

# LausanneWorldPulse.com

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

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## WORLD NEWS BRIEFS

### AROUND THE WORLD

Although translation work among [Wycliffe Bible Translators](#) has been progressing faster than ever (more than 2,200 languages have at least some of the Bible in their language), at least three thousand languages still need the good news translated into their heart language. And many are in difficult-to-reach areas or where there is warfare and civil unrest. At the current rate it would take until the year 2150 for translation work to be started in each language that needs it. For this reason, Wycliffe formed Vision 2025, a plan that calls for the start of Bible translation projects for every language community that needs one by the year 2025. Working hand to hand with [SIL International](#), the project requires partnership with national churches, seminaries and Bible schools, mission agencies and other Bible agencies. While the translation needs span the globe, eighty percent of the remaining Bible translation needs are focused on three areas of the world: Central Africa with eight hundred languages; the region from northern India to southern China which includes another eight hundred languages; and the band of islands in Asia from Sumatra to Papua New Guinea with one thousand languages. ([Global Prayer Digest](#))

### AROUND THE WORLD

Members of thirty-two minority language groups worldwide received God's word in their own heart languages for the first time in 2006 thanks to a long-standing partnership between [Bible League](#) and [Wycliffe Bible Translators](#). "Some of those we are reaching have been exposed to the gospel via a language they did not understand," said the Rev. Chester Schemper, Bible League's director of minority languages. "But many testify that it was after God spoke to them in their own language that they finally understood the message of salvation and really came to know Christ as their Savior and Lord." The minority scriptures published in 2006 by Bible League were translated by Wycliffe Bible Translators, and used in countries with active Bible League ministry. Bible League provides scriptures and Bible studies to local churches in more than fifty-five countries. ([Bible League](#))

### AUSTRALIA

The newly published Business Bible was launched by Bible Society NSW 12 December 2006 in Sydney. The Business Bible is a new edition of the Good News New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs, with personal testimonies from leading Christian business people in the opening pages. According to Daniel Willis, CEO of the Bible Society NSW, "Just to stay on top of such critical issues as human resource management, personal and company tax and industrial law is a big task. The Bible is a source of real guidance on how we should live—even in the corporate jungle—and that is why we have released this new edition of the New Testament with Psalms and Proverbs." ([ASSIST News](#))

## **BELGIUM**

European church leaders meeting in Brussels have called for a dialogue with other religions about the future of Europe, while underlining the need for the process of European integration to be based on shared values and a common vision. “As people from different cultures and traditions in Europe come closer together, we want to highlight the importance of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue,” the Christian leaders said in a statement, following a two-day meeting in the Belgian capital. ([Ecumenical News International](#))

## **CHINA**

A research team was formed by Shaanxi provincial China Christian Council/Three Self Patriotic Movement to carry out an investigation on the situation of grassroots level churches. In August 2006, the research team, made up of three vice presidents of the provincial “two committees,” visited churches in six counties and a district within the city of Yan’an. The main objective of the visits was to meet church members and clergy so as to assist them in internal and external matters of church management, such as setting up church ministries, resisting heretical doctrines, preparing documents for the registration of the church and establishing relations with the local religious authorities. ([Amity News Service](#))

## **CÔTE D’IVOIRE**

On 1 January 2006, the [United Bible Societies](#) began the next stage of an ambitious project designed to bring God’s word into the homes and workplaces of many residents of Côte d’Ivoire who have little knowledge of the Bible. On this date, three radio stations were to begin broadcasting La Bible sur les ondes (“The Bible on the airwaves”), a series of programmes that will take listeners through the whole Bible in a year. There is considerable potential for the 15-minute programmes, which consist of Bible texts recorded by Hosanna and comments on the texts, to have a broad impact, believes Dr. Lynell Zogbo, the UBS translation consultant who is overseeing the writing of the scripts by an interconfessional team. “We have not avoided addressing issues such as leadership, family values and morality,” she explains. “We are trying to address West African issues, not just Ivorian issues.” ([United Bible Societies](#))

## **INDIA**

More than two years after a tsunami devastated communities around the Indian Ocean, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) continues to help build hundreds of houses for tsunami survivors in Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka. In India’s Tamil Nadu state, MCC helped build 450 houses in order to relocate the coastal village of Idinthakarai, which was declared uninhabitable after it was damaged by the tsunami. This was the largest of MCC’s post-tsunami construction projects that have been completed to date. Several more large construction projects were recently completed or are underway—including an additional 287 houses in India, 181 in Sri Lanka and more than three hundred in Indonesia. ([Mennonite Central Committee](#))

## **IRAQ**

Kurdish Surani-speakers in northern Iraq are to receive scripture calendars in their own language for the first time, thanks to an initiative by the [Bible Society in Lebanon](#). The Society has published twenty-thousand scripture calendars in the language for the Kurdish Church and people living in northern Iraq. “We were excited to know that the Kurdish Church is now growing strong and steadfast in its faith,” said Mike Bassous, the Bible Society’s general secretary. “So we decided to provide them with this scripture portion that will accompany them throughout 2007.” The Society has been publishing scripture calendars since 1980, distributing hundreds of thousands every year throughout the Middle East, using various scripture texts in Arabic, English, Armenian—and now, for the first time, in the Kurdish dialect of Surani. Altogether the Society has published 170,000 2007 calendars for distribution in several countries in the Middle East. The largest quantity among these comprises those destined for Iraq. Some sources estimate the number of Surani-speakers in Iraq at around three million. “The scripture calendar has been the trademark of our Bible mission in Iraq for years,” said Nabil Omeish, the Society’s program coordinator for Iraq. “It provides Iraqi Christians with hope and encouragement to continue living in this troubled country, and it provides the Church with an opportunity to distribute portions

of God's word outside their walls, to non-Christians." The distribution of the calendars was expected to be completed in mid-January 2006. ([United Bible Societies](#))

## **LEBANON**

After years of satellite and shortwave broadcasting into the North Africa/Middle East Region, [HCJB World Radio](#) recently had the opportunity to show God's love through its healthcare ministry, responding to the aftermath of the war between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon. An HCJB World Radio medical team of six women found serious medical and spiritual needs in Lebanon when there for two weeks to help alleviate the widespread suffering. In the short medical response trip, the team saw approximately five hundred people. HCJB World Radio responded to the need of a partner organization on the ground that asked for non-North America, female doctors. One of the Ecuadorian physicians said, "We believe this trip planted a seed to bring people hope. There was a language barrier, but through our behavior, our care, our medical attention, the people saw us and the hope we brought." Another doctor added, "With each person we gave medical attention, we prayed for them. Nobody rejected that. They accepted us. They were very open with us, to the point where some of them said to us, 'thank you for bringing the light' in their own language." ([HCJB World Radio](#))

## **NETHERLANDS**

Russia's Orthodox Church has bought a Roman Catholic church and monastery in the Netherlands and plans to turn them into the largest Orthodox complex outside Russia. "Many churches have had to close here, especially in suburban areas, and all kinds of things are happening to them," explained Pieter Kohnen, spokesperson for the Dutch Catholic Bishops' Conference. ([Ecumenical News International](#))

## **NIGERIA**

The much publicized, long-awaited Jesus 50 Million People March took place 26 December 2006 in all thirty-six states of Nigeria and 774 local government areas spread across the country. Over forty thousand Christians converged at designated zones all over the country for the march. This comprised Christians from all church denominations and associations. Many of the participants wore t-shirts and fez caps which bore the inscription "JESUS." The country is also preparing for the United Jesus Rally (UJER) which will take place on Easter Monday. ([ASSIST News](#))

## **ROMANIA**

An increasing number of European churches are beginning to understand the role of Christian media in reaching the unchurched in Romania and Europe. To provide adequate training in the use of Christian television, Alfa Omega TV reports that in conjunction with [World Vision Romania](#), it has launched a short-term intensive media training program. According to Alfa Omega, the training is for two days a month and provides basic information about the technical aspects of filming, editing, news, feature reports and interviews. The first course brought a group of young people from five cities not only interested in using media tools in local churches, but also excited about getting involved in broadcast production on Romanian TV channels. The aim of the course is help prepare a strong group of Christians who can effectively use the media to spread the gospel in Romania and beyond. ([ASSIST News](#))

## **SWEDEN**

The Lutheran Church of Sweden, the national church and the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden, the country's second largest denomination, have celebrated the signing of an ecumenical agreement at a service in Uppsala Cathedral. In terms of their agreement "the two churches recognise each other as apostolic churches, participating in the Church of Christ...holding the same confession of the apostolic faith" and "the same understanding of the sacraments," the Church of Sweden said in a statement. ([Ecumenical News International](#))

## UNITED KINGDOM

Delegates at the Global Connections' conference in December in Swanwick, Derbyshire, UK heard how mission is central to God's very nature. Conference speaker Clive Calver said that our Lord is a sending God—the Father sent the Son, the Son sent the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit sends the Church. Martin Lee, executive director of Global Connections said, “It was great to rediscover the missional heart of God and that mission cannot be on the edges of church life, but is actually in the very nature of God and so should be at the core of who we are.” The conference was attended by 170 delegates, including church leaders, Bible college principals and leaders from organisations including [Tearfund](#), [Interserve](#) and [FEBA](#). ([Global Connections](#))

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## WORLD EVANGELISM & MISSIONS REPORTS

### [Tentmaking: The Way of Missions in the Twenty-first Century](#)

By Johnny Chun

**In the last twenty years most churches, mission agencies and denominations have come to the conclusion that tentmaking missions is the future of world evangelism.** The doors for traditional missionaries are closed in many countries, but the doors for tentmakers are opening rapidly. In many countries, the desire to learn both Western technology and the English language—coupled with the impact of globalization—has made more countries than ever open their doors. Tentmaking has greatly benefited from the rapid spread of the Marketplace Theology movement, which has mobilized lay people around the world for ministry in their own communities.

#### **History of Tentmakers International**

[Tentmakers International](#) (TI; formerly known as TIE) was formed shortly after the 1989 Lausanne II meeting in Manila. Participants of the tentmaking track there did not want to lose the benefits that came from interacting with other tentmakers. In 1992 several international observers were invited to come together for the organizational meeting of USAT (INTENT) in Glorieta, New Mexico, USA. From that, the first TI (TIE) Congress was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand in 1993. Delegates from fifteen countries met for five days. Dr. Christy Wilson, author of *Today's Tentmakers*, delivered the challenge to work together and learn from each other. Model projects from Galcom in Israel and E-Land in Korea were examined. Much networking has resulted in strategic alliances being formed among participants. Later conferences included:

- **1997.** The second TI Congress in Melbourne, Australia.
- **1999.** The third TI Congress was held in Capetown, South Africa.
- **2002.** The fourth TI Congress was held in South Korea.

