

LausanneWorldPulse.com

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

January 2008

PUBLISHER'S MEMO

War, Genocide, Trauma...Gospel?

By Lon Allison

There is no room for the word “gospel” in the title above, any more than there was room for Jesus in Bethlehem. No room remains for hope and certainly not for happiness. Fredrick Buechner writes, “The weight of these sad days all but crushes the life out of the gospel.”

I sat with a sad young man this week. At age thirty, hope has been wrung out of him. Following a degree from a Christian college, he and his young wife went to Africa to serve the poor and promote justice and development. But the war, genocide and resultant trauma sucked the life out of them. This was exacerbated by personal crisis with the loss of a young child. Although they continually cried out for God, they saw little evidence of the kingdom advancing. What they saw was war, genocide and little gospel results. Trauma resulted.

Recently, a 19-year-old man entered a shopping mall in Omaha, Nebraska (USA) and shot and killed nine people before taking his own life. He had just been fired from his job and recently separated from his girlfriend. From what we know, he was not a victim of war or genocide; however, his trauma—compounded by a childhood bereft of loving parents—has left families, a city, and in some ways, a nation, paralyzed. How do we speak the gospel in such sadness?

The Bad News of the Gospel

There is bad news in the good news (gospel). The bad news is that persons, societies and even creation itself is infected with evil. The bad news says that all earthly attempts to eradicate this evil have failed. War, genocide and trauma are the effects of such evil. The bad news says that the Creator God is not pleased with the evil and is wholly committed to war against it. He will punish all evil and evildoers. The Christian gospel starts with such bad news.

The Good News of the Gospel

But good news follows and in a sense, consumes it. This Just God who hates, wars against and punishes all perpetrators of evil, surprises the universe by taking the evil onto himself, bearing the penalty and punishment. This is the shocking truth we speak in gospeling. God himself steps into the evil and conquers it by letting its full weight of sadness befall him. It befalls him, but it does not destroy him.

In truth, this all powerful, sin-bearing God will break evil's power and curse. In fact, since this historical process occurred in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, evil's grip has been slowly loosening. We do not always see its effect, because evil still strikes and we shudder under its enormity. But it IS breaking. We see the in-breaking of good in small and ever-larger ways—in unearned smiles, shelters for the poor and societies adopting good and just policies. A bit here and a bit there, but we'll take good, bit by bit. We read the promises of evil's final collapse in the sacred prophecies:

“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’” (Revelation 21:3-4)

And hence, we find hope seeping into our sorrows.

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NEWS BRIEFS

AROUND THE WORLD: Gospel Communications Launches Volunteer Matching Site

[Gospel Communications](#) is launching an online volunteer [matching site](#) in partnership with [TechMission](#) to match Christians with volunteer opportunities in ministries serving under-resourced communities. Potential volunteers can search over 2,200 volunteer and short-term missions opportunities from over 1,300 organizations. The site is in partnership with TechMission's [ChristianVolunteering.org](#), which is the first major website to match volunteers with Christian volunteer service opportunities. According to the Corporation for National and Community Service, the value of the donated time of faith-based volunteers in 2005 was US\$51.8 billion dollars. [ChristianVolunteering.org](#)'s partners serve over thirty-five million low-income individuals each year. In addition to matching volunteers to local volunteer opportunities, the site also has sections for short-term missions opportunities, virtual volunteering opportunities and volunteer opportunities for church small groups. ([Christian Newswire](#))

ETHIOPIA: GRN Team Records Gospel in Twenty-four Languages

Three Global Recordings Network (GRN) recordists from Sierra Leone recently traveled to Ethiopia, where they recorded the gospel in twenty-four languages during a six-week period. Three Ethiopian believers assisted the team on “The Sheba Recording Project” by serving as readers, translators and a driver. In most of the areas the team visited, the people they encountered were animists. In some villages they were warmly received; in others, they were rejected and asked to leave. ([Global Recordings Network](#))

FRANCE: Faith-based Organizations Not Using Assets to Fullest

Faith-based organizations have failed to use the power of their investment funds to transform global money markets, leaders of Christian, Jewish and Buddhist groups have been told at a conference on ethical investment in Paris. "The great faiths wield enormous economic power in stock and shares," Joost Douma, secretary general of the International Interfaith Investment Group (3iG) told representatives of more than twenty faith-based groups. "The assets of 3iG's members alone are equivalent to more than the Bank of England's entire foreign currency and gold reserves." ([Ecumenical News International](#))

GERMANY: Charismatic and Pentecostal Christians among Most Faithful Churchgoers

Charismatic and Pentecostal Christians are among Germany's most faithful churchgoers. Although they make up only slightly more than one percent of all twenty-six million Protestants, they account for twenty percent of the worshippers on an average Sunday. These figures were released during the annual gathering of the "Circle of Charismatic Leaders" meeting 3-5 December 2007 in Kassel. The thirty-five leaders represent approximately 300,000 Charismatic and Pentecostal Christians from mainline, evangelical and independent churches. The mainline Protestant churches have twenty-five million members on their rolls. About four percent worship on a regular Sunday. Catholics go to church in greater numbers; fourteen percent of the 26.6 million Catholics attend mass. ([ASSIST News Service](#))

HONG KONG: Fifty Million Bibles Produced

Celebrations are planned in China to mark the production of more than fifty million Bibles in the People's Republic by the Amity Printing Company, a joint venture between the [United Bible Societies](#) and the [Amity Foundation](#), a Chinese Christian agency. "After the cultural revolution of 1966 to 1976, many Chinese Christians are doing their best to take the chance to read the Bible," Qiu Zhonghui, general secretary of the Amity Foundation, said. ([Ecumenical News International](#))

MAURITIUS: Bible Society Responds to Rise in Violence

Violence pe briz lavenir nou zanfan (Violence is ruining our children's future) is the theme of a campaign launched in October 2007 by the Bible Society of Mauritius in response to a rise in violent crime. "Cases reported to the police clearly indicate that there is an upsurge of violence in this country," said Bible Society executive director Marc Etive. "This is the result of a profound sense of ill-being in our society. There is an urgent need to help people channel their energy in the right direction in order to reach their full potential as human beings. The Bible Society's partners in the campaign include the Council of Religions, KINOUETE (an organization that rehabilitates ex-prisoners), the police department and the National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers. The Bible Society and its partners have printed three thousand posters and 100,000 brochures, which will be distributed across the country. ([Bible Society](#))

NETHERLANDS: Ten Days with the Bible Travels the Country

Quizzes, television programs, dance workshops, Bible reading marathons and more were used to encourage people to engage with the Bible during the recent *10 Days with the Bible* event organized by the Netherlands Bible Society. Across the country, *10 Days with the Bible* events brought God's word into venues such as schools, shopping centers, marketplaces and homes for the elderly. Many churches also celebrated Bible Sunday during the same period. Supporting materials provided both digitally through a dedicated website and in print ensured that both organizers and participants were guided and inspired. Firmly locating *10 Days with the Bible* within its overall Bible engagement strategy, the Bible Society also used this initiative as the launch pad for a project designed to support Bible work in Eastern Europe. During the ten days, [United Bible Societies](#) translation consultant Dr. Marijke de Lang and Dr. Marina Lomova, who works in Moscow for the Institute for Bible Translation, toured the country giving presentations on translation work in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and Central Asia. ([Bible Society](#))

PHILIPPINES: WCC General Secretary Speaks on Christianity in Asia and Africa

Asia and Africa may become the center of gravity for twenty-first century Christianity, says [World Council of Churches](#) (WCC) general secretary the Rev. Samuel Kobia, who has challenged Philippine church leaders to prepare for this shift. "Christianity is declining in Europe but growing in Asia and Africa," Kobia, a Methodist from Kenya, told bishops and other church leaders in Manila. The WCC leader said that church buildings in Europe are being sold to Muslims, who are converting them into mosques, and to business people, who are transforming the churches into hotels, restaurants and other commercial centers. On the other hand, Filipino churches have begun to spread their reach overseas as they seek to minister to Filipinos seeking overseas jobs. ([Ecumenical News International](#))

SWITZERLAND: Caring for the Aging Population in Europe

Europe's largest grouping of churches has noted the continent's steadily growing proportion of people over the age of sixty-five and is calling for the rediscovery of "the interdependence between generations." The executive committee of the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches said in a statement on 29 November 2007 that less than three percent of Europe's population was over sixty-five a generation ago, but that by 2050 it could be twenty percent, with only half of the population of working age. "Such changes bring new perspectives to much older human questions such as 'How should we view old age? What is the status of the elderly in our societies? How do we care for their needs?'" the CEC committee said after adopting a position paper on "Aging and the care for the elderly." ([Ecumenical News International](#))

UNITED KINGDOM: Walking School Bus Plan for Green Church of the Year

The first parish in England to be named the Green Church of the Year took steps to reduce its carbon footprint eighteen months ago with a "walking school bus" scheme for adults to walk children to school rather than driving them there in cars. Sixty separate daily car journeys have been eliminated since the Rev. Cathy Horder and other leaders set up a roster to escort the children to school. Since then, Holy Trinity (Anglican) Church at Cleeve near Bristol has switched to a green energy supplier, run its own recycling scheme and campaigned against the extension of the Bristol airport. ([Ecumenical News International](#))

