

# 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**

Individuals on Christian college campuses, local church college ministries, mobilization ministries and others passionate about getting this generation on fire for Jesus Christ will be taking part in the 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting from 22 January to 12 February 2007. Sponsored by the [Student Volunteer Mission Movement 2 \(SVM2\)](#), the event calls Christians around the world to pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit among the emerging generation. A daily prayer guide is available at [www.svm2.net](http://www.svm2.net). (SVM2)

### **CHECHEN REPUBLIC**

After standing in ruins for more than a decade, the only Russian Orthodox church in Chechnya's capital has been restored. The consecration of the Church of St. Michael the Archangel in Grozny was led by Bishop Feofan of Stavropol and Vladikavkaz, who presides over a region settled by Christians and Muslims, but which today is filled with tragedy. Particularly horrific was the school hostage-taking in Beslan, Northern Ossetia, near Vladikavkaz, in September 2004. ([Ecumenical News International](#))

### **CYPRUS**

Arab Vision is drawing up plans to produce Iraqi television programs by early 2007. These programs will be made by Iraqi Christians themselves in their own Iraqi Arabic dialect. They will focus on sharing the gospel of peace with their nation, as well as encouraging their own Christian community to cope with the extreme pressures and dangers it is facing on a daily basis. ([Arab Vision](#))

### **JAPAN**

Theologians from Korea and Japan, Korea's colonizer in the first half of the twentieth century, have begun a dialogue in search of "an Asian theology that can act to reconcile, and that goes beyond nationalism in both countries." The two-day Korea-Japan Theology Forum 2006 was held in Kyoto. It was hosted by the Japan Society of Christian Studies. Organizers said the meeting was unprecedented and that it was the most significant communication between theologians from the two countries in recent years. ([Ecumenical News International](#))

### **INDIA**

The number of missionaries in India has increased over sixty-seven percent in the last five years, said the country's Minister of State for Planning, M. V. Rajasekharan. At the same time the Minister said that according to the World Bank's World Development Indicators 2006, the population living on less than \$1USD per day had declined to 34.7 percent in 1999-2000. This is compared with forty-seven percent in 1994. (*Voice of Asia* magazine)

## **INDIA**

Christian groups in India are mourning the killing of a prominent Christian worker who had converted from Islam and who was shot dead at a bus stop in front of his home in the state Kashmir. The Global Council of Indian Christians has demanded that the federal police fully investigate the killing of Bashir Tantray, the slain man, who worked in his spare time for the church group. People close to him said he was gunned down by motor-cycle borne Islamic militants. ([Ecumenical News International](#))

## **IRAN**

For the first time, 24-hour Persian Christian radio is available anywhere in the world. The new Persian-language website Radio Mojdeh (Mojdeh means “good news” in Persian) and a 24-hour Internet radio service have recently been launched. The website, [www.radiomojdeh.com](http://www.radiomojdeh.com), includes Christian music and teaching for both Muslim and Christian believers, the entire Persian Bible online, testimonies, Bible exposition and intensive discipleship training. This technology is vital because the number of Internet users in Iran jumped by ninety percent in the past year alone. Seven million of the sixty-five million people in Iran currently use the Internet. This number is expected to jump to twenty million next year.

## **MALI**

After more than fifteen years of work by many translators and collaborators, missionaries in Mali announced that the New Testament is now available in the Maasina Fulfulde language. This will make the gospel story accessible for the first time to more than one million Fulfulde Malians who have never seen the Bible written in their mother tongue. Fulfulde is spoken in some form in seventeen African countries. Numerous dialects, however, make exact communication in Fulfulde difficult from country to country. Some experts estimate that at least seven different Bible translations would be needed to make it comprehensible to all Fulfulde speakers. The edition introduced in November 2006 is based on the dialect spoken by the Fulbe people in Mali. ([Christian Reformed World Missions](#))

## **UNITED STATES**

The Disaster Response Office of [Habitat for Humanity International](#) recently rolled out its newest program, the Disaster Corps. The program seeks to provide increased support for disaster affected Habitat affiliates by engaging baby boomer generation volunteers with professional and skilled backgrounds. “We’re trying to engage volunteers to help...in more internal roles—helping to build a strong volunteer/donor database, meeting administrative needs, participating in project management, financial management and strategic planning,” said Jennifer O’Donnell, Habitat’s Disaster Response external relations specialist. At the end of the two-week program graduates, called Disaster Corps Legacy Leaders, are placed with a US Gulf Coast Habitat affiliate for two to four weeks, assisting with local short and long-term needs. ([Habitat World](#))

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# **WORLD EVANGELISM & MISSIONS REPORTS**

## **[Bible Translation in the New Millennium: The Changed and Changing Context](#)**

**In successive eras, translation has been at the heart of the communication of the Christian message.** Societal changes and upheavals have not stopped this; indeed, at times they have only accelerated the process. At the beginning of the new millennium we stand on the cusp of major changes in the world as we know it. Language is at the heart of who we are as human beings, and is vitally involved in this rapidly changing situation. The future directions of Bible translation should be considered in light of this.

## History of Bible Translation

The history of Bible translation can be understood in various ways. For some it begins with the example of Ezra teaching the law to those who had returned to Jerusalem from the exile (Nehemiah 8). He read in Hebrew, but after long years in exile his hearers no longer understood Hebrew and needed a translation in Aramaic. In the following centuries in the Jewish assemblies, the practice developed of the *meturgeman* (interpreter) who gave an oral translation (*targum*) of the scripture being read. For others, Bible translation begins with the translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek (known as the *Septuagint* or *LXX*) in Egypt in the second century BC.

William Smalley divides Bible translation into a number of eras:<sup>1</sup>

Era	Time	Notable Features
Era of spreading the faith	200 BC	<i>Septuagint (LXX)</i> onward
Era of European vernaculars	405	Vulgate completed
Era of printing	1450 AD	Gutenberg's Vulgate completed in 1456
Era of Bible Society	1804	British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) founded 1804
Era of professionalised translation	1943	Eugene Nida, ABS; W. Cameron Townsend, WBT- SIL Nida's <i>Bible Translation</i> '47
Interconfessional era	1965	Vatican II 1962-1964 <i>Dei Verbum</i>
Era of non-missionary translation	1970	

**1. Languages with part or all of the Bible.** Bible translation advanced slowly in the first 1,500 years of our era, and then saw significant growth with Spanish and Portuguese colonial expansion (usually the translation of texts for the liturgy and lectionary readings) and the Protestant Reformation. However, as can be seen, the Reformation did not result in the expansion in translation that is often attributed to it.

Year	Translated Languages
1499	35 languages
1799	an additional 59 languages
1899	an additional 446 languages
1949	an additional 667 languages
	<b>Total:</b> 1207 languages <sup>2</sup>

The figures show that the major development in Bible translation took place after 1800, coinciding with the development of the Bible Society movement. For example, the **British and Foreign Bible Society** (BFBS) was founded in 1804.

**2. Scriptures of the world.** The annual statistics compiled by the **United Bible Societies** (UBS)<sup>3</sup> give the following picture:

Component	Translated Languages
Bibles	in 426 languages <sup>4</sup>

New Testaments	in 1,114 languages
Portions	in 862 languages
Total	2,403 languages

In terms of population, at least a portion of the Bible exists in languages spoken by ninety-five percent of the world's population. Around 300 million people, or four thousand languages, still have no scripture in their language. At the same time we must remember that the existence of scripture in a language does not mean that the ninety-five percent have actually received, heard or read scripture in their own language. In addition, over two billion people in the world today are illiterate; this is one-third of the world's population.

**Some Features of Bible Translation: 1950-2005**

Bible translation has a rich history; however, all that has taken place since the middle of the twentieth century has yet to be fully documented. In that time there has been an explosion of Bible translation. From 1950 to 2005 new translations have been made available in 1,196 additional languages.

**1. Eugene Nida and Kenneth Pike.** The history of this period cannot be written without reference to two pioneers of translation theory: Eugene Nida and Kenneth Pike. Following World War II, both applied the tools of the new sciences of linguistics and anthropology to the challenge of making the Bible available in languages around the world. In developing their approaches to translation they became the theoreticians of the UBS and the twin organisations of the **Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL)** and **Wycliffe Bible Translators (WBT)**.

In the 1950s and 1960s translation theory was in its infancy, and Bible translation was at the cutting edge of that new discipline. The emphasis was on meaning-based translation. This approach became known as “dynamic equivalence” and, later, as “functional equivalence.”

**2. Post-war missionary generation.** In the aftermath of World War II there was a surge in the evangelical missionary movement, especially from North America<sup>5</sup>, as well as a new missionary thrust on the part of the Roman Catholic Church. In the Americas a significant number of these new missionaries focused attention on indigenous peoples. Bible translation was a core concern. Pike's tools for linguistic analysis and Nida's theory and practice of translation provided the keys to advance in this area.

**3. Shift from missionary translators to mother-tongue translators.** From the mid-1970s onward the growth of the Church, the increase in training facilities and the changing missiological emphasis produced the shift from expatriate translators to mother-tongue translators in indigenous language projects. Bible translation had thus moved to a third stage.

Stages	Notable Element
pre-1950	Translations done by missionaries
1950-1975	Translations done by missionaries with help from mother-tongue “informants”
1975 onward	Translations done by mother-tongue translators

**4. Interconfessional developments.** The promulgation of the *Dei Verbum* document in 1965 following the II Vatican Council marked a fundamental change in the use of vernacular languages in the Roman Catholic Church. This produced a commitment to Bible translation and to work such as *El Libro de la Nueva Alianza* (1968), the NT translated by Fr. Armando Levoratti and Fr. Alfredo Trusso in Buenos Aires. In 1969, the “Guidelines for Interconfessional Cooperation in Translating the Bible” was published by the United Bible Societies and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity of the Roman Catholic Church.

## **Bible Translation: The Changing Context**

At the outset of the twenty-first century major social changes affect the task of Bible translation and decisions regarding priorities.

**1. Globalisation.** One of the major driving forces in creating our globalised world has been the revolution in communications of the last twenty years, and particularly the emergence of the Internet. In relation to the translation task the two most important features are (1) the emergence of dominant languages at a global level (such as English<sup>6</sup>) and (2) the search for ethnicity and identity at the local level. Many minority languages now find themselves under threat in the face of these global forces. The forces of cultural globalisation are seen most clearly in media such as television. Globalised television programmes produce similar sets of cultural icons, images and styles which impact regions of the world far away from the places where these programmes were produced.

**2. Language change.** Languages are living entities. All languages change over time—sounds, syntax, meanings, etc. This alone leads to the need to revise translations in each generation. Changes in language use (i.e., inclusivity, issues related to gender and political correctness) must also be taken into account by translators.

In major languages the most dynamic area is youth culture; this may lead to the need to segment publics and produce translations for specific groups in society. One example is the new UBS Spanish translation *Traducción en Lenguaje Actual* (2004), aimed at children and young people. The French study edition *La Bible Expliquée* (2004) is designed to provide easy access to a text “which comes from another world and another time in history.” It is aimed at people who do not have prior knowledge of the Bible, but who are interested in finding out. It deliberately “avoids religious vocabulary” and “privileges words from everyday speech.”

Major change in language use is a characteristic of the speech of adolescents. Current examples of this are found in Internet “chatting” and the SMS/texting (Short Message Service) phenomenon via cellular phones, both of which enjoy huge popularity among adolescents. These have their own language—fast, fluid and dynamic. Speed is the order of the day, with the way words sound playing a key role. Syntax, grammar and orthography have been sent into exile. In many cases, the chat “dictionaries” that have evolved have only about two hundred “words.” The speed produces communications that are almost simultaneous and makes it possible to replicate to some extent face-to-face conversations.

