



# Lausanne World Pulse

Providing Evangelism & Missions News, Information and Analysis

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

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## PUBLISHER'S MEMO

### Overcoming Barriers so that the World Would See Jesus

By Doug Birdsall

**As Christians, we should constantly be reminded of the hope that darkness turns into light and that life overcomes death.** In the midst of global financial uncertainty, poverty, and violence, there is no greater time to communicate the hope and freedom of the unchanging gospel found in Jesus Christ. We are called to not only actively communicate the hope of the gospel, but to clear the way of potential stumbling blocks that may prevent non-believers from coming to a saving knowledge of Christ.

From the Old Testament to the New Testament, God's people are called to be the light and salt of the earth—to serve as examples in leading others to serve, love, and worship the one true living God. In the OT, God's people were commanded, "Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but fear your God. I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:14). This is echoed in the NT to the early Christians: "Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks, or the Church of God" (1 Corinthians 10:32). Our call is to communicate the hope of the gospel in all we say and do and to remove as many "stumbling blocks" as possible.

**Spiritual warfare.** Scripture teaches that our battle is not just with the world, but against principalities (Ephesians 6:12). In the global North, this is usually not readily apparent. We are often overly reliant upon what we experience as "truth" with our five senses. However, as we learn from our brothers and sisters around the world, spiritual warfare is at the forefront of encountering the truth and power of the gospel. Effective communication of the gospel must begin with addressing ultimate truth in the spiritual world.

**Disability ministry.** Another stumbling block is how we treat people who may be different from ourselves. In the global North, those with sickness and disabilities are often not readily visible to the general society. The tendency is to look toward institutions to care for the disabled. In the global South, those with sickness and disabilities are often visible yet dehumanized, powerless, and voiceless. The message of the gospel is not communicated well to this marginalized group. However, Jesus' message and ministry was to give hope and strength to the sick and disabled—to bring good news (Matthew 11:5; cf. Luke 4:18; Isaiah 61:1).

**Evangelism to New Age people.** The gospel must also be communicated to those ensconced in other world religions and belief systems. Currently, much work is being done on how to interface with those

from other major world religions such as Islam and Buddhism. However, we must also seek to communicate the gospel to those involved with new religions and New Age belief systems.

**The use of media.** We must also look at the question of how we are to use media to effectively reach other cultures. Media and technology are continuing to evolve at astonishing rates. How we communicate with changing technology and media to a changing world audience on a changing world stage is a challenge before us.

### **Communicating Christ in a Changing World**

Even the face of global Christianity has changed. The average world Christian no longer looks like a middle-class, middle-aged, Caucasian North American male from a mainline denomination. Today, the average world Christian looks more like an 18-year-old African female from an independent charismatic denomination. Communicating within a quickly evolving Church is a challenge, especially where many more cultures are being enfolded. How much more of a challenge do we have before us to effectively utilize media and technology to communicate the gospel to a changing global audience, especially to those *not* already in the Church?

Lausanne is committed to addressing these challenges to help remove such stumbling blocks and more effectively communicate the gospel. Lausanne is committed to doing this by not only *being* reflective of the global realities of the Church, but by *hearing* the prophetic voices of our brothers and sisters from both the North and the South and *seeking* cooperation from the *whole* Church. Lausanne is committed to finding ways for the Church as a whole to interact with each part synergistically on the basis of shared call, vision, need, resources, and mutual respect. All for the sake of better understanding our world to better communicate the hope of the gospel.

In this issue of LWP, I am delighted to present to you several perspectives from across the globe addressing barriers to the gospel. With articles on spiritual warfare, disability ministry, evangelism to new age people, and the use of media to reach other cultures, I hope these articles will stimulate and challenge your thinking, creativity, and action.

It is my prayer that as we engage further in thought and action on removing barriers to the gospel, we will be inspired and encouraged to keep communicating the gospel clearly and releasing the power of the gospel unhindered to the whole world. May God bless you as we engage the world with the immeasurable hope of the gospel.

**Doug Birdsall** is executive chair of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. He served as president of Asian Access from 1991 to 2007 and continues to serve on their board of directors. Birdsall is a graduate of Wheaton College, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Harvard University. He is co-publisher of Lausanne World Pulse.

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## **NEWS BRIEFS**

### **ANGOLA: Southern Baptists Respond to Effects of Severe Flooding**

Severe flooding hit southern Africa earlier this spring, and reports say the “situation is worse than last year.” About twenty-five thousand people in Angola have been displaced, and the Red Cross estimates that in the Cunene province, around 125,000 people have been affected. Reports indicate that in Angola more rain has fallen since December than fell during the entire 2007-2008 rainy season. Cholera and malaria are a constant threat; the World Health Organization has delivered five tons of healthcare kits and

drinking water supplies. The [Southern Baptist International Mission Board](#)'s ongoing work in Angola includes ministering to unreached people groups. These groups include the Ngangela, Lunda, and Nkhumbi peoples. Indigenous church planting efforts have recently begun among the Ngangela, while culture and traditions make it hard for evangelical Christianity to take root among the Lunda and Nkhumbi people groups. ([Mission Network News](#))

#### **AROUND THE WORLD: N1H1 Virus May Have Devastating Second Wave**

The N1H1 influenza virus, commonly known as the swine flu, is subsiding in Mexico. However, Carolyn Wetzel with [Food for the Hungry](#) says the second and third waves could be worse, particularly in Africa: "Thirty percent of the population is infected with HIV. So if the pandemic flu reached there, we could see serious impact on a much greater scale than we would see in a more developed country." Wetzel added, "If we are prepared in case this situation does escalate, then we can really make a difference in terms of saving lives." ([Mission Network News](#))

#### **AROUND THE WORLD: All God's Children International Appoints New President**

John Blanchard was recently appointed president of [All God's Children International](#) (AGCI). With a background in business and education administration, Blanchard has filled roles such as director of operations for The Nature Conservancy of Oregon, vice president of the Oregon State University Foundation, and vice president of administrative services for Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon. For the past six months Blanchard has acted as CEO for AGCI. Founded in 1991, the adoption and orphan care agency now serves thousands of orphans in nine nations. ([Christian Newswire](#))

#### **INDIA: Operation Mobilization Launches Appeal to Help Children**

In an effort to meet the needs of poor and deprived children in India, [Operation Mobilization](#) (OM) has launched an appeal for the sponsorship of children. The appeal, tagged "Help Feed a Child in India," is targeting more than fifteen thousand of the poorest children in India. The appeal is expected to give hope to children who are students in OM's nearly one hundred Dalit schools. Many of the children are from families who don't have enough money to provide lunch for the school day. For more information, visit <http://omusa.org/give>. ([Assist News Service](#))

#### **MALAWI: Teen Missions International Goes Fishing**

Lake Malawi holds approximately one thousand different kinds of fish. These fish could serve as a food source for the fifteen million AIDS orphans in Malawi, presenting a ministry opportunity for [Teen Missions International](#) (TMI). TMI plans to take twenty young "fishers of men" on a unique short-term mission trip to teach orphans to fish. Malawi fishing trip team members will receive training in the United States from mid-June to 5 July 2009 before departing for Africa. For the next four weeks, the team will minister to AIDS orphans in Malawi. ([Mission Network News](#))

#### **MIDDLE EAST: Plight of Women Highlighted in Documentary Series**

Satellite television station SAT-7 has voiced the plight of women who are the sole providers for their children, their siblings, or their parents—women facing social, legal, and economic hardships. Through twenty-six documentaries from Egypt, Lebanon, and Morocco, these women tell their stories. The series, called *And I Am Not Just a Woman*, aired on 5 May 2009. The documentaries are part of a larger media campaign, which also includes a number of awareness-raising spots. ([SAT-7](#))