UNITED STATES: Third Annual Saddleback Global Summit on AIDS & The Church

The third annual Saddleback Global Summit on AIDS & The Church was recently held with a challenge from Dr. Rick and Mrs. Kay Warren to the more than 1,700 attendees for the Church to lead with love in the global response to HIV/AIDS. Warren emphasized that his church did not do this conference for a cause, but rather for a person, Jesus Christ. "If you want to know how much Jesus loves people with AIDS, just look at the cross," he said. "It all comes down to whether you accept the world's or Jesus' response to AIDS. The world's response is A.I.D.S.: Avoidance, Intolerance, Distance and Superstition. But Jesus' mandate to respond to people with AIDS is for us to replace each of those with H.O.P.E.: Help, Openness, Presence and Education." The two-and-a-half-day event featured more than ninety international speakers, including Sen. Hillary Clinton; Her Excellency, Jeanette Kagame, First Lady of Rwanda; Her Excellency, Maureen Mwanawasa, First Lady of Zambia; Ambassador Mark Dybul, U.S. global AIDS coordinator; Dr. Peter Piot, UNAID executive director; Dr. Robert Redfield, Institute of Human Virology, University of Maryland at Baltimore; and Pastor John Ortberg from Menlo Park Presbyterian Church in California. The Summit remains the only HIV/AIDS conference worldwide to be built entirely on a practical "local church-based" strategy designed to mobilize millions of congregations around the world for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. ([ASSIST News Service](#))

UNITED STATES: Majority of Teens Okay Occasional Dishonest and Violent Behavior

A significant percentage of American teenagers, who are confident in their ability to make ethical decisions, regard dishonest and even violent behavior as necessary for success, according to the fifth annual Junior Achievement/Deloitte Teen Ethics Survey. The majority of teens surveyed (seventy-one percent) say they feel fully prepared to make ethical decisions when they enter the workforce. Yet thirty-eight percent of that group believe it is sometimes necessary to cheat, plagiarize, lie or even behave violently in order to succeed. Nearly one-quarter (twenty-three percent) of all teens surveyed think violence toward another person is acceptable on some level. Of those who think so, the justifications for violence include settling an argument (twenty-seven percent) and revenge (twenty percent). ([Deloitte & Touche USA LLP](#))

UNITED STATES: Pat Robertson Steps Down as CEO of CBN

Pat Robertson, founder of the [Christian Broadcasting Network](#) (CBN), has relinquished his duties as Chief Executive Officer of the network. He will continue on as chairman of the board. His son, Gordon Robertson, was named the new CEO. As chairman, Pat Robertson will continue active involvement in the ministry he founded as well as the presidency of Regent University. Gordon Robertson lived in Manila in the Philippines for five years and was placed in charge of CBN's Asian operations in China, India, Indonesia and Southeast Asia. He has assumed expanded responsibilities to include the production of CBN's flagship program, The 700 Club, its national and international news and its digital media division. ([ASSIST News Service](#))

THEMED ARTICLES: PROCLAIMING CHRIST IN AN ERA OF WAR, TRAUMA AND GENOCIDE

[The Church as an Instrument for Redemption, Not Administration](#)

By The Rev. Canon Andrew White

We had lunch with one of the Archbishops in Baghdad last week to talk about the struggle Christians in Iraq have and the way the Church is just trying to survive. During the conversation (which was accompanied by terrible food!), the Archbishop made this extraordinary remark: “The Church is an instrument for redemption, not administration.” My mind went back to my days as a vicar and later as a Canon in the Church of England. I was challenged concerning the hours I had spent in administration compared to the hours I had spent seeking the work of redemption.

Clarity at the Iraqi Anglican Church Council

After lunch, we moved on to talk about issues in our Iraqi Anglican Church council, the only church council in the country to cut across the Iraqi Coalition divide. The members of the council are Iraqi, American and British. My mind went back to the Parish Church Council in Clapham, England. That council, although very good, was very focused on administration. What would today's meeting be like?

The meeting commenced; each participant gave an account of what was happening in his congregation. Then, without any preparation, the main item of the agenda became clear: How do we stop our leaders in St. George's Memorial Church in Baghdad from being kidnapped and killed? Our people are increasingly going hungry and relying on the church for everything—food, water, medicine and rent money. Our relief work through the church has radically increased; however, supplying the needs of the people involves huge risks. All of us stopped discussion for a moment, realizing that most of our church leaders have been killed or kidnapped. Oh, how difficult it is for those of us from the West to accept the risk of death for the ministry of redemption! Although all of us are aware of danger and risk (you cannot be ignorant of this if you live in Iraq), I wonder if we are really prepared to take real risks for the sake of redemption.

Challenged by Redemption

After the Church council ended, we found ourselves seriously challenged. Yes, I was challenged like I had never been at any church meeting before. My mind went back to the previous weekend at church. Many of our children had their first communion that day. They processed into church in their wonderful white robes, singing the simple word, “Hallelujah!” Some of the children were in tears. As they came to the front of the church, I asked one of the girls why she was crying. She told me it was because it was the most important day of her life and she knew that Jesus was walking with her. Their song was a song of redemption and their tears were tears of redemption. My mind returned again to the words of the Archbishop. These words challenge us here and they should challenge the Church around the world.

Fais, our lay pastor at St. Mark's, is very concerned about the redemption of our people. He knows that the gospel has always been dangerous and that there has always been kidnapping and murder; however, he is prepared to take this risk for the sake of redemption. Indeed, we must have administration; however, we must not forget the key purposes of the Church of Christ: to share the good news of Jesus, to bring redemption, to change lives and to take risks. Here, in one of the most dangerous places in the world, the gospel is simple: we love God because he first loved us.

I think back to the words of my mentor, Donald Coggan. Every time we parted, he would say, “Take risks, not care.” I hope I have done this and I pray we all will do this more and more when it comes to sharing the good news of Jesus with the world.

The Rev. Canon Andrew White is president and CEO of the [Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East](#), chaplain of St. Georges Church Baghdad, Anglican/Episcopal chaplain of the International Zone Baghdad and senior advisor in Inter Religious Affairs to the Prime Minister of Iraq. Over the past few years he has acted as a negotiator in many conflict situations, including the siege of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the riots between Muslims and Christians in Northern Nigeria. In recent years, he has been awarded several significant prizes for his peace work, including the US Cross of Valor, the Tanenbaum Peace Maker in Action Prize, the International Sternberg Prize and The ICCJ Prize for Sustained Intellectual Contribution to Jewish Christian Relations and in 2003 the Three Faith's Forum Prize for Inter-

Bringing a Relevant and Holistic Message of Hope to a Broken World: A Case Study in Uganda **By Dana Ryan**

A 19-year war in northern Uganda, initiated by the LRA (Lord's Resistance Army) against the government of Uganda, has subjected its people to brutality and violence beyond imagination. Joseph Kony, the leader of the LRA, abducts children from their homes to use as soldiers and sex slaves; sadly, since the start of the conflict, an estimated fifty thousand children have been abducted. Once the children are kidnapped, they are taken to a training camp where LRA soldiers beat and often disfigure them. Many of these children are forced to kill. They receive little food even while working up to twelve hours a day and girls given to LRA officers as sex slaves are regularly raped. Girls who escape often return as child mothers with children they conceived as the “wives” of LRA rebels.

Proclaiming Christ to Traumatized and Victimized Children

How do we, as Christians, proclaim the message of Christ in this context? How do we tell a child who has been abducted, traumatized and forced to kill that there is the hope of a kingdom of truth and light beyond the dark kingdom they have seen and experienced? Where do we even start?

While we know the gospel holds the power to bring freedom, hope and light, we must deliver the message while addressing the reality of a child who has been engaging in guerilla warfare or who has been sexually violated and abused. We must face all truth—even the truth of a broken, depraved world, where children are exploited and power is used for corruption.

During Jesus' ministry, he addressed the realities of his day head-on. He stood up for the rights of children (Luke 18:16) and rebuked corrupt religious leaders (Matthew 23:13-29). He proclaimed God's kingdom with relevance. His example shows us how to declare the message of Christ as we walk in a world suffering from the consequences of sin.

As Jesus interacted with the crowds, he healed the sick and fed the hungry. He met the needs of the whole person. His attention to both physical and spiritual needs emphasizes the fact that a relationship with God involves the entire individual. We especially see this in Jesus' admonishment to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30). We cannot speak to the needs of the soul while ignoring the needs of the body.

Holistic Evangelism in Uganda

Confronted with the conflict in Uganda, **Food for the Hungry** sought for a way to speak God's message in a relevant, holistic manner to those most affected. Food for the Hungry learned that child mothers in Uganda who escape from the LRA continue to suffer even after they obtain freedom. These women often feel they have no control over their situation and express feelings of guilt, shame and hopelessness. In addition, they face social stigmas due to sexually transmitted diseases which lower their chances of marriage. They desperately need God's truth.

In response, Food for the Hungry implemented a residential rehabilitation center called the New Life Center in Kitgum, Uganda, to provide holistic development and psychosocial support to formerly-abducted child mothers and their children. Food for the Hungry works with other organizations, community leaders, church leaders and families to rehabilitate the women emotionally, spiritually, educationally and psychologically. Even after "graduating" from the residential care center, child mothers receive ongoing follow-up and counseling as needed.

The New Life Center provides a safe, secure, temporary residence where child mothers can live with their children and participate in:

- Literacy and catch-up classes
- Home economic and preventative health care classes
- Christian psychosocial counseling
- Nursery care for children of child mothers
- Technical training for child mothers based on their strengths and experiences
- Health clinics and HIV/AIDS counseling and prevention

Mary, a child mother, entered the New Life Center after escaping from the LRA and living in an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp. Her story highlights the need for loving, long-term care to address the physical and emotional wounds suffered by abducted children:

In 1995, I was abducted. Three of us from the same family were taken. They took us to Sudan. When we reached Sudan they divided us into different groups and we were given to men. Of the three of us, two of my sisters were able to return to Uganda, but they kept me there. They said I looked like I wanted to escape. I was given to a man and had a child, Estella. Then I had Jack, my second child. From Sudan, we all left and headed back to Uganda. But instead of entering directly into Uganda, they took us to a hill. From there, life was very difficult. I had two kids and I had to carry them and all my belongings. It was too much. Every day we were bombarded by soldiers and we had to keep moving with all our luggage and children. We were frightened for our lives. They decided to divide us into two groups. One remained in Sudan, the other in Uganda. I went to Uganda. When we were entering Uganda, they give me six soldiers because they thought I would escape with my kids.