Through the benevolence of [Mission to Unreached Peoples](#), based in Seattle, Washington, USA, and several individuals, Tentmakers International has also published regular newsletters.

#### **Leadership**

The leadership of Tentmakers International is truly international. Former TI international directors include John Cox, Berit Kloster and Danny Martin. The current chairman, Derek Christensen, is from New Zealand and the executive general secretary, Johnny Chun, is from South Korea. In addition to their responsibilities on the TI board, each of the board members also play very important individual roles in the global tentmaking movement through speaking at conferences and churches around the world. They also invest their time helping upcoming tentmakers in their ministries.

#### **Vision**

The vision of TI is to promote the concept of “tentmaking as mission” and to serve national tentmaker

associations, denominational groups and vocational and professional associations around the world. TI helps with the formation of such groups by the exchange of ideas, information and opportunities and through identifying needs and resources. TI serves as a clearinghouse for information on and sources for training and equipping tentmaker trainers to enable vocationally-skilled Christians worldwide to minister cross-culturally.

### **Upcoming Conferences**

In line with the nature of Tentmakers International, there are two major conferences planned for 2007. The first will be the fifth International Tentmaker Conference 9-11 July 2007 in Malaysia. People from all over the world will come together to network, be equipped and be encouraged in their tentmaking ministries. Some of the issues that will be covered include: the challenge of unreached peoples, **business as mission**, politics and the role of Christians, sports as "global language" and disaster and crises relief.

The second conference is the All-Africa TI Conference 16-19 August 2007 in Bamako, Mali. The conference is designed to develop the tentmaker strategy of evangelism in Africa, and to train lay people to share their faith in the context of their vocations to the unreached peoples within their respective nations. There are now over twenty-five nations involved in the conference planning. For more information on upcoming conferences, visit [www.tentmakersinternational.com](http://www.tentmakersinternational.com).

Tentmakers International strives to ultimately be true to Jesus' last commandment to go into all the world and to make disciples.

**Johnny Chun** is executive secretary of **Tentmakers International**. He is also executive director of Mission International and former director of the Korea Association of Tentmakers (KAT).

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### **The Big Deal About Little Gambia**

**By Mark Kolo and Hannah Ibanga**

**Gambia, a small country in West Africa with a population of 1.4 million people, had its early contacts with the gospel as far back as two hundred years ago** when the Anglicans and Methodists arrived on "the smiling coast." It was one of the first countries in the sub-region where Western missionaries planted churches. In spite of centuries and decades of the gospel's presence in Gambia, not much can be celebrated since there remain dominant forces long entrenched in the land, unchallenged by the might of the Church.

Virtually every tribe in Gambia can be described as unreached since none of them possess sufficient manpower and resources to effectively evangelise their own people without external assistance. Early pioneers to Gambia seemed to concentrate their evangelistic work almost entirely among the Aku. This made many of the other people groups believe that Christianity was not meant for them. This perception has been passed down from one generation to another to the extent that a Wolof or Mandinka person considers it unthinkable to be called a Christian. These tribes, numbering hundreds of thousands, barely have a handful of indigenous believers among them. For example, among the 100,000 Soninke in Gambia, there are less than thirty known Soninke Christians. The story is no better among the Fulas who regard themselves as the original custodians of Islam in West Africa. Even communities among the Traditional Religion such as the Jola and Manjako are being taken over by the steady growth of Islam in Gambia due to financial aid from Arab countries.

What can the Church do to reverse this trend? Tor Uja, director of Mission House International, believes that "Gambia needs a fresh, massive and sustained missionary drive to bring the impact of the gospel to these people. The existing churches are in dire need of discipleship. There is need for intensive youth work that can rise men for Gambia. For despite the political changes, there has remained an open door for the gospel, although it takes them long to believe."

### **Demi-gods and Red Flags**

The Marabouts have a strong grip on many people in Gambia. Their influence cuts across society like a knife. From politics to economics, from the social structure to the educational system, these men run the country with such great power that some of them are considered gods by their followers. The encasement of Gambia within Senegal on all borders makes it easy for Marabouts who are trained and receive powers from Senegal to penetrate every fabric of societal life in Gambia. For many, loyalty to a personal Marabout comes before the state. Only the praying might of the Church can liberate the vast number of people whose lives are governed by these forces of darkness. Who will stand in the gap to pray?

The majority of Jolas, although not an Islamic tribe, are bound by the powers of Jalang, a traditional deity which controls and counsels many people in their day-to-day lives. Sam Bello, a missionary reaching Jolas, says it is not uncommon to drive through a Jola settlement and see a red piece of cloth on the doorposts of half of the houses in the community as a mark of identity to signify that Jalang can be consulted there. Such is the situation that characterises the lives of many in Gambia who have no knowledge of Christ.

### **The Need for Senders**

We have been involved in trying to create awareness about missions and mission support in Gambia for the last two years. One of the greatest challenges to mobilizing for mission involvement in Gambia is that committed Christians are few—and the ones who are committed are already over-stretched both time-wise and financially.

There are many pastors working in the Greater Banjul area, a coastal and more developed part of Gambia. However, not many of the ministers feel called to go into the hinterlands where there is not much development or many amenities and where few have heard of Jesus. When sharing about Jesus in one village, one man was asked by people there if he was the Jesus he was talking about.

There are a few missionaries who have a heart to work among these people; however, they do not have the support required to engage these strongholds. The Church needs to work together with missionaries in order to penetrate the land. The needs are many. Our desire is to have people to make a one-year commitment to support missionary efforts in Gambia.

The Mandinkas are one of the largest unreached tribes in Gambia. There are very few Mandinka Christians. In 1998, a church decided to target a Mandinka village where the gospel had never been preached. They chose Bantanunku, which is about three hours away from Banjul.

The mission was a success and they had up to fifty people coming to the meetings. In Gambia, this is a very large number. Eventually, the supporting church felt they could not continue and pulled out of the village. One missionary who was part of the evangelistic outreaches was willing to continue; however, he needed to have a motorcycle so that he could go there two or three times a week. The new converts were disappointed. No one was available to disciple them. The open door had slammed in their faces. The people who had taken the step toward Christ were left abandoned. Since then, this missionary has had the desire to go and restart the work. However, he has not had the support.

### **Caught in a Vicious Cycle**

In Gambia there are many unmarried mothers. This has led to the formation of a society with broken-down moral values. Many children grow up without knowing their fathers. When questioned why she had to have children out of wedlock, one woman replied, “What am I to do in the circumstance that no young man was coming to ask for my hand in marriage?” Some families pressure their daughters to have a child for any man, but avoid making a commitment. This practice is widely acceptable. A young man was recently asked why single Christian men show no interest toward young Christian girls in marriage. His reply was, “We find it hard to forgive the girls for having children out of wedlock.” As a result, some of these girls end up marrying eligible

and ever-willing Muslims and so the cycle continues. The Church must work consciously to correct this problem.

### **Sitting Beside Open Doors**

Despite the predominant Islamic presence, Gambia is still open to the gospel. The Church must act quickly while the doors remain open. Now is the time to pray, give and maximise our outreach and impact.

There are many ways that Christians can reach the people with love and touch them where they need help. People with a vision to reach the youth can arrange to come as teachers and be sponsored by others at home. Christian organizations can collaborate with missionaries working here to organise workshops and short-term medical outreaches.

Medical outreach provides a viable platform to sow seeds of the gospel in the hearts of young Gambians. Who can tell what fruit may follow in years to come if we sow the right seeds today? If everyone gives a little, then a lot can be accomplished in this land. The opportunities to affect the destinies of many communities and nations abound here. The Church has sat beside an open door for too long. It is time to walk in and set captives free from the shackles of sin, idolatry and deception.

Ministries engaged in taking the gospel to those who have never heard need the financial support of the Church. For “how shall they preach unless they are sent?” A church or fellowship group can adopt Gambia for prayer.

The call is yet to cease. The doors are still open. It is yet daytime in Gambia. Once the cry goes unheeded, the door closes and the night comes, no person can work no matter how much he or she desires. To wait much longer before responding to the cry of those in Gambia would be like a person picking up his or her working implements and heading for the farm when the sun has set.

**Mark Kolo** serves as director of media and mobilization with Missions Supporters League (MSL), a movement focused on mobilizing prayer and material support for cross-cultural missions. He is working toward pioneering MSL's vision to reach the ten countries of Southern Africa. He is a graduate of Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria, and lives in Jos, Nigeria.

**Dr. Hannah Ibanga** serves as consultant pediatrician. She formerly worked at the Medical Research Council in Gambia where she pioneered the work of MSL. Although she is originally from Nigeria, she currently lives in the United Kingdom.

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## **Kingdom Advance in Gambia: A Veteran's Perspective**

**By Rashida Bah**

**Below is an interview with Modou Sanneh, head pastor of the Reformed Evangelical Church of Gambia, on the advance of the Kingdom of God in Gambia.** The interview was conducted by Rashida Bah

### **Q. What is the state of missions in Gambia?**

**MS:** There is yet to emerge a mature monolingual church among any people group. There are Mandinka, Fula, Jola, Balanta, Wolof, Aku, Serer, Manjako, Serrahule, Jahanke and others. There is no “people group church” teaching in these languages to reach the cultural hearts of these people. The work is much and the workers are still few.

The most concentration of church planting missionary agencies is in the Greater Banjul area, but the majority of the population is in the rural areas, which are harder to reach or live in. There are few indigenous workers trying

to plant churches among the Mandinka, Wolof, Fula, Jola and Manjako, and most recently work has begun among the Balanta. I believe that this gospel must become part and parcel of this country.

**Q. What was your life like before God called?**

**MS:** My father died when I was six years old, so I had to stay with different families. It was a struggle for survival. My quest for independence led to my adopting a principle never to give up in the face of obstacles. Even though I did not understand it then, my Muslim grandfather told me the very last time I saw him alive that “God has a plan for you.” I was about eighteen years of age then. It means a lot to me now, to believe that somehow God shared his plans for my future with my grandfather.

Another thing of great help was and is my interest in languages. I can speak Jola (my mother tongue), Wolof, Mandinka, Fula and some French. My language capacity helped me work on the first translation of the New Testament in Mandinka.

**Q. Could you share some of your early experiences as a missionary?**

**MS:** In 1979, my wife and I moved into a Mandinka settlement in obedience to the Great Commission. The place was dedicated to a snake spirit. In trying to move with wisdom, I took kola nuts to the elders and adopted the Alkalo as my “father” in that town. We engaged in community development for them. With the Bibles and a hoe I would weed with them, asking them, “Why do we remove weeds? Sin is like weeds and God wants to weed out sin from our lives. Jesus is the weeder to take sin away permanently.” The people could relate to this description easily. We did medical work and explained both physical and spiritual cleanliness.