A number of factors contribute to the popularity and use of technology in this way. There is a desire to be in touch with others, to belong, to develop an identity with its own codes. It offers freedom from established ways of doing things and allows adolescents a means of being different from adults. The speed and the buzz are attractive. In addition, the relatively low cost is within their means.<sup>7</sup>

The role of the media and culture of the image also present new challenges to Bible translators. This, in turn, leads to research of symbolism and iconicity and to the use of semiotics in an approach to transmediatization.<sup>8</sup>

**3. Language disappearance and death.** A major concern of linguists today is language loss and death. According to Darcy Ribeiro, in the twentieth century ninety indigenous groups became extinct in Brazil. Some linguists suggest that half of the 6,700 languages spoken today are spoken by adults who no longer teach them to their children. Fifty-two percent of the world’s languages are spoken by less than ten thousand speakers. In this context, decisions about what to translate and in what formats and media these translations should be produced require a full study of each situation.

In facing the cases where languages die, we should remember that the people from that culture do not disappear; rather, they speak a different language. Language shift takes place. What are those languages? What scriptures do they now need? There is no one single answer to those questions.

**4. Urbanisation.** The world's population is rapidly urbanizing, especially in developing countries. In 195, only thirty percent of the world's population was urbanized. By 2030, sixty percent of people will live in cities.<sup>9</sup> Much of the urbanization is taking place in large cities. The number of megacities (more than ten million people), large cities (five to ten million people) and medium cities (one to five million people) is increasing rapidly, especially in the Developing World. Seventeen out of the twenty-one megacities expected to exist in 2015 will be located in the Developing World.

Rural-urban migration and immigration are major contributors to this growth. While the process of assimilation to urban culture does lead to the loss of linguistic diversity, other processes also take place. An increasingly important feature of population movements is the birth of new languages. Bilingualism and diglossia are products of languages in contact. Creole languages now attract intense interest from linguists and educators.

However, the growth of urban areas is not only a matter of migration. They are the place of birth for new generations of children to settled migrants. In many cases, the rate of natural growth of urban populations is higher than the rate of immigration. These children do not necessarily speak the mother tongue of their parents.

**5. Demographic change.** It took all of human history to reach a world population of one billion in 1800. It then took only 130 years for the population to double. During the next seventy years, the population had tripled to six billion by 2000. World population is currently growing at around eighty million people per year.

However, this population growth is not evenly spread. In fact, there is a striking dichotomy. Ninety-eight percent of global population growth is occurring in developing countries, while populations in developed countries are actually declining as people are opting to have fewer babies. The “graying” of the West contrasts with the youthfulness of the non-Western world. In Mexico City, a city of twenty million people, the average age is about fifteen.

**6. Diaspora peoples.** Many indigenous peoples are caught up into the mobile human groups which are a feature of the contemporary world: exiles, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, guest workers, government bureaucrats and tourists. These “ethnoscapes” of different population types can be seen most dramatically in the megacities of the world. Physical distance separating groups has been collapsed and subordinate cultures have been brought into immediate contact with dominant ones.

Where there is significant immigration, new ethnoscapes can emerge and multilingual “translocal” communities develop. New social identities are constructed. In Toronto, Canada's largest city, 131 languages are spoken daily. Calgary, a city of one million people, is the capital of Canada's oil and gas industry. In 2005, more than nine thousand immigrants from 132 countries speaking seventy-eight languages came to live in the city.

**7. Hybridisation and palimpsest.** Subordinate cultures are not simply swallowed up without a trace; there is often a mutuality of interaction with the dominant cultures. Hybrid forms emerge which can be a strength rather than a weakness. Distinctive aspects of the subordinate culture can become an integral part of new formations which arise. In recent writing in post-colonial studies on this matter, the dominant metaphor used is that of the palimpsest, the parchment written upon several times, each previous text still partly visible because it was imperfectly erased. New forces that impinge upon a people have the potential to produce an additional layer of “text” to the cultural palimpsest.

## **Conclusion**

Bible translation has played a key role in the life of the Church since its very beginnings. The translatability of the scriptures basic to the Christian faith has resulted in the Church successively (and successfully) crossing cultural boundaries and emerging and expanding in new contexts with fresh vitality and appropriate forms. In these contexts, a variety of media have been pressed into use—the oral medium, the codex, the illuminated

manuscript, the printed book and now the new media. In today's changed and changing situation strategic directions for the shape, nature and priorities of Bible translation in the new millennium should not be determined without due consideration of the factors mentioned above.

Hard questions must still be faced and some cherished shibboleths re-examined, while we endeavour at the same time to discern the will of God and hold before us the vision of that kingdom which "cannot be shaken"—that community of communities, where our plurality of identities is affirmed, where difference is celebrated, where shalom is finally and fully realised.

## Endnotes

1. Smalley, William. 1991. *Translation as Mission: Bible Translation in the Modern Missionary Movement*. Macon, Georgia, USA: Mercer University Press. 22-31.
2. Figures based on Smalley. 33-38.
3. United Bible Societies. 2006. "Scripture Language Report." *World Report* 401: 3-4.
4. 122 of these Bibles include the deuterocanonical books.
5. The deaths in 1956 of five evangelical missionaries from the USA in the Ecuadorian jungle was widely reported and led to a significant increase in US missionaries to South America's indigenous peoples in the 1960s.
6. One and a half billion people now speak English, but only 460 million speak it as their mother tongue.
7. The Bible Society of Australia has developed a text for this audience. ([www.biblesociety.com.au/smsbible/](http://www.biblesociety.com.au/smsbible/)).
8. Hodgson, Robert and Paul Soukup, eds. 1997. *From One Medium to Another: Basic Issues for Communicating Scriptures in a New Media*. New York, USA: American Bible Society. and *Fidelity and Translation*. New York, USA: American Bible Society.
9. <http://www.worldbank.org/urban/symposium2003/docs/papers/mohan.pdf>

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## Forum for Bible Agencies International and Partnership in God's Word

**God's word offers hope, light and life to people of all cultures, languages and nations.** But what will it take to give the whole world access to God's word? What about the people who have access but who have not had the opportunity to witness the life-changing power of the word?

Jesus provided the strategy more than two thousand years ago. As he prayed for the disciples and for future generations of believers, he prayed that they would be of one heart and one mind, in unity, so that the world would believe the good news (John 17).

So what will it take? It will take God's people, his Church, in this generation, coming together, serving alongside each other, bringing their abilities, gifts and resources, so the world will know him and grow in him through his word. This is the hope of the **Forum of Bible Agencies International** (the Forum) as it works in partnership with churches around the world.

The goal is to work together to maximize worldwide access and impact of God's Word. This is the vision that unites twenty-five leading Bible agencies around the world in a mutual work. This goal is coupled with the

belief that the speed and scope of accomplishing this vision will be significantly increased through collaboration and cooperation.

### **What Does the Forum Do?**

As an alliance of Bible agencies, the Forum promotes and pursues collaboration by:

- **Strengthening** inter-agency understanding and relationships
- **Undertaking** strategic global initiatives
- **Advocating** the centrality of God's Word in life and mission
- **Fostering** professional excellence of its members through training
- **Providing** support for the development of regional and national forums

This has resulted in partnership and strategic involvement throughout member agencies. Perhaps most notable is the development of a translation development group. Chaired by Freddie Boswell of **Wycliffe International**, this group has been responsible for setting standards for all member agency translation consultants as well as developing a database of ongoing and needed translation work. The result has been coordination and collaboration across member agencies which has led to a decreased duplication of efforts and an increase in skill and knowledge. There is also a long-term aim of more efficient and timely provision of new Bible translations.

Beyond the translation group, Forum members have embarked on coordinated work in the area of distribution, engagement and advocacy. Special areas of focus include Bible distribution in the areas of the world heavily impacted by HIV/AIDS, an online catalogue of available scriptures and the development of six regional and twenty-one national forums, furthering the spirit of unity worldwide.

Roberto Laver, executive director of the Forum, recently shared thoughts on the Forum's work:

*“Today, there are millions of people without scripture in their heart language; millions of others without access to existing scriptures and many more for whom the Bible has no relevancy or credibility. The Forum represents the commitment and efforts of twenty-five ministries, from varied expressions of Christian faith, to work together in addressing these realities and needs. As anyone who knows anything about partnership and collaboration, this is not an easy challenge. The costs may appear high but the benefits to the kingdom are immense. The Forum has served (and continues to serve) as a platform and catalyst for stronger relationships, countless partnerships and changes in individual ministries' emphasis and approaches (i.e., audio-visual methods, scripture use, outcome-based ministry). The Forum is taking steps to intensify cooperation through its comprehensive scripture database development, formulation of a common advocacy strategy, greater focus on regional and national collaboration and development of new peer groups. We continue to be challenged by John Mott's words over sixty years ago when he told the then-Bible Societies that ‘in the face of the corroding influences of Western civilization, the hour has struck for cooperation, not only at our headquarters, but right down the line. We should only impoverish ourselves by standing alone...this is a day of God's visitation not only for our sins, but visitation by God in that he is beckoning on us and drawing us closer in this cooperation.’”*

According to Douglas Birdsall, executive chair of the **Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization**,

*“The Forum of Bible Agencies International sets a standard of excellence as a strategic partnership in the enterprise of world missions. The Forum is comprised of many well-established organizations that could easily*

*'go it alone.' Yet they have chosen to partner together. As a result, each organization is stronger, and the collective work of Bible translation, publication and distribution is enhanced and accelerated to serve the Church around the world."*

More information about the Forum of Bible Agencies International and its member agencies can be found online at [www.forum-intl.net](http://www.forum-intl.net).

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## **“It’s Our Bible”: The Passion of the Kapingamarangi for God’s Word**

### **By Nico and Pam Daams**

**The Kapingamarangi are a group of about 1,500 Polynesian people located in Micronesia.** Half of the population live in a settlement on Pohnpei, while the other half live on the remote atoll, sixty miles north of the equator. A government ship provides transportation to and from the island every few months. In many people’s eyes the Kapingamarangi people may seem insignificant; however, their great motivation to have the Bible in their own language makes them an example to other language groups.

In 1982, the Kapingamarangi community contacted **Wycliffe** personnel and asked for someone to help them with Bible translation. For many years, there was no team available to help meet the need. But the request was not forgotten. Nico and Pam Daams, who worked with related Polynesian languages in the Solomon Islands, remembered it. In 1994, they visited Pohnpei. That was when one of the Kapingamarangi church leaders asked them, “What do we need to do to get you to come to help us?”

Two years later the Daams family arrived to help with the translation. Nico and Pam discovered the great commitment these island dwellers had for the Bible in their own language. For years the Kapingamarangi community had been saving money to pay for Bible translation, mainly by working copra or selling handicrafts. They had also been translating portions of scripture for the daily church services. Soon, twenty-four of these translators began work on the New Testament and nearly one hundred reviewers checked and commented on the translation. Nico worked with this team, providing training and exegetical expertise. Through their combined effort the New Testament was published in four years, with the Kapingamarangi community paying all the publication costs from the money they had saved all those years. The Kapingamarangi people felt such ownership for their project that when the question of paying the translators arose, their response was, “Why should we be paid? We are doing this for our own people. It’s our Bible!”

The translation team has continued work on the Old Testament. In 2004, forty percent of the Old Testament was published; they are now working on the remaining sixty percent. At the dedication of the published version, one man said, “The Kapingamarangi Bible has given our people new life.”

*(This article is translated and adapted from an article that first appeared in "Volken & talen," a publication of **Wycliffe Netherlands**.)*

**Nico and Pam Daams** have worked with **Wycliffe**, serving as translation advisors for Polynesian languages since 1978. They are now based in Melbourne, Australia, and assist translation projects across the Pacific.

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## **Latin America Blessing the World**

### **By Chacko Thomas**

#### **The Gathering of the Latin American Mission Force**

It was a privilege to join nearly two thousand church and mission leaders from forty Latin American nations 13-

17 November 2006 at the third international gathering of the missions association of Latin America, **COMIBAM** (Cooperation of Missions of Iberia and Americas), in Grenada, Spain. Previous gatherings were in Sao Paulo, Brazil in 1986 and in Acapulco, Mexico in 1997.

Nearly three hundred attendees were Latin missionaries serving in sixty countries in Asia, Africa and Europe. About 150 volunteers, from places such as Chile, Peru, Mexico and Canada, came on their own expense. They helped with details such as transporting participants to and from the airport and acting as security at the conference centre.