In Uganda, we were being followed by soldiers every day. We had no time to prepare food or to rest. It was like this every day—walking like this for hours and hours. It was horrible. One day we were trying to hide under a tree and a plane dropped something out of the plane and it hit me. I began to cry very loudly. I was very hurt. They said if I continued crying they would kill me. So I hid my tears and kept quiet.

Then another attack came and I decided not to run. I just stood there, not caring. I was standing in an open place but they did not target me. Then another plane came and dropped something and many people were injured. They decided to move us to another location. From there, I decided I needed to escape.

One of my friends tried to escape but was rearrested and brought back. She was beaten in front of us. When that girl was being beaten, she told them that I was one of the ones trying to escape. Then we were all beaten. I prayed that God would help me and take me away from this group.

I prayed like this over and over again. A group of us decided to escape together and I was their leader. We prayed to God that he would help us. When the leaders heard we were trying to escape, they decided to relocate us.

When we moved, we saw a plane coming. Immediately, the soldiers began to shoot at us and the plane started to bombard us. When everyone was running we went the opposite direction. I thought I was running alone, but the other four girls saw me and followed me. We had no food or sleep for three days. The children who were young had no strength to walk. The LRA soldiers followed us and were instructed to kill us when they found us. We

found some children who gave us cassava. I told them we had escaped from the LRA and begged them not to take us to the soldiers. Instead, I asked them to take us to the local consulate (LC). A man did.

I am still traumatized by the things that happened in the bush. I still have nightmares. When I hear a loud noise, I get scared. I don't feel safe in the IDP camp. The people tell us that if the LRA finds us, we will be killed. I have seen a lot of people being killed.

I am looking forward to coming to the New Life Center to learn how to better care for my children and to learn how to make a living for myself. My dream is to become a doctor. If it is God's will, he will provide the way. After all, he provided a way for me to escape.

The stories the child mothers tell are horrific and difficult to hear. It is heartbreaking to imagine such evil experienced by innocent children. But for this evil, Christ came, died and rose again, bringing healing to even the most broken of hearts. What hope the Savior gives! This is the message the world needs. This is the message we are called to proclaim.

At the New Life Center in Uganda, this is the message that is restoring women and children physically and spiritually, allowing them to reenter their lives with a new hope and calling.

Dana Ryan is a writer at [Food for the Hungry](#).

Five Reasons Indigenous Media Ministries are Vital to Christian Witness in the Middle East **By Terence Ascott and David Harder**

Wherever he or she may live today, every Christian can trace his or her spiritual roots to the Middle East, to the land where the Church was birthed. Yet despite this great historical connection, the Church in the Middle East today is suffering and shrinking.

In many parts of the world, modern media—particularly radio, the Internet and satellite television—provide useful services which often compliment information also readily available at a local church. In the Middle East and North Africa (ME/NA), however, these modern tools are not only helpful, they are indispensable and have become critically important to the very existence of the Church. Here are five reasons why indigenous media efforts in this turbulent region need and deserve our help.

1. Mass media is the only means to proclaim the gospel in many parts of the Middle East and North Africa.

The region, which encompasses nearly the entirety of the 10/40 Window and has a population of around 500 million people, receives the least amount of support in terms of direct funding and missions-related manpower when compared to any other part of the world. This disparity is in large part caused by the sheer difficulty of living as a Christian in the region. Many ME/NA countries have strict governmental or societal rules that either prohibit or severely restrict Christian activities ranging from church construction to evangelism. These prohibitions make it extremely difficult for either local churches or foreign missionaries to witness to their faith in Christ.

Mass media, however, is increasingly popular. Beginning in the early 1960s, radio stations typically based in Europe brought Christ's message of salvation to many who otherwise would have no other means of meeting a single Christian or hearing a gospel presentation. By the mid-1990s, satellite television had become phenomenally successful in the region. Initially, the desire to watch satellite television was driven by Middle

Eastern people wanting uncensored coverage of the First Gulf War. The instant popularity of these dishes led to the 1996 creation of Al Jazeera and several other stations, including the first Christian Arabic satellite television station, SAT-7. Today, hundreds of Arabic channels are broadcasting from satellites in geosynchronous orbit high above the Arab world.

Satellite television is so popular that even some Bedouins living a remote and nomadic lifestyle use car batteries to power their satellite receivers and televisions. Many Christian media services have found a second and compendium avenue for their broadcasts: the Internet, which is able to carry both radio and television services to some of the remotest parts of the world.

This allows people who are curious about the faith to log on and receive channels through which they can learn about Christ. Middle Easterners appreciate the privacy, immediacy and communal nature of the Internet as a vehicle to chat and interact. The Internet allows viewers to immediately respond to what they have seen. Unfortunately, governments can block some of these web-based services; however, it is extremely difficult to obstruct radio and satellite television broadcasts which reach into living rooms in even the most remote and restrictive locales.

2. Middle Eastern churches are suffering and disappearing.

In 1900, local Christians made up nearly twenty percent of the population of the Middle East. Today, that number is less than five percent and shrinking. Some Christian leaders and social scientists say that within this generation we may witness the complete disappearance of the indigenous Church in the Holy Lands. Unfortunately, it is far too easy to find examples of why this could be the case:

- The young father who directed the Bible Society in Gaza was recently martyred for his activities
- Thousands of Christians are fleeing persecution in Iraq
- In Turkey, three Christians, including a missionary, were murdered for their faith in 2007
- In many parts of the Middle East, Christian homes and businesses are regularly threatened or attacked
- Unknown thousands of churches are operating underground and have little or no source of any outside support. Many indigenous church leaders in the ME/NA trying to lead these suffering congregations look to the Christian community around the world and wonder, "What are you doing to help us?"

The good news is that in much of the region huge numbers of people are spiritually thirsty. Their lives are difficult or even hopeless, and they are looking for answers they cannot find in their own communities. In some places, churches are spontaneously being created. At [SAT-7](#), we have received many reports of people who have come to Christ through our broadcasts and the efforts of other television, radio and Internet-based ministries. These thirsty and new followers of Christ want to join churches and some have even started their own fellowships.

Media ministries are providing a great compliment to local churches desperate for resources necessary to help young Christians. Media ministries also help place young Christians into local congregations and provide them with training material, courses, Bibles and other resources in short supply locally. For Christians living in extremely remote areas or for those keeping their faith a secret, media transmissions often provide the only source of encouragement and training. A woman in Iran recently told us that her city does not have a single church so the only two things helping her grow in faith are her Bible and our broadcasts. Internet, radio and satellite television are playing a key role in helping train emerging ME/NA church leaders.

3. Mass media reaches women, the illiterate and other marginalized groups.

In many parts of the ME/NA, women are second-class citizens. Even in the wealthiest countries in the region, they often spend a great deal of time secluded from society. This status makes them a difficult group to engage, even for people living in those societies. But satellite television is extremely popular among women who tune in to “soap operas” and talk shows in large numbers. And on Internet chat rooms they can vent their frustrations and ask for help.

Many programs airing on satellite television and radio now have complimentary Internet chat rooms where the audience can ask follow-up questions. One such show airing on SAT-7 received a huge response from Arab women desperate for relationship advice. People going to the chat room asked questions about what they had seen on television, and many said the interaction with the counselor had saved their marriages and also brought them into fellowship with Christ. This website continued to receive a large response, even after the program finished broadcasting.

Functional literacy rates in the Middle East/North Africa hover at fifty percent. This low rate, among the worst for any region, means that even if we could give someone a Bible or other Christian literature, they could not read it. This applies to Christians and non-Christians living in poor areas. But the broadcast media are easily accessible to those who cannot utilize any other modern communications medium.

Sadly, one marginalized community in the region is often overlooked, even by the local church. That group is the disabled. Across most countries in the Arab and Muslim world, the disabled and their families are considered as having been cursed by God. The disabled person brings shame to his or her family, so these individuals are often kept from participating in society. Broadcast ministries that reach out to this marginalized group show Christ’s compassion and demonstrate that the local Christian community has an important role in helping improve local societies. One non-Christian mother of a disabled child told us she initially was concerned about being involved in a show recorded at a Christian studio, but that in the end it was one of the best experiences of her child’s life.

4. Indigenous media ministries offer the best way to reach youth and children—the largest demographic in the Middle East and North Africa.

While birthrates fall and populations rapidly age in the West, in the ME/NA the trend is completely opposite. In much of the region, people under age twenty-five are in the majority. This younger generation is open to new ideas and new technologies. Internet usage among the young is skyrocketing—although the ME/NA still lags behind the rest of the world. Despite increasing educational opportunities and even technical expertise, young people in many ME/NA countries look to the future with a sense of dread and hopelessness. Nearly all youth struggle because of limited employment opportunities in often state-controlled economies where access to position is determined by connections instead of merit. Christian Arab, Iranian and Turkish youth face the added pressure caused by ostracism or outright persecution.

In this environment, young people are searching for answers—and they are looking to the mass media. They flock to chat rooms, send text messages to radio and television programs and say watching television with their friends is one of their regular activities. This is especially true in conflict areas or repressive societies where young people simply cannot safely gather together away from their homes.