#### **PAKISTAN: Sharia Law Enforced in Swat Valley**

The Taliban has now officially enforced *sharia* law over the Swat Valley in what looks like a desperate attempt by the government to create peace with the group. It appears to have had the opposite effect. Todd Nettleton of [Voice of the Martyrs](#) (VOM) expressed the opinion that the Taliban sees this as encouragement for expansion. Nettleton explains, "This is the part of Pakistan that is known to be the

most radically Islamic, and therefore most radically anti-Christian. We have had Christian workers in that area who have been kidnapped, they have been badly mistreated, and they have been beaten because of their Christian witness. Some have been killed, simply because they were known to be Christians and known to be involved in outreach to Muslims." ([Mission Network News](#))

### **PAKISTAN: Country Facing Refugee Crisis**

As Pakistan continues its press on the Taliban, thousands of people are fleeing the Swat Valley. A "peace" pact with the Taliban broke down when security forces began an assault to push the militants back into their territory. The rebels had begun to encroach upon Islamabad in a grab for land and power. The government is now preparing for up to 500,000 internal refugees, the largest displacement crisis in Pakistan's history. Even when the refugees arrive at refugee camps, it's not a guarantee of safety or comfort—the camps are hot, overcrowded, and have inadequate sanitation facilities and no electricity. Add to that diseases and a lack of medical help, and the situation deteriorates quickly. Teams from the [Christian Reformed World Relief Committee](#) are helping the refugees. ([Mission Network News](#))

### **TAJIKISTAN: New Law Hits Christians Hard**

A new law in Tajikistan may force evangelical Christians underground in this predominantly Muslim Central Asian country. Allowing Christian literature into the country is a decision open to government officials' subjective interpretation of the law. Legally-registered Christian organizations, including [Bible League](#) (BL), will be required to re-register under the new law. BL is one of the world's largest evangelical, nondenominational scripture placement agencies, partnering with local churches worldwide. Those re-registering should know by the end of June 2009 whether or not they've been approved. ([Bible League](#))

### **UNITED STATES: Missionary Gospel Fellowship Celebrates Seventy Years**

Missionary Gospel Fellowship (MGF), headquartered in Turlock, California, is celebrating its seventieth anniversary this year, culminating in special events at its annual conference 8-12 August 2009. The event will honor long-term missionaries and supporters. Ministering to immigrants pouring into the U.S. from East Asia and the Middle East, MGF has established mission fields in areas heavily populated with Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims in the U.S. and Canada. ([Missionary Gospel Fellowship](#))

### **UNITED STATES: HCJB Announces Ministry Contest**

On 20 April 2009, [HCJB Global](#) launched the "Be the Voice and Hands of Jesus" contest, part of the *Me and My Household* campaign. HCJB president Wayne Pederson explained, "We're encouraging listeners to declare and demonstrate Christ's love through a mission project, either in your community, within the U.S., or globally. Tell us what you're doing to be the voice and hands of Jesus this summer." The deadline for the contest is 1 August 2009. One can enter the contest by going to the website, [HCJBGlobal.org/contest](http://HCJBGlobal.org/contest). HCJB hopes the contest will do two things: provide others with ideas for outreach and help monetarily with a cash prize of \$200 USD for the winning ministry project. ([HCJB Global](#))

### **ZIMBABWE: Emergency Supplies Airlifted to Those in Suffering**

On 28 April 2009, [Medical Teams International](#) (MTI) airlifted \$2.5 million USD in emergency medical supplies to Zimbabwe to help people suffering from HIV and AIDS, malnutrition, and other severe health problems. Zimbabwe's economy is in ruins with hyperinflation and unemployment at around ninety percent. Millions are in need of food and the country's infrastructure and institutions are in shambles. Experts do not agree as to the cause of the collapse—mismanagement of the government, global recession, U.S. sanctions, or a combination of all factors. MTI is a Christian global health organization which sends teams of volunteer health professionals to carry out disaster relief, long-term development,

and community health programs in collaboration with local partners. (Medical Teams International)

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## THEMED ARTICLES: Overcoming Barriers to the Gospel

### New Age, New Mission? Evangelism and the Rise of "The New Spiritualities"

By Steve Hollinghurst

**Until recently, Christian literature on the New Age was not geared to equipping Christians to share their faith with its followers.** This has been changing as Christians have come to view those involved in such spiritualities as people with whom we are called to share faith in cross-cultural evangelism. What are the issues this raises for evangelism in our day? How might we approach people involved in such spiritualities?

#### Changes in Culture and Spirituality in the West

Within the context of Christian countries, New Religious Movements were often based upon a revision of Christian understanding. The Latter-Day Saints or the Jehovah's Witnesses would be classic examples. Others emerged from esoteric beliefs and occult practices. Christian responses to these sought to show their error or warn of their danger and were primarily geared to protecting the Christian majority from adopting them.

When the New Age Movement and Contemporary Pagan groups began to gain a following as part of the late 1960s counter-culture, it was very easy for Christians to view these in this way.

By the start of the twenty-first century it was becoming clear to many that something quite different was happening. These new movements, unlike others, did not define themselves from within a Christian framework, and while clearly influenced by other faiths and occult ideas, they did not actually adopt those systems.

Rather, they represented a new postmodern and post-Christendom approach to spirituality that was increasingly becoming mainstream. In the U.K., one sign of this was the way the "mind-body-spirit" section in bookstores containing titles on subjects ranging from self-help to meditation to tarot to complementary medicine became much bigger than the religion section.

Surveys in the U.K. have also shown changing beliefs so that half of those who believe in life after death believe in reincarnation; and while twenty-six percent of the population believe in a personal God, forty-four percent believe in some kind of spirit or life force nearer to the force in *Star Wars* than the ideas of traditional religions.

However, it was also difficult to classify and measure the numbers of followers of these new movements. This has not been helped by the dropping of the label "New Age" by most of those who once would have identified with it with no real alternative emerging. One can talk of New Age and Paganism as two ends of a spectrum from which contemporary spirituality has emerged and this still offers some helpful distinctions.<sup>1</sup>

However, beyond that, one has to talk vaguely of "The New Spiritualities" or a similar phrase, there being no agreement among observers or practitioners on a term to use. Indeed, all this is an expression of the highly postmodern nature of such spiritualities, which means they tend not to be organised groups with

clear doctrines but more fluid collections of people who tend to be focused on what works for them rather than developing belief systems.

Indeed, this style of spirituality has come to be seen as expressing the kind of client-based religions often found in countries like Japan where few people are members of a religion but most will consume the services of any and every religion they feel works for them.

In many ways, the success of the more New Age end of the spectrum has been that such approaches to spirituality fit perfectly with a consumer culture. The more Pagan end has been a source of counter-cultural activity against capitalism (although this is being threatened by the growth of a far more consumer-orientated Paganism on the internet, especially among teenagers).

The way these spiritualities work also means that they do not make exclusive claims on those adopting them. This means that while largely post-Christian Europe has seen many attracted to The New Spiritualities as an alternative to Christianity, in the U.S. with its much stronger Christian profile, these beliefs and practices are being adopted by churchgoers without them seeming to experience a conflict.<sup>2</sup> Such styles of spirituality are therefore a mission issue of evangelism not just among a particular people group, but within a whole society that seems to increasingly approach spirituality in this way.

This is why understanding such spiritualities is far more important for evangelism in post-modernity than the numbers of those at mind-body-spirit fairs (probably about one percent of the population in the U.K.) might suggest.

### **Changing Understanding of Evangelism in the West**

Much evangelism in the West has been based upon models developed within Christian countries. The classic mission meeting based upon proclamation of the cross is a good example. In the U.K., however, this approach has been in decline as it became apparent during the late twentieth century that most of those who came to faith this way had church backgrounds<sup>3</sup> at a time when fewer and fewer people had such a history. The same difficulty in reaching those without church backgrounds seems to be true for the otherwise very effective Alpha Course.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time the insights of missiologists like David Bosch on mission at times of paradigm shifts were beginning to be applied to post-modernity. Evangelism in Europe is being re-thought as foreign mission rather than the tradition inherited from Christendom. Such thinking seems to increasingly make sense regarding other parts of the West, perhaps even areas of the U.S., especially among the young.