According to David Ruiz, president of COMIBAM, “Grenada was chosen not only for its conference facilities, but also to bring the meeting closer to the missionaries,” most of whom are serving in the Indian Subcontinent, Europe, Central Asia, Middle East and North Africa. “This also enabled many of the participants from Latin America to visit their missionaries before or after the conference,” he added.

The conference included a series of five messages entitled the “Message to the Church,” during which missionaries reflected on the Latin America Church as a sending church. One missionary who had served for twenty years in North Africa pleaded, “Put Christ in the centre of the Church!”

One Egyptian encouraged those at the conference to work closely and in consultation with the national Church. “It is a lie of the devil that we can do it alone,” he said. A married couple from Morocco and a pastor from Albania were converted through Latin missionaries, and are now serving the Lord full-time, one through radio ministries, the other pastoring a significant mission-minded church in Albania. Experienced mission leaders such as Bill Taylor, Samuel Escobar, David Ruiz and Bertil Ekstrom led the panels. They spoke on themes such as training, sending and missionary care.

Two experienced researchers working with COMIBAM spoke on the history and future of Latin American missions. Their findings formed the basis for discussion of the work groups which met daily. Each group had Latin missionaries in them. The research is available in Spanish, Portuguese and English at [www.comibam.org](http://www.comibam.org).

### **Latin America in Global Missions**

Nearly twenty-five years ago Latin America formally joined the world missions force; today there are four hundred mission agencies sending out nine thousand Latinos. Another three thousand are thought to have gone out without a sending structure. Of the nine thousand missionaries, only two thousand are serving outside of Latin America. This is partly because many must serve cross-culturally in Latin America before they are considered for Asia or Africa. Below are some statistics:

- 780 serve among Muslims
- 246 serve in India
- 128 among the Buddhist people
- 1440 serve in the 10/40 Window

Pastor Waldimar from Brazil said that his mission, Kairos, is celebrating its twentieth anniversary in 2008. He began his career in missions with the Operation Mobilization ship M. V. Doulos in the early 1980s.

American missionary Don McCurry was a missionary to Pakistan and has spent much of his life serving among Muslims. He is currently training Latinos to be more effective in missions to the Muslim world. He has conducted programmes in every nation in Latin America. He assured me that his counterparts are also training Latinos for the Hindu and Buddhist worlds.

One couple had come from a small church of only sixty members in Brazil to work in Spain. They shared with me their long and difficult journey into missions as a young couple and as new converts with no financial or other support. Their difficulties included a six-month separation from their little boy who was sent back to the grandparents (to spare him the troubles on the mission field). When the wife had a miscarriage, the husband could not afford the bus fare and so had to walk eight kilometres daily to see her in the hospital. According to the wife, God's hand was upon them. "All the difficulties have drawn us together to each other and to the Lord," she said. They have begun a small church plant in Spain and enjoy part-time employment which puts bread on the table. Their son is back with them and enjoys life in Spain.

### **Ending the Conference and Stepping Out with Renewed Passion**

Dr. Bob Fu of China spoke on "Missions in the Midst of Martyrdom." He had three points: stand up (for the gospel), speak up and shut up. There are sixty million Christians in China who are not persecuted because they toe governmental lines. However, if you stand up for the whole truth you will be persecuted, Fu said. For the third point, Fu gave the illustration of a young lady who was imprisoned and tortured, but refused to betray her pastors or other believers. Fu shared that "people are giving thanks to God, not for their second car or something similar, but for the honour of suffering for Christ." His message was based on 2 Timothy 3:12: "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

The closing ceremony included flags of many nations and a speech by Ruiz, who passed the leadership of COMIBAM on to Carlos Scott from Argentina. Ruiz has been president of the movement for nearly seven years. "The Latin American missions movement will continue," he reminded his audience. As a pastor with a heart for the unreached, he has left his mark on the missions movement.

Scott gave a fiery message entitled "A New Chapter of the Acts of the Holy Spirit." He made it clear that Latin missions is not only a movement of the Iberia-American Church, but more importantly, it is a movement of the Holy Spirit. Missions, he said, is centred on God and obedience.

Perhaps the reflection of one Korean mission leader when he was asked what he would take back from the conference speaks for all of us: "Koreans are not the only ones doing missions." We all, including Latinos, can add the name of our nation to this reply. While "standing on the shoulders of giants" who have gone before them, Latin missionaries have their own distinct identity. Latino churches are blessing the world by the design and power of the Holy Spirit. With more than eighty-five million evangelical in this region, Latinos have a major role to play in missions.

May the huge Church growth in Latin America spill over and overflow into the rest of the world. Let us rejoice for the Latin flavour entering world missions today. The whole Church taking the whole gospel to the whole world is becoming a reality.

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

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### **More Than Dreams: Muslims Coming to Christ Through Dreams and Visions**

*"In the last days," says God, "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions."* (Joel 2:28)

For decades, a well-documented phenomenon has been occurring in the Muslim world—men and women who, without knowledge of the gospel, or contact among Christians in their community, have experienced dreams and

visions of Jesus Christ. The reports of these supernatural occurrences often come from “closed countries” where there is no preaching of the good news and where converting to Christianity can invoke the death sentence. But these are more than just dreams. Setting them apart is the intense reality of the experience and the surrender of one’s heart and mind to Christ in the wake of the dream. A common denominator appears to be that the dreams come to those who are seeking—as best they can—to know and please God.

Beginning in 2002, a group of people interested in this phenomenon took initial steps in bringing it to the attention of a worldwide audience through a series of video programs. Numerous on-site interviews were conducted with former Muslims who had experienced a dream or vision of Jesus resulting in their conversion to Christianity. From the outset, the producers endeavored to represent a global cross-section of Islam in the series, and for that reason, stories were sought in Arabic-speaking countries, Muslim areas throughout Africa and Asia and the secular Muslim nation of Turkey.

The project’s goal was to create versions of these stories in multiple languages, and, in league with ministry partners around the world, disseminate the product globally both to evangelize unbelievers and encourage those who have already experienced a dream or vision of Jesus that they are not alone. The following five stories were put together into the video series called *More Than Dreams*:

1. **Khalil.** In September 2004, production began in high-definition video on the first of five stories. It was the remarkable account of Khalil, a radical Egyptian terrorist who was changed from a murderous “Saul” to a forgiving “Paul.” He set out to discredit the Bible but could not; and although he despised Christians and Jews, his heart was changed forever when the savior appeared to him in a dream that penetrated his soul.
2. **Khosrow.** Later that same month, production began on the story of Khosrow, who, as a teenager in Iran, despaired of life itself. That is, until he experienced a vision of Jesus Christ. In the vision, Christ extended his hand toward Khosrow, inviting him to take hold and promising him that his “life would change forever.” Khosrow took Jesus’ hand and, as he describes it, “waves of electricity flowed through my body over and over again. I wept for the first time since I was a child and joy filled my heart.”
3. **Dini.** Dini also came to faith in Christ as a teenager in her native Indonesia. Feeling let down by family, friends and society and drifting into rebellion, Dini nonetheless yearned to know God and please him. On the night of Lailatur Qodar, when Muslims around the world make individualized prayers to Allah, Dini experienced a vision of Jesus Christ, who appeared before her and told her to follow him. Dini was hesitant. As a Muslim, she realized that following Christ would make her a Christian. But she overcame her fear and committed her life to Christ that same night. Peace filled her heart, even as persecution began.
4. **Mohammed.** Mohammed of northern Nigeria did not have just one dream of Jesus Christ—he had seven! Son of a prominent Fulani herdsman, Mohammed had studied the Qur’an in depth at several Muslim schools and was preparing to leave for advanced studies in Saudi Arabia when he experienced the series of dreams that convinced him of the deep love and lordship of Jesus Christ. Although his father tried to kill him in the wake of his conversion, Mohammed survived the various attempts on his life and persevered in his Christian walk, eventually leading his father to faith in Christ.
5. **Ali.** Ali grew up in an area of Turkey heavily influenced by communist ideology. As a boy, he talked to a god he surmised must be there, as evidenced by the beauty of the natural world around him. Married at a young age, he became an alcoholic. Desperate for a solution to his addiction, Ali went to Saudi Arabia to work in construction, reasoning that he would have to quit drinking because alcohol was forbidden there. To his dismay, friends showed him where to buy liquor on the night of his arrival. Not willing to give up easily, Ali made the pilgrimage to Mecca in hopes that God would free him of his addiction to

alcohol and lead him in the way of a true and better Muslim. While sleeping a stone's throw from the Ka'aba, Ali experienced a dream of Jesus Christ that changed him forever.

### ***More Than Dreams* Video Programs**

The distribution strategy of *More Than Dreams* involves a multi-pronged approach in which each of the five stories will be dubbed into different languages in order to reach the largest target audience possible. It is estimated that Islam numbers over one billion followers worldwide. Through satellite broadcasts and massive "home video" distribution on VCD, DVD and VHS, it is hoped that *More Than Dreams* will reach millions of Muslims. The producers are allowing distribution partners to use the programs and even make copies for evangelistic purposes without royalty payments. The website [www.morethandreams.tv](http://www.morethandreams.tv) provides more information on the series as well as on partnership opportunities.

The language conversion strategy is to first dub all five stories into the five original languages featured in *More Than Dreams*: Arabic, Farsi, Bahasa Indonesia, Hausa and Turkish. At the same time, they are planning on dubbing them into several other languages commonly spoken by Muslims: French, English, Urdu, Bengali, Kyble Berber and Russian. After this, depending on factors such as funding availability and distribution partner interest, they hope to put the series into many other languages, including a variety of Central Asian languages, Mandarin Chinese, German, Fulani, Bahasa Malaysia, Swahili and Tagalog.

Complimenting the audio-visual approach, the producers have designed an Arabic-language [website](#) to handle follow-up inquiries. This site was designed in such a way that it can also serve as a template for *More Than Dreams* follow-up websites in other languages.

To date, the entire series has aired several times in Arabic on satellite TV across the Middle East and North Africa. It is also currently airing in Farsi on a satellite channel broadcasting to Iran and the Iranian Diaspora in Europe. Broadcasts are planned for other language versions as they are completed.

However, due to the nature of *More Than Dreams*, the producers are putting more emphasis on physical distribution in DVD and VCD format than on broadcast of the series. In fact, they have set a goal of distributing ten million copies directly and through partnerships in the next three to five years. The first major distribution occurred mid-2006 in Europe. An Arabic-language version of the product was developed. It featured three of the five stories, a ministry segment featuring a Muslim Background Believer (MBB) explaining how to accept Christ and how to walk with him and an Arabic Bible in electronic format. Partnering organizations handed out thousands of copies to Arabs attending the Germany 2006 World Cup matches involving Saudi Arabia and Tunisia. They distributed many more copies as well to Arabs and North African resident in Europe as well as to North Africans traveling by ferry between Europe and North Africa. A few months later, the same content was packaged on two VCDs and duplicated for distribution in North Africa.

*More Than Dreams* producers are beginning to receive many email reports of the ministry impact of the series. One American was able to lead an Indonesian girl to Christ by asking her to listen to the audio of the Dini story through an Internet telephone. Many Arabic-speakers have written to share how they too have had dreams or visions of Christ and were encouraged to see these types of experiences featured on television. Middle Eastern Christians have written to express appreciation for the project. A believer in Jordan wrote that he loves watching it because it strengthens his faith and gives him inner peace. Another Middle Eastern believer wrote, "I want [a DVD copy of] this film because there are many things said in the programs that can touch my friends' hearts and souls and maybe by seeing it they will accept Jesus in their lives."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer once wrote, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." This joining of one to Christ may or may not embody a physical death, but it is always a death to one's self-interest. One-sixth of the world's population is bound by ignorance and separated from God. Yet in their zeal to know and serve the only

god they know, many of the world's Muslims put practitioners of other world religions—including Christians—to shame. How can we, as followers of Jesus Christ, ignore their plight? As the Apostle Paul wrote, "*How are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?*" (Romans 10:14)

The tools are in our hands. The will is in our heart as we strive to announce the year of the Lord's favor and to bring spiritual freedom to all those crying out in spiritual darkness. Ministries interested in *More Than Dreams* are invited to email [producers@morethandreams.org](mailto:producers@morethandreams.org) or visit [www.morethandreams.tv](http://www.morethandreams.tv).