5. Indigenous media ministries are sensitive and effective.

While nearly anyone can rent a channel on a satellite broadcasting into the ME/NA, those who have worked in cross-cultural ministry recognize that usually the most effective communicators to any given community are

people of that community. Anyone who has had a message interpreted knows the challenge posed by idioms and local expressions. This is particularly the case in the ME/NA where Arabic and other local languages are very poetic.

Additionally, listeners and viewers prefer to listen to messages delivered in their own heart languages. In the ME/NA, two types of broadcast ministries seem to exist. For one type, the majority of programming is made up of Western religious television dubbed into Arabic and other local languages. The second type broadcasts primarily locally-made content. Occasionally, outside broadcasters are unaware of local moirés and can cause unintended offenses through their efforts. Additionally, groups that are not based in the ME/NA occasionally take an aggressive tone because they do not have to fear local retaliation. Unfortunately, indigenous Christians and churches are often the first target for retaliation whenever an offence is caused. Ministries such as SAT-7, which has a board of ME/NA church leaders, are accountable to the local church. These community leaders help set up and guide programming policies.

Additionally, local Christians understand what it is like to live as a minority. They are open to bridge building, to the concept of “dialogue” that is often looked upon derisively in the wider evangelical community. Dialogue does not necessarily mean compromise; it can often mean an opening of doors once non-Christians come to a better understanding of their Christian neighbors. It can be very difficult for someone to witness to an enemy; however, if the neighbor of an Arab Christian knows and respects the person, that neighbor will be more likely to hear his or her testimony. This approach of respecting others, including those of different denominations and religions, is important and helps to build bridges of understanding which lead to greater opportunities to witness to the “hope which lies within” all followers of Christ

Children living in these difficult situations are often desperate for safe places to gather. Television and other media can provide zones of safety. At SAT-7, we have many children from various conflict zones saying how much the broadcasts mean to them. Many non-Christian parents have also written to tell us how much they appreciate the broadcasts. Al Jazeera and several other Arab stations recently launched children’s channels which include a fair amount of religious material.

It is vital that we reach children and youth while they are open to new ideas. By exposing the gospel to non-Christians while they are young, they will have a better understanding of their Christian neighbors and be more willing to accept their messages later in life. Many young viewers do not wait until later and choose to follow Jesus or walk closely with the Lord from a young age.

Conclusion

Mass media efforts are expensive, often costing much more than traditional church planting or even medical outreach; however, in the Middle East and North Africa the expense is well worth the outlay because media provides some of the only tools which are effective in a region so resistant to both typical missions enterprises and efforts of the local church.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “A great and effective door to the gospel has been opened up to me, but there are many who oppose me” (1 Corinthians 16:9). Those of us who are partnering with the local church to create productions for use on radio, Internet and satellite television know of their effectiveness. And so do the millions of viewers who are tuning in. But without greater prayer and financial support from our Christian family around the world, many of these efforts could stumble or go silent.

What SAT-7 Viewers Are Saying

"I would like to thank SAT-7 for their love and care. The SAT-7 channel is such a part of our lives that we no

longer can live without it. Your programs are like water for thirsty souls. Your programs are very interesting; they deal with our daily life problems so we don't feel that we are alone in this world." - **man in Egypt**

"I really appreciate the great efforts you exert. I live in Iraq and due to the circumstances that we have every day, we cannot go out very much. I dare to say that SAT-7 is the only source for our spiritual growth and entertainment. I like very much the Christian songs because they are a source of joy and hope in the midst of hardship." - **woman in Iraq**

"I would like to thank you for your encouraging message that brought hope again to me. I am a regular viewer of your wonderful programs, but because my family likes to watch other Arabic channel, my only chance to watch SAT-7 is while they are sleeping. I also cannot get into the chat because it is forbidden in my country." - **man in Syria**

"I would like to thank SAT-7 for the love, reconciliation and messages of peace that are conveyed through your programs. It is a channel that is committed to Christ's message of love and reconciliation. I am a non-Christian and I never feel any prejudice in your programs toward any religion." - **man in Algeria**

Terence Ascott is Chief Executive Officer for **SAT-7**. **David Harder** is communications manager for SAT-7.

Reaching Out to Iraq's Displaced, Suffering Christians

By Jerry Dykstra

Iraqi Christians are on the move, fleeing from the violence in their country. Many Christians are leaving because they have been threatened by Muslim extremists who want them permanently removed from the country.

Some Iraqi people are fleeing to northern Iraq. They are called Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Others are attempting to find refuge in Syria, Jordan or in the West. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) recently said that the number of IDPs now stands at 2.3 million. An additional sixty thousand people per month are now being displaced in Iraq; this averages to two thousand people per day!

A movement considered to be the "second wave" includes IDPs and refugees who were unable to move earlier, but now must move because of the violent situation. They have left everything behind and are living on their cash in hand. The influx of refugees to northern Iraq has increased unemployment and dramatically heightened the cost of living.

Christian IDPs and refugees need relief supplies, housing help and spiritual counseling. **Open Doors USA** supports them by providing food, housing, heating, clothes and medical care. In Syria and Jordan, Open Doors helps with similar relief for the neediest families among the refugees. Through helping the refugees, Open Doors has the opportunity to establish a relationship of trust, which could revive the faith of nominal Christians who are frustrated with religion because they feel their spiritual leaders did not care for them properly.

Background of IDPs in Iraq

While there has been a history of internal displacement of people within Iraq over the past forty years because of human rights abuses and internal and international conflict and war, the situation has worsened in recent years. Hundreds of thousands of individuals have been displaced since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003.

In 2003, 500,000 to 600,000 Christians lived in the country. Today, Iraq's Christian population is estimated to have dropped below 450,000. With approximately two thousand people leaving daily, many of them Christians, the future of the Church in Iraq is bleak.

Due to the growing IDP problem, Open Doors, working through local partners, decided to assist Christian IDPs and help stem the hemorrhage of believers from some of the oldest Christian denominations in the world—namely, the Armenian, Assyrian and Chaldean churches.

Thousands of people are arriving in the northern region of Iraq known as Kurdistan. Since 1992, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has had a separate parliament, elected by popular vote, called the Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly. After 2003, Kurdish politicians have been represented in the Iraqi governing council. The autonomy of the KRG has resulted in this area of Iraq enjoying relative peace and a growing prosperity compared to the rest of the country. This has made the region a magnet for the many IDPs unable to leave the country.

In the northern areas of Kurdistan, especially Dohuk, Erbil and Sulaymania, it is estimated there are about twenty-four thousand IDP families. This relatively safe haven gives some relief from the daily challenges and fears associated with living in southern Iraq; however, it also brings fresh challenges. Among those arriving in the area are numerous Christians often singled out for additional persecution by the Islamic groups operating to the south of the Kurdish border.

While some Christians have managed to flee with large amounts of money and are able to begin a new life in a new home and establish new businesses, the vast majority arrive with nothing but the clothes they wear.

Problems Identified

Last winter, there was a great need to help IDPs survive the harsh weather. In one village, over 120 people had been identified as having no money to rent houses in the city or buy kerosene. Fuel is very expensive (bottled gas for cooking and kerosene for heating) and, for many, impossible to afford.

Many of the IDPs are city people with jobs in offices or government departments. Now, having moved to a rural area, they find themselves struggling to live as country people. They want work, but there is none. The infrastructure of the villages cannot cope with the number of people arriving. This creates frustration and a feeling of hopelessness, especially for the men who feel they are failing their wives and children.

One of the greatest and most urgent needs facing those who have arrived in Kurdistan is practical relief to help them survive the harsh winter. Temperatures can plummet to below zero. Food is hard to come by, especially for those without ration cards. Blankets are often too few in number. In addition to obvious practical help needed, there is also a spiritual void in many hearts which needs addressing. Along with providing humanitarian help, an opportunity exists for meeting the spiritual needs of those who belong to the oldest churches in the world.

Having undertaken further research and working closely with three local Christian organizations in a spirit of multi-denominational partnership, a project to meet the immediate needs was put into action. At the start of November 2007, 1,070 families have been helped with basic necessities. Preparations are complete to help many more families in the coming months.

Story of One IDP Mother

Umm Salaam¹ left Baghdad just over a year ago. Many killings and kidnappings were taking place and she became afraid for the safety of her children and husband. Their decision to move to their ancestral village in the

north of the country, however, meant leaving everything behind. Although the family had not been directly threatened, they felt very insecure and feared it was only a matter of time before they would be singled out as Christians and therefore targeted by Muslim fundamentalists. This fear increased as more and more Christians in their neighborhood of Dora were targeted and some friends were forced to pay money to the Muslims in order for their businesses to be allowed to continue. They were told they should become Muslims or leave the city.

Umm Salaam was very grateful for the relief received. While sharing her story, she held the copy of a Children's Bible she had been given. Holding the Bible to her chest, she quietly said, "This is the biggest help for anyone; my son will love and treasure it."

Endnote

1. Name changed for security reasons.

Jerry Dykstra is media relations coordinator at [Open Doors USA](#). He travels to countries such as China, Vietnam and Mexico to meet with persecuted believers.

PERSPECTIVES

Taking the Orality Plunge: Confessions of a Print Addict Unawares

By Phill Butler

It was about seven or eight years ago. Somewhat wide-eyed, I was talking with Jim Bowman, who, along with his wife Carla, pioneered oral Bible training of non-literate, oral-communicating grassroots church planters. Working with remote Indian tribes in Mexico, they were frustrated with scripture gathering dust in warehouses inaccessible to the Indians because they were exclusively oral communicators. They were what we in the West call "non-literates." Mentally inferior? Hardly. They have just never had access to learning how to decode a printed page.

Training Leaders for the Local Church with No Bible?