Our method is to allow people to watch our lives. I was there for a three full months before preaching one word. By this time, a stable relationship had been built. We lived and preached from an old house in the middle of the village. This made it hard for them to ignore our message and us. The Alkalo heard the gospel fully. He sat for two years as I taught. Even the Marabout came to hear. The chapel built in 1992 is miraculously still standing. Another church planting effort came out of that church and another church has emerged elsewhere from this second church.

**Q. What is the plight of “closet Christians”?**

**MS:** There are far fewer people openly practicing Christianity than those who are secret believers in Christ. There is persecution and threats on lives and livelihood and this makes it difficult for many to openly confess faith in Jesus. The significance is not in the numbers but in the inroads we make to the unreached people. Not every one is opposed to the gospel. When I go to the mission field with the Bible, the people willingly receive copies to read.

**Q. What is the focus of the present advance?**

**MS:** Indigenous preaching in local languages is on the increase as opposed to using English as the medium of expression. This is proving effective and Gambians are beginning to change their view of Christianity as a “Western religion.” There are opportunities to teach through national media (television, radio, newspapers), but very few missionaries have the resources to sustain ministry through media.

**Q. What are some specific needs of missions in Gambia?**



**MS:** Two of the most important things are moral and financial support of converts. When a convert comes to faith in Christ, he or she ceases to be cared for by friends and family for things like feeding, accommodation and school fees. He or she is seen as an outcast.

It is now the responsibility of the church planter to take in the convert for discipleship, care and protection. The community and relatives will persecute him and try to draw him back either by persuasion or by coercion. In Africa, to be “lost” to one’s family is to lose touch with your very existence.

**Rashida Bah**, a native of Gambia, was a practicing Muslim for more than thirty years. In Gambia she was active with Wathew (Women at the Well) Ministries International. She now lives in Mesa, Arizona, USA.

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## **WORLD PERSPECTIVES**

### **What Postmodernism Means for Evangelism**

**By Paul Mumo Kisau**

#### **Introduction**

The mention of the word “postmodernism” evokes the notion of pluralism, where anything goes, since the concept of truth becomes relative. This then poses a real challenge to the Christian “one-way” method of salvation, where the Bible clearly provides evidence of Jesus asserting, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes [to God] to the father, except through me” (John 14:6). Later on, the Apostle Peter echoes these words without apology: “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). These absolutes of the Christian message suffered in the advent of modernistic worldview and now suffer more from postmodernism. The question that begs an answer is: What does postmodernism mean for evangelism today? We must begin our discussion with a historical survey that will trace the winding path through which postmodernism has come to us. This will then lead to the question of evangelism in a postmodern world.

#### **Premodernism**

This worldview dominated the medieval times until the 1798 French Revolution. In this worldview, the “Western world” believed in the supernatural. The existence of God was taken for granted and the spirit world was taken as a fact. The spiritual world, which existed beyond the five senses, controlled the happenings of the physical world. Biblical Christianity was readily accepted during this premodern era. Church dogma was also readily accepted and evangelism came in the form of proclamation (cf. 1 John 1:3, 5). People were expected to believe the truth of the Bible without question.

#### **Modernism**

Premodern era values began to be undermined by the advent of the first Renaissance followed by the Reformation. The real threat to premodernism was, however, the Enlightenment era. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, philosophers like René Descartes and Immanuel Kant began to question the source of authority. What had been taken for granted as the source of authority—Church and the scriptures—was put to the test. The philosophers sought to free humanity from the bondage of superstition and bring them to the land of religious freedom. In this land, rational inquiry, empirical evidence and scientific discovery were of cardinal importance. The tables of religion were overturned and in their place human reasoning was enthroned. Some found it easier to become deists and to think of God as one who created the world and the universe and then walked away. Here God could exist and be worshipped, but human reasoning was still the final authority.

Modernity, however, came crumbling down after humanity's reason and discovery brought with it the two very deadly world wars of 1914-1919 and 1939-1945. Many people perished and many more were displaced. Human

reasoning had failed to bring the desired success that was propagated by its proponents. The death nail came down at the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (so it is argued) since Marxism had tried to put into action the tenets of the Enlightenment.

### **Postmodernism**

With the demise of modernism, a new worldview was born. Postmodernism takes its name from modernism and supposes its death by the prefix “post.” According to Gary Gilley, “If the optimistic projections of the last two hundred years of the best efforts of reason, science and technology have failed; and if the tenets of premodernism with its foundation of revelatory truth is preposterous, then all that is left is the pessimism of nothingness, emptiness and uncertainty.”<sup>1</sup>

Gilley quotes Kruger who says that “postmodernity, in contrast to modernity, rejects any notion of objective truth and insists that the only absolute in the universe is that there are no absolutes. Tolerance is the supreme virtue and exclusivity the supreme vice. Truth is not grounded in reality or in any sort of authoritative ‘text,’ but is simply constructed by the mind of the individual.”

Thus, the postmodernism worldview rejects universal truth. This rejection was ushered in by existentialism philosophy clearly articulated in Jean-Paul Sartre's novel *Nausea*. Truth is seen as being personal. It is not something that one searches and finds; rather, it is something that one creates. The implication here is that one's truth cannot be taken as universal and hence can be rejected.

### **Evangelism**

Jim Leffel captures the spirit of the age of postmodernism aptly: “Today, Christianity is widely rejected, not because it was critically examined and found wanting, but merely because it claims to be true. Increasingly, American academics regard claims to objective and universal truth as intolerant and uninformed.”<sup>2</sup>

This poses a challenge to evangelism, since in it one seeks to convert another. How can one attempt to convert someone to Christianity seeing that each person is entitled to his or her own beliefs? To evangelise then would be viewed as religious intolerance, or as Leffel puts it: “Attempting to convert is unacceptable because it implies standing in judgment over others' beliefs.” A survey carried out in America showed that the majority of people think that all religions pray to the same god and therefore no one is really lost. This thinking has entered into the Church through the back door and hence there is no commitment to evangelise among many evangelicals.

The challenge of postmodernism culture must be dealt with at the congregational level by igniting the spirit of evangelism among believers. Romans 10:14-17 is a wake-up call to believers to evangelise. The message of the gospel must be heard in order to bring the desired effect of conversion. The seed, the word of God, needs to be scattered by someone (cf. Luke 8:5ff). The harvest need not be aware of its readiness; it is the farmer who knows when to harvest. In the same way, the Church must pray for the owner of the harvest to raise up harvesters even in these days of postmodernism where truth is supposedly rejected and religious freedom advocated.

### **Methods of Evangelism<sup>3</sup>**

In the mid-twentieth century, various methods were devised to evangelise humankind. The Four Spiritual Laws represent the evangelical's response to the modernism worldview in evangelism. The problems these Laws encounter in the postmodern worldview is their proclamation nature which is rooted in scripture. The postmodern worldview rejects absolute truth and therefore cannot be reached by such declarations alone. However, this does not negate the Four Spiritual Laws, since they still find their place alongside other methods.

We must adjust our methods of evangelism if we are to reach the young people today. The older people are still sympathetic to the gospel, but the young ones live in a culture that is bent toward accommodation. All faiths are

taken to be personal and hence are seen as being superior to the others. The following are seven methods that can address the so-called “Generation X.”

**1. Felt needs evangelism.** Although the postmodern worldview rejects absolute truth and advocates for wide choices in religion, there remains an open door in the hearts of many. People are looking for solutions to meet their problems and the gospel that comes to meet that need will find room in many hearts today. Like Jesus, it is important for evangelists to propagate the gospel through the open door of felt needs. Jesus always reached the hearts of the people by meeting their felt needs, whether they were physical, social, emotional or spiritual. If the evangelist knows God, knows self and knows the people, he or she will be an effective communicator of the gospel.

Examples of felt needs evangelism include running specific seminars to meet physical issues. These can include health issues forums, social forums, woman issues or wholeness seminars. Such seminars can then integrate Bible teaching in a non-threatening way, using the rest of the methods discussed below. People are searching for answers to their felt needs and as we meet those needs the fundamental needs will be filled as well.

**2. Parables.** The age-old parable method employed by Jesus in the first century finds attraction in the postmodern context in the sense that it is non-threatening and at the same time allows the listener to draw a conclusion. Parables offer the listener an opportunity for active participation.

**3. Cartoons.** Cartoons represent a non-threatening medium because although they include human voices, they are not human. They do not present another person’s truth—just a cartoon’s truth. Children enjoy cartoons and such a method will attract them to the gospel. Research has shown that most people come to faith before the age of eighteen and cartoon evangelism has the opportunity to capture a whole generation. (*Editors Note: Read “[Christian Comics? It’s No Laughing Matter!](#)” from the July 2006 issue of Lausanne World Pulse.*)

**4. Testimonies.** Personal testimony has more value than a dry message and people will not argue as much against a testimony. A testimony is a powerful tool since in it one shares personal experience. Jesus always sent people away to share their experiences with others. Indeed, the first disciples were to be simply witnesses (Acts 1:8). In the same way, we are called to be witnesses of our experience with Jesus.

**5. Chat rooms.** Internet chat rooms are very important mediums of evangelism for the postmodern generation. A team of dedicated chat room evangelists can reach the young people online with the gospel through this means.

**6. Email evangelism.** The danger of junk email might make this method unlikely, however, there are people out there who might be willing to read a catchy message in their email inbox. The entry point could be for Christians to reach their non-believing friends since it might be easier for them to communicate the gospel this way. This will also be a polite way to follow-up with people who may have visited a church or spoken with an evangelist. Again, various topics of interest or friendship evangelism can be conducted through email.

The Church could also invest in developing Internet-based solutions much in the same way as yahoo and hotmail, where gospel pop-ups would be displayed for evangelistic purposes. (*Editors Note: The [April 2006 issue](#) of Lausanne World Pulse featured articles on a number of ways the Internet is being used for evangelism.*)

**7. Screensavers evangelism.** Designing interesting screensavers for evangelism is another non-threatening method of evangelism. There is a need to design interesting and eye-catching screensavers since many people spend their time in front of their computers.

## Reaching the Postmodern Generation

Below is a comparison<sup>4</sup> of postmodern evangelistic methods versus previous modern methods.