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## **Friends of the Disabled in Latin America Impacting Thousands for Christ**

**By Judy Nuñez**

**Friends of the Disabled Latin America, Inc. (FRIDLA) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to glorifying God by seeking out and assisting those affected by disability, presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ and building them up in the faith.** This ministry model began in Chile in 1996.

My husband and I were part of a church planting team in Santiago, Chile, and decided that our hearts desire was to help those affected by disabilities. I had been a victim of polio as a child. We had become involved with Refugio Esperanza, a camp in Chile for children with disabilities. In July 1996, with the help of the **Joni and Friends** program "**Wheels for the World**," we held our first evangelistic outreach and distribution of wheelchairs and other mobility equipment to the economically disadvantaged in Santiago, Chile.

We discovered that as soon as the distribution was over, no one was interested in ministering to people with disabilities. It was apparent that everyone who volunteered wanted to help with a "good work"; however, that was as far as it went.

We began to seek out and train volunteers in disability awareness as a requirement for serving as a volunteer with the ministry. In 1997 we formed a non-profit corporation in Chile made up of nationals so that disability ministry would be ongoing. This would also give us the ability to import the wheelchairs without paying import taxes.

### **Meeting the Needs of the Disabled**

The primary focus of the non-denominational, non-profit corporation is ministering to and evangelizing those affected by disability. Helping the physical needs of this people group, empowering the local churches and mobilizing the nationals for follow-up and discipleship accomplish this objective. After each wheelchair, walker or other mobility implement is custom fitted for the recipient, the entire family is presented the gospel in a private setting.

While on furlough in September 1995, my husband was diagnosed with esophageal cancer. The doctors gave him six months to live. He felt compelled to return to Chile. His dream was to help me begin the ministry. I was in a lumbar brace and in constant pain. Considering our health problems, everyone thought we were crazy for returning to Chile! As it turned out, God's plan was for my husband to live for two years. In 1997 the ministry spread to southern Chile and there were plans to take the ministry to northern Chile in 1998. My husband died in Santiago in September 1997, but not before God allowed him to see his dream fulfilled.

I returned to the United States in late 1998 and founded **Friends of the Disabled Latin America, Inc.** (FRIDLA), located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA. The expansion into other countries in Latin America began in 1999 in Lima, Peru. For eighteen months the emphasis was on building awareness, changing attitudes in the churches and training volunteers. Because people with disabilities are hidden from public view, the

volunteers had to seek them out. The [Lausanne 2004 Forum for World Evangelization](#) included those with disabilities as part of the “[Hidden and Forgotten People Groups](#).”

In many parts of the world people with disabilities are considered to be of lesser value. Their families are isolated by society and treated with prejudice. Many still believe that God is punishing the family because of sin; this belief explains why the family has a member with a disability. One only needs to look at the scriptures and read John 9:1-3 to discover that this is not a new phenomenon. There you will see an example of the cultural influence on the beliefs of the disciples. Many pastors, having grown up in this culture, usually do not realize that it has affected the way they look at people with disabilities. They need to be reminded that God created all people in his image. All must be treated equal even though they are different on the outside. It is necessary to look to Luke 14:23: “*Go quickly into the streets...make them come in so that my house may be full.*”

The Peruvian corporation of FRIDLA was founded in 2000 and the first distribution of wheelchairs, walkers and crutches took place with the help of “Wheels for the World.” The ministry administered by nationals continues to grow in Peru.

In 2001 I married Alberto Nuñez, a native of Peru. We established a workshop for the ministry in Florida. Alberto began collecting and repairing power and manual wheelchairs.

### **Each One Can Help**

In 2002 FRIDLA began establishing the ministry in Bolivia. The first twenty months was spent in training and mobilizing volunteers. The non-profit corporation became official in 2003 and with the help of [Wheels of Hope](#) in Akron, Ohio, USA, evangelistic/fitting events began in Santa Cruz. Each year new cities are added to the ministry. FRIDLA now ships containers of wheelchairs to Bolivia and Chile and the volunteers have monthly evangelistic/fitting events.

In 2003 a prayer partner in South Carolina, USA, told me that he was getting ready to semi-retire and would like to learn how to repair wheelchairs. His church decided to make the wheelchair repair a ministry of the church. The desire of one person has grown to a dozen volunteers who get together weekly to repair wheelchairs for FRIDLA. They shipped their first group of refurbished wheelchairs to Chile in 2004. A forty-foot container was shipped to Bolivia in 2005 and another was shipped in August 2006. Volunteers in Colorado, Florida, Georgia and North and South Carolina collect used wheelchairs to be refurbished.

### **Future Ministry Plans**

Over 3,500 wheelchairs have been custom-fitted since this ministry began in 1996. Hundreds of crutches, walkers and other mobility devices have been distributed to economically-disadvantaged people with disabilities in Bolivia, Chile and Peru. Every individual who receives mobility equipment also receives a Bible and the gospel is shared with the entire family. Over eighteen thousand people in Latin America have heard the gospel of Jesus Christ through FRIDLA's ministry.

Future plans include continued expansion of the ministry in Bolivia as well as developing a regional ministry center and transitory clinic (shelter) near Santa Cruz. The regional center will house a ministry office, repair workshop and warehouse. More importantly, it will be a “week-care” home. Many times either the mother or father deserts the family because they cannot deal with the responsibility. Sometimes, the disabled person is abandoned altogether. The shelter will be a blessing for families who have a member who requires continuous care. This will make it possible for the caregiver to work outside the home in order to support the family. Future plans for the center include job-skill training, nutritional training for caregivers, Bible studies and discipleship.

As God leads and provides, FRIDLA plans to expand into other Latin American countries. All the glory and honor belongs to God. Only he has enabled this to be accomplished.

Judy Nuñez is president of [Friends of the Disabled Latin America, Inc.](#) (FRIDLA).

## Boomers—The New Wave of Volunteer Missionaries

**On average, one “baby boomer” (those both after World War II and before the Vietnam War) retires every seven seconds in the United States, and [Wycliffe Associates](#) is tailoring its programs with this in mind.**

“Wycliffe Associates, which supports Bible translators in practical ways, is building a new volunteer mobilization center in Orlando [Florida] to recruit, train and mobilize the service contributions of what is expected to be a continued influx of mature, skilled volunteers,” said Martin Huyett, vice president of volunteer services for Wycliffe Associates.

Baby boomers make up a quarter of the total population in the United States.

“In their teens and 20s, they redefined pop culture,” John Hall of Texas Baptist Communications has written. “In their 30s and 40s, they challenged the traditional role of women. Now in their 50s and 60s, baby boomers are poised to change American culture again.”

Todd Johnson, a research fellow and director of the [Center for the Study of Global Christianity](#) at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, confirms that boomers are more interested in being active than just giving money. Many are starting NGOs (non-governmental organizations) such as orphanages, business centers and health clinics that minister at a local level. “Many retirees’ post-retirement plans are being built around missions,” Johnson said.

Although boomers are sometimes branded as members of a very self-centered and individualistic generation, many are experiencing a deepening desire to give back. They are coming to realize that significance is found in looking beyond oneself, studies show. Christian organizations, such as Wycliffe Associates, believe they have a great opportunity to match mature, highly-honed skills with ministry opportunities.

“It’s cheaper these days to go overseas. The entire world is more accessible,” said Huyett. “Today’s 60-year-old is mature and needs far less training in living skills than his or her younger counterpart. Traditionally, mission organizations send new missionaries in their 20s and 30s through an orientation process, like a jungle camp, to learn how to survive the harsh living conditions in the field. But a person in his or her 50s and above has triumphed through their productive years and has built-in strategies for success.”

Wycliffe Associates has experienced this phenomenon among its own ranks. One such boomer is Michael Willard, a retired US Army Special Forces engineer, who has taken his skills to the mission field. Willard’s career was spent designing and building airstrips for jets, so his skills are highly valued in places like Papua New Guinea and Africa. Without air transportation, missionaries in small villages would be at risk of greater isolation from food and medical supplies.

Willard was part of a Green Berets special unit that established military airstrips in jungles and other remote places. He used these skills in Papua New Guinea, where the local people rely heavily on small airplanes for transportation. Airstrips need continuous maintenance and care as the jungle intrudes. Recently, dozens of airstrips were too dangerous to land a plane. One particular airstrip had been torn apart by a small volcano. Willard and his teams restored ten airstrips there.

In 2005, more than 1,200 Wycliffe Associates volunteers served in thirty-six countries as part of the worldwide Bible translation team. Wycliffe Associates plans to send more than 1,500 volunteers to forty different countries

this year to build and renovate facilities, construct roads and airstrips, teach Vacation Bible Schools, help with language development and office work, oversee projects, use their computer skills and much more.

*Time* magazine reported that boomers volunteer at a rate of thirty-three percent, contrasted with twenty-four percent for those 65 and older. Last year, 65.4 million people did volunteer work, but seventy-five million volunteers will be needed in 2010, the magazine reported.

The need for volunteers is there, said Huyett. Wycliffe Associates currently has more than two thousand unfilled volunteer positions. Wycliffe Associates responds quickly to inquiries and then matches volunteers with appropriate assignments. Upon completion, the new volunteer mobilization center will be dedicated to coordinate volunteers to support and advance Bible translation.

“The benefit to adults who feel God’s call to ministry in the second half of life is an enriching experience, as they use the skills and knowledge gained in their younger years for eternal purposes,” said Huyett. “Free from the pressures of youth and middle age, the older adult can do exciting, meaningful things never dreamed of before. As hundreds of thousands of new volunteer missionaries rise from the ranks of retiring baby boomers, they will challenge the status quo of missions and how organizations will respond to them.”

*(This article was edited from a Wycliffe Associates [news release](#).)*

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## WORLD PERSPECTIVES

### [Into the New Millennium: The Changing Face of Bible Translation](#)

**The first few years of the new millennium have seen the continuation and even the acceleration of the major societal and demographic changes<sup>1</sup> begun in the final decade of the twentieth century.** Those years also saw ferment in the academic world and the emergence and growth of new disciplines, none less so than in the fields of cognitive sciences and communication studies. The theory and practice of Bible translation has not been immune to these developments.

#### **Bible Translation: Factors Affecting Theory and Practice**

Translation does not take place in a vacuum. Not only are there societal factors to consider, there are developments in biblical studies, linguistics and the social sciences.

**1. Explosion of translation sciences.**<sup>2</sup> Translation theory developed from translating the Bible into languages around the world was a leader in the field fifty years ago. This is no longer so. As the world has grown smaller in the last twenty-five years, there has been massive growth in translation studies.

**2. Developments in the social sciences.** The growth in translation studies has been paralleled by developments in communication studies,<sup>3</sup> cognitive studies, anthropology<sup>4</sup> and linguistics.<sup>5</sup> The new understandings of human interaction generated by these sciences may provide tools to carry Bible translation to a new level.

**3. Developments in biblical studies.**<sup>6</sup> There have been new developments in biblical studies, many of which have relevance for translation. With the contribution of the social sciences, biblical exegesis is now much more inter-disciplinary. The understanding of the Bible as literature is of particular importance.<sup>7</sup> The areas of developments can be summarised as follows:

- *Text. Septuagint* studies, exegesis, canonical studies

- *Texture*. Socio-rhetorical studies
- *Context*. Sociocultural settings
- *Pretext*. Ideology.

**4. Translation and technology.** In our globalised world, translation needs have seen exponential growth<sup>8</sup> and it is no surprise that computer power has been harnessed by the translation industry; still, the goal of fully automatic translation remains elusive. Yet there have been major advances: translation memory tools, corpus linguistics (including text types and genres), electronic corpora and “term banks,” an intralingual approach to translation based on syntactic structures.<sup>9</sup>

In the field of Bible translation, tools have been developed to aid the translator, but matters such as pragmatics, morphosyntactic structures, literary genres and the huge variety of languages into which the Bible is being translated mean that while machines are making an immense contribution, Bible translation will need human beings for some considerable time to come.

