus, every movement must be mindful to constantly bring up and incorporate a new generation of leaders. History reminds us that vibrant movements that have neglected to bring up new and younger leaders through the ranks have subsequently subsided and disappeared. One must constantly replenish the ranks or a war will never be won.

The Lausanne Movement is not only seeking to focus on key ideas and issues; it will also focus on who the key people are who God is raising up. The 2006 Younger Leaders Gathering in Malaysia is being convened specifically for the purpose of raising new leaders for world evangelization. YLG '06 is not intended to be a one-time event; rather, it is meant to be a process that will include mentoring small groups and hosting subsequent Lausanne Younger Leaders Global Connections around the world between October 2006 to May 2007.

Many of the current senior Lausanne leaders, including yours truly, emerged from Lausanne's Younger Leaders Gathering in 1987 in Singapore. Participants from Singapore are now planning a twenty-year reunion to celebrate the relationships established and to reflect on the strategic impact of that gathering on their lives and ministry.

Every movement needs (1) the experience of those who have gone before us (2) the commitment of those currently engaged in ministry and (3) the leadership, enthusiasm, vitality and promise of a new generation. In Budapest in June 2007, these three dynamic streams of leadership from the past, present and future will be brought together during Lausanne's biannual leadership meetings. In addition to the convening of the Lausanne III executive leadership team, Leighton Ford will be organizing a meeting of senior statespersons and Brian Stiller will be organizing the Singapore reunion. A new generation of leaders emerging from YLG '06 will also be incorporated into this motley crew.

As we plan and pray for the future, let us be mindful and deliberate in the development and refinement of the youth who are to energize and lead us into the next era of world evangelization.

Doug Birdsall is executive chair for the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, and director of the J. Christy Wilson, Jr. Center for World Missions at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He has served as a missionary in Japan with Asian Access/LIFE Ministries since 1980. Birdsall has been president of Asian Access, a mission focused on evangelism and church multiplication, since 1991.

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