For a one-time professional broadcaster and a person who has depended on the seemingly indissoluble link between print and oral communication, what they were saying seemed almost impossible to me. "Come on," I said. "I can see leading someone to Jesus without ever having to open a Bible. You can share passages from memory and tell your own story and stories from scripture. But doing discipleship? How do you do disciple without reading from the Bible and doing studies on key themes?"

"Oh that's not all," Bowman said, responding to my incredulity. "Not only do we teach non-literate, oral communicators how to do evangelism and discipleship, we also teach how to develop and train leaders for the local church—all orally. No printed Bible." I argued: "But how do you do that without tools like PowerPoint, workbooks or at least white boards or overhead projectors? And, what about the Bible itself?"

The Bowman's journey to a solution was a long one. As Bowman will tell you, "We tried just about everything. Story cards, old-fashioned flannelgraph, picture sequences. You name it, we experimented with it."

I, being the product of a society with a nearly 400-year history of progressively accessible information from external sources (books, tapes, libraries, computer data bases, etc.), of course viewed this all as pretty strange, if not improbable.

“Think about it this way,” Bowman said. “Imagine you are in a culture where there is no external reference material—no books, libraries, magazines or computer databases? The entire database of your life and the world, all history and explanation of things around you, is between your ears. Now imagine you are in a leadership position in a culture like this. No external reference books to fall back on. No written legal or historical precedents. No place to ‘look up’ what you need to help you make a tough decision. Everything you’ve got is between your ears—and those of peers in the culture.”

With a wry smile, he continued, “I think of Jesus. Most of his men—in fact, most of his audience—were oral communicators. The one thing we know he wrote, a message in the sand, was lost. Jesus left nothing behind in writing. But, look what’s happened because of his oral communication strategy.”

Trying to Comprehend the Immensity of the Issue

According to UNESCO, about 2.5 billion in the world are absolute non-literates. However, another 1.4 to 1.5 billion are functional non-literates and receive at least ninety-five percent of their information orally. Not surprisingly, these people are concentrated in areas still considered the least reached with the good news: Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist and Animist cultures. No wonder we have not seen the massive breakthroughs we have prayed for—hundreds of millions coming to know Christ and walk in his power and grace.

More than two hundred years of the modern missions movement has been led by literates with largely literate-dependent strategies. Instead of reflecting on what our audience needs, our strategies have too often reflected who we are. We have done what we know how to do. A hallmark of Western culture has been an upwardly mobile, ever-growing demand for literacy in all forms of media: print, film, how to use libraries, how to use computers, how to access databases, how to do email, how to “Google.” And these are only the most basic.

However, the Bowmans found that there were several keys to getting around this type of focus.

1. **Identify the handful of semi-literates who most likely have a fourth to seventh-grade equivalent education.** By using simple scriptural material and related training, these individuals can reach the masses.
2. **Study scripture.** Jesus’ teaching methods and a careful look at traditional cultures point toward the centrality and power of stories. Jesus told them constantly. By word count, scripture is over seventy-five percent stories. The rest is divided between wisdom, poetry and more traditional, Greek-influenced “Western style” content such as the New Testament epistles.
3. **Identify with repetition.** “In the West, we hate repetition,” Bowman remarked. “In traditional cultures, repetition is the backbone of continuity of the culture—of making sure the norms, the history, the rules and expectations are all understood and accurately passed down, generation to generation. So, we build a lot of repetition into the training.
4. **Place great emphasis on accuracy of stories.** Being able to tell a story with absolute precision, time after time, is vital. “You can imagine, they have pretty amazing memories!” Bowman exclaimed.

Collaboration in Ministry to Oral Cultures

The Bowmans are doing leading edge work through their ministry, **Scriptures In Use**, which has grown to be a worldwide training and materials resource to the Bridges Training Network (BTN). BTN consists of over thirty-five mission agencies committed to using oral strategies for evangelism and church planting. Most of these mission agencies are non-Western, indigenous agencies.

Among more traditional Western ministries, awareness of the orality issue saw great growth only several years ago. Today, over 110 mission and evangelism agencies are working together to implement new approaches as part of the [International Orality Network](#) (ION).

Developing an Oral Partnership Training Course

At [visionSynergy](#), our specialty is helping ministries form strategic partnerships and networks for all types of evangelism initiatives. It has been our privilege to serve both the BTN and the ION as they have begun to see real breakthroughs in Asia, the Middle East and Africa. The BTN (the name comes from the oral Bible training course, “Bridges to Oral Cultures”) has already trained over twelve thousand grassroots church planters. Literally thousands of “oral Bible churches” have already emerged in India and Africa. BTN has set a goal of at least fifty thousand trained grassroots church planters by the end of 2010.

Along with others, like [Interdev Partnership Associates](#), visionSynergy trains both Western and non-Western leaders in the skills needed to develop effective, sustainable ministry collaboration, strategic alliances, networks and project-specific partnerships. Long steeped in print-based systems, you can imagine my surprise and challenge (to put it mildly) in mid-2006 when Jim Bowman approached us and asked, “Can you folks help us develop an oral partnership training course?” When I asked him why he wanted us to help, he responded, “These emerging Bible churches are rooted in cultures where community is important. But everything around them—political, economic and religious systems in many cases—actively seeks to discourage their working together. We’ve got to have a training module for our ‘Bridges’ training course that will help them see how to work together, practically and energetically. Working together in open, trusting relationships was God’s original plan in his creation. We need to help these people regain the power and joy of this.”

All I knew was a world of whiteboards, PowerPoint presentations, printed handouts, written case studies (basis for group discussion, of course) and written partnership strategy project papers. And, I had even written a book on this last subject! Prepare grassroots church planters to understand and be able to pass on real, practical, durable partnership principles that could be applied at the village level? With *nothing* in writing? Whoa!

Truth be known, I’d been concerned about somehow getting partnership training to this massive group of unreached for many, many years. We just didn’t know what to do or how to help. Thanks to Bowman and his team, however, we are on our way. Here is a short explanation of what we are doing:

We are depending solely on biblical stories that contain a core principle. Then, we have the participants:

- memorize the story
- do a drama of the text
- make up a song
- develop a traditional chant based on the story
- feed back the principle of what the story means about working together

Based on feedback we have received from the grassroots level, we have settled on four applications for the local churches working together in partnership. Imagine a district of one hundred villages in which eight of those have seen oral Bible churches emerge in the last two to two and a half years. Many questions have emerged.

- **How can these eight small, local fellowships work together for evangelism and church planting among the other ninety-two villages in the district?** They are all led by non-literate, oral communicating elders and volunteer leaders with a semi-literate grassroots church planter/encourager who visits every ten days to two weeks.

- **How will the church flourish unless its people are economically viable?** Many of these people live on less than US\$.50 per day.
- **How will the people work together for community development?** Issues like health, clean water and education haunt the world's illiterate poor.
- **What do we do about persecution?** By banding together, we need to speak to political leaders and more effectively represent our views and needs.

Stay tuned. This is a work in progress. First drafts of the “oral partnership course” are complete. I have just returned from India for a week of intensive work reviewing the material with Indian leaders experienced in oral evangelism and church planting. Revisions are now underway. In a few months we expect the first field tests to occur. The message is critical. The audience is massive. It's a God-sized task!

Phill Butler serves as Lausanne Senior Associate for Evangelism Partnership Development. He is also director of [visionSynergy](http://visionSynergy.net). He can be reached at: pbutler@visionsynergy.net.

Following Christ in World Evangelization

By Grant McClung

In *Following Christ*¹, Joseph Stowell relates the story of Edward Kimball, a quiet and unassuming Sunday school teacher who followed Christ in evangelization. On a routine Saturday in Boston, Massachusetts (USA) some 150 years ago, Kimball took the day to visit every young man in his class. He wanted to be sure that each one had come to know Christ. One of the students worked as a clerk in his uncle's shoe store. Kimball entered the store, walked back to the stockroom where Dwight Lyman Moody was stocking the shelves and confronted the youth with the importance of knowing Christ personally. In that stockroom, D.L. Moody accepted Christ as his Savior. The faithful Sunday school teacher had no idea that this act of faithful evangelistic witness would reap such a rich harvest for heaven. It has been estimated that during his lifetime, Moody traveled more than a million miles (before the days of commercial air travel!) and spoke to more than 100 million people.

It was Moody who led Wilbur Chapman to the Lord. Chapman became a great evangelist in the generation succeeding Moody's. During Chapman's ministry in Chicago, Illinois (USA), a baseball player with the “Chicago White Stockings” had a Sunday off (all professional ballplayers did in those days) and was standing in front of a bar on State Street. A gospel wagon from the Pacific Garden Mission came by, playing hymns and inviting people to the afternoon service down the street. This ballplayer, Billy Sunday, recognized the hymns from his childhood, attended that service and received Christ as his personal Savior. Sunday played baseball for two more years then left professional sports to minister in the YMCA in Chicago. Sometime later, Chapman was passing through town and invited Sunday to join his crusade team as an advance man, to help organize pastors and set up evangelistic meetings. Sunday enthusiastically agreed. After two years, Chapman left the evangelistic ministry to become the pastor of one of the leading churches in America. Although Sunday felt stranded, he refocused on national crusade evangelism and soon began scheduling his own crusades.

In one of Sunday's meetings, a young man named Mordecai Hamm accepted Christ. Hamm became a great evangelist in the southeastern United States, ministering to massive crowds south of the Mason-Dixon Line. In one of those large crowds one night, a lanky North Carolina farm boy named Billy Graham stepped out and moved forward to accept Christ.