Translation projects are now routinely equipped with computers and programmes such as the **United Bible Society's** (UBS) *Paratext*, which enable translators to access texts and commentaries and use tools developed for text analysis, text-processing, glossing and concordancing. Increased efficiency and quality in manuscript preparation and the publishing process result from this. Advances in media technology provide a range of options for using non-print media to communicate the translated text.

## Into the New Millennium

**1. The Church universal.** According to Kwame Bediako, “It is important to realise that Christianity which ‘has always been universal in principle,’ can be said to ‘have become universal in practice only in recent history,’ a fact which is not only unique among the world's religions; it is a new feature for the Christian faith itself.”

The centre of gravity of the Christian Church has now moved to the South—there are new Christian “heartlands” in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In the twentieth century, translation preceded the Church. Will this now be reversed? Will the churches, rather than parachurch organisations, now promote translation? Or will there be meaningful partnership in which the church is the senior partner?

The face of mission has changed. It is now “from everywhere to everyone.” The rural character of mission fifty years ago has moved to urban concerns. The role of expatriates has been redefined and reshaped, with mission organisations undergoing profound changes.

**2. Priorities in translation.** Work is underway by the UBS, **SIL/Wycliffe Bible Translators** and the **Forum of Bible Agencies** to analyse needs and set priorities. One thing is now clear: translation will be owned and done by mother tongue speakers. Translator training programs up to a doctoral level are being developed in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe.

In an increasingly urbanised, globalised world the task must be prioritized. Do we focus on:

- *major languages?*
- *minority languages?*
- *urban cultures? rural peoples?*
- *oral translations?*
- *creole languages?*

- *language of Christian community?*
- *media languages?*

**3. Types of translation.** The audience/public for whom the translation is intended must be carefully studied in order to decide the nature of the translation and the format and media in which it will be produced. Should it be literal, dynamic, literary or liturgical?

**4. Translation theory and practice.** Bible translation theory and practice today is in a process of transition. The two major agencies involved—UBS and SIL—are developing new approaches. New terminology is being used, moving from concepts of faithfulness and equivalence to those of *similarity* and *difference*.<sup>10</sup> SIL scholars are focusing on “relevance theory” as a key component of their approach. UBS researchers are developing ideas complementary to those of SIL, in which conceptual frames of reference, situational and textual contexts, literary and linguistic components are considered.

### **Words Without Borders**

According to Lamin Sanneh, “Bible translation in the modern missionary movement ... turned Christianity into the possession of the worldwide human family.”<sup>11</sup> In the history of Christianity, Bible translation represents a revolutionary conception of faith as something translatable and multicultural. The fact of Christianity being a translated and translating faith places God at the center of the universe of cultures.

Small wonder then that in its 2004 World Assembly held in Newport, Wales, the UBS affirmed that Bible translation was at the core of its ministry. Meanwhile, a few years earlier, SIL/WBTI launched its 2025 Vision to begin Bible translation in every language that needed it by the year 2025.

In scripture we find that before Babel (Genesis 11) there was ease of communication; this soon turned to confusion. At Pentecost (Acts 2) this was reversed. Pentecost broke the limits on vernacular languages, enabling them to be vehicles of God’s word.

There is a theology of Bible translation; it is an extension of the Incarnation—“the Word became flesh.” According to Andrew Walls, “The first divine act of translation into humanity thus gives rise to a constant succession of new translations. Christian diversity is the necessary product of the Incarnation.”<sup>12</sup>

For peoples and cultures, scripture is not just text, it becomes context. The reader (or hearer) enters and participates in its world of meaning and experience, in the one multicultural people of God. Translated scripture ensures that the world of experience is expanded in the other direction, shaped by the cultural world of experience of the reader or hearer.

Biblical truth in a new idiom enriches the Church universal, encouraging deeper translation of the life of Christ in our communities and cultures. Barriers between peoples are broken down and people cry out “*we all hear them using our own languages to tell the wonderful things God has done*” (Acts 2:11).

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## **The Bible and Church Planting/Church Growth**

### **By Ronald Vander Griend**

**The Bible changes lives.** It cuts to the heart and creates new communities. In the pages of the Bible people meet God.

Many theological claims and scripture references could be advanced to describe the relationship between the Bible and church growth; however, from the practical perspective of a church worker or missionary, two points of impact are important.

1. **The micro level.** At the level of an emerging congregation, the Bible is essential for follow-up. Bible study is at the center of the relationship-building, disciple-making fellowship that cements one's commitment to the group called church.
2. **The macro level.** A passion for the Bible precipitates and fuels movements of church planting and missionary sending.

To plant or grow a congregation, two basic things must repeatedly occur: people must come to know Jesus and they must become members of his body. The first step can happen in an evangelistic instant. It is the miracle of faith born during a gospel presentation. What follows is most effectively accomplished through an intentional program of Bible study. House churches, cell groups and small groups are used to incorporate new believers. At the center of each one is a time of Bible study. The obvious benefit of these groups is that the members gain knowledge of what the Bible says about faith and life (2 Peter 1:3); however, a number of other dynamics contribute to church planting and growth. Below are seven.

1. The small group is a **venue for seekers**. It offers a low-threat environment into which a believer may invite friends or family members.
2. The regularity of group meetings **puts people in relationships**.
3. Scripture is the counselor and authority on **“one-another” fellowship**.
4. The study group **empowers ordinary believers** to search and to share.
5. The group is an **incubator for new leaders**.
6. As an engine of growth, Bible study groups are **infinitely reproducible by ordinary believers** even in a context of opposition and persecution.
7. Even in societies with low levels of literacy, **public reading, storytelling or scripture recordings are at the center of gatherings** that produce growth.

Two patterns seem to inhibit growth. Roland Allen calls the first “fear for the doctrine.”<sup>1</sup> Here, the Bible is used to proof-text theological positions and ordinary people are not trusted to read or teach it. There will be no spontaneous expansion of the Church. A second danger is the elevation of individual “anointing” over the authority and perspicuity (clarity and ease in understanding) of scripture. Anointing often elevates an obscure verse for the personal benefit of the anointed one; this can lead to a cult of personality. In both cases, ordinary believers are convinced that the Bible is the province of experts beyond their ability to understand, much less share with others.

A respect for scripture is at the foundation for mass movements. There is extensive literature on revivals, people movements, church planting movements, apostolically-gifted people groups and global movements. In every case, observers remark on the importance of the Bible in founding, directing and strengthening large-scale change.

Where there are churches, revival often precipitates a passion for growth and mission sending. Donald McGavran identifies “thorough Bible study” as a precondition for revival: “Revivals in the churches of Europe and America were preceded by long years of careful Bible reading in homes and churches.”<sup>2</sup> The Korean revival led to an explosive period of church planting worldwide.

People movements happen when the greater part of an entire ethnic group become Christ followers over a relatively short period of time. These movements often happen shortly after that group has access to the Bible in their own language for the first time. Committed translators such as Adoniram Judson, William Carey, William Cameron Townsend and their heirs continue to have a remarkable impact on church planting.

More recently, mission strategists have focused on geometric growth, church multiplication, **Discipling A Whole Nation** (DAWN) and church planting movements. In much of this literature, the small group Bible study is a strategic building block. In his survey of church planting movements, David Garrison observed that “in every instance, scriptures provided the rudder for the church’s life, and its authority was unquestioned.”<sup>3</sup>

Philip Jenkins notes that the Church appears to be growing most rapidly in places where the Bible is taken most literally.<sup>4</sup> Where the Bible is taken literally, it is read, understood and lived by ordinary people. Where ordinary people are empowered, the Church grows. Isaiah 55:11 attests to this: *“So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”*

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## The Prayer of Faith

By John Godson

***“If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer”*** (Matthew 21:22).

Faith is the most important quality of a prayer that God answers. Faith is that quality that trusts in and clings to God. Faith attracts God. Without faith it is impossible to please God. It is the raw material upon which the answers to our prayers are produced. Need and circumstances do not move God as much as faith. Jesus has promised that whatsoever we ask, if we believe, it shall be granted us.

There are many passages and stories in the Bible which show God’s reaction to faith and to unbelief. Let us examine a few of them.

### 1. Man Sick of Palsy: Matthew 9:2

*“Some men brought to him a paralytic, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw **their faith**, he said to the paralytic, ‘Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.’”*

Jesus was ministering to crowds. There came some men carrying a paralytic. Mark 2:1-5 gives us a detailed account of what happened. These men wanted Jesus to heal their sick friend. There was no way to get to Jesus so they made a giant hole at the roof so that their friend could be healed. The house was not theirs. They were visitors. Now that is called faith. Jesus noticed it and acted according to it.

### 2. The Woman with the Issue of Blood: Mark 5:24-34

*“So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, ‘If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.’ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, ‘Who touched my clothes?’ ‘You see the people crowding against you,’ his disciples answered, ‘and yet you can ask, Who touched me?’ But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, ‘Daughter, **your faith** has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.’”*

This woman had protracted and profuse menstruation for twelve years. She had suffered much and was treated as an outcast. She had spent all her money on doctors who could not help her. One day she heard of Jesus and pressed her way through the crowd to see him. She touched his garment. Jesus turned around and declared, “Someone has touched me.” Everyone was baffled at the statement.

This is one of the most remarkable stories of the ministry of Jesus. Countless people were pressing on Jesus and nothing happened; yet, one poor woman who believed got Jesus' attention. The reason is faith. Faith attracts the attention of heaven. It makes God stop everything he is doing and, like Jesus, he says, "Someone is praying."

### **3. The Prostitute: Luke 7:48-50**

*"Then Jesus said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' The other guests began to say among themselves, 'Who is this who even forgives sins?' Jesus said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'"*

Although she would be rejected by the religious circle of the day, this woman's faith saved her.

### **Faith in Prayer**

God does not answer according to our prayer; he answers according to our faith. Scripture says, *"Be it done according to your faith," "Your faith has made you whole" and "Your faith has saved you."* Hebrews 11:1-2, 6 says, *"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for....And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."*

Faith involves laying hold of things that are invisible. Without faith we can not please or serve God. The summary of ministry or work for God is believing and trusting in him. "Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe on him whom he has sent' (John 6:29).

### **Building Our Faith**

So how can we build our faith? There are four ways:

1. **Understand that faith is not just a feeling.** Faith is an act of the will. You decide whether to trust or not to trust in someone.
2. **Mediate on and obey God's word.** Faith can be nurtured by these two elements. Romans 10:17 says, *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*
3. **Encourage it with the testimony of others.**
4. **Increase faith with the knowledge of God.** The more we know God, the more we trust and believe in him. We can say with Job, *"Though he slay me, yet I will hope in him"* (13:15).

Unbelief, on the other hand, limits God. Where there is unbelief there are limitations to what God does.

### **Jesus Visits Nazareth: Matthew 13:54-58**

*"Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. 'Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?' they asked. 'Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?' And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, 'Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor.' And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith."*

The Bible shows us that God is mighty. There is nothing too difficult for him. And although Jesus did miracles in various places, when he came to his hometown, he could not do many miracles because of unbelief. My prayer is that we shall all believe. If you believe, nothing—absolutely nothing—shall be impossible for you.

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## **A Mission, a Witch and a Village: The Lasting Effect of Missions**

**By Graham Johnston**

**People often ask me, "When you go off and do these missions, does any lasting good come from it?"** Sadly, many miss out on knowing how to answer that question because their team only visits a locale once and then moves on to greener pastures. Through our fellowship, Subiaco Church in Perth, Western Australia, we have been returning to the same region of Africa, Bungoma, in Northwest Kenya for over ten years. In that time, we have witnessed twenty-three new church plants, an orphanage and school, and countless numbers of lives transformed. Sarah is one of those stories.