This thinking is shaping approaches to evangelism that begin not with the message we wish to proclaim but by listening to the beliefs and experiences of others and looking for connections to the Christian gospel. This approach requires the building of relationships and a willingness to go to where people are in mission rather than expect them to come to us. The story of Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10 is being re-discovered in contemporary experience.

### **Discoveries in Evangelism within the New Spiritualities**

Those doing evangelism as cross-cultural mission within this culture, like those for instance in the Lausanne Group on New Religious Movements, have gained a number of insights, many of which are likely to be applicable for other areas of our culture. Below are five:

1. **There is a critique of Christendom and failures of the Church to address key issues effectively**, what the Lausanne Issue Group report calls “the unpaid bills of the Church” that we need to hear. Christianity is often viewed as lacking spiritual reality, and bearing responsibility

for environmental damage, violence, and the oppression of women and minority groups. We need to admit past failures as well as develop both effective apologetics and actions consistent with the Christian tradition to address these issues.

2. **The approach to spirituality is based upon experience rather than doctrine.** Apologetic approaches seeking to show the gospel as true make little sense to the people we are evangelising; instead, they are far more interested in personal testimony and want to experience God for themselves. Things like prayer, meditation, and prophetic insights are ways to connect with people. However, there is a danger of simply adding to the range of spiritual consumer products if there is not also an attempt to open up issues of the transforming power of God in peoples' lives and the place of Jesus as the one through whom this occurs.
3. **Understanding of concepts like sin and salvation are absent or often distorted so that traditional explanations of the atonement are not understood and are rejected.** New language is needed that builds upon an often-present understanding that the way people live is harming the planet and is responsible for suffering in the world. The biblical imagery of redemption and Paul's language of the death and resurrection of Christ as breaking the power of sin and death are the most likely to be understood as answers to this.
4. **Many people talk of spiritual experiences that are likely to be of the God we know through Jesus Christ.** This is often hidden by the fact that people explain these experiences without having the language of Christianity and through ideas drawn from New Age or Contemporary Pagan thought. Showing how peoples' spiritual experiences make sense within a Christian spirituality is an important part of evangelistic witness. We find ourselves in a similar situation to Paul in Athens speaking about the Unknown God.
5. **Those who come to faith often find it hard to be accepted by churches, and indeed would naturally express Christian faith in their own culture.** Insights from the C1-6 explorations of evangelism among Muslims are likely to be helpful in this area and it is likely that longer term mission in this culture will be served by planting churches in that culture.

### **Moving On in Evangelism in a New Spiritual Landscape**

This area of missions is at a place where it needs to both expand and deepen. While in some areas there are a good number of Christians engaged in this mission, in others there are few. In the U.K., we have developed a resource called "Equipping Your Church in a Spiritual Age" that has been helpful. We plan to make this available as a download as a response to increasing international requests.<sup>5</sup>

Training is increasingly available for those wishing to explore this ministry. For many of us already working in this field, there is a challenge in maintaining contact with those we are sharing our faith with, particularly creating communities that can become churches in this culture. It is often when a church exists within a culture that long-term mission can be sustained. We believe the same is true for the New Spirituality culture in the West.

### **Endnotes**

1. For more on this see Hollinghurst, Scott. 2003. *New Age Paganism and Christian Mission*. Cambridge: Grove Books.

2. Successive World Values Surveys have shown the growth of such beliefs among churchgoers. There is significant information on this area in the Baylor Religion Survey 2006.



3. See Finney, John. 1992. *Finding Faith Today*. Bletchley, U.K.: Scripture Union.

4. See Hunt, Stephen. 2005. *The Alpha Enterprise*. Farnham, U.K.: Ashgate.

5. For information, contact me at s.hollinghurst@sheffieldcentre.org.uk

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## **Powers and Principalities**

By Knud Jørgensen

**Evangelical theology views the conflict between Jesus and his adversary as a conflict between two kingdoms.** Casting out evil spirits was part of the conflict, but so was preaching in the synagogues (Mark 1:39). Preaching the good news, healing, and exorcism were all signs of the presence of the Kingdom of God (cf. Matthew 12:28; Luke 11:20, where exorcism is viewed as a sign of the kingdom).

### **The Tension of Two Kingdoms**

In evangelical theology, this points to the reality of a hostile realm in conflict with the Kingdom of God. This hostile realm has several dimensions or fronts, including what Scott Moreau<sup>1</sup> calls the *systemic front*, where the agenda is warfare against the domination systems that make up our cultures and societies.

These systems (cultural, economic, political, religious) are manifestations of what John calls “the world” (*kosmos*: “the whole world is under the control of the evil one”; 1 John 5:19). This concept of kingdoms in conflict is also illustrated by Satan’s claim of dominion when he offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world (Matthew 4:8-9). The point is that even though God ultimately is the sovereign king of heaven and earth, Satan does exercise significant influence over *kosmos* and its power structures.

The conflict is evidenced in a tension between the two, often overlapping, kingdoms. Our allegiance is to the Kingdom of God. As citizens of this kingdom we are part of the new creation. Nevertheless, we see the impact of evil all around us in the form of violence, poverty, crime, racism, ethnic strife, betrayal, and brokenness.

This way of looking at the kingdoms in conflict was central to the Reformation. Try to sing the battle hymn of the Reformation, “A Mighty Fortress Is our God,” and one will realise that the *leitmotif* is the battle between God’s kingdom and Satan, not just in an internal, personal manner, but on a cosmic scale and in the midst of society and as an attack on the Church.

For Martin Luther, the truth that “God is for us” implies that “the devil is against us.” If this Reformation understanding is left out, the entire gospel of incarnation, justification, and forgiveness is reduced to vague ideas rather than experiences of faith.

We should perceive of evil and spiritual warfare in a broad way. It has to do with the common struggle as Christians, and it touches every area of our lives—family, relationships, neighbours, communities, work. All these areas are battlegrounds for the kingdoms in conflict. At various levels, we recognise that the biblical worldview corresponds to a reality of Auschwitz, Rwanda, Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan—or the



reality of a drug culture, a divorce culture, a culture of ethnic and racist strife, and the devastating effects of a globalised culture marginalising major parts of the world.

### **The Attack on Societal and Cultural Levels**

Satan exerts influence on societal and cultural levels. This influence may come through idolatry and occult practises and beliefs (e.g., Acts 13 about the magician Elymas). Or it may come through what Sherwood Lingenfelter calls “prisons of disobedience” found in all cultures.<sup>2</sup> In a sense, every culture and system may be used by the evil one to hold us in bondage by entangling us into a life of conformity to shared values and beliefs that are fundamentally contrary to God’s purpose and will for humanity. Thus, Satan has worked on a corporate level, says Lingenfelter, to blind people to the gospel.

How the bondage is experienced will vary greatly from culture to culture. In some parts of the world, there is great fear of the spirits, and the gospel is heard as the good news of deliverance from these spirits. In other places, there is evidence of powerful occult undercurrents with overt demonic activity.

In some Latin American countries major parts of the population are caught up in witchcraft, voodoo, and magic. Likewise in Hindu cultures there is a pervasive fear of the spirit world. In the West, discarding Christianity has taken off the lid of the ancient jungle of religiosity. As the animals of the jungle reappear, we call them new (New Age), even though they are as old as the fall of humanity. However, the main bondage most people in “the westernized world” experience is the desire for affluence. The globalised culture has allowed the pursuit of the good life to shape its perspective, values, and psychology so profoundly that Leslie Newbigin is right in viewing the Western culture as the most non-Christian culture ever.