Postmodern methods	Modern methods
Multiple encounters	Single encounters
Listener-centered	Witness-centered
Dialogical gospel story	Monological gospel story
Gospel story	Gospel presentation
Story then proposition	Proposition then story
Asking good questions	Giving lots of information
Community integration	Individual isolation
Soft	Loud
Consideration	Argumentation
Guided tours	Ticket sales
Supernatural	Natural
More earthly benefits	Less earthly benefits
Relational validation	Evidentiary validation
More time seed planting	More time harvesting

Postmodernism calls for a subtler mode of evangelism. No church can turn back the clock to premodern times. The declaration of “thus says the Lord” must be clothed in an attractive coat. Bearing in mind that although the core of the gospel does not change, the method must suit the context. If there was ever a time to contextualise theology, this is the time. The Church must understand the times that postmoderns are living in and seek God’s help in meeting the challenge of communicating the gospel to them.

### Endnotes

1. Gary Gilley. 2002. “Postmodernism—Part 1.” September/October, 8:7. See also D.A. Carson. 2003. “The Dangers & Delights of POSTMODERNISM” in *Modern Reformation Magazine*. July/August 12:4.
2. Jim Leffel. “Postmodernism: The ‘Spirit of the Age.’”
3. Most of these methods are adopted from the Web Evangelism Guide.
4. McRaney, Will. “Sharing Christ with Post-Moderns.”

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## Postmodernity and the Emerging Church

By Geoff Westlake

**What does the so-called “Emerging Church” really bring to the whole Church taking the whole gospel to the whole world?** How do we critique it meaningfully, without overstating the good or bad within it? What can we learn from it? And can we assist its formation in effective mission?

### **Mission Ferment**

Some say that the term “Emerging Church” (EC) refers to new kinds of church “emerging from the field,” groups that have emerged from the grassroots level up instead of training from the top down. Indeed, emerging church personnel often report that they thought they were a lone voice until they suddenly met others on the same path. So it is largely true to say that the phenomena “emerged” from the interfaces between church and the changing cultures of postmodern times. In that way, the EC movement does arise from both missionary exchanges and dissatisfaction with established churches’ abilities to meet those exchanges.

It is generally a good impulse to “live with the natives” and let indigenous forms of church emerge, similar to the ministry of Hudson Taylor (whom we now hail as a father of modern mission) in China.

Taylor’s actions, however, scandalized the “compound” missionary model of his day, which enabled missionaries to be in proximity enough to “communicate to” the Chinese, but allowed them to retreat to their little piece of Britain each day. When Taylor “went native,” the compound missionaries quickly criticized his audacity. They gave many warnings: “You will syncretize. You will not preach the gospel. You will lose your distinctiveness. You will lose the great traditions of the Church. You will not be nourished. You will become theologically lazy.”

One should never dismiss a new movement out of fear of what might happen. Perhaps these opponents of Taylor were so personally invested in the compound as “the right way” that they could no longer imagine other ways.

Since Alvin Toffler’s 1970 book *Future Shock*, we have known that Western cultures have shifted far from church culture. They are now foreign, just as Chinese culture was foreign to British compounds. This is precisely why emerging churches often do not have the “compounds” of church buildings, structures, salaries, music, services and sermons as we know them. Could it be that some emerging churches hold the seeds for a new missionary movement for our challenging day?

### **Numerous Streams**

In 1998 I traveled to the United States and the United Kingdom to research “churches that don’t look like church.” I talked with thirty founders of this as yet un-named movement. Just like the established Church, the Emerging Church has numerous subsets. For example, I found that churches emerge from the following streams:

1. In Europe, from the simple, house church movement (i.e., The 24/7 church led by Wolfgang Simpson)
2. In North America, from conscious engagement with postmodernism (i.e., Mars Hill church led by Mark Driscoll)
3. In Britain, from a need to find alternative worship expressions (i.e., Third Sunday Service led by Paul Roberts and The Late Late Service)
4. In Australia, from a community-oriented outreach impulse (i.e., the **Forge** network)
5. Globally, from the experiences of cross-cultural missionaries overseas (i.e., Thom Wolf, then at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in San Francisco, California, USA, and Andrew Jones at [tallskinnykiwi.blogspot.com](http://tallskinnykiwi.blogspot.com))

6. Globally, from contemplative traditions and a neo-monasticism with social activist traditions (i.e., Peace Tree led by Harry Wykman; and Rob Moll's article "[The New Monasticism](#)")

On every continent there is increasing diversity as EC pioneers exchange insights and experiences. Still, it remains important to know the applicable streams of influence upon a particular EC in order to interpret its core principles and practices. There are two focuses.

1. A **“postmodern-focused”** EC may be using postmodern forms to attract postmodern people, much like the marketing-based church-growth movement of the 1980s. But its core method is still “come to us,” and “we set the methodological tone.”
2. A **“people-focused”** EC might not set up a church at all, going instead with a very boiled-down core, relating and sharing life until the people can express their newfound faith in their own culturally meaningful (and often simplified) ways. Those church forms then emerge from the people.

Both ECs may look similar on the surface, but they are in fact quite different.

### **Postmodern Convergence**

All of the different EC streams listed above have intersections with the rise of postmodernism: questioning and deconstructing the establishment; retreating from one-size-fits-all; simplifying; searching for integrity; returning to the roots (radical-izing); appreciating the individual’s perspectives; and longing for community, belonging and experience (being a part of something bigger). These descriptors apply to both “postmodernism” and “emerging church.” So whether or not they consciously tailor themselves for postmodern cultures, there is a happy convergence that makes ECs more suited to postmodern minds.

Church responses to postmodernism have included:

1. **Disapproving of the whole movement** and retreating to the cultural compound with self-righteous zeal. This is legalistic fundamentalism.
2. **Accepting postmodernism completely** and syncretizing it with the gospel. This is liberalism.
3. **Taking the good and leaving the bad.** This is mainstream thought. Note: Many people begin to feel an arbitrary kind of “judgmental acceptance” from this approach.
4. **Going to live within the new world and loving people without the safety-net of an established compound.** The results are varied, and many are considered part of the Emerging Church.

It is important to note that many ECs do not target postmodernism. For example, at **“Cheers,”** the local EC of which I am a part, we want to be faithful to the way of Jesus in the world (John 17:18). Here we can look at the example of the Apostle Paul. In one location, he could debate in the synagogue, reason with the Greeks and mix with the sailors. In a multicultural world we adapt with the people we meet. A Chinese person can be married to an Anglo, have postmodern kids and have a traditional grandfather. We become fluid, not merely postmodern.

### **Emerging Churches Here to Stay**

ECs generally fit into David Barrett, George Kurian and Todd Johnson’s “Independents” grouping. According to the authors, “For mid-2000, neo-apostolics (also termed Independents or Postdenominationalists) were in over twenty-two thousand networks with 386 million members total. (In 2000, Protestants were in nine thousand denominations or networks with 342 million members). By 2025, it is projected that neo-apostolics will outnumber Protestants, 582 million to 469 million.”<sup>1</sup>

While most Independents would not consider themselves part of the EC, there are enough similarities to make them part of this family grouping. This group is not a mere sideline; they will not simply disappear (the Chinese Church is in this group). Nor will they necessarily conform and become institutional like everyone else (Note: The early Church did not institutionalize until the fourth century, and even then not all of them did.)

These Independents reject overbearing, centralized authority, and seek a more effective missionary lifestyle.<sup>2</sup> These outward characteristics are worthy of support, not fear. One should be impressed that so many in this generation are rising to the challenge of mission.

### **A Little Help?**

ECs need support. Many of those involved in the neo-mission field are inexperienced and untrained. They can be theologically flaky if not given assistance. They can be unwise in the ways of administration and insurance if left unaided. They can be clumsy, scathing, shallow, legalistic, syncretistic or victims to any other hazards that face new missionaries.

Perhaps many of the established churches cannot help these new missionaries because they are themselves ill-equipped for culturally-sensitive mission. Some established churches seem to assume that the ECs do not have core elements of church simply because those elements do not appear in the forms their compounds recognize. If they cannot see what already exists in an EC, they probably cannot help its formation.

Below is a double-edged checklist for self-examination of both emerging and established churches:

- Absence of singing does not equal absence of worship.
- Absence of certain miracles does not mean they do not see God at work.
- A focus beyond the assembly does not negate care within the assembly.
- Absence of preaching does not equal absence of learning or of the ministry of the word.
- Interactive learning does not equal theological shallowness.
- Absence of traditional liturgy does not equal a piece-meal approach to God's grand narrative.
- Living with the people in the harvest does not equal syncretism.
- Missiological flexibility does not equal theological looseness at the core.
- Respect for individual autonomy does not equal individualistic formation.
- Absence of tithing does not equal absence of stewardship.
- Absence of external structures does not equal absence of internal structure.
- Absence of denominational control does not equal absence of accountability.
- Absence of big meetings does not mean the church is small.
- Small does not equal ineffective.
- Temporary does not equal ineffective
- Empowering others to initiate does not equal chaos.
- One method or another does not equal righteousness.

### **Allies in the Field**

A widespread feature of emerging churches is flexibility and adaptability. By operating through relationships, with fewer external structures, ECs can not only flex culturally, they can do it quickly, and even simultaneously. They tend to find low-cost, highly efficient, cross-cultural ways to help others flesh out the core faith. At their best, this speed and understanding can breed mutual appreciation between cultural groups by helping people find *numerous* "right ways" to express the core faith.

As an itinerant outreach specialist, I meet many people who ask what I do and what "Cheers" is. The quickest people to understand those involved in ECs are older, cross-cultural missionaries. They are the most supportive,

and I suspect will continue to be most helpful at keeping ECs both theologically sound and missiologically effective. That endorsement is telling.

The second quickest to understand those involved with ECs are people with no church background. The third quickest are church people. The slowest ones are leaders of established churches with the most personal investment in those established forms.<sup>3</sup>

And yet established churches could not only cooperate, but even incorporate some of the EC's best-practices emerging from the field. A good test of an EC is looking at the core beliefs and practices. We then must ask how we can best enable these people to express them in their cultures.

Of course, if an EC compromises the core faith, established churches could gently seek to hold up a mirror of understanding. In the same way that we try to understand where a friend went wrong in order to help them find his or her way back, established churches will need to understand the streams and dreams of local ECs if they are to help them find their theological and missionary feet. Understanding their missionary impulse, their methods and their story thus far is a good first step toward helping.

Among friends, the possibilities are endless. My wife and I came from a larger, traditional church to start "Cheers." Our old church provides eldership accountability for us, but also asks for reports from which they can learn and be stimulated. Other friends work for a para-church agency, which now holds our bank account, auditing, insurance and ensures best practice in duty-of-care. Another friend coaches us. At a more local Baptist church, another group of friends put us on their books like overseas missionaries. So we benefit from four lines of accountability and support.<sup>4</sup>

As emerging churches continue to infiltrate culture, may they do so within the parameters of scripture and the unity and fellowship of the wider Church.