Sarah was a witch, making her one of the most powerful and influential persons in her community. Her mother was a witch as was her mother's mother. Young apprentice girls would seek her out when wanting to learn the secrets to her dark practices. Spells and sacred instruments had been passed down from generation to generation. About five years ago, we conducted a mission in her village. Typically, a stage and sound system is set up in the village centre. A number of people, both locals and visitors, present their story of how Christ has impacted their lives. On this occasion, I was called upon to give a challenge to embrace Jesus and receive the new life available through the cross and a commitment to follow him. After the presentation, the audience was asked to come forward by faith. A local pastor instructed the respondents and pointed to a large tree saying, "Next Sunday, we will begin a new church and we will meet right there. You are all welcome."

Among those who responded was Sarah. Immediately it created a stir. Was this witch really serious about following Jesus? Indeed, three days later she agreed to a ceremonial burning of her sacred instruments. This entailed the destruction of all the magical items passed down to her as well as potions and forbidden plants. By doing this in her village, she was making a powerful statement about the superiority of Jesus over the powers of darkness. Some villagers, while being curious, were too frightened even to attend the burning. Pastors and key lay leaders from neighbouring villages were present and the singing, praise and prayer were a sight to behold.

After several years I returned to Bungoma on a follow-up tour. I wanted to encourage the fledgling churches that were started through these missions. As we walked up to this new African building, a number of women came to welcome us, holding a chicken dish and handmade bread. As we exchanged greetings, I recognised Sarah's face. "Are you still following Christ?" I asked with expectation. "Yes," she replied as she covered her mouth, embarrassed by her poor English. Excited to see her again, I immediately asked that a photo be taken of the two of us.

Later, as the more formal program began, the new building was filled with villagers. Only years ago there was no believing witness in this community; today the facility is overflowing with men, women and children giving praise to the Lord. Many approach me to say they were a part of that original group who began meeting under a tree years ago. The pastor who was appointed to spearhead this initiative unfolded the story of the fellowship's progress. Land is always the most difficult acquisition in a case like this; however, someone came forward to donate the property at no cost to the church. Who would surrender such a costly possession that would have been in his or her family for generations? It was Sarah. She was asked to stand and speak in her own dialect. "I wanted to ensure that a living testimony to Jesus would exist in my village so that everyone could know the happiness that I have experienced," she said. A woman who once held sway over a community through fear was now humbling herself by waiting on others with food in hand.

When people ask me, "Is there any lasting difference?" my reply is simply to show them the photo of Sarah and me.

**Graham Johnston** is senior pastor of Subiaco Church in Perth, Western Australia. He is also an associate with [Leighton Ford Ministries](#) and is actively involved in evangelism and leadership training in Australia through [Arrow Leadership Australia](#).

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## PEOPLES OF THE WORLD

### [An Overview of Middle and West Africa](#)

By **Justin Long**

#### **Middle Africa**

Middle Africa is one of the most resource-rich regions on the African continent. The Congo River and its tributaries together drain a greater area than any river system except the Amazon. Oil, gold, uranium, timber, metals, fish and water are found here. It has one of the lowest population densities in the world, and should be one of the wealthiest. Instead, Middle Africa is one of the least-urban, most war-torn, diseased and poverty-stricken regions in the world.

Some ninety-six million people live in nine countries; increasing by three million annually, by 2025 this number will likely rise to 184 million. Two-thirds of the people live rural lives. Fifty million (nearly half the population) are children, and the region has one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates in the world.

Few of Middle Africa's governments are stable. All but the smallest are either mired in or rebuilding from war. Conflict has defined their history for much of the twentieth century. Decades of bloodshed in Angola, the many coups in Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea, military regimes in Central African Republic and Chad, a devastating civil war in Congo-Brazzaville and the many wars and assassinations in Congo-Zaire have all led to an atmosphere of violence. Even today, armies are flowing into this region—particularly into the Great Lakes region where so many wars have been fought. If Middle Africa is to have a better future, peace must be made.

Devastated by coups, wars, repressive governments and mismanagement, it has become the second poorest region in the world after Eastern Africa. Both Angola and Congo-Zaire have enormous resources—and both have succeeded in squandering them. The overwhelming majority of Chad's millions live in abject poverty. Both Chad and Equatorial Guinea have oil resources to develop; however, many aid programs have been terminated due to the mismanagement and corruption that is further sapping their ability to advance. The two biggest economies are Cameroon (which produces thirty percent of Middle Africa's total GNP) and Zaire (which despite its state still produces twenty percent of the area's GNP).

Most in the region have been affected by AIDS. Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Zaire and Gabon all have widespread AIDS epidemics. The disease is decimating the workforce and making orphans of future workers. In most cases, national plans have been organized. However, they have not yet been able to sufficiently respond to the scope of the disease.

#### **Christianity in Middle Africa**

Christianity first came to the region in the 1400s. Portuguese missionaries spread the gospel in the sixteenth century. Modern mission movements spread from the east in the nineteenth century, and the African Independent Churches exploded during the twentieth century. Today, Christianity claims a substantial majority of every country except Chad (which, bordering Egypt, Libya and Sudan, is half Muslim and a quarter Christian, with about fifteen percent holding to older ethnic beliefs), which is a substantial base for Muslim mission

activity. The Church is making gains, although these gains are slipping in Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome & Principe (which are saturated with Christianity but need revival). Less than ten percent of the population is unreached. Many Christians, however, are not actively practicing their faith. Zaire is over ninety percent Christian and yet has descended into the morass of civil war. Still, the enormous number of conversions signals a significant thirst for the water of life.

The people of the region must face the difficult work of peacemaking in order to rebuild this region's infrastructure if any progress toward a better tomorrow is to be had. Education and ethics are needed to help reduce out-of-wedlock births, strengthen family structures and equip today's child-parents to create a better future for their own children. Christians should make serious investment in AIDS ministries and the economy or they may face a future where strong Christian advances are lost. Yet if this is accomplished, Middle Africa is in a key strategic position from which to impact most of the continent.

### **Statistics for the Nine Countries of Middle Africa**

Name	P'00	P'25	C '00	%	C '25	%	75-00	00-25	Issues affecting the future
Angola	13.8	26.8	13.0	94%	25.7	96%	++	++	War recovery, landmines, many resources, poverty, AIDS, corruption
Cameroon	14.9	21.6	8.3	56%	13.1	61%	++	++	Many resources, poverty, secessionists, AIDS, reforms
Central African Republic	3.8	5.3	2.4	65%	3.7	69%	++	++	Unrest/violence, AIDS, undeveloped, lack of education, poverty
Chad	8.2	17.2	1.9	23%	4.1	24%	++	++	Oil, extreme poverty, separatists, Sudan war, AIDS, Islam, droughts
Congo-Brazzaville	3.4	7.4	3.1	90%	6.7	91%	+-	++	Poverty, AIDS, war recovery, corruption
Congo-Zaire	50.1	103.2	47.6	95%	98.7	96%	++	++	Many resources, severe civil war, AIDS, drought, poverty
Equatorial Guinea	0.4	0.8	0.4	89%	0.7	87%	++	+-	Oil, unemployment, poverty, corruption, repression
Gabon	1.3	1.8	1.1	89%	1.6	88%	+-	+-	Resources, wealthy, stable, AIDS, development
Sao Tome & Principe	0.1	0.2	0.1	96%	0.2	94%	+-	+-	Cocoa-development, poverty, debt, political stability

### **West Africa**

West Africa features sixteen countries scattered over twenty percent of Africa's landmass: northern deserts bordering the Sahara, central savannahs and grasslands and southern coasts lightly dusted with tropical rainforests.

The population of the region is exploding: from twenty-seven million in 1900, it has risen to 233 million today and will likely nearly double to 400 million in 2025. Its population will then exceed North America; by 2050 it will have 586 million—more people than all of Europe. Over half live in Nigeria (nearly one in eight Africans is Nigerian). Nearly half (105 million) are children and some forty-two percent (100 million) are urbanized. Nearly 168 megacities are located mainly in the south. Along with Middle Africa, this region has one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates in the world.

West Africa was ruled by several empires, including the Soninke, Soso, Mali and Songhai. The Portuguese arrived in 1445, followed by other European powers. The African slave trade began soon after. Up to World War II, Britain and France controlled much of West Africa; however, between 1957 and 1960 most of the

countries achieved independence. Unfortunately, to date few have achieved political stability or fully developed their countries.

Wars have been or are being fought in Togo, Ivory Coast and Liberia. Most are smaller conflicts than those in Middle or Eastern Africa. Apart from the open warfare, there are many small clashes caused by ethnic and religious unrest.

As a result of this instability, West Africa contributes just fifteen percent of Africa's total GNP. The two largest producers are Ivory Coast (fourteen percent of West Africa's economy) and Nigeria (forty percent of West Africa's economy). Nigerian oil (which makes up ninety percent of Nigeria's export earnings) is a large component of this.

Ten of the seventeen countries have serious AIDS epidemics. The drug trade has a new and growing influence, as Latin American drug lords courier shipments to Europe through West Africa.

### **Christianity in West Africa**

Christianity was first brought by missionaries to West Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Today, West Africa is divided between Islam in the north and Christianity in the south, with a belt of ethnoreligionists and syncretists in between. Many participate in secret occult societies.

Three countries are majority Christian, and five have significant Christian minorities. Nigeria is evenly divided between southern Christians and northern Muslims, with religious conflict erupting where the two meet. The Islamization of some countries and provinces, as well as the general desire to enforce some kind of peace on warring factions, has led to some restrictions on religious (especially Christian) activity. These restrictions are not as severe as those in, for example, Western Asia; nonetheless, they pose an obstacle to the spread of church planting. A larger problem is violence from extremists.

About a third of West Africa has little or no access to the gospel. African mission societies are sending hundreds of workers throughout the west and north and have plans to rapidly increase their numbers. As they do, it is almost certain that religious confrontation will increase.

### **Statistics for the Sixteen Countries of West Africa**

Name	P'00	P'25	C '00	%	C '25	%	75-00	00-25	Issues affecting the future
Benin	7.2	14.3	2.2	30%	4.3	30%	++	++	AIDS, political stability, religious freedom, economic growth
Burkina Faso	11.3	23.2	2.0	17%	5.8	25%	++	+-	Extreme poverty, spiritism, AIDS, Islam (north)
Cape Verde	0.5	0.8	0.4	85%	0.7	95%	+-	++	Drug trade, resource depletion, ecological disasters
Gambia	1.3	2.3	0.1	4%	0.1	4%	++	+-	AIDS, Islam, unemployment, numerous coups, nominalism
Ghana	19.9	31.0	11.4	57%	19.2	62%	++	++	AIDS, development, religious tensions, leadership training
Guinea	8.4	14.9	0.3	3%	0.5	3%	++	++	AIDS, resource management, liberalization, leadership training
Guinea-Bissau	1.4	2.9	0.2	13%	0.4	14%	++	++	AIDS, political stability, poverty, religious freedom
Ivory Coast	16.7	25.1	5.5	33%	8.5	34%	++	++	War, corruption, political instability, Islam, syncretism

Liberia	3.1	5.8	1.2	39%	2.4	41%	++	++	AIDS, war, occult societies, resource management
Mali	11.6	24.0	0.3	3%	0.7	3%	++	++	AIDS, Tuareg unrest, ecological crises, Islamic growth
Mauritania	2.6	5.0	0.0	0%	0.0	0%	+/-	+/-	Poverty, resource scarcity, political instability, relations with Israel
Niger	11.8	26.4	0.1	0%	0.1	0%	++	+/-	AIDS, Tuareg insurgency, famine, poverty, Islamic growth
Nigeria	117.6	190.3	55.1	47%	92.2	49%	++	++	AIDS, ethnic/religious tensions, resource management
Senegal	10.3	17.3	0.6	6%	1.1	6%	++	++	Civil unrest, rapid Islamic growth, religious freedom
Sierra Leone	4.5	8.7	0.5	11%	1.0	11%	++	+/-	One of the poorest countries in the world, in total anarchy
Togo	5.4	9.6	2.4	44%	5.6	59%	++	++	AIDS, poverty, civil war, religious freedom

#### Key for above charts:

**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 West and Central Africa: 520 Least-Reached People Groups Remain

### Overview

West and Central Africa embraces twenty-four countries with more than five hundred least-reached people groups remaining. The countries of Senegal, Mali, Guinea, Gambia, Mauritania and Niger lead the way with over eighty percent of their populations least-reached. Still, in terms of number of people Nigeria has over forty-five million people least-reached, although they represent only 34.7% of the total population of that nation. Islam had already reached the powerful tribes of West Africa long before the French colonized much of the region during the nineteenth century. For many centuries, Islam was the religion of the chiefs and elite since Arabs were primarily interested in profiting from the slave trade—not in making converts. When slavery was forbidden by the colonial powers, Islam spread faster in fifty years than it had in the previous eight centuries. Yet, Islam here may also include animistic traditional religions and practices. Voodoo, fetishes, ancestor worship and idolatry are found here.