In the kingdom conflict we are, Paul says (Ephesians 6:10-20), confronted by principalities (*archai*), authorities (*exousiai*), world rulers (*kosmokratores*), and spiritual forces (*pneumatika*). Among evangelicals, these terms are usually understood to refer to satanic forces. Paul’s focus is on the day-to-day struggle of the believer in the midst of culture and society, not on territorial spirits. Neither do the terms seem to describe a hierarchy of spirits.

### **Domination Systems**

Walter Wink talks about *domination systems*. When an entire network of powers integrates around idolatrous values, we get a domination system. The domination system is the system of the powers. Here are a few examples:

- A farming family in Bangladesh loses everything to crafty lawyers and hired guns, being forced into the city slums which have no labour, high crime, high prostitution, and starvation. Nearly sixteen million people die from starvation and poverty-related diseases every year.
- Blacks struggle against an apartheid system as a demonic system.
- Consumer sickness of wealthy societies is fuelled by belief in endless progress and by a commercialised information society saying less and less to more and more.
- The sick combination of violence and sexual perversion available for all ages on the internet and video, thus crippling the minds of both older and younger people.

The domination system is characterised by unjust economic relations, oppressive political relations, biased race relations, patriarchal gender relations, hierarchical power relations, and the use of violence to maintain them all.<sup>3</sup>

The basic structure of this system has persisted since the rise of the great conquest states of Mesopotamia around 3000 BC. At that time, the horse and the wheel together made conquest lucrative, and plunder and conquest included females as slaves, concubines, and wives, resulting in female subordination and a system of patriarchy. Wife-beating and child-beating developed as a male right. Evil was blamed on women. In addition, plunder and conquest gave rise to new classes of aristocrats and priests—people producing nothing, but dominating others through a spiral of violence.

And to uphold the domination system, *a myth of redemptive violence* comes into being, a myth that lifts high the belief that violence saves, that war brings peace, and that might makes right. Violence in this way becomes the nature of things.

### **The Weapon: The Liberating Message of Jesus**

The primary weapon against the powers has always been and will always remain *the liberating message of Jesus*. That small word or testimony is sufficient to bring down the whole army of powers and principalities. The gospel is the most powerful antidote for domination the world has ever known. It was that antidote that inspired the abolition of slavery; the women's movement; the non-violence movement; the civil rights movement; the human rights movement; the fall of Nazism, Fascism, and Communism; and the breakup of apartheid.

In our fight against the domination system, we shall lift up the biblical focus on servanthood *and servant leadership* (Luke 22:22-27) not just as a principle, but because the central core of the gospel is the slave or servant of the Lord who took upon himself our transgressions. The consequence of this gospel truth is the repudiation of the right of some to lord it over others by means of power, wealth, shaming, or titles. The man on a donkey is the master of God's people in their fight against powers and principalities in this world.

The cross challenges the entire domination system. The cross reveals the delusions and deceptions and reveals that death does not have the final word. Jesus entered darkness and death and made it the darkness of God. It is now possible to enter any darkness and trust God to wrest from it resurrection. And the cross proves that truth cannot be killed. The mighty forces of deception and lie cannot ever kill the truth.

The primary task of the Church with reference to powers and principalities is to unmask their idolatrous pretensions, to identify their dehumanising values, to strip from them the mantle and credibility, and to set their victims free. This includes the testimony to the crucified—to the rulers and powers. It does not include a commission to create a new society; rather, we are, in the midst of society, to call the powers' bluff, to de-legitimize and ridicule the domination system.

*(Editor's note: The full version of this article is found in 2002. Deliver Us From Evil: An Uneasy Frontier in Christian Mission. Eds. A. Scott Moreau, Tokunboh Adeyemo, David Burnett, Bryant Myers, and Hwa Yung. Monrovia, California, USA: MARC.)*

### **Endnotes**

1. 1997. *Essentials of Spiritual Warfare*. Wheaton, Illinois, USA: Harold Shaw Publishers, 18.
2. 1992. *Transforming Culture: A Challenge for Christian Mission*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA: Baker.
3. Wink, Walter. 1998. *When the Powers Fall: Reconciliation in the Healing of Nations*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 59.

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## **A Forgotten Barrier: Attitudes toward Disability**

By David W. Anderson

- Born with cerebral palsy, the tightness in Sandra’s muscles made her movements uncoordinated and spastic. Her father did what he believed necessary: he left her on the bank of a river, perhaps with the idea of returning her to the gods.
- Emmanuel contracted polio at age six, resulting in a mild physical disability. His father, believing Emmanuel useless, put him out of the family to survive on the street.
- Solange’s knee deformity made walking difficult. Coupling this disability with the mysterious disappearance of eggs, her father believed Solange was actually a snake in the guise of a child.
- While giving birth to her fourth child, a mild stroke left Amie with hemiplegia, causing a definite limp and limited usefulness of one arm. Since the village “doctor” was unable to cure her (through physical and sexual abuse), her husband kept the children and sent Amie away to fend for herself.

**These stories are typical of the experience of many disabled persons in developing nations, and represent a form of spiritual bondage which maintains a wall of separation between the temporarily able-bodied and the disabled.** This separation presents a significant barrier to the gospel which must be overcome.

### **Jesus’ Mission of Freedom**

My concept of missions is broad and focuses on the total redemptive and restorative work which Jesus emphasized in Luke 4:18-19 when he read from Isaiah:

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon 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.*

Those hearing Jesus immediately recognized the reference to the Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:10-11) in which slaves were freed, debts canceled, property returned to its owner, and the soil was to remain fallow. Jesus was saying that with his coming, the true year of jubilee had begun, a time of hope being offered to those without hope, and freedom proclaimed to those in bondage to sin. It was a time of restoration, renewal, and reconciliation with God and fellow humanity.

These words describe Jesus’ mission as he saw it. It is the same mission he authorized his followers to engage in (Matthew 28:18-20): a rescue mission in which we are charged with doing our part to create a God-centered community that offers salvation, health, physical care, nurturing, economic support, reconciliation, and restoration—in short, *shalom*.

It is a task which requires crossing many types of frontiers which present barriers between the people of God and the people of the world. According to Hans Kasdorf,

Once those frontiers have been crossed, the Church witnesses of God's redemptive, healing, and helping grace on the other side of these frontiers. In this sense, "mission means being sent by God to love, to serve, to preach, to heal."<sup>1</sup>

Many barriers to ministry to and with persons with disabilities are architectural, such as multiple steps which make the church building inaccessible and inadequate transportation which keeps persons with disabilities from participating in the local faith community. However, these barriers are often relatively easy to surmount with some creative problem-solving.

### **Attitudinal Barriers**

The more difficult "frontiers" to be crossed are attitudinal. Attitudinal barriers often arise from cultural beliefs and traditional religious thinking, as reflected in the stories of Sandra, Emmanuel, Solange, and Amie. Lacking scientific answers, people in developing nations have devised superstitious or mythological explanations for disability, such as a lack of proper reverence for one's ancestors, broken taboos, witchcraft, evil spirits, or individual or parental sin. These erroneous views create prejudicial attitudes, which often result in exclusion of the individual by the community (or even by the family).

Such misconceptions shape a person's thinking, causing him or her to see the disabled as personally responsible for his or her condition. A stigma becomes attached to the individual or the entire family, while at the same time elevating temporarily able-bodied persons (at least in their own mind), allowing them to justify rejecting, neglecting, or even eliminating the disabled. Persons with disabilities are pushed to the margins of society. This is exactly opposite to the approach of Jesus, who frequently broke through barriers and freely interacted with, even welcomed, persons with disability during his earthly ministry.

Based as they are on misinformation, these attitudes about disability and the disabled reflect fear, embarrassment, guilt, anger, prejudice, or insensitivity. These lead to equating disability with something negative or evil—a valuation which easily attaches to the individual, so that the disabled *person* is seen as negative, evil, incomplete, unworthy of living, or someone to be ignored or discarded.