In relaying this incredible, God-orchestrated connectivity of persons, Stowell says, “What a phenomenal succession of faithful and stellar harvesters for the cause of eternity. Edward Kimball, the Sunday school

teacher, was simply an unheralded follower who gave up a Saturday for the cause. Heaven is crowded with the results of his routine faithfulness.”²

The Heart and Ethos of Christ-centered Evangelization

This story of simple and straightforward evangelistic witness gets to the heart and ethos of Christ-centered evangelization. Following Christ in world evangelization demands the pursuit of a personal experience with the Triune God through the Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit—with a corresponding passion to make Christ known among the nations.

It also means following Christ’s example in evangelization. How did Jesus go into his world and how does that model inform us as his followers today? How can and should we personally experience and follow Christ in a way that leads to effective evangelization? There are many ministry examples of Jesus described in the Gospels. In Luke 3-6, there are at least eight examples of following Christ:

Jesus went (and we follow):

1. **With God’s favor.** At his baptism, “the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: ‘You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased’” (Luke 3:22).
2. **Full of the Holy Spirit/led by the Holy Spirit.** “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil” (Luke 4:1).
3. **Guided by the Word of God.** “Jesus answered, ‘It is written: Man does not live by bread alone’” (Luke 4:4).
4. **With the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit** (Luke 4:14,18-19). “Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14). Jesus also said, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18-19).
5. **With an intercultural focus.** “I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian” (Luke 4:25-27).
6. **With authority in teaching, deliverance and healing.** “They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority” (Luke 4:32). “‘Be quiet!’ Jesus said sternly. ‘Come out of him!’ Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him. All the people were amazed and said to each other, ‘What is this teaching?’ With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out” (Luke 4:35-36). “They asked Jesus to help her. So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them” (Luke 4:38-39).
7. **With a vision for those who had not heard the good news.** “I must preach the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent” (Luke 4:43).
8. **With an interdependent/cooperative team partnership.** “When *they* had done so, *they* caught such a large number of fish that *their* nets began to break. So they signaled *their partners in the other boat* to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink” (Luke 5:6-7,

italics mine). “For he (Simon Peter) and *all his companions* were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon’s *partners*. Then Jesus said to Simon, ‘Don’t be afraid; from now on you will catch men.’ So *they* pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him” (Luke 5:9-11, italics mine). “One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles” (Luke 6:12-13).

The events and experiences of Christ followers in the early Church were a continuation of the ministry of Jesus. It is apparent that when Luke starts his introduction to the Book of Acts, he sees it as a sequel to an unfolding continuation of the Gospel of Luke: “In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus *began* to do and to teach” (Acts 1.1, italics mine). If the Gospel of Luke was the story of all that Jesus began, then the Acts of the Apostles is the continuation of the ministry of Jesus.

This fact was not lost on Peter in his first public declaration following his own personal empowerment in the Holy Spirit. With a fresh boldness (“Brothers, I can tell you confidently,” Acts 2:29), he bears witness to Jesus Christ being squarely in the middle of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit:

“God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.” (Acts 2:32-33)

The Presence of Christ in World Evangelization

As we follow Christ in world evangelization, he reciprocates with his own personal presence and involvement with us. He promises and demonstrates his own continuing, active presence and power to his followers: “And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28.20b). The Berkeley Version states it this way: “And, mind you, I am alongside you.” The Weymouth Translation says it this way: “...day by day, until the close of the Age.”

“After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it” (Mark 16:19).

Models and strategies of evangelization may adapt and change, but this will remain the same: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13.8). The continuing, active presence and power of Jesus Christ will be with us daily as he works with us and we follow him in world evangelization

Endnotes

1. Stowell, Joseph. *Following Christ*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA: Zondervan.
2. Ibid. 130-131

Grant McClung is an international missions leader with [Church of God World Missions](#). He has served as a missionary educator in Europe, in cross-cultural student ministries in Southern California and as denominational supervisor for leadership training worldwide. McClung is a member of the editorial/advisory committee for [Evangelism and Missions Information Service](#) (EMIS). He is also editor of [Azusa Street and Beyond:100 Years of Commentary on the Global Pentecostal Charismatic Movement](#).

[Seeking Justice and Loving Mercy: Christians for Biblical Equality 2007 Conference](#)

By Mimi Haddad, Chelsea Dearmond and Mary Ann Ngugen

Do you long to make a difference for Christ? Are you passionate about Jesus and his work in this world? Do you long to see wrongs righted, injustices redressed and the gospel lifted high? Do you believe God's Spirit works through scripture to shape our lives and our work? These were the questions addressed at **Christian for Biblical Equality**'s (CBE) 2007 conference, "Seeking Justice and Loving Mercy."

Christians from around the world gathered in Denver, Colorado, USA, to explore not only the biblical foundations of gift-based ministry, but also the biblical and theological basis for gender justice and Christian service. Speakers shared from their years of study and ministry, award-recipients were honored for their lives of courage and leadership and we joined in worship and prayer. Truly, we felt God's presence grow stronger—and it came largely in the form of joy.

The "precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart" (Psalm 19:8). Why does joy accompany our gospel service in a fallen world? Why is redressing error, injustices and gender inequities accompanied by God's joyful Spirit? Scripture tells us that when justice prevails, the joy of the Lord is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10).

Prayer in Biblical Equality

In addition to joy, the importance of prayer emerged during the conference. Speakers reminded us that prayer plays a strategic role in discerning and doing God's will in the ministry of biblical equality.

In drawing upon the wisdom of CBE's gender and justice panelists, conference attendees asked how we should deal with denominations or churches that continue to resist the biblical foundations of gift-based rather than gender-based ministry. Panelists—seasoned by years of leadership experience—agreed the answer lies in patient and persistent prayer. In waiting upon God, we renew our strength and discern God's leading in our lives and ministries.

CBE leaders unanimously affirmed prayer as a fundamental principle in the ministry of biblical equality and in the work of reforming the Church and the world. This is not a novel discovery. Christians throughout the centuries have discovered the power of prayer. Mary Slessor (1848–1915), Scottish missionary to West Africa, wrote in her book, *Our Faithful God: Answers to Prayer*, that,

"My life is one long daily, hourly, record of answered prayer. For physical health, for mental overstrain, for guidance given marvelously, for errors and dangers averted, for enmity to the gospel subdued, for food provided at the exact hour needed, for everything that goes to make up life and my poor service, I can testify with a full and often wonder-stricken awe that I believe God answers prayer....I am at perfect peace, far from my own countrymen and conditions, because I know God answers prayer."

At CBE, we have discovered that as we pray for individuals and denominations, God often graciously allows us to observe his hand working even as we pray. We are often blessed to grow closer to those whose lives are impacted by our prayers—even when we pray for people we have never met! Here is one example from our conference.

Rob works on CBE's blog team. Although we have never met him, we remember him in our prayers often since he is a vital member of our community. While at our conference, a good friend and CBE member Patti Valasek kept telling me she wanted me to meet her son-in-law Rob. At the end of the conference she introduced me to him. This was the same Rob on our blog team. I wanted to cry for joy. Rob had become dear to us not only through prayer but also through his partnership in CBE's ministry.

CBE is a global community of change-agents whose shared commitment to Scripture, evangelism and justice are fueled by courage, prayer and joy—all good and perfect gifts from our loving God!

Conference recordings are available at CBE's [online bookstore](#).

During the CBE gathering, Lausanne Issue Group leaders Jane Crane, Mimi Haddad, Alvera Mickelsen, Jo Anne Lyon, Lorry Lutz, Jane Overstreet and Cecilia Yau met to explore future opportunities to celebrate the biblical basis for women's gospel-service. Missions and evangelism—core values not only of our biblical faith but also our evangelical heritage—grew significantly during the modern missionary movement as women and slaves offered extraordinary leadership. Because of this, CBE will host a gender and missions symposium in Toronto, Canada, 18-20 July 2008.

We invite anyone interested in writing a paper to submit a proposal to [Chrissy Stockton](#). All proposals are welcome.

For more information on CBE's recent conference, please [click here](#).

Dr. Mimi Haddad is president of [Christians for Biblical Equality](#) and a founding member of the Evangelicals and Gender Study Group at the [Evangelical Theological Society](#). She also serves on the board of directors for [Global Women](#) and is an adjunct professor at North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois, USA. She served as the convener of Issue Group 24 for the [2004 Lausanne Forum](#) in Pattaya. **Chelsea Dearmond** is editor of *Mutuality Magazine*, a publication of [Christians for Biblical Equality](#). **Mary Ann Nguyen** is pursuing her Masters of Divinity at Bethel Seminary in San Diego, California, USA. She and her husband are preparing to serve overseas.

URBAN COMMUNITIES

[Kolkata, India: An Overview](#)

(Editor's Note: Information below originally appeared as part of the [Global Urban Trek](#).)

Kolkata (formerly named Calcutta), the capital city of the State of West Bengal in Eastern India, is home to between thirteen and fourteen million people. The city was founded by the British in 1690, and as the capital city of the British East India Company, grew to become the largest city in Asia, and a primary political, commercial and intellectual center.

Independence from Britain in 1947, and the partition of the subcontinent into "Hindu" India and "Muslim" Pakistan (including modern-day Bangladesh) resulted in large-scale communal rioting and bloodshed. Kolkata was flooded with millions of immigrants in 1947, 1951 and 1971. These huge waves of immigrants, combined with communal violence, political turmoil and corruption, have contributed to the enormous economic depression in Kolkata that has brought the city to an advanced state of decay and poverty today. [Operation World](#) describes Kolkata as the city with the lowest urban standard of living in the world, with 5.5 million residents living in squalter conditions.