#### **Endnotes**

1. David Barrett, George Kurian and Todd Johnson. 2001. *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press. 4, 16-18.
2. Ibid. 28.
3. Not all church leaders are slow. Theologians are careful at first, but once they have their questions answered, they tend to be more like the missionary group. This underscores the importance of a sound theological base from which to launch missiological experiments.
4. A fifth accountability is to other EC friends. One example is [Forge](#), an Australian network that exists to "help birth and nurture the emerging missional Church."

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## **Burned Out on Church, Fired Up for Jesus: Love Evangelism in the Postmodern Era** **By Mark Russell**

### **Burned Out on Church**

My wife and I have spent the last seven years in three different countries, all of which had a cultural base of



Christianity. However, we have also found a negativity toward church. We spent much time with people who were not following Christ as we sought to understand this negative view of church. Over and over we heard the same thing: people were burned out on church. Sometimes the reasons were serious, such as experiences of abuse in a church setting. Other times the reasons were vague and largely theoretical, such as the presence of hypocrisy.

In Germany, when I tried to talk about God or Jesus, frequently the response I got was a critique of church. Initially I felt defensive and thought that most of the criticisms were unfair. Gradually I became frustrated that I kept getting sucked into conversations about church when all I really wanted to do was talk about Christ.

Postmodernism, far from being an isolated phenomenon relegated to the halls of academia, is very prevalent in the corridors of office buildings and on the streets of most cities today. There are many different ways it can be described. *Disenchantment* with the way things have been is a basic and useful explanation. This disenchantment extends to the way people view church.

### **The Church Has Left the Building**

At a recent conference, a colleague remarked that the Church had left the building. His point was that traditional church settings are no longer the means to reach people with the gospel. In his book *Revolution*,<sup>1</sup> George Barna says that his research has revealed that there is a growing sub-nation of over twenty million people in the United States who are devout Christians but “have no use for churches that play religious games.”<sup>2</sup> He adds that ninety-one percent of Americans who identify themselves as born-again “possess a patchwork of theological views and rarely rely upon those perspectives to inform their daily decisions.”<sup>3</sup> This shows two things:

1. There is a perceived disconnect between religious faith and real life.
2. This disconnect has produced a significant sense of disenchantment with church.

Nevertheless, about seventy percent of all Americans still rely on a local congregation as their primary source for their spiritual life. About five percent of the population relies on an alternative faith community and approximately twenty percent have turned to various cultural sources such as the media or the arts to satisfy their spiritual needs.<sup>4</sup> What is most interesting is where Barna thinks this is heading. He projects that in 2025, between thirty and thirty-five percent of people will rely on a local congregation; thirty to thirty-five percent on alternative faith-based communities; and thirty to thirty-five percent on the media, arts and culture.<sup>5</sup>

Postmoderns are not anti-spiritual. In actuality, they tend to be quite spiritual. However, they are reactionary to religion and traditional assumptions. They do not want a generic, pre-packaged religious presentation; rather, they want to experience a spiritual journey.

As our culture is changing, it is exposing and magnifying some of the weaknesses of many of the Christian faith traditions. One in particular is that church and religion have been promoted as an important part of people’s lives rather than a way of life that is integral to all spheres of one’s existence. This is the exciting opportunity that awaits us in the postmodern age. We can recapture the ancient truth that our faith is our life. It is not something to be stacked on top of everything else.

### **It Is Not About Coolness; It Is About Love**

After graduating from university, I lived in Russia for a year. As is normal, I felt out of place and uncomfortable in a new culture. In order to reduce my anxieties and insecurities, I tried hard to be like my Russian friends. I bought Russian clothes. I worked at learning the Russian language, even some slang phrases. One of my greatest days was when a Russian told me that my appearance was just like a Russian’s and that some of my well-rehearsed phrases sounded native. I was cool.

A few years later, when we moved to another country, I worked hard again at inculturating myself. We lived with a local family. I bought local clothes. I worked at the language again. I learned street terms and constantly got feedback from locals. I was cool.

We had a colleague. He was a nice guy, but he dressed like he had just arrived. He had been there eleven years. He butchered the language. At times it was downright painful. One time he did an entire presentation in which he used the wrong word and continually said that the church should work at failing. At the same conference, I got up and gave a smooth PowerPoint presentation. I cracked some jokes. They laughed. I was cool. I was sure of it.

Afterwards, I was completely dumbfounded when my colleague was surrounded by the locals and received several invitations to speak at local churches. I wanted to tell them that he would make the same mistakes at their churches. No one asked me to speak at their churches. Maybe they had something against PowerPoint.

As the months went on, I was continually amazed at the influence that my language-butcherer, uncool-clothes-wearing colleague had on people. One day it hit me. I saw his clothes; they saw his heart. I heard his grammar; they heard his love.

His love for the people came through loud and clear. Since that time I have given up on being cool. Instead, I have tried to light the fire of the love of Jesus in my life. Like a fire that gives warmth and can be seen from miles away on a cool night, it is the single most attractive aspect of our faith.

### **The Postmodern Church**

Many others have observed the aforementioned fact that postmodern people are increasingly disinterested in church. The approach that some have taken has been to re-shape and re-work what is done in church so that people will come. One church that I am acquainted with has constantly upped the ante with more extravagant decorations and spectacular music. People come; people have fun. But Christ is rarely mentioned and the Bible is hardly used. When the leadership was asked about this, the query was immediately dismissed.

Do not get me wrong here. A church can use any kind of music. People can dance and be creative. However, we must not be fooled into thinking that being cool is the answer. People will come to something cool. But they will give their lives for love.

In the postmodern era, we need to become less concerned with bringing people to church and more concerned with bringing the church to the people. Now, more than ever, people need to see us on the streets of our cities, loving people. Through us they need to feel the love that Christ has for them. *Soli Deo Gloria!*

### **Endnotes**

1. Barna, George. 2005. *Revolution: Finding Vibrant Faith Beyond the Walls of the Sanctuary*. Carol Stream, Illinois, USA: Tyndale House Publishers

2. Ibid. 13.

3. Ibid. 33.

4. Ibid. 48.

5. Ibid. 49.

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## **Will I Go to Heaven When I Die, Too?**

**By David Sills**

**I was in Peru recently helping to train some national leaders.** As always, I was thankful to be able to travel to teach humble Christian workers like these students. They are sincere believers striving to do the best they can with the little they have. It always humbles me how appreciative they are and how much they sacrifice to come and be a part of the few training opportunities that come their way.

On this occasion, I was teaching about protecting the flock from cults when the students' questions began to turn to the topic of basic doctrines. I was glad to be scratching where it itched, so it was fine with me if they wanted to move in that direction. I stressed that we not only need to know the truth but also teach it to others. A young indigenous lady asked me how we can do this when many among them do not read or write. Since I have been interested in reaching and teaching oral cultures for years, I was thankful for the chance to address that issue.

I launched into my professor mode and shared with the class how more than seventy percent of the unreached world consists of oral-culture peoples. (*Editor's note: Read the **October 2006 issue** of LWP which was dedicated to reaching oral cultures with the gospel.*) I told them that many of those people do not have a written alphabet, so of course, they do not have a Bible or the ability to use the discipleship and training materials we use. I shared a little about chronological Bible storying techniques and the value of telling stories to teach oral-culture learners. In fact, I was so wound up in my lecture that it took some time before I noticed that several faces were concerned.

I paused to ask what they were thinking. Their answers broke my heart. An older indigenous lady named Fortunata was obviously troubled, so I asked her to share her question. "What about me?" she asked. "Can I go to heaven when I die, too?" Seeing the confusion on my face, she clarified: "We have always been told that we could not enter into the kingdom of heaven if we could not read." Through a voice that occasionally stopped for composure, I reminded her that in the plan of salvation the ability to read was not a requirement to be right with God. I told her that most of Jesus' hearers and early followers were oral learners. We all smiled amid a chorus of "amens."

Fortunata is a precious believer who sincerely wants to follow the Lord Jesus. A small church meets in her humble home, and just like many others, it labors along without proper teaching. Even one of the most prolific evangelical denominations in Peru does not have pastors for ninety percent of its churches. Some of the brothers told me that, overall, only half of the evangelical churches have pastors and many of them do not have pastoral preparation or theological training. They mean well and are sincere but have been untaught or wrongly taught, if taught at all.

I teach in one of the best theological seminaries in the world. I rub shoulders on a daily basis with some of the most brilliant professors and students in the world. I can walk from my office and in two minutes be in one of the best theological libraries in the world.

Spending my days in this environment makes it easy for me to slip into a mode that assumes far too much. How it grieves my heart when I find humble believers and Christian workers like this precious sister who struggles on with no books, no formal training and the constant attack of false teaching.

When I walk through the door in my stateside classroom or in my church, people often greet me with smiles, pats on the back and requests for my time or opinion. It feeds the flesh and makes me feel useful. When I have the opportunity to meet with these humble Bible-hungry believers in other nations, I find it hard to leave. And when I do leave and return to my highly academic comfort zone, it seems a little like taking a seat on a lifeboat and deserting those going down on the Titanic. I sometimes wonder about the greeting I will get when I walk through the door to heaven. I know I will see the Fortunatas and that they will forgive me, but I wonder about those who never heard at all.

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## PEOPLES OF THE WORLD

### An Overview of Eastern Europe

By Justin Long

**Eastern Europe has one of the largest landmasses of any region in the world.** Russia is the largest country in the world, and Ukraine is the second largest country in Europe. The region is resource-rich, having farmland, timber, oil and rare metals. It is also prone to earthquakes and landslides, and the remoteness and cold make it very difficult to utilize these resources or bring them to markets. Heavy industrialization has led to significant soil, water and air pollution. The entire region was affected by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster; however, Ukraine and Belorussia were the most affected with the latter being over twenty percent contaminated.

For its size, the region is one of the least populated. About 315 million people lived here in 2000, but no longer. Not a single Eastern European country has a growing population. All are aging and in decline. The region is losing 1.5 million people each year; by 2025, the population will likely fall to 223 million, ahead of the rest of Europe but smaller than most African, Asian or American regions. Two-thirds of the people live in urban areas; there are 599 megacities (but this number, too, could decline). Since fewer children are being born, the number of children is of course falling as well from sixty-one million (twenty-three percent of the population) in 1950 to fifty-five million (nineteen percent of the population) today, and likely to thirty-nine million (fourteen percent of the population) by 2025. Eastern Europe has half as many children as North America.