These attitudinal barriers also lead to blindness on the part of the Church to the spiritual needs of persons and families affected by disability. In African contexts, there may even be a blindness to the *existence* of disabled people. Informed of the intent of an indigenous ministry to reach out to people with disabilities, one village chief responded that there were no disabled people in his "realm." However, when he came to the church through which the outreach was being done, he found himself among ninety-five people from the immediate area with physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities.

### **The Church Creating Community**

The role of the Church should be to create communities in which people who are not alike can be found living and working together.<sup>2</sup> This will allow the Church to assume its rightful position in shaping culture, and to become a visible expression of God's love for all humanity through constructive protest against the social conditions faced by men and women with disabilities.

The Church must seek to establish reconciled and reconciling communities which not only work toward restoration of right relationships between God and humankind, but also toward right relationships between individuals—all genders, all races, all cultures, all social strata, and all ability levels. Ministering to and with persons who have a disability necessitates a proactive approach by kingdom people with the same compelling spirit of which Paul spoke in 2 Corinthians 5:14, and the same urgency with which the servant was sent out to compel the poor, crippled, blind, and lame to come to the great banquet (Luke 14:21).

The Bible asserts the lordship of Jesus over the forces and divisions which bring enmity between people (Ephesians 2:11-18). Hence, Christians should engage the culture, bringing to bear on culture and social issues God's transforming truth and the presence of Jesus, and leading the movement away from ignorance, insensitivity, and indifference toward acceptance and reconciliation, actively seeking to remove barriers which exclude disabled persons from all aspects of society.

This must be done wisely and openly—acknowledging that church and culture are equally guilty of having neglected the disabled. There can be no escaping Jesus' example and teaching in the parables about reaching out to "the least of these" (Matthew 25) and of including in the gospel invitation those whom society (religious and civil) has tended to reject (cf. Luke 14:15-24).

In seeking to meet the needs of all humanity, the Church of Christ must go beyond humanitarian objectives alone to minister holistically, addressing spiritual and relational needs as well as physical and social needs.<sup>3</sup> For the Church to be salt and light in society (Matthew 5:13-14), it must speak out against any form of discrimination and injustice, especially against those who cannot defend themselves.

The Church must advocate for and defend the welfare and human rights of even the most severely disabled, recognizing that all people are God's children by creation and have equal value as God's image-bearers. God does not exclude people on the basis of ability; neither can the Church. The Church must be a change agent in society through living a lifestyle of reconciliation and acceptance. Jesus' focus on including the excluded must be that of all Christians.

### **One Example of Disability Ministry**

To encourage and equip churches to engage in ministry to and with persons with disabilities, Crossing Bridges Inc., a U.S.-based ministry, has established a collaborative relationship with the Center for Empowerment of Females with Disabilities in Cameroon.<sup>4</sup> This collaboration has involved promoting disability awareness and providing ministry training through seminars in several communities, churches, Bible colleges, and seminaries. This training has resulted in confession and repentance among participants for attitudes of neglect and exclusion, and has resulted in the mobilization of many individuals and several churches for evangelistic and social outreach with disabled persons.

Excluding someone with a disability from the opportunity to hear the gospel—whether out of ignorance and oversight or intentionally, assuming the individual is neither worthy nor capable of receiving God's love—dishonors God, whose love and compassion is not limited. Jesus' command to his disciples was to take the good news to all the peoples of the world, not just those whom society or culture says are deserving of God's grace. God's grace is grace because no one is deserving of it.

Ultimately, the goal of disability ministry is the same as for any other form of ministry: bringing glory to God through proclamation of the gospel and through living a life that honors the one who has called us to be his children. More specifically, disability ministry seeks to:

1. Open doors to sharing the gospel with disabled persons
2. Integrate people with disabilities into the life of the church
3. Model inclusivity and fellowship to the greater community and to the culture
4. Demonstrate the love of Christ in action
5. Meet the spiritual, physical, social, and emotional needs of persons with disabilities

The World Health Organization estimates that ten percent of the population is disabled. This equates to more than 670 million persons with disabilities worldwide, approximately eighty percent of whom are thought to live in the developing nations of the world. This presents the Church with a pivotal opportunity to model the practice of Christian love and to obey Christ's command to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15).

### Endnotes

1. 1986. *A Century of Mennonite Brethren Mission Thinking: 1885-1984*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.
2. McCollum, A. B. 1998. "Tradition, Folklore, and Disability: A Heritage of Inclusion." In *Human Disability and the Service of God: Reassessing Religious Practice*. Eds. N. L. Eiesland and D. E. Sailors. 167-186. Nashville, Tennessee, USA: Abingdon.
3. Cf. Fuller, W. H. 1987. "The Church and Its Mission and Ministry." In *New Frontiers in Missions*. Ed. Patrick Sookhedeo, 101-114. Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA: Baker Books.
4. Crossing Bridges, Inc., and Center for Empowerment of Females with Disabilities are international affiliate ministries of Joni and Friends International Disability Center in Agoura Hills, California, USA.

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### Lessons from Our Daughter: Reflections of Church and Ethics

By Daniel and Gayna Salinas

**The birth of our daughter in November 1993 threw us into the unknown land of disabilities.**<sup>1</sup> Our daughter Karis was born with cerebral palsy. Simple tasks were impossible. Eating, getting dressed, brushing her teeth, combing her hair, or using the toilet were out of the question. Karis never walked or sat up by herself. She lived her life strapped to a wheelchair or some other therapy apparatus.

She never talked. Communication was limited to crying and smiling. We never knew her favorite food, her likes or dislikes, or her dreams or feelings. Hundreds of doctors' and therapist visits punctuated her seven years of life.

#### Taking a Good Look at Ethics and Society

Slowly, we realized this was wide-open territory. Where was it before? Why had we not seen it? Certainly there were people with disabilities around. What did society do with such people and their families? After visiting three countries, we realized many of these individuals were ignored, institutionalized, or abandoned to public charity. This led us to evaluate our ethics of life and society.

Horrified, we noticed many influential philosophers proposed that these individuals were not even persons and did not have the same rights as "normal people." Having created the concept of "Quality of Life," they applied it to people with special needs. The quality of life of these individuals did not reach their criteria, hence, lives could (and even should) be terminated. This included children, elderly, quadriplegics, and fetuses with health or mental problems. Furthermore, ethicists redefined personhood, adding the category of "non-human persons" (basically primates) with the same rights that "human

persons” have. Therefore, such “non-human persons” have, according to this philosophy, more right to life than our daughter had.<sup>2</sup>

### **Inside the Christian Community**

We thought we would find compassion, understanding, empathy, help, and respite in the Christian community; instead, we found the same utilitarian ethics in place as in the secular world. For most believers, there were two options: either God heals the person or God takes the person away. They asked, “What sense does it make to live like that? Isn’t it better that God calls the person home?” Although these seem like innocent questions, behind them rests the same argument secular scholars propose.

These questions reveal the urgent need to seriously evaluate our ethics. The Church, where supposedly the ethics of the Kingdom of God are proposed and practiced, has (consciously or unconsciously) bought into the secular ethics of the day. The Church should be the voice for the voiceless, eyes for the blind, hands for those who cannot produce, and feet for the immobile.

Rather, people with special needs are conspicuously absent from congregations because they cannot contribute, or bring a monetary offering, nor can they help with numerical growth. Some pastors even go as far as telling parents that they are welcomed in church, but without their children.

Think for a moment: how many congregations do you know of with an intentional ministry to special-needs people and their families? How many include simultaneous translation for the deaf? How many Sunday schools include Down syndrome kids? Are there only able-bodied people involved in the leadership of the church? This reality should make us feel somewhat embarrassed. This shows the need for believers to consider ethics seriously.