The Church has grown rapidly, especially in places like Nigeria which is now a sending base for missionaries to other continents. Two of the major missionary-sending churches are Redeemed Christian Church (which has two million members) and Deeper Life Bible Church (which has over 450,000 members). However, a great challenge remains even in their midst. AIDS in Africa now overshadows the future of the entire continent. Add to that the specter of poverty and one sees the great obstacles those in this region face. Pray that God empowers our brothers and sisters in this region to rise to the challenge with good news and works which lead to transformation.

## Prayer Points

- **Miracles of Healing and Deliverance.** Pray that miracles of healing and deliverance even for those battling HIV/AIDS would open doors for faith.
- **Power over the Demonic Activity.** Pray that believers walk in the Holy Spirit's power over all demonic depression, oppression and attraction of every sort, demonstrating that Jesus is truly king of kings and Lord of lords.
- **Once for all Sacrifice.** Pray that least-reached peoples recognize that Jesus is the lamb of God, the once-for-all sacrifice that forgives all our iniquities and heals all our diseases and that they apply this finished provision to their lives.
- **Binding of all Backlash of the Enemy.** Pray that believers apply their authority in Jesus Christ to bind all backlashes of the enemy as they work to penetrate the strongholds of darkness to deliver the captives and see them transferred to the kingdom of light.
- **Breaking Generational Curses.** Pray that generational curses that have come as a result of idolatry, immorality, injustice and independence from God will be broken and believers will walk in the true freedom of Jesus Christ as a testimony to those who do not yet believe.

## Links

- [Resources](#) to pray and to mobilize prayer and outreach.
- [Discover](#) West and Central Africa's least-reached peoples.
- [Pray](#) for the peoples of this region.
- [Obtain](#) daily prayer guides for peoples of this region.

## Background

### **Islam Advances Across Africa like a Mighty Army**

*(Prepared by Keith Carey and the Ethne staff, for the [Global Prayer Digest](#))*

In West Africa, you will find voodoo, fetishes, ancestor worship and idolatry. But most of the least-reached peoples are adherents to Islam. There are historical reasons for this. For many centuries Islam was the religion of chiefs, sub-chiefs and the elite. Arabs who were making huge profits in the slave trade were not interested in making converts since the Quran explicitly forbids the taking of Muslims as slaves. When slavery was forbidden by the colonial powers, Islam spread faster in fifty years than it had in the previous eight centuries.

In plotting the progress of Islam across Africa, one becomes aware that Islam followed the established trade routes and pilgrimage route of Muslims on the Hajj (one of the Five Pillars of Islam) to Mecca, which is required of all Muslims once during their lifetime. Often they settled for several years in a town to make enough money to continue their journey. They were quick to start Quranic schools with paying students. Africans were attracted to their affluence and sent their children to school. If a prominent African converted to Islam, the individual was given many substantial gifts and assured that he had a trade route to the north and the west. If he was a tradesman, he could break the barrier into trades, which had been monopolized by Muslims.

Islam in Africa can best be described as only the Five Pillars of Islam on top of their animistic traditional religions. In a unique fashion, Islam is very appealing to the tribal people of Africa as it does not require them giving up any of their customs or cultures.

What does Christianity have to offer people bound by fear of curses and illness, misfortune or death brought on by interpersonal relationships gone awry? We have a God who is greater than all the gods. We have a God who is all-knowing, all powerful, ever present and able to take a broken sinner and create a new creature with eternal life who no longer needs to fear the ancestors or nature spirits. Pray that the folk Islamic peoples of Africa will see the need to recognize Jesus for who he is.

### **The Fulani: The Peoples Who Define West Africa**

*(Prepared by Mike Hughes for the [Global Prayer Digest](#))*

With a population of about twenty million, the Fulani peoples of West Africa are generally considered the largest nomadic people group in the world (although since they are nomadic it is hard to have an accurate estimation of their numbers). They are geographically spread across the width of West Africa from Senegal in the west to Chad and Cameroon in the east. No one is sure of their origins. Many think they may have migrated from the region around Egypt or Somalia, as they have a much stronger resemblance to these people than to their other West Africa neighbors. In more recent history they have spread east from Senegal under the Sahara Desert and generally have embraced Islam from the Arabic traders coming across the desert.

The Fulani are traditionally cattle herders and have lived nomadic or semi-nomadic lives taking their animals to find pasture, hence their dispersion across West Africa. While there are many similarities between the Fulani who live in different countries, they have also adapted to each locality. There are roughly fourteen different dialects of the language spoken by the Fulani, but all have a common root. Generally the Fulani are proud of their culture, and Islam is firmly embedded as part of this culture. Because of their nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle they live in hard to reach places. Both of these factors contribute to making the Fulani peoples unreached with the gospel.

My wife and I work among the Fulani of Niger, so I will share some of the distinctive attributes of this subgroup of the Fulani people. The Fulani of Niger are thought to number around one million (about ten percent of Niger's population) and are spread across the country. Linguistically and historically they can be split into two groups, the Western Niger Fulani, who live around the Niger River Valley and migrated from Mali through Burkina Faso, and the Eastern Niger Fulani, who took a longer migration path from Mali via Benin, Nigeria and then up into Niger. Both groups number about 500,000 and would only have several hundred Christians among them. Two separate Bible translations are underway with a joint partnership between [SIM](#) and [Wycliffe Bible Translators](#). To date several books of the New Testament have been published in both dialects. Last year the JESUS Film was produced for both dialects. There have been two national Christian conferences for workers among the Fulani and Fulani believers. At one of them there were around two hundred believers from all over the country gathered for worship, teaching and encouragement.

A number of mission groups work among the Fulani. However, all of us feel insignificant among such a large population of dispersed people. There are few places where the Fulani are a majority. In the same way, there are only one or two churches that could be called Fulani. Most Fulani believers are isolated from one another. Many join churches from other people groups. Literacy rates in Niger are about fourteen percent, but they are even lower among the Fulani; therefore, oral methods of evangelism and discipleship are necessary to form the development of a church among them.

The Fulani have a strong adherence to their particular cultural values, and are often described as proud people. Even in the face of increasingly difficult climatic conditions for their farming and herding lifestyle, they stick tenaciously to their way of life and values. Islam has become part of this value set, although it was not always

this way. Consequently, the Fulani of Niger are often among the poor and marginalized and are slow to adapt or change. This means Christianity has been slow to take root. Outwardly many would admit that the claims of the Bible are true; however, many will face social ostracism for becoming a Christian.

Niger was featured in the world news in 2005 when they had a food crisis. This is not a new thing for Niger, and the Fulani are always badly affected by the variances in the rainfall. Many Fulani families lost most or all their animals and most are still in debt from having to pay very high prices for grain to feed their families. The Fulani of Niger are a needy people in all senses of the term.

Please pray that they will soon experience the truth and peace that only comes through Christ, and that a Fulani church would rise up among them that would reflect Christ in a way that is also Fulani.

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### **Into Their World...The Jula of Mali** **By Laurie Fortunak**

**The Jula of Mali are descendants of the Malinke (Mandingo) inheritors of the ancient Mali empire.** By the 1500s the Jula began settling in towns where they often became politically subservient to the kings and chiefs of other ethnic groups. As a result of living between the Arab world to the north and the black African nations to the south, the Jula have a rich cultural mix which is reflected in their music, dance and artistry.

The name “Jula” means “itinerant trader” and the people are known for their trading abilities. Although trade is done by both men and women, division of labor is typically according to gender: weaving, fighting and studying Islam are performed by men and spinning, cooking and tending to children are performed by women.

The clan is the most important aspect of the community. The Jula are fiercely loyal to their clans and value obedience and honesty. They also have a high view of human dignity.

The Jula still practice polygamy and young people are encouraged to marry within their own clans, preferably between cousins. Girls are typically married by the age of sixteen. Nearly half the population is under the age of fifteen and only thirteen percent of the Jula live beyond the age of forty-five. Because of this, the Jula have great respect for the elderly.

The majority of the Jula are Sunni Muslim. However, twelve percent are what the Jula Muslims call “pagan,” people who hold to traditional animistic beliefs. Only one percent of the Jula are Christians and there are no mission agencies working with the Jula in Mali. Only portions of the Bible have been translated into the Jula language. Pray that Christian workers will finish the task and lead the Jula into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

For more information on the Jula of Mali, visit:

[www.global12project.com/2004/profiles/p\\_code3/208.html](http://www.global12project.com/2004/profiles/p_code3/208.html)

[www.hesed.com/jula.htm](http://www.hesed.com/jula.htm)

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

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# STRATEGY, TRENDS & STATISTICS

## Pentecostals: Missions Movement or Voting Bloc?

By Justin Evans

**From humble beginnings in rural Midwestern America, the Pentecostal movement has grown to represent at least a quarter of all Christians globally, second only to Roman Catholics** (who themselves are a major segment of Renewalists in the form of Catholic Charismatics). Pentecostals were ostracized from the rest of Christianity while the movement was in its infancy. Nevertheless, the movement was founded upon an evangelistic logos, as the baptism in the Holy Spirit is understood to be an empowerment for ministry. Due to remarkably rapid church growth, Pentecostals have shot through adolescence to adulthood, claiming a seat at the Christian roundtable.

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life published **Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals** in October 2006. The report seeks to understand how Pentecostals have become a major political force in Christendom, and will play a prominent role in politics in the years to come. It specifically seeks to challenge the perception that Pentecostals are “largely apolitical in their outlook.” The ten countries surveyed in the report are: Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Philippines, South Africa, South Korea and the United States.

The report classifies Pentecostals as “closely resembling evangelical Protestants in many of their doctrinal beliefs,” but distinguished in their affirmation of miraculous signs of the Spirit, such as speaking in tongues, prophesying and divine healing. Diversity within the theological tradition has given way to two generally accepted groups of classification. First, the term “Pentecostal” is used to refer to those belonging to intrinsically Pentecostal denominations (such as the Assemblies of God or an independent indigenous church). The second group, “Charismatics,” refers to those who share many of the distinctively Pentecostal experiences, but still remain within mainstream Protestant, Catholic or Orthodox denominations. Both Pentecostals and Charismatics are referred to under the blanket term “Renewalist.”

### Distinguishing Characteristics

There are experiences and other aspects of their faith that distinguish Renewalists from other Christians. There are three characteristically Pentecostal religious experiences:

1. **Divine healings.** In all ten countries surveyed, over half of Pentecostals claim to have experienced or witnessed a divine healing. In seven of the countries the number is over seventy percent.
2. **Divine revelations.** In eight of the countries, over half of Pentecostals claim to have received a direct revelation from God.
3. **Exorcisms.** Over half of Pentecostals in seven of the countries claim to have experienced or witnessed an exorcism.

### The Bible and Evangelism

Renewalists (particularly Pentecostals) are also distinguished by biblical literalism. A high percentage of Pentecostals believe that the Bible is the actual word of God and to be taken literally. For example, ninety-four percent of Renewalists in Nigeria believe this. The Philippines is the only country where the number does not exceed seventy percent, and in seven of the countries it is over eighty percent. This is contrasted with other Christians, where it ranges from thirty-seven percent in the United States and Chile to eighty-two percent in Nigeria. In seven of the countries, fewer than seventy percent of non-Renewalists are biblical literalists; and in four of the countries the number is fewer than sixty percent.