Part of the problem is the economies of the region. All have made the transition from communism to free markets, some better than others. Most of the countries are growing and some are close to becoming players in the global economy. Russia in particular is leveraging its oil and natural gas wealth to raise its economic fortunes markedly. But this latter growth cannot be sustained in the long-term; moreover, throughout the region poverty and unemployment are still widespread, approaching double-digit percentages in most of the countries. Over seventy-five million people live in poverty, and many more are poor and underemployed. Hunger and homelessness are readily seen on the streets. Moldavia is one of the poorest countries in all of Europe.

Government corruption and instability—both so common as to be accepted without question—contribute to the economic problems. Russia's governments have been typified by strong, autocratic—if not dictatorial—leadership for centuries. The smaller countries have governments that are barely stable, although many are becoming more so. Crime is rampant. The combination of these many problems frightens would-be investors. The ongoing warfare in Chechnya only adds to the darkness of the mix. AIDS is a silently growing threat, with significant epidemics in Bulgaria, Russia and Ukraine. Far more visible are the cankers of drug addiction and alcoholism.

## Christianity in Eastern Europe

Tradition says St. Andrew first brought the gospel to Kiev. Whatever the truth of the tradition, the good news was seeded here in the first century after Christ. The Church did not become firmly established, however, until nearly nine centuries later. In 990 AD, Prince Vladimir I and the whole of Kiev was converted in the East Orthodox tradition. It became known as the “Jerusalem of Russia” and the center of Christianity in Eastern Europe. Even today, Ukraine is a “Bible belt” of Eastern Europe. Despite the winds of politics, the heritage of Orthodox Christianity has remained strong.

The overwhelming majority of the population claim to be Christian of one variety or another. Most belong, if only in name, to the Orthodox Church. Religious apathy and inter-tradition rivalries are common, and restrictions on unapproved Christian workers (mainly Protestant evangelicals and marginals such as Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses) are growing. Few are interested in missions to other nations, although there are some indications this is changing. At the same time, those who claim to be nonreligious are still present and there are a growing number of Muslim immigrants.

The next generation will be focused primarily on improving and stabilizing the economics and politics of the region. Mission efforts will mostly be the domain of small, independent evangelical agencies. Eastern Europe will still be considered a mission field by the majority of Christians, and much work should be done here to revive the stagnant Church. However, small “underground” works will be used to bring the good news to unreached peoples on the borders of the region. The winds of politics and persecution, however, should be carefully watched.

## Statistics for the Ten Countries of Eastern Europe

Name	P'00	P'25	C '00	%	C '25	%	75-00	00-25	Issues affecting the future
Belorussia	10.0	8.6	6.9	69%	6.5	76%	++	-+	Poverty, Chernobyl contamination, possible merger with Russia
Bulgaria	8.0	6.6	6.7	84%	5.5	84%	-+	-+	Economic growth, corruption, crime, openness
Czech Republic	10.3	9.8	6.5	63%	6.8	70%	+-	-+	Strategic position, stable economy, openness, apathy
Hungary	10.2	9.4	8.9	87%	8.5	90%	-+	-+	Economic growth, open, leadership training
Moldavia	4.3	4.0	2.9	68%	3.1	77%	++	-+	Extreme poverty, agriculture, some restrictions
Poland	38.6	37.1	37.1	96%	35.9	97%	++	-+	Poverty, unemployment, pollution, Catholic vs. evangelical tensions
Romania	22.1	19.9	20.8	94%	19.1	96%	++	-+	Poverty, corruption, some restrictions, renewal movements
Russia	146.6	129.2	84.9	58%	89.6	69%	++	-+	Erosion of democracy, stagnant economy, AIDS, migrants, poverty, war
Slovakia	5.4	5.3	4.6	84%	4.7	88%	+-	-+	Growing economy, unemployment, religious openness, lack of vision
Ukraine	49.1	37.3	39.1	80%	31.4	84%	++	-+	Stabilizing government, growing economy, long Christian heritage

### Key:

P'00 - Population, AD 2000

P'25 - Population, AD2025

**C'00** - Christianity, AD 2000 (followed by the percentage of the overall population)

**C'25** - Christianity, AD2025 projection, World Christian Database (followed by percentage of overall population)

**75-00** - Growth rate. The first (+/-) indicates whether Christianity is growing or declining; the second (+/-) indicates whether it is growing faster or slower than the population (thus whether Christianity's influence is growing or declining). (+) means Christianity is growing, but not as fast as the population, and so is declining as a share of the country.

**00-25** - Growth rate projected for AD2000-2025

**Issues** - A brief encapsulation of the issues affecting the growth of Christianity in the nation

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## **A Focus on East Europe and Eurasia: 188 Least-Reached People Groups Remain**

### **Overview**

Eastern Europe and Eurasia are comprised of twenty countries with 188 least-reached peoples remaining among them. Serbia and Montenegro lead with 66.8% of their population. Here almost seven million people remain least-reached. Less than two percent are evangelical and less than five percent adhere to any form of Christianity. However, in sheer numbers, Russia exceeds them with over twelve million least-reached people in seventy-two different people groups. A decade of democracy associated with greed, crime, self-seeking politicians, a pervasive mafia and degeneration of the quality of life has caused many in Russia to hanker after the authoritarian certainties of Communist dictatorship.

The long-term disastrous distortions of Marxist economies in Eastern Europe adversely affected national infrastructures, ecology and the work ethic of the people. The dominant realities of the 1990s have been the gradual recovery of most former Communist states and the strengthening and planned expansion of the European Union from thirteen original members to most nations in Europe. Ethnocentrism and religion have become important and major causes for political confrontations since 1990. The Church overall in Eastern Europe and Eurasia is small and struggling; however, there are rays of hope in places such as Ukraine. Pray that the spirit of prayer will sweep through the Church and revive it. Pray for laborers for this volatile environment that is ripe for the good news.

### **Prayer Points**

- **Deliverance from addictions.** Pray God sets the captives free from bondages to addictions such as alcohol and drug abuse, sexual addictions, pornography and gambling in order that they may be as lights in the world, examples of God's grace and the goodness in Jesus.
- **Hound of heaven.** Pray the Holy Spirit searches for the lost and demonstrates to them God's goodness that leads them to repentance.
- **Overcome evil with good.** Pray that God shows believers how to overcome evil such as greed, crime, self-seeking, organized crime and degeneration with his goodness and love and that his kingdom may rapidly grow.
- **All things to all people.** Pray that the Church understands Paul's command to become all things to all people that they might win some in order to bring the gospel in a way that can be understood and accepted.

- **Invisible means of support.** Pray for God to pour out his heavenly provision through those whose hearts are completely his so that he supplies and multiplies all resources needed for reaching those who have not yet heard the good news.

## Links

- [Resources](#) to pray, mobilize prayer and outreach.
- [Discover](#) East Europe and Eurasia's 188 least-reached peoples.
- [Pray](#) for the peoples of East Europe and Eurasia.
- Obtain [daily prayer guides](#) for peoples of this region.

## Background

### **The Ebb and Flow of Christianity in Eastern Europe and Russia**

*(Prepared by Wesley Kawato for the [Global Prayer Digest](#))*

Eastern Europe is one of the Church's oldest mission fields. Paul was on his second missionary journey when God used a dream to lead him to go to what is today Greece. Two of the churches Paul founded on that journey still exist today. Thessalonika (modern-day Salonika) and Corinth are still major administrative centers of the Greek Orthodox Church. For the first three hundred years, the Church focused on planting congregations throughout the Roman Empire. Early missionaries gave little thought to reaching people groups beyond Rome's control.

### **Early Efforts to Reach the Goths and Slavs**

There were early contacts with the peoples of Eastern Europe. Roman armies often raided lands north of the Danube River. These armies brought back slaves who were sold in the empire's major cities. The Church reached out to these people with the gospel. Most of these slaves were from Gothic people groups. When the Goths began migrating out of Central and Eastern Europe during the decline of Roman rule in the late fourth century, various Slavic people groups moved into the lands abandoned by them. These Slavic tribes were in the process of being driven west and south by the Huns, a vicious people group who poured out of Central Asia in search of new pastures for their flocks.

Attacks by Slavic tribes drove various Gothic people groups into the Roman Empire. The tribes that Rome's weakened armies were unable to expel were allowed to settle within the empire. Rome was now divided and weaker than anyone realized. Two emperors now ruled the empire, one in the west and one in the east. Some of the Goths who had settled within the empire revolted in AD 378. This led to the Battle of Adrianople. The defeat of the Roman armies at Adrianople would start a chain of events that would lead to the collapse of the Western Roman Empire nearly a century later.

Strong emperors in the east prevented the collapse of the Eastern Roman Empire after AD 476. One of them was Justinian, who ruled from 527 to 565. Justinian was a Christian, and he strongly supported the churches within his empire. He encouraged missionaries to reach out to the Slavic peoples living north of the Danube River. These missionaries fought a hard battle against paganism and heretical doctrines. Aryan missionaries had contacted some of these Slavic tribes first, winning them to their own heretical brand of Christianity. Seeds of faith were planted among the Slavs; however, converts were few.

### **Missionary Efforts Stalled**

After AD 600, missionary efforts in Eastern Europe got side-tracked by the birth of Islam and Arab attacks on

the Eastern Roman Empire. Justinian's successors had little energy or resources to reach out to the people groups of Eastern Europe. They were fighting a life-and-death war for the very survival of their empire and Orthodox Christianity. Lands that were once "Christian" were rapidly becoming Muslim with the advent of the Muslim empires.

Internal threats also side-tracked missionary efforts in Eastern Europe. Churches in the east and the west went their separate ways after 476. Increasingly, the doctrine of the Trinity divided Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches. In the west, theologians believed the Holy Spirit emanated from the Father and the Son. In the east, theologians believed the Holy Spirit emanated from the Father alone. There was also a controversy over religious art. Statues of Jesus, Mary and the Apostles were considered acceptable in the west. In the east, such statues were thought of as idols and thus forbidden.

In the eleventh century, the break between east and west became final when the Pope excommunicated the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople, and the Patriarch returned the favor. After the split, the Roman Catholic Church tended to ignore the people groups of Eastern Europe. The only notable exceptions were the Poles and the Slovenes.

The controversy between east and west did not stop all missionary efforts in Eastern Europe, however. Around 800, two brothers named Cyril and Methodius made a series of missionary journeys north of the Danube River on behalf of the Orthodox Church. They are also honored today by Roman Catholics. They reached as far as Russia and planted small churches at every stop they made. Their efforts expanded the reach of the Kingdom of God.

The split between east and west freed the Orthodox Church to resume outreach efforts in Eastern Europe in earnest. New workers watered the seeds planted by Cyril and Methodius. Around the year 1000, King Stephen of Hungary was converted. His conversion completely changed the spiritual climate of Hungary, the land of the Huns. As late as the year 955, the Huns had still been sacking Christian churches in Austria. Stephen quickly made Orthodox Christianity the national religion. Orthodox missionaries preached quick sermons to the Huns, which were followed by mass baptisms. Many of these converts were less than sincere; however, it was a starting point.