### **When Ethics Become Personal**

Such an ethical void, or ethical adaptation, became even more acute when our daughter died in January 2001. The death of a child is unnatural; parents are not supposed to bury their children. As believers, death makes us cry out loud, “Let your kingdom come!” Death is our enemy. But, in our case, for most of the believers who came to “comfort” us, our daughter’s death was the best thing that could have happened. She was better off dead. The message was clear: “She is better off now; there is no more suffering and pain.”

Yes, Karis lived with much pain and suffering, but how much better is it to search for ways to alleviate the pain than celebrate death. Is not our God pro-life? Are we not supposed to promote life? So then, why did they keep telling us it was better that our daughter died?

### **Utilitarian Ethics?**

The Church has let the world convince her that the criterion to define life worth living is utility—the capacity to produce. If anyone cannot produce, his or her life is meaningless, worthless. The Church has adopted an ethic in which utilitarian criteria are predominant. According to J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *utilitarianism* is defined as the belief that “the rightness or wrongness of an act or moral rule is solely a matter of the non-moral good produced directly or indirectly in the consequences of that act or rule.”<sup>3</sup>

For utilitarian ethics, the moral task is to reach the highest happiness and the lowest pain, even if that implies induced death for a terminal patient, or aborted fetuses with genetic or other malformations. Indeed, isn’t life with limitations unhappy?



The same utilitarian ethics can also be found in the Church's mission strategies and theories. Most Christian mission today is about reaching the highest numbers, in the shortest time, with the lowest costs and the best profits. Such a definition of mission leaves out the weak, the disabled, the orphan, the widow, the poor, and the displaced, because they bring only problems and meager offerings. We need to rediscover:

1. **The doctrine of creation.** God is the creator of everything, including people with special needs. He is the sustainer of the whole universe and is involved in all aspects of his creation. He does not abandon us.
2. **The doctrine of God's providence and sovereignty.** God has always had control of the universe. He presents himself as compassionate, merciful, just, holy, eternal, and loving. He is the redeemer; he takes the initiative to reach us. His mission is to restore his rebellious creation through his transformed people—the Church.

God created humans as his image-bearers independently of how much they produce. After sin entered the world, death infected all areas of human life. The effects of death are evident in the oppression of the poor, economical inequality, kidnapping, unjust laws, political corruption, and violence.

We experienced the effects of death not only when our daughter passed away, but in the uncomfortable rejection of many, including believers. Those who grieve are left alone. We have forgotten the biblical text: "Mourn with those who mourn."

We constantly grieve the death of our dreams: our daughter will never play sports, graduate, get married, or reach any other milestone in the process of life. Death punched us every time someone told us she was better off in heaven. Even though our daughter could not produce, nor invest anything in the economy, she was a bearer of God's image and that was more than enough reason to have lived. Why has the Church accepted so much utilitarianism without even thinking twice about it? We need to return to Jesus' model of life.

### **Jesus and Ethics**

Jesus' importance goes beyond soteriology. He is God's personal revelation in human form. Jesus came to show us how to accomplish God's mission. He was God incarnate, dwelling among us. Serving, he came to give his life for many. He constantly departed from the orthodoxy of his time:

- He let children come to him.
- Women were included among his disciples.
- Ceremonial contamination was not a concern when touching the dead body of a widow's only son.
- Dignity was restored to a chronically-unclean, ill woman who had touched him.
- He stopped a successful meeting to heal a paralytic who came through the ceiling.
- He confronted the religious leaders who wanted to kill him for doing good on the Sabbath.
- He promoted life, and, paradoxically, it was through his death on the cross that he conquered death to give us life eternal.

Jesus is the savior of the world, and the incarnate one par excellence.

### **The Church Following in Jesus' Example**

So what can we do to turn around the Church's assimilation of utilitarian ethics? Our praxis must follow Jesus' model, promoting life. We need to learn and practice ethics that stem from the Kingdom of God.

The Church must be compassionate toward those in need. It must include the poorest of the poor, disabled, orphans, widows, and those who suffer the results of death daily. We must reject any and all systems that promote death. The Church is called to respect the dignity of human life, because we are the bearers of God's image. We are to become the advocate of those whose basic rights are denied.

The Church needs to say "no" to being seduced by big numbers and big investments, and return to defending and promoting life in its fullness.

One practical suggestion is to look for a family with a child with disabilities and adopt them into your world and let your heart be transformed. Remember, if we are currently "able-bodied," we are only a heartbeat or a step away from the possibility of being "dis-abled," so we all need a special dose of God's grace.

### **Endnotes**

1. We use the more common term *disabilities*, understanding the terms *physical limitations* and *physically challenged* are more correct.
2. See Cavalieri, Paola and Peter Singer, eds. 1996. *The Great Ape Project: Equality Beyond Humanity*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin; Fletcher, Joseph. 1979. *Humanhood: Essays in Biomedical Ethics*. Buffalo: Prometheus Books; Kuhse, Helga, ed. 2002. *Unsanctifying Human Life: Essays on Ethics*. Oxford: Blackwell; and Singer, Peter. 1994. *Rethinking Life and Death: The Collapse of Our Traditional Ethics*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
3. 2003. *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 433.

**Dr. Daniel and Gayna Salinas** have been missionaries with the Latin America Mission since 1992. Daniel, who is originally from Colombia, is general secretary of GBUP, an International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES)-affiliated group in Paraguay. Gayna is originally from America.

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## **Asian Missions in the Twenty-first Century—An Asian Perspective**

By Hwa Yung

**Asia today is a vast continent consisting of fifty nations, with 3.7 billion people making up sixty-one percent of the world's population.** They consist of thousands of diverse ethnic groups, speaking as many different languages, with a multiplicity of cultures, some of which go back to antiquity.

### **What Has God Been Doing in Asia?**

Over the past century Asia's encounter with modernity has propelled many Asian countries into the forefront of technological advances and economical development. Japan, Hong Kong, and Singapore are already richer on a per capita basis than some Western colonial powers of yesteryears.

South Korea's Samsung is the world's largest consumer-electronics company today, and IBM's personal computer division has now become a Chinese company named Lenovo. In the words of Singapore's first

Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, “an increasing number of Asian societies are leapfrogging from the Third World into the First World.” Yet, hundreds of millions or more in places like Bangladesh—and many areas in rural China, India, Indonesia, Philippines, and so forth—remain mired in grinding poverty.

Over the same period, Christian missions have also met relative success. The *World Christian Encyclopedia* tells us that Christian numbers, as percentages of Asia’s population, have gone from 2.3% in 1900, to 4.7% in 1970, and to 8.5% in 2000. Today there are over 300 million Christians on the whole continent, many of whom would be evangelical in theology and freely operate in the ‘signs and wonders’ of the Holy Spirit.

In some places, the growth has been phenomenal, including better known examples like South Korea, as well as lesser known ones like Nepal and proliferating grassroots churches in many parts of India. And the story of the explosive growth of the Chinese Church has yet to be fully told! Clearly, God has blessed the labors of his servants in Asia.

### **What Is God Doing in the Asian Church?**

This growth of the Church has not gone unnoticed by external observers. Reflecting on the future direction of world missions in the twenty-first century, the American spiritual writer, Richard Foster, in a “Pastoral Letter” from November 1999, wrote, “The twenty-first century will witness one of the greatest harvests of Christian mission ever. I concur with John Paul II that in the next century we will see a ‘new springtime’ for the gospel message.” Foster goes on to note that much of the energy for this will be found outside the West, but

“The really pivotal continent ...is Asia. Throughout the twenty-first century Asia will be the rising culture, no doubt about that. The real question is whether the Christian witness in Asia is strong enough to ride the rise of Asian culture... I believe the Christian witness is strong enough. Chinese Christians have suffered tremendously and are deeper and stronger for it. They will teach the rest of us how to live for God. Korea... will teach the entire Christian world how to pray. And the signs of spiritual vitality in the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, India, and numerous other places are so encouraging that I believe the twenty-first century will be viewed as ‘the great century’ of advance for Christ and his kingdom. Let us pray that it may be so.”