Kolkata is named for Kali, the Hindu goddess of death and destruction. More than two thousand altars and shrines devoted to Kali are found throughout the city. The people groups of Kolkata have only scarcely been touched with the gospel. Approximately seventy-six percent of Kolkata's residents are Hindus, and twenty-three percent are Muslims. Less than one-tenth of one percent of Kolkatans are evangelical Christians.

In this environment are servants of Christ surrendering all to bring the hope of the gospel to this darkened land. Click [here](#) to read how one community of believers is seeking to restore life in the red light districts of Kolkata.

Restoring Life in the Red Light Districts of Kolkata, India

By Sarah Lance

Pinky stood at the entrance to the narrow, crowded main lane of Sonagacchi, the largest red light district in Kolkata, India. She was waiting among other young girls standing the line. (In India, working in the sex trade is often referred to as “standing the line,” because the women literally line up along the street waiting for customers.) Pinky’s hair was cropped close and her eyes glassy with unshed tears. The raw look of shame and fear spoke of her vulnerability and drew me to her. I asked her where she was from and how long she had been in Sonagacchi. She told me the story of losing her mother and how her father was now also very sick and she needed to support her younger brothers. With tears, she said she had only been on the line for ten days. Unlike many of the girls I had met previously, Pinky had not been trafficked; instead, she was offering her body as a solution to desperate poverty.

I walked away from Pinky carrying her desperation as my own. Crying out to God, I lamented for Pinky’s situation and voiced my anger that no place existed for a girl like this to find a job and support her family without selling her 16-year-old body. I found myself feeling hopeless, paralyzed, wondering how in a place of such deep and profound bondage there could be freedom. I asked God for a vision, for radical hope with tangible actions that would give fair job choices to girls like Pinky and a safe place where life could be made new.

A short five-minute walk from our home, our small community continues to find ourselves walking down the main lane of Sonagacchi and sharing life with girls like Pinky. We walk through the doors of brothels as if we belong—up the dark, filthy stairs into very small but well-kept rooms of women we have come to call friends. As a community of believers, North American and Bengali, we have been seeking the incarnation of Jesus in the red light area of Songacchi for more than six years.

The women of Sonagacchi and Kalighat, a smaller red light area, are the daughters, sisters, mothers and wives of the poorest of the poor in the villages of West Bengal, India, Nepal and Bangladesh. They have found themselves at the doorsteps of these brothels because of poverty, trafficking and trickery. Some of them married the wrong boy and found themselves here when they could not bear children. Some heard the promises that appeal to the ears of every girl in desperate poverty: “You can have a good paying job as a nanny or housecleaner”—but then found themselves under the firm hand of a madam, working for years to pay a debt for their own lives. One mistake led them to the door of a brothel and into a life that many feel they can never leave.

Numbers Become Neighbors in Need of Redemption

According to Jose Vetticattil and Sunitha Krishnan, “Although exact numbers are not known, it is estimated that there are more than sixty thousand brothel-based women and girls in prostitution in Kolkata.”¹ Seven thousand of those women are living their lives in the red light area called Sonagacchi.² The lanes are also filled each day with an additional three thousand women who come in from the villages up to three hours away searching for an answer to the hunger in their children’s bellies.³ These women, called *flyers*, offer themselves out of circumstances of desperate poverty for rice and school fees. Humanity in the red light area is numbered by gender. The statistics do not tell the whole story because they only relate the women who live in this place; they forget the children and the men who find themselves partnered in bondage to the sex trade which is plied within its boundaries.

The numbers are now our neighbors and they have become people and stories that have compelled our vision for freedom. The assault on human dignity is devastating in the red light area and yet we cling to the hope that the women of Sonagacchi can have freedom, that dignity can be restored and that the streets which are lined with women in slavery can be made new. Through long-term relationships, we believe that red light communities like Sonagacchi and Kalighat can be transformed.

Biblical Restoration

God proclaims in Revelation 21:5 that he will make all things new. It is this future hope and promise of life being made new in Christ that compels our community to seek freedom for the red light areas. We believe and are seeing that Jesus makes life new for the women and their families.

As a community, we also cling to the words of Isaiah 58, which is full of promises for those who submit to the difficulty of the chosen fast and for those who actively seek the breaking of chains and setting the oppressed free:

"Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke? Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into the house; when you see the naked, to cover him; and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?"

And if you give yourself to the hungry, and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then your light will rise in darkness, and your gloom will become like midday. And the LORD will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones; and you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters do not fail. And those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins; you will raise up the age-old foundations; and you will be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the streets in which to dwell. (Isaiah 58:6-7, 10-12)

The challenge of the fast is culminated with the promise in verse 12: "You will rebuild the ancient ruins; you will be the repairer of the breach and the restorer of streets with dwellings." It is a promise for the transformation of our neighborhood, a red light area, which is in desperate need of restoration.

Word Made Flesh in Kolkata

The **Word Made Flesh** community in Kolkata is made up of connectors and developers. We spend hours a day on the streets, talking with the girls, their owners, their lovers. Time is shared in the brothel rooms drinking tea and listening to the stories of loss and betrayal. Together, we hunch over notebooks, teaching Bengali literacy or spoken English, all for the sake of relationship. Our time is offered by both showing and telling the women that their lives have value and that they are loved by God.

The girls and women of Sonagacchi and Kalighat are reminded that they have choices. The community supports and partners with the girls as they go to hospitals for tests and treatments for HIV. We also resource them with other organizations who can give them long-term support. New jobs are offered at businesses and NGOs (Non Government Organization) that are hiring women specifically from the red light areas. Our community makes an offering of time so small seeds of trust are planted that might one day grow into a life of holistic freedom. Our hope is to meet the women and their families where they are, in the place where they live and work. Our hearts desire is that one day each girl, woman, child and man would have a life made new, redeemed.

Freedom Through Sari Bari

Although I have never seen her again, Pinky's face remains engraved on my heart. It is her face and the faces of many others that our community has come to love, that we think of when a new woman walks through the door of our business initiative called **Sari Bari**. Sari Bari is not only the answer to my lament for Pinky, but the

prayers of the Word Made Flesh community in Kolkata, and more deeply, the answer to the unheard cries of the girls in the red light areas of Sonagacchi and Kalighat. At Sari Bari, women earn a living by making bags and blankets.

We see Sari Bari as a means by which life can be made new through employment in a safe, loving community among women from similar circumstances who are walking through exodus to freedom. We are privileged to see twenty-two women in two red light areas taking the road to a new life through Sari Bari.

The hope of life being made new was planted in our hearts for the women many years ago and the women in turn are planting the seeds of freedom in the hearts of the women with whom they share space in the brothels. We started Sari Bari with three women. We spent a year pouring into their lives emotionally, spiritually and tangibly through education and job training. The women who work for Sari Bari remain in their rooms in the red light areas and are able to maintain accountability to stay out of the trade with one another as well as continue in community friendships. The first three women brought eight more women through the doors of Sari Bari. We have seen the same story repeated in another area. One young woman who was working at our partnering unit moved into a new brothel to pay cheaper rent as she worked to get out of the trade. She invited the whole brothel to come and have a new life. Six women came and are still working today and those women have now brought their neighbors from the brothel next door.

These red light communities are being transformed, woman by woman, brothel by brothel. We hold close our dreams that one day what we now call a red light area will stand as a profound testimony to the transformation of a community of people.

My friend Kerry, who inspires a business for women coming out of the sex trade, will often single out a woman and ask her, "What is our business?" I have never heard a girl answer with anything but a single word "freedom." It is a word that all the women we work with both in the trade and out of the trade understand. Kerry is in the business of freedom, the girls may sew bags with their hands; however, in their hearts they are working for and living out a life of freedom. We are all in the business of the master, the business of making things new. From the darkest lanes and most horrible circumstances, freedom and newness is coming in conversations over hot tea, in those tentative steps toward a different job, in the hands that sew beauty into blankets and bags, in the lives that become new as they walk into the arms of Jesus.

Endnotes

1. Jose Vetticattil and Sunitha Krishnan. 2002. *The Shattered Innocence: A Field Study on Interstate Trafficking for Commercial Sexual Exploitation from Andhra Pradesh*. Hyderabad, India: Prajwala Anti-Trafficking Cell. 42.

2. Sankar Sen, P.M. Nair, Ips. 2006. *Trafficking in Women and Children in India*. Hyderabad, India: Orient Longman Private Limited. 672.

3. Ibid. 672.

Sarah Lance is the **Word Made Flesh** Kolkata field director and the director of **Sari Bari**. She lives and works among women trapped in prostitution and shares the dream with her community that one day all the men, women and children of the redlight areas in Kolkata will find freedom.

RESEARCH

Awakening Through Storytelling

By Grant Lovejoy

(Editor's Note: According to the [International Orality Network](#), there are four billion oral communicators in the world. In other words, two-thirds of the world's population either cannot, do not or will not take in new information or communicate by literate means. The following story is an example of ministering in an oral context.)

When someone comes to your door at three o'clock in the morning, it is seldom good news. That's especially true when government forces and opposition groups have fought for years in your area. After five years of living in and out of the village, José and Isabel¹ had learned to expect the unexpected.

During their first four years, José and Isabel had focused on learning the language, understanding the culture and making friends among the "N" people. They were preparing to translate the Bible into the N language. Then, José and Isabel met Christian workers who encouraged them to use an oral approach to ministry because the N culture is oral. (Oral cultures rely on spoken communication, instead of writing, so they use storytelling, songs and proverbs to pass down their heritage and beliefs.) Their friends encouraged José and Isabel to select and tell biblical stories that would speak specifically to the N culture. They also encouraged José and Isabel to work with members of the community to put the stories into the N storytelling style while remaining biblically accurate.