### **Russia Converts to Orthodox Christianity**

Other Orthodox missionaries worked with the churches Cyril and Methodius had started in Russia. One of them converted Princess Olga of Kiev. Olga's grandson, Prince Vladimir, would later go on a spiritual search. He investigated Islam, Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy and Judaism. In 988, Vladimir embraced Eastern Orthodoxy and ordered his subjects to do the same. He also sent for more Orthodox missionaries. The churches of Greece supplied as many workers as they were able. Again, mass sermons were preached in every village of the Principality of Kiev, which controlled most of what is now European Russia. As with the Huns, after the sermons they held mass baptisms. Many of these converts, too, were not sincere; they knew that the penalty for refusing baptism was death. Only a few of the missionaries remained in Russia after the mass baptisms. Most new converts understood little of their new faith. In Hungary and Russia, the Orthodox Church had relied too much on conversions of the leaders. This mistake would lead to spiritual weakness. Vladimir quickly declared himself to be the leader of the newly formed Russian Orthodox Church. A shortage of workers led to a serious problem with nominalism in many Russian churches.

Disaster struck in 1237 when the Mongols invaded the Principality of Kiev. Kiev would remain under Mongol rule until 1480. During the occupation, the Russian Orthodox Church became a hotbed for opposition to Mongol rule. Faith and patriotism became entwined, creating another source of nominalism within the Russian Orthodox Church. The occupation diverted resources away from missionary work as the Russian church focused on winning independence from the Mongols.



In 1480 Russia threw off the Mongol yoke and established a new Russian state in Moscow. Internal divisions soon side-tracked the Russian Orthodox Church from missionary work. In 1503 there was a controversy over whether monasteries should own land, leading to a church split. After 1600, Russian Orthodox Patriarch Nikon introduced a new liturgy that angered traditionalists into splitting from the Russian Church. In a twisted attempt to restore unity, the reformers persecuted the old believers.

During the 1700s, church/state relations became an issue when Peter the Great tried to take direct control over the Russian Orthodox Church. Although Grand Prince Vladimir had ruled the Russian Church directly, many of his successors had appointed patriarchs to rule the Russian Orthodox Church. This controversy would divert resources away from missionary work.

### **The Orthodox Church Suffers During the Communist Era**

The controversy ended in 1917 when the Russian monarchy was overthrown and Tikhon was appointed Patriarch of Moscow. Tikhon quickly denounced Vladimir Lenin and his communist comrades, who had taken control of Russia during the chaos of the 1917 Revolution. Lenin put up with Tikhon's denunciations until he was securely in power. Lenin then shut down all churches and banned religion. Many priests and believers ended up in labor camps in Siberia. The Russian Church, forced to go underground, was in no condition to engage in missionary activity.

Between 1941 and 1945 Stalin briefly legalized the Russian Orthodox Church in an attempt to unify all Russians against the German invaders. After they won World War II, Stalin outlawed all religion and persecution resumed. Attacks against the Russian Church would gradually ease starting in 1984, when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power. Complete religious freedom would be restored in 1991, when the Soviet Union collapsed and Boris Yeltsin became president of the Russian Republic.

Today nominalism is still a major problem within the Russian Orthodox Church. Various church leaders are trying to get Orthodoxy declared the state religion. The Russian Church has also engaged in slander campaigns against other denominations such as the Baptists and Pentecostals. But there are still a small number of true believers within the Russian Orthodox Church, people who have joined forces with the Baptists and the Pentecostals to reach out to unreached people groups in what had once been the Soviet Union.

The Orthodox churches in Eastern Europe need our prayers. Nominalism is a serious problem. Some Orthodox churches are also plagued by hard-core nationalist elements. The Serbian Orthodox Church is a mixture of true believers and radical nationalists who believe God has called them to wipe out all Bosnian Muslims. Pray for a restoration of doctrinal purity. Because of division and heresy, there has also been a serious shortage of missionaries being sent out by the various Orthodox churches. Ask God to restore unity and put a stop to the diversion of resources away from the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

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### **Into Their World...The Andi of Russia**

**By Laurie Fortunak**

**Although having a population no greater than ten thousand people, the Andi of Russia are an unreached people group in need of the gospel of Jesus Christ.** Also known as the Qwannab, the Andi are one of the indigenous groups of the former USSR who live mainly on farms in western Daghestan. Although they were officially considered a distinct ethnic group with their own language until the 1930s, since that time they have been classified by the Soviet government as part of the Avar, the larger people group located farther south.

The Andi make their living raising livestock and are well-known for their work with gold and other metals. Although they wear typical European dress, the traditional woman's costume—worn during ceremonial

occasions—is unique with its chukhtu, an embroidered headdress in the form of a half-moon, with the ends pointing downward.

Andi traditionally marry at age 15 or older. Monogamy is commonplace; however polygamy has traditionally been permitted. Wedding ceremonies can last up to three days and can include horse-racing competitions.

Up until the 1300s it is thought that the Andi held a hybrid of Christian and ancient religious beliefs. However, the Andi soon adopted the Muslim faith and today nearly all members of society are Shafiite Muslims. With the growing popularity of Islam in the Russian Federation, Muslim influence continues to increase and infiltrate Andian society. It must be noted, however, that the spiritual life of the Andi also includes various elements of superstition. According to popular belief each person has a ghostly counterpart. The Andi believe that what happens in a person's life is repetitive of what happened to his or her double.

The Andi have neither the Bible nor the *JESUS* film in their native language. No known mission agencies have targeted the Andi and no Christian broadcasts are being aired in their language. Pray that God will use his people to reach the Andi for his name.

For more information on the Andi of Russia, visit:

[http://kcm.co.kr/bethany\\_eng/p\\_code5/1596.html](http://kcm.co.kr/bethany_eng/p_code5/1596.html)

[www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=ani](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=ani)

[www.eki.ee/books/redbook/andis.shtml](http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/andis.shtml)

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

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

**Laurie Fortunak** is editorial coordinator of Lausanne World Pulse. She also serves as editorial coordinator for Evangelism and Missions Information Service (EMIS) and managing editor of Evangelical Missions Quarterly (EMQ).

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## STRATEGY, TRENDS & STATISTICS

### [Status of Global Mission 2007: An Annual Update](#)

By **Todd Johnson**

**This commentary and the accompanying table represent our twenty-third annual report on global mission prepared for the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research (IBMR)* each January since 1983.** The full report is eight pages and includes five tables examining the total extent of Christ's mission across the world. For this *Lausanne World Pulse* update we include only Global Table 5 and its commentary. Readers desiring the full version should contact the *IBMR* at [www.omsc.org/ibmr.html](http://www.omsc.org/ibmr.html).

Global Table 5 forms the climax of the 8-page report. It enumerates the multifold activities, presence and context of the missionary force. It depicts how to analyze seventy-nine variables across 225 years. Foreign mission personnel are involved in all sixteen major concerns and situations of Christianity shown in capital headings in Global Table 5. Missionaries are also involved in virtually every one of the seventy-nine spheres of activities enumerated there, often as far back as the year 1800 (first column of statistics).

Global Table 5 sets out global statistics for seventy-nine variables, each enumerated at the years 1800, 1900, 1970, 2000, 2007 and 2025. A trend variable in Column 7 provides 553 (79 x 7) additional comparative boxes of percentages and trends. Total foreign mission personnel have grown from 25,000 in AD 1800 to 443,000 by 2005. Of the latter, 245,000 are men and 198,000 are women. These figures refer to full-time workers, which means those employed full-time by churches and missions. However, the rest of the population should not be labeled as part-timers.

In fact, as Global Table 1 in the full version for *IBMR* explains, there are 688 million Great Commission Christians (rising to 703,225,000 by 2007) defined primarily as persons believing in and committed to Christ's Great Commission and the worldwide mission of the Church. Of these millions, this analysis divides this vast bloc into two: 468 million function as background supporters of worldwide foreign missions. The remaining 220 million Great Commission Christians function as primarily supporters of home missions.

### **The Annual Paradox: Progress or Regress?**

Global Table 5 presents each year data illustrating two paradoxical situations about the status of the global Christian mission—the first appearing to be undergoing remarkable progress, the second undergoing little-noted stagnation or even decline. The main global statistical categories involved are our threefold terms: World A, World B and World C, described here for convenience in reverse order: C = Christians (baptized persons), B = evangelized persons and A = unevangelized persons. Two situations for these three are given detailed statistics in Global Table 5, amply documented and nowhere contradictory. Below are these six, each with reference to Christ's Great Commission with its 0 English-language imperatives.

- **C-1.** The key quantifiable imperative in the Great Commission is “Baptize!,” the only imperative enabling exact enumeration. Row 25 shows the Churches’ tenfold response from AD 1800 to 2007. There are now 2,077,909,000 baptized Christian believers, a success story indeed.
- **C-2.** Paradoxically, however, when changed to percentages Row 24 shows the same figures remaining unchanged at thirty-four percent over the entire period from 1900 to 2025. Stagnation has set in, on this way of counting. The analysis behind this is given in *World Christian Trends, Part 3*.
- **B-1.** The Commission’s main imperative in English is “Tell!” Evangelized persons are people and populations adequately aware of Christianity, Christ and the gospel, They have been told the gospel. Row 78 in Global Table 5 quantifies them at  $100 - 28 = 72\%$  of world population, which is Row 1 minus Row 77, computing to 4,765,446,000 persons. Their annual increase is 58.4 millions of persons newly evangelized for the first time (160,000 a day), an amazing achievement that many agencies are responsible for.
- **B-2.** Meanwhile the whole world is expanding in 2007 by 79.4 millions per year (287,530 per day). Some twenty million are thus not reached or served although several thousand Christian agencies make this their aim to accomplish. This is a failure representing the other side of the paradox—failure by baptized Christians to attain their own widely-proclaimed global goals.
- **A-1.** The Great Commission’s main overall emphasis is “Evangelize!,” so “unevangelized” is the umbrella term for all not benefiting from the Commission’s 110 parallel or synonymous imperatives. The Churches’ stewardship over two centuries on this can be depicted in various ways. In Row 78 statistics of the unevangelized world fall from 74.6% of the world in 1800, then drop precipitously to 28% by 2007. This appears to represent a massive achievement by churches and agencies.
- **A-2.** However, a quite different picture emerges if instead we examine the actual numbers of the unevangelized (persons unaware of Christianity, Christ or the gospel). Row 77 thus reveals a

progression of rapidly increasing numbers up to 2007. This is not progress, from these individuals' viewpoint—it is neglect, even regress.