This may appear astounding to those unfamiliar with Asian Christianity. For me, whatever doubts I had vanished after I attended the global mission conference, Ethne06, held in Bali in 2006.

At that meeting, some of the major mission networks from the non-Western world reported on their plans for the coming years. COMIBOM reported that by 2005, Latin American churches had sent out some eight thousand missionaries to over 150 countries. And more are in the pipeline. African churches were not to be outdone. For example, Timothy Olonade of the Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association noted that the Nigerian churches have sent out 5,200 missionaries to date. By 2020, their goal was to send out fifty thousand missionaries.

But it was the plans of Asian missions that took my breath away. Dr. Kang Sung Sam of the Korea World Missions Association reported that Korean churches have sent out eighteen thousand missionaries to date. By 2030, they hope to send 100,000. The Indian Missions Association, under Dr. K. Rajendran, covered 208 mission agencies with more than thirty thousand cross-cultural missionaries. Most of these are working within India’s borders, but a growing number are overseas.

Then there is the “Back-to-Jerusalem” movement of China’s house churches, based upon a vision that first emerged in the 1920s. The goal is to send out 100,000 missionaries within this generation along the

ancient trade routes back to Jerusalem, going through the heartlands of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam along the way. Again, the Philippines Council of Evangelical Churches speaks of sending out 200,000 tentmakers in the form of migrant workers by 2010.

Over and above all these are the emerging mission movements from all the other countries in East and Southeast Asia. When added up, just the sheer numbers alone will have an overwhelming impact on the shape of world missions in the twenty-first century!

### **What Will It Take to Fulfill God's Call?**

Are all these a mere pipe-dream, a pie-in-the-sky? What will it take for the Asian Church to make these a reality? If the Asian Church is to fulfill God's destiny for her, two considerations must be borne in mind, amongst others.

The first is that *we must learn to depend fully upon God, and not on ourselves*. The ever-present danger in Christian life and ministry is to place our primary dependence upon our abilities, strengths, money, organizational efforts, and human power and resources. All these will fail. The New Testament reminds us of this again and again. For example, reflecting on his own ministry to the Corinthians, Paul writes,

For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified... My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom but on God's power. (1 Corinthians 2: 2-5)

Without a proper dependence upon God, there can be no real advance of the gospel. Time and again we see this truth played out in mission history.

The greatest evangelist of China in the first half of the twentieth century was John Sung. Christian missions to China had brought in thousands of missionaries, together with the best mission schools, universities, and hospitals. Yet the gospel made little progress. Sung was not unappreciative of the sacrificial labor of the missionaries. Nevertheless, he noted that what was preventing the Chinese Church from really growing were missionary control and over-dependency upon Western funds. Repeatedly, he urged the budding Chinese Church to cut its apron strings and move on toward independence and maturity.

Asked shortly before his death in 1944 about the future of the Chinese Church, Sung revealed that God had showed him that a great revival was coming—but all the missionaries would have to leave first. The history of the last sixty years shows that this was the most profound prophecy concerning the Chinese Church in the twentieth century. And as the saying goes, “The rest is history!”

The danger today is that Asian churches, with all their newfound riches, will repeat the same mistakes of mission history. God does not need our resources, money, degrees, or organizational expertise. He has shown again and again that his Church can grow fabulously without those things. Yet if we learn to humbly consecrate these things to him in genuine dependence, he can use them to bear much fruit for eternity.

The second important consideration is *the need for genuine commitment and sacrifice*. If the Church is to advance in Asia, these two things cannot be avoided. The house church movement in China, which is responsible for developing and implementing the Back-to-Jerusalem vision, understands this very well. Hence, their motto is “Sacrifice, abandonment, poverty, suffering, death.” The question is, Do other Christians in Asia understand this?

Recent efforts by some Asian missionaries, especially those from richer nations with advanced economies, have sometimes given rise to serious concern about whether in fact they do. But there are at the same time many signs of hope. I think of a Malaysian friend of mine who left a comfortable job as a nursing tutor in a leading hospital in Leeds, U.K., to work among teenage prostitutes in Thailand. In the past twenty years, God has used her to bring salvation and a new hope to many women.

Jesus said, “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if dies, it bears much fruit” (John 12:24). Pray that God will grant that many in the Asian Church will learn to die with Christ, so that billions more will find life!

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## PERSPECTIVES

### **Spiritual Warfare: Arise, Fight, and Never Give Up!**

By John Godson

*“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” - Ephesians 6:10-12*

**The Christian life is spiritual warfare.** Many Christians are prone to overlook or minimize this; however, we cannot run away from the fact that we are in a war. The day we decided to become disciples of Christ we declared war against the kingdom of the devil and all his works in our lives and in our communities.

This war is real. We can either decide to fight or be defeated. Many of us are not experiencing any warfare because we have long been defeated and the enemy doesn't bother us anymore.

The picture Paul used in Ephesians was that of a Roman soldier who needed to be strong and watchful in order to be able to fight well. It is a picture of a soldier who needed to be careful and prepared at all times. Spiritual warfare is about overcoming the enemy, his temptations, and his traps. It is about winning new territories for God.

The reason why spiritual warfare is so important is that prayer is not only about talking to God; it is also about defeating the devil and his evil plans. The devil has a ministry. His 24/7 ministry is to steal, to kill, and to destroy. The ministry of the devil is to war against the purposes of God in our lives and in our nations. His main calling is to make sure as many people as possible go to hell, including you and me. His mission is make people doubt God.

The Bible is full of accounts of spiritual warfare, starting from Eden and ending at the book of Revelations. The Bible itself is an account of the warfare between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. We as human beings are the objects of this warfare. It is a war for our hearts and our loyalty. We have been given the privilege and power of serving as agents in waging warfare against the devil.

However, we may not be conscious of the spiritual activity going on around us and in our communities and nations. We participate in this warfare through our prayers and witness. Let us look at one of the few examples of warfare in the Bible.

### **Daniel and Spiritual Warfare**

*At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over. On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; the men with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground. A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling. Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia." (Daniel 10:2-13)*

This is a telling story about prayer and spiritual warfare. Daniel decided to seek God's face in prayer and fasting. He prayed and fasted for many days; however, no response was coming. On the twenty-first day, the answer came through an angel who told him that the prince of Persia withstood the angel and delayed him. God had given an answer to Daniel from the very first day he started praying. The answer did not get to him until Michael came to help the angel to fight the prince of Persia who was the demonic prince over the kingdom of Persia. What would have happened if Daniel had stopped praying? His prayer brought help.

The devil's ministry is to foil and destroy everything God is doing on earth. We are on earth, inside the enemy's kingdom. Do you think the enemy sits down and blesses your work and ministry? No! He is in the business of doing everything possible to stop you. That is his goal. But we are victors because "Greater is he who is in us than he who is in the world!"

### **Who Are Our Enemies?**

Ephesians 6:12 says, "*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*" The Bible clearly says that we are not fighting against human beings, but against:

- Principalities
- Powers
- Rulers of the darkness of this world
- Spiritual wickedness in high places

The kingdom of the devil is organized. As we saw in the Daniel passage above, there was a demon called the "Prince of Persia." Likewise, there are demonic princes over continents, nations, cities, and towns.

The Bible says it is against them we are fighting. Their work is to make sure that the kingdom of Jesus does not get established in their dominions. Although they are invisible, they are real.

Second Corinthians 10:3-5 says,

*For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

God has equipped us with spiritual weapons that are capable of:

- Pulling down spiritual strongholds
- Casting down evil imaginations
- Casting down every high thought that exalts itself against the knowledge of God
- Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that we can win souls and get people into God's kingdom without direct confrontation with these demonic forces. This is why prayer is so strategic. Through prayer, we harness the forces of God's kingdom—his angels—to fight on our behalf.