The Transformation of an Entire People

After selecting the stories that spoke to the N culture and crafting them to reflect the storytelling style of the culture, José and Isabel reentered the village. Scripture spoke with obvious power. All four people who helped translate the biblical stories trusted Christ. A few months later, after the N people had heard the story from creation through the life of Jesus, they made a unanimous group decision to follow Jesus. Group decision-making is common in the N community.

It quickly became apparent that the decision was also a very personal one for many of the N people. One man said, "I was very bad, but now I believe in God. He cleaned me from my bad ways." After listening to several Bible stories, one young orphaned man wept for over half an hour. He had buried his head in the dirt and said, "Father, Father . . . now I have a father." Hearts were transformed.

God's word transformed behavior, as well. Previously, people had been going hungry. They were afraid to go into the jungle to gather food because they feared the spirits who live there. Today, the believers collect food in the jungle for their families. Biblical stories convinced them that God is more powerful than the other spirits. The new believers among the N have learned to make restitution for their wrongdoing. Several of them have returned chickens to the people from whom they stole them.

Drunkenness has disappeared from the village. People no longer want to drink. Instead, they want to hear the stories about God. People have been physically healed. After the new Christians began praying for a five-year-old boy who had never been able to walk, the boy began to walk.

Repentance in Individual Hearts

One of the most powerful Bible stories for the N community was the story of Jonah. They said, "We are like the people of Nineveh and we deserve to be punished by God." They observed that because the people of Nineveh listened to God and turned from their evil ways, God did not punish them. Through this story, they first began to understand salvation.

One of the N men was so moved by God's word that he felt compelled to act on it. He had learned that followers of Jesus should be baptized. As he pondered the stories in the wee hours of the morning, he decided that he

should be baptized immediately. So he went to José at 3:00 a.m. and asked to be baptized. José suggested that his baptism could wait, at least for a while. But the man was insistent; he wanted to obey Jesus' command immediately. After some conversation, José decided to baptize this brother quickly in obedience to the Lord's command. At 5:00 a.m. they held their baptismal service.

Hebrews 4:12 describes the word of God as "living and active" and "piercing." Its impact is maximized when people encounter God's word in their heart language, in a medium and format that is familiar, from passages whose relevance quickly becomes evident to them. Increasingly, Christian workers are recognizing that most people respond better to a story than to a traditional sermon. They would rather discuss a story than have someone explain its meaning to them. Oral strategies for communicating Scripture are awakening people to the reality of God and the new life that he offers.

Endnote

1. Names have been changed for reasons of security.

Grant Lovejoy is director of Orality Strategies for the **International Mission Board** (SBC). He advises IMB leaders and field personnel about communication strategies and training approaches for working effectively with oral communicators.

LAUSANNE REPORTS

Lausanne Regional Reports: An Overview

By Lindsay Brown and Naomi Frizzell

The world and the Church have changed significantly since the original 1974 Lausanne International Congress for World Evangelization. While overall the majority Christian population has shifted to the global South (commonly considered to be Latin America, Africa, Asia and parts of Oceania), there has also been growth in the Church as a whole. Few know that five of the largest churches in the world are in the United States, China, India, Brazil and Nigeria.

Estimates of the number of Christians living in China range from 40-100 million, while significant growth in the life of the Church is also reported in India, Ethiopia and Nepal. Additionally, remarkable growth, relative to past history, is being experienced by the Church in Tunisia, Algeria and parts of Central Asia. Yet, alongside the reports of encouraging growth and maturation, the Body of Christ is facing increased opposition and outright hostility from Islamic and Hindu fundamentalists. Believers in South Korea, Eritrea and Iran are subjected to overt persecution while Christians in North America and Europe face intensified intellectual hostility.

Dr. Todd Johnson, director of the Center for Global Christianity, **recently outlined** a number of important trends in world Christianity. Johnson noted that:

1. Christianity has shifted dramatically to the South.
2. Christianity is fragmented.
3. Christians are experiencing unprecedented renewal.
4. Christians are experiencing unprecedented suffering.

What does this mean country by country or region by region?

This year, Lausanne World Pulse will offer a series of articles from Lausanne's twelve International Deputy Directors that will provide a closer look at each region of the world. It is our prayer that these articles will be of service to the Church, as together we gain a new perspective on what God is doing.

Our desire is twofold: (1) to offer encouragement as leaders share their perspectives on Christianity in their region and offer stories of perseverance in the face of extraordinary obstacles and (2) that the articles would serve to educate us about challenges faced by Christian brothers and sisters so that we can pray in a more informed manner and respond in appropriate ways to the needs presented.

By Cape Town 2010, the **Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization**, it is our hope that our vision for the world would be expanded—region by region—and that we would have a greater understanding of the uniqueness, giftedness and importance of the entire Body of Christ.

The Lausanne regional focus begins in February with Rev. Daniel Willis' report on Oceania. In March, Dr. Adrian de Visser will report on South Asia.

Questions about this series may be directed to editor@lausanneworldpulse.com.

Lindsay Brown is international director of the **Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization** (LCWE). Most recently, he served as general secretary of the **International Fellowship of Evangelical Students**.

Naomi Frizzell is managing editor of Lausanne World Pulse and director of communications for LCWE.

New African Enterprise Centre for Urban Mission and Evangelism in South Africa **By John V. Tooke**

If you were to take:

- The scholarly evangelical theological witness of John Stott, Edward Carnell and James Packer
- The strategic vision of Billy Graham for mass evangelism
- The apologetic tradition of Francis Schaeffer, C.S. Lewis and E. Stanley Jones
- The search for justice of Martin Luther King
- The passion for peace of Albert Luthuli
- The reforming zeal of William Wilberforce
- The spirit of African ministry of Festo Kivengere

...and you brought those influences, in some measure, to fruition in one man, it might look very much like Michael Cassidy.

Cassidy and the Lead-up to a New Urban Centre

Cassidy is an enduring source of leadership in the **Lausanne Movement** and has played a major part in the locating and early leadership of organising the **Lausanne III World Congress on Evangelization** in Cape

Town, South Africa, in October 2010. On the African continent Cassidy's influence has extended to many City Evangelism Missions conducted through the many **African Enterprise** (AE) teams that span the continent.

He has also profoundly impacted the way in which the Church in Africa, and more specifically South Africa, advances and applies the gospel in the two Pan African Christian Leadership Assemblies (PACLA) in 1976 and 1992, and the two South Africa Christian Leadership Assemblies (SACLA) in 1979 and 2003.

Cassidy is founder of African Enterprise (AE) and is recognised in Christian communities for his evangelistic preaching, teaching and his stand for ethical righteousness in society and his struggle for justice in the face of oppression. He has authored over a dozen books and is known for the way in which his message touches both the mind and heart.

As Cassidy completes close to fifty years as a follower of Christ he is passing the baton of international leadership to Stephen Lungu of Malawi, and of South African leadership to Greg Smerdon, the newly-appointed South African team leader of AE. A large part of Cassidy's energies are now being directed toward the new Centre for Urban Mission and Evangelism in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

The Centre for Urban Mission and Evangelism

The centre will extend the ministry legacy of Cassidy, and the evangelical tradition of the Lausanne Movement in a number of ways:

1. **Urban.** Africa is expected to outstrip all other continents in urbanisation in the next decade.
2. **Laypeople.** Cassidy is himself a non-ordained layman and hopes that lay people will find a new and massive role in ministry in transforming cities.
3. **Mission and evangelism.** The parochial fixations of local congregations should give way to the teaching of a vital mission theology and praxis that wins people to Christ and releases grace into society.
4. **The recovery of a Judeo-Christian worldview.** The secular and other philosophical answers to humanity's needs leads to ethical confusion and human enslavement. Biblical truth needs to be recovered and reasserted.

The methodology being used is varied, with the following building blocks representing the preliminary start-up approach:

- **A volunteer faculty.** Teachers and lecturers from South Africa, Africa and the wider world are being encouraged to use this facility as a point of contact with South African and African students and church leaders.
- **Strategic alliances and partnerships.** Several organisations have already expressed interest in partnership with the new venture. These include: **The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity**, **The Oxford Centre for Mission Studies**, **The Cove**, The Third Millennium Project, The Redeemer Church Planting Centre New York, Fuller Seminary, Trinity Western Seminary British Columbia and The Wilberforce Centre in Cambridge. In Africa, links will hopefully be developed with Daystar University in Nairobi and Nairobi Evangelical Seminary. In Ghana, Dr Kwame Bedioko's Theological Institute has already had input. The proposed North African Theological Institute in Alexandria and several South African Theological Training institutions are other exciting ventures with which the AE Learning Centre will partner.

- **Formal theological education brokerage.** Cassidy's years of ministry have yielded an enormous amount of material that will also be put into courses that can be used for credit in theological training institutions around the world. This valuable deposit needs to be multiplied. However, the Learning Centre also has an interest in providing a conduit to students in Africa for graduate and post-graduate studies initiated from other institutions. The Centre has a growing capacity to house a short-term intensive type of student body or provide a residential capacity to provide for seminaries in overseas countries in the fulfilment of residential requirements.
- **Informal training and conferences.** Two to seven-day conferences are being designed around the four primary themes to bring lay and clergy leadership up to speed on issues or provide an ongoing basis for ministry renewal and revival.
- **Adventure youth camps.** The 16-30-year-old age group will have a special emphasis as this generation will guide Africa to its post-colonial destiny. To assist with this, an adventure camp environment will be created in the 125 hectare wooded site owned by AE.

AE is also planning to build a Aalarge training facility with auditorium, library, media centre and classrooms to apply the vision and further the legacy of Cassidy and Festo Kivengere of Uganda, who shared the leadership of AE in Africa. Anyone seeking to network or encourage the growth of the new ministry initiative of Cassidy should contact:

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