### **Summary**

This vast collection of percentages and numbers can now each be examined from varied points of view—demographic, theological and missiological. As you, the reader, use these statistics, you may find other new and often startling comparisons and insights. Please let us know what new findings your research discovers by emailing us at [tjohnson@lausanne.org](mailto:tjohnson@lausanne.org).

### **Sources and Documentation**

Most of the statistics listed in the preceding analysis come in the first instance from the multiple censuses and minicensuses that compose each year's Megacensus. Due to differing definitions of the terms used by different denominations and Christian World Communions, and to the overlapping categories at a number of points, the total picture presented here should be regarded as in the main an impressionistic portrait in oils rather than an exact photographic image with everything in focus. This situation, and its attendant problems and solutions, are described and discussed in detail in the presentation of data and methodology set out in *World Christian Trends, AD 30–AD 2200*.

**Dr. Todd Johnson** is director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Communications to him may be directed to [TJohnson@gcts.edu](mailto:TJohnson@gcts.edu).

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## **LAUSANNE REPORTS**

### **[New Religious Movements and New Spiritualities the Focus of the Lausanne Consultation on Christian Encounter with New Spiritualities](#)**

**By Ole Skjerbaek Madsen**

**Issue Group 16, Religious and Non-religious Spirituality in the Postmodern World, from the 2004 Lausanne gathering in Thailand in 2004, continued their work with a recent consultation 30 September to 7 October 2006 in Hong Kong.** [Areopagos](#) provides scholarship support for the attendance and participation of several members of the network. Through this meeting, the new missional apologetic paradigm to new religions and new spiritualities was discussed, as well as the work of the issue group since 2004. Future plans, including a conference for 2008 and preparations for the continued work going into the preparations for the Lausanne gathering in connection with the 2010 centenary of the Edinburgh meeting, were also discussed. The participants of IG 16 and the 2006 consultation will continue their work as a Lausanne network on Christian Witness to New Religious Movements (NRM) and New Spiritualities (NS).

### **A New Paradigm for New Religious Movements and New Spiritualities**

During the conference participants confirmed the continuing development of an emerging new paradigm for a Christian engagement with the adherents and practitioners of NRM and NS. This paradigm begins with and builds upon the insight of the 1980 Thailand report ([Lausanne Occasional Paper 11](#)) that adherents of new religious movements are unreached peoples. The development of the NRM and NS affirms this insight in light of the spiritual reality of the Western world, which calls for mission and Christian witness as a priority of the Western Church and evangelical Christians. Furthermore, the process of globalisation brings this development to the Two-Thirds world, especially in the big cities.

Since NRM and NS represent unreached peoples, they should be encountered missionally as any other unreached people group, (i.e., the gospel should be contextually communicated to adherents and practitioners of new religions). This new paradigm calls for an abandonment of (1) the atmosphere of fear in the relationship

with adherents of the NRM, (2) the automatic demonization of their spiritual practices and (3) the typecasting of them as spiritual enemies.

The new paradigm looks upon the adherents of NRM and practitioners of NS as people whom God loves, potential disciples of Jesus Christ and neighbours for who Christ died on the cross. This does not mean that the discernment of spirits is abandoned in relation to NRM and NS, but it means that Christians should not be afraid of establishing friendships and studying and understanding their beliefs, practices, hopes, hurts and fears. We recognize in and among ourselves the same beliefs, hopes and fears shared in our common humanity and *imago Dei*.

In ministering among the people who comprise the NRM and NS, we are dealing with a group of people who have often been deeply hurt by Christians, and who have suffered from rejection and suspicion from Christians. In the same group of people we find many who have misunderstood Christian teachings and practices, and who are unaware of the message and viability of Christianity in the postmodern world, but who nevertheless in their search for a spiritual dimension and meaning have found inspiration in new expressions of East Asian religions, in nature-based spiritualities such as Contemporary Paganism, Neo-Pagan movements, Wicca and in various esoteric traditions.

A new paradigm includes learning from the NRM and NS, since their practices and beliefs may reflect the failures of the Church in engaging significant issues which has led to a vacuum filled by NRM and NS. This reflection, as well as discernment of the points of contact and areas of potential conflict, may help the Church to understand the questions of postmodern men and women; this in turn may help Christians to proclaim the gospel by meeting actual concerns instead of answering questions which may be of interest to the Church but which are often not raised by the people we seek to engage. The recognition of these unpaid bills and points of contact may help the Church to find new expressions of its life and spiritual practice, which may contribute to an atmosphere and the creation of a revitalized Christian community where the spiritual seeker and the new follower of Christ may feel more at home in Church and accepted in Christian fellowship. In addition to these positive aspects, the new paradigm also recognizes the reality of syncretism and therefore attempts to (1) exegete religious and spiritual cultures, (2) critically reflect on religious practices in light of historic Christianity and (3) develop culturally relevant Christian practices.

During the consultation, participants shared experiences and insights from American, Australian and European settings and discussed religious phenomenology and a missiological models for cultural engagement. The participants decided to continue as a network of missiologists, practitioners and scholars from the 2004 IG as well as from this consultation, and from an invited group of participants which will be chosen in the near future.

### **Goals and Conferences**

The IG 16 reached its goals established in the 2004 gathering in Thailand concerning forming a network and establishing a web portal. The network will continue to work at reaching its additional goals of producing resources and working on cooperative projects. These goals will be addressed in part at the conferences scheduled for 2008 and 2010.

The network plans a conference in 2008 at Trinity International University in Deerfield, Illinois, USA entitled "Post-Christendom Spiritualities: The New Unreached People Groups." The aim of this conference will be to continue to define and develop the new paradigm of Christian witness to NRM and NS.

In the time leading up to the conference a call for academic papers from scholars and missional practitioners will go out. Some suggested topics of praxis, theology and missiology include:

- Developing a missiological model for engagement with NRM and NS

- Defining Church in a postmodern world
- A sociological analysis of NRM and NS as the biggest mission field in the Western hemisphere
- The work of the Spirit in mission and New Spiritualities
- Contemporary spirituality in relation to Christian tradition in cross-cultural mission and/or the study of world religions
- Creation and redemption in Christian theology
- Goddess spirituality and the theology of God
- Inter-religious apologetics in postmodernity
- The emerging Church and emerging spiritualities
- Science and new religions
- The Christian and the paranormal
- Christian approaches to complementary or holistic medicine and energy healing

Co-authoring will be encouraged, and critical responses to papers from experts in the appropriate fields will be sought.

In the time leading up to the conference, models and case studies of Christian witness to and presence among NRM and NS will be shared and prepared for workshops. The models and case studies may deal with subjects relating to the topics of academic papers and subjects such as:

- Ethos in participating in neo-spiritual events
- Offering guidance as Christians in relation to prophecy and divination
- Energy healing paradigm and Christian healing
- Material for discipling converts from NRM and NS
- The use of religious language in NS settings
- Worship and ritual for Christians working in the NS milieu
- Engaging with pluralist understandings of Jesus in NS

One of the outcomes of the completion of the conference will be a book and other materials that will be produced as a record and collection of resources from the cutting-edge of theology and praxis in this area.

### **2010 Lausanne Forum**

Concerning the 2010 conference, the Lausanne network on Christian Witness to NRM and NS envisage the following three issues:

1. The need to **recognise that the NRM and NS are major unreached people groups**, if not increasingly the major unreached people groups in the developed nations of the Majority World where they often represent mainstream spiritualities that often replace or supplant traditional religions (including Christianity).
2. The new missiological challenge stemming from the **spread and adaptation of such spiritualities as part of globalisation in developing nations**.
3. The **close linkage of the New Spiritualities to the spiritual search of women and young adults** and its importance to this area of mission among these groups.

We therefore believe that the importance of this issue requires representation in the main plenary sessions for Lausanne as part of the programme for the 2010 conference, and this issue group offers to work with the conference organisers to enable this to happen.

**Ole Skjerbaek Madsen** has been a missions pastor with Areopagos, working in the area of new spiritualities, since 2000. He was a parish pastor from 1975 to 1999. Skjerbaek was the convener of the Lausanne Consultation on Christian

Encounter with New Spiritualities in Hong Kong. He co-authored the article with Steve Hollinhurst (UK) and Michael Cooper (USA).

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## LEADERSHIP MEMO

### Servant Leadership for the Glory of Jesus Christ

By Doug Birdsall

**The only way to exercise moral leadership in the work of the kingdom is through character that is exemplary and Christ-honoring.** Without such character, we will not be able to gain the confidence of those we are seeking to reach with the gospel. Nor will we be able to build and keep the trust of those who have been entrusted to our care.

Trust is foundational to leadership and to effective witness in the world. We cannot fake trust. We must earn it. And we earn it and develop it through our imitation of Christ.

Just as the Lord of all creation chose to relinquish all of his power and glory for our sake and to come in complete humility in the form of a babe, so too are we called to follow in his footsteps. Although not all of us are called to positions of leadership, we are all called to follow Christ (Philippians 2:5). And like Christ who did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but instead lowered himself and made himself nothing, we too are to take on the very nature of a servant (Philippians 2:7).

It is from Christ's humility and obedience unto death that he is exalted to the highest place. It is from humility and obedience based on the love of the Father "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11). This is the very heart of God and his vision for the redemption of all creation.

Before any of us can be leaders, we must first be followers. Before we are called to lead for the sake of the gospel, we are first called to serve. Indeed, to serve *is* to lead.

It is impossible to overstate the fundamental importance of servant-leadership as incarnated in the life of Christ. This has occupied much of my thinking in the months following the [Lausanne Younger Leaders Gathering](#) this past autumn. Looking at so many promising evangelical leaders of today and tomorrow, and reflecting upon the leaders of yesteryear, I realized that the greatest and most effective strides for the kingdom come not from ones with the best technologies, education or strategies. Rather, they came from the pure in heart who sought after the heart of God.

It is in the pursuit of the very heart of God, the heart of purity, abounding love, humility and obedience to his word, that as leaders we would not be led astray and enticed by the temptation of self-centeredness and self-glorification that exhibits itself in cults of personalities and other tragedies of moral failings. We must fix our eyes on the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2), and not upon ourselves. The Lausanne Covenant states, "Christ's evangelists must humbly seek to empty themselves of all but their personal authenticity in order to become the servants of others...all for the glory of God."

Brothers and sisters, in this new year let us resolve not to be self-serving, but God-serving; let us resolve to fix our eyes on Christ and become more like him in humility, obedience and servanthood. Let us serve others not so as to be served, but to seek after the heart of God, for the glory of God. Let us do this so that "at the name of

Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

**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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