While the above statistics help to qualify Renewalists against the greater Christian population, they are not the most telling data in the report. According to the report, in eight of the countries the majority of Pentecostals share their faith at least once a week. Six of the countries report that at least forty percent share their faith more than once a week; in five of the countries at least twenty percent report sharing their faith everyday.

This should not be surprising given Pentecostalism's history of missionary activity. For example, at the first General Council of the Assemblies of God (the world's largest Pentecostal denomination) in Hot Springs, Arkansas, USA, interest in foreign mission was one of the chief motives for forming together as a denominational body. If measured solely in terms of sheer size, Renewalism is decidedly marked by a commitment to advancing the gospel.

### **Renewalist Population**

The population of Renewalists surveyed varies from five percent in India to sixty percent in Guatemala.<sup>1</sup> Within Protestantism, the size of Renewalists ranges from twenty-eight percent in the United States to eighty-five percent in Guatemala. Within six of the countries surveyed, Renewalists account for over half of the Protestant segment. In five of the countries, Renewalists exceed two-thirds of the Protestant bloc. Considering the relatively short history of Pentecostalism, this growth rate is indeed staggering.

### **Political Involvement**

Perhaps some of the misconceptions about Renewalists' political involvement are in their eschatological outlook. In six of the countries, over half of Pentecostals believe that Jesus will return in their lifetime. They also gain much of their distinctive doctrine from Acts 2, where Peter quotes the apocalyptic words of the prophet Joel. This apocalyptic mentality has perhaps given rise to the perception of Renewalists as being highly isolationist. It is indeed true that many apocalyptic communities have been characterized by a bewilderment of existing government structures and withdrawal to await the eschaton (consider the community at Qumran, Jonestown and the Millerites). While to some extent this same mentality has plagued Renewalists, they have also shown fierce commitment to evangelization, which by its very nature is antithetical to isolationism.

In all ten of the countries surveyed, Renewalists are shown to express as much support for religious involvement in political and public life as other Christians. In eight of the countries at least sixty percent of Pentecostals support expressing religious views in politics; over seventy percent in five of the countries. In comparison, only seven of the countries have sixty percent of other Christians expressing support for religious involvement in politics; and in only one country over seventy percent of non-Renewalists.

### **Social and Moral Concern**

The report examined three areas of social and moral concern. In nine of the countries, the majority of Pentecostals say that drinking alcohol is never justified; in six countries the number is over seventy percent; in four countries it is over eighty percent. By contrast, in only five countries the majority of non-Renewalist Christians say drinking alcohol is never justified; only two countries over seventy percent; three countries are under forty percent.

In six of the countries the majority of Pentecostals say that divorce is never justified. Four of those countries are over seventy percent. Among non-Renewalists only four countries have majorities opposing divorce in all situations.

Religious expression in a political environment is a natural extension of missionary expansion. The Kingdom of God is more than spiritual; it is also material: "*He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*" (Micah 6:8). By their very nature, missionary movements are intrinsically political, insofar as political involvement includes advancing social and moral concerns. Consider the words of Isaiah: "*Learn to do good; seek justice, correct*

*oppression; vindicate the orphan, defend the widow,*” (Isaiah 1:17). It should be no surprise that a missions movement is at its core concerned with social matters.

#### **Endnote**

1. All statistics were taken as national samples indicative of the country as a whole. The only exception to this was in the case of India, where the survey was limited to the states Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Meghalaya (districts known to have a disproportionately high Christian demographic).

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## **LAUSANNE REPORTS**

### **Global Missions Health Conference Focuses on Whole Person Missions**

**By Rebecca Barnes**

#### **Dr. Florence Muindi remembers the bell on the missionary church in her rural Kenyan community.**

Growing up she attended Sunday school with the missionaries’ kids. And she remembers the missionaries who staffed the medical clinic. While their impact on the impoverished area was substantial, it was also limited because (1) the approach was not inter-connected between the physical, spiritual and social needs of the people and (2) the work ended when the missionaries went back home.

Muindi told the story of her own mission work in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where from the beginning she wanted to take a more holistic approach. “Right from the onset we realized this would be holistic ministry,” Muindi told the audience at the transformational development pre-conference for the annual Global Missions Health Conference (GMHC) at Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky, USA, 9-11 November 2006.

“We realized it would take an integrated approach for change to occur,” Muindi added.

Holistic mission became the focus of the three-day event that drew more than 2,400 students, mission workers, agencies, organization representatives and healthcare professionals. The GMHC is the largest medical missions conference of its kind. As a plenary speaker, Muindi spoke about her experience in holistic missions, calling it “The Emerging Strategy.” She described her prayerful work as centered not on projects, but on a total commitment to God and on service to the poor that would empower them rather than create dependency or imply superiority on the part of the missionary. “I want to serve the poor at a level that they can identify with me,” Muindi said.

Her long-term commitment, evident faith practice and close relations with the poor translated into a holistic model that she said goes back to Jesus. “It was about being Christ to the people,” she added. Her work led to the formation of [Life in Abundance, International](#), which is now operating in several African countries and in hundreds of communities.

While the history of traditional missions must be overcome in the Developing World in much the same way that the colonial model must be overcome, holistic models are working in more and more areas—a sign that the Spirit of God is involved. “The strategy for missions has shifted,” Muindi emphasized.

Community-based organizations and training national believers in church planting are two examples Muindi cited. By demonstrating, training, delegating and enabling disciples, today's missionaries are emulating Christ. This model also includes phasing out ministry and glorifying God the Father. "This is the model he left us with," Muindi reminded her audience. "Transformational strategy is what God seems to be approving. He is also actively spitting out what is not transformational."

### **Holistic Ministry in Disaster Relief**

Perhaps the place where this distinction is most obvious is in disaster relief. While recent worldwide disasters have brought great opportunities for global outreach, they have also underlined the importance of a transformational development approach. Dr. Ted Yamamori, an advisor to the GMHC and former international director for the [Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization](#), noted the upswing of evangelical response in particular to worldwide disaster and the subsequent consideration of mission philosophy.

"More evangelical ministries and churches are recognizing the importance of holistic ministries," he said. However, he added, this is neither new nor emerging. Rather, it can be traced back to the 1974 Lausanne Covenant and further back to Christ's ministry.

What may be new, at least for evangelicals, and especially for nationals now involved in missions, is a reversal of the old model of preaching and then serving, to a holistic model of serving then preaching, Yamamori shared.

### **Holistic Ministry and Compassion**

According to Steve Saint, son of martyred missionary Nate Saint, "Half of the world's population does not know God loves them and the best way to tell them is to show them compassion." He echoed the call to holistic mission during his sessions at the GMHC.

"We have an incredible opportunity in front of us now to partner as true partners with our brothers and sisters all over the world," Saint encouraged his audience. He is working to train indigenous people in dentistry and basic medical procedures and prescriptions through his company, ITEC.

Partnering with nationals is important in Dr. David Thompson's work as director of the [Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons](#), an interdenominational and international organization dedicated to establishing surgical training programs for African doctors at existing Christian hospitals in Africa.

Thompson called for compassion, but cautioned Christian missionaries to have pure motives and not to view compassion as a tool for evangelism. "We need to be treating the sick because we love them and because we love them we tell them about Jesus, too," he said. Thompson's plenary session focused on inspirational missionary histories as examples of sacrificial Christian lives. An estimated three hundred people committed themselves to full-time mission work in response to Thompson's call for new missionaries.

### **Holistic Ministry in the United States**

In addition to global medical missions, many at the GMHC learned about transforming their medical work in the United States to include whole person care.

Dr. Dan Fountain, who chaired the pre-conference, said that along with this type of work worldwide, "This is a model that needs to expand right here in the US." As director of the Global Health Training Program at King College in Bristol, Tennessee, USA, Fountain has been instrumental in developing workshops to train health professionals in serving the poor domestically and internationally.

Dr. Harvey Elder, from Loma Linda, California, USA, and Dr. Sherry O'Donnell, from St. Joseph, Missouri, USA, led a breakout session entitled, "Care for the Whole Person," in which they discussed in detail how

healthcare professionals in their own culture can incorporate the spiritual and emotional aspects of care into their practice. According to O'Donnell, spiritual questions become a part of patient histories and prayer becomes a part of an office visit.

“Sometimes as Christians we say a prayer at the end and say that’s care for the whole person,” she added, “It’s not. Causes of illnesses are multi-dimensional. We have to involve therapy for each of these dimensions.” Addressing the whole person is its own reward and joy, Elder shared. “This is why you went to school to become a healing person.”

“It’s time we take back healthcare for the United States,” O’Donnell added.

This year’s GMHC also provided exhibitors and participants with a new web-based format to communicate job openings, short-term volunteer opportunities, training options, equipment and supplies, services and more on the [www.medicalmissions.com](http://www.medicalmissions.com) Mobilization Center. The networking opportunities present at the GMHC continue in part through this new forum.

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## **LEADERSHIP MEMO**

### **Aspen Glow**

**By Lon Allison**

**One of the largest organisms on planet earth is an aspen tree.** Found throughout the United States, aspen trees shimmer in the spring and summer, turn a splendorous gold in the autumn and shed their leaves in the winter cold. One aspen tree in Utah (USA) weighs over six thousand tons (that's twelve million pounds!). How can an aspen be so large and yet live on average only one hundred years? The answer is because an aspen tree is actually a limb that grows both into the air and into the soil, sending its roots both deep and wide. Thus, it gives birth to another limb. Over and over again goes the process. One such aspen has birthed more than forty thousand other limbs, each appearing to be its own tree. When we see such an aspen on a mountainside it looks to be a large grove of trees. In actuality it is only one aspen tree. The original limb dies almost unseen amidst its children, while the limbs it births go on for thousands of years.

Of course there is a leadership lesson here. We are best at being leaders, freely giving ourselves to birthing and nourishing other leaders. Such leaders care little about who gets the credit for ministry success, as long as the kingdom grows. They market neither their own name nor their achievements; rather, they gather limbs all around them until soon they blend into the glorious beauty of God's larger work. In today's leadership literature we call such leaders "mentors." A dear mentor in my life, Dr. Leighton Ford, taught me of the aspen through his words and deeds. I am grateful for him and credit him for the analogy.

As a result, I see aspens emerging throughout the kingdom Church worldwide. Today, I am especially grateful for one aspen-leader I met nearly ten years ago. Dr. Mel Lorentzen was a distinguished professor of literature at Wheaton College (Wheaton, Illinois, USA). Mel had many talents; he could write, teach, preach and organize ministry with astonishing effect. He served as one of the first leaders of the **Billy Graham Center**, where I now act as director. In fact, he led much of the work behind the scenes to build the Center's impressive structure. He also started the Institute for Strategic Evangelism, a vanguard department of the Center's ministries. Mel's leadership was spread richly and broadly in many ventures close to home and in far away places.

However, I did not know Mel in any of those roles. Rather, I met him when he was "retired." Re-fired is a better word. He was full of energy. I especially remember how his eyes twinkled when he spoke either personally or in a public setting. His mind was fully engaged, his passion for Christ and his kingdom undiminished. What I most valued, however, were the personal times together either in my office or over lunch at the community center where he lived. He listened deeply to my musings about life and ministry. He was probably quite amused by me and my sometimes silly rantings. He tenderly spoke into my life, gave careful and thoughtful advice regarding the Billy Graham Center and deepened my love of literature and the arts. I loved Jesus and life more because of Mel. I miss him. Heaven is richer since he left us, but we are, I am afraid, lessened.

And yet Mel is still with us. You see, he was an aspen. His memories, his teachings and even some of his carefully saved wealth lives on. I was filled with gratitude and yet not surprised when part of his estate was given to the Billy Graham Center nearly a year ago. If you are reading these words in Lausanne World Pulse (LWP) you may give thanks to God for Mel, because his gift is providing you with several months of inspiration, instruction and interconnection. Each monthly issue of LWP costs nearly \$9,000USD to produce. And yet anyone around the world can read it for free. Everyone reading LWP is blessed through the giant aspen that was Mel and others like him.

Ponder the aspen and its maker. Go and do likewise.

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