Mark 3:27 reads, *"In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house."* Matthew 18:18 adds, *"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."*

This is one of the weak points of the Church in our generation. We have neglected fighting in prayer for our nations and our people. We easily give up and give in. We pray routine prayers that are dead and that do not make any impact on God's work.

### **Radical, Violent, Passionate Prayer**

There is something about fighting in prayer that is radical, violent, and passionate. It is a fight, not a joke. Read Matthew 11:12: *"From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it."*

And God wants us to fight the devil and his demons. God does not give us the weapons of warfare (Ephesians 6:10-16) so we can just dress up and look like soldiers—only to run away when the war starts. He has given us those weapons so we can fight and win. He expects us to win.

- *"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* - James 4:7
- *"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings."* - 1 Peter 5:8-9
- *"I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you."* - Luke 10:19

Some of the key words or phrases in these verses are:



- Put on the full armor
- Stand against the devil's schemes
- Struggle against principalities and powers
- Prince of Persia withstood (opposed)
- Weapons of warfare
- Bind and loose
- Take it by force
- Resist the devil
- Tread on

We should not be afraid of fighting this war. We are called and equipped to be soldiers of Christ. God has given us everything we need to win; he has assured us of victory, and those who overcome shall reign with Jesus forever. Therefore arise, fight, and never give up.

*“The superficial results of many a ministry, the deadness of others, are to be found in the lack of praying. No ministry can succeed without much praying, and this praying must be fundamental, ever-abiding, ever-increasing.”* - E.M. Bounds

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## **Media that Transforms Nations**

By Carol C.

**As technology slowly infiltrates even the most unlikely of places, media “disciples” the nations in cities and villages around the world.** Tragically, it can be a tool of evil (e.g., pornography, violence). Gloriously, the Body of Christ is also utilizing it to bring righteousness, joy, and the life-changing message of the gospel.

### **Contextualized Media**

At **Create International** we focus on producing media tools to communicate with those who have the least access to the gospel. The 6,800 distinct unreached people groups of the world reflect the incredible complexity, diversity, wonder, and greatness of our God. One media form, or one message, will not reach them all. We need to culturally contextualize our message to make it relevant.

Media producers should seek to both distribute media and to facilitate personal contact or follow up. Media producers are primarily enablers who work to make resources available and to train people to effectively utilize media in their witness.

Contextual media is the best form to ensure continued use by the audience. This was demonstrated to us during a project in West Sumatra, where our team was filming a dramatic rendition of the “Prodigal Son” parable. One of our actors happened to be Muslim, but at the end of the filming he gave his life to the Lord. Part of what impressed him was that our team cared enough to make a film adapted to his Minang culture.

During the filming, he heard the gospel and was personally witnessed to by a Minang Christian. When this actor, a prominent singer and entertainer in the Minang culture, proudly showed us some of his music cassettes, we challenged him to produce and sing God-honoring music for his culture.

Two years later, a team from Singapore was visiting that same area in Sumatra and heard of a local dance and music performance. They all attended and were overjoyed to hear the gospel woven into the presentation in a way that was non-offensive (and yet professionally done) to the majority Muslim audience. They went up to the manager after the show to congratulate him and to ask how he was able to do this type of presentation in a predominately Muslim people group that was less than one percent Christian. He proceeded to share his experiences with our Create International team, who had challenged him and showed him how to use the arts to present the gospel. He continues to rise to the challenge, winning people to Jesus using Minang cultural art forms.

We are continually discovering ways in which we can best use the indigenous arts of a culture to convey the gospel message. However, much more could be done in this area. Christian workers around the world should be paying special attention to how this can be encouraged and promoted in their work, especially among the unreached nations.

### **Working with the Culture and the Audience**

Serious consideration must be given to the non-technical media already available in the audience's culture. The Christian message conveyed through a familiar indigenous expression is far more likely to be embraced by the audience than the same message introduced through a strange or foreign media. Traditional cultural forms such as music, art, storytelling, and dance can be redirected to reveal one's true relationship with God and to communicate his message of love and salvation.

Thus, evangelism combines varied media approaches, including films, videos, live dramatizations, and traditional cultural arts.

*Films* are a powerful medium which attract a wide audience of viewers. People love dramatic stories. Jesus knew this, and that's one reason why he spoke in parables. Parables personalize the message. People can say, "I can relate to that."

The Bible is full of *drama and stories*. In 1994, Leighton Ford wrote,

It's been said that next to food and drink, our most basic human hunger is for storytelling. Storytelling follows the model that God himself has given us in Jesus, the greatest storyteller, and the Bible, the greatest story ever told.<sup>1</sup>

Dramas, such as *skits and puppet shows*, provide opportunities to speak to people about the condition of their hearts without quickly alienating or placing them on the defensive. They serve as preparation for the more direct approach.<sup>2</sup>

### **Discerning Which Media to Use**

Ultimately, Christian communicators need to provide the appropriate media, at the appropriate time, in the appropriate setting. The following questions can help discern which media should be used in discipling a people group:

1. Who is the target group (i.e., to whom are we trying to communicate)?

2. Which types of media are culturally, technologically, and financially appropriate for use within and by the target group?
3. Which forms of media are presently being employed to communicate the gospel? How effective are they?
4. What are the anticipated long-term benefits and/or consequences of using a particular medium?
5. Who should introduce this new form of media? Local pastors? Missionaries? Community leaders?

### **Exhausting All Possible Means**

God has given us both a great challenge and a great opportunity. Never before have we been given the ability to communicate with so many people for so little cost. As the Internet grows and the convergence of digital technologies approaches, the future for discipling unreached nations is looking brighter and brighter.

This challenge represents an amazing opportunity for both evangelism and discipling of millions of people if we will make the effort to translate or incorporate already translated materials on our websites, VCDs, and other digital materials. Bulletin boards, email forums, and chat rooms are just a few of the electronic locations where we can meet with individuals from around the world and share the love of Jesus.

Evangelistic postcards and follow-up email can be sent to contacts we have made while visiting Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu websites. Free advertisements and classified ads can be used to promote Christ and his kingdom. God has millions of new ways to reach the peoples of the world, and he will give them to us if we seek him earnestly. The Apostle Paul's words ring true for us today: "...so that by all possible means some might be saved" (1 Corinthians 9:22).

Have we exhausted all possible means?

God wants our involvement, using all of our gifts, by all possible means, to bring all the nations the greatest story ever told. Let's take full advantage of all the multiplicity of media forms, clothed in familiar forms, to help a needy world understand the gospel message in all its fullness.

### **Endnotes**

1. *The Power of Story*. Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA: Nav Press.
2. Nicholls, Kathleen. 1983. *Asian Arts and Christian Hope*. New Delhi: Select Books, 134.

**Carol C.** and her husband, Calvin, have been serving as full-time missionaries with **Youth With A Mission** since 1978. They are the founders/directors of Create International, a transnational ministry of YWAM focused on producing audio visual resources for frontier missions. For the last twenty years Carol has served as a full-time media missionary to over fifty-six nations, trained hundreds in media and mission schools, and produced over 150 films focused on reaching out and calling forth missionaries to unreached peoples. Now living in Thailand, Carol continues to serve on the YWAM frontier mission leadership team and the Lausanne Strategy Working Group.

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### **Visible Christianity: A Call to Consider the Social Implications of Worship**

By Enoch Era

**In December 2008, following the violent attacks on Christians in Orissa, India, there was a threat that Christians would not be allowed to celebrate Christmas.** This resulted in a sense of confusion and consternation on the part of Christians.

### **A Real Look at Christianity in India**

In an article in the *Organiser*, dated 1 February 2009, Dr. J. K. Bajaj wrote, “A couple of months after the visit to Uttarkashi, I took the metro from Chennai Station to Mylapore. Suddenly, I found too many of the houses along the track supporting imposing crosses. Christian symbols were always very visible in southern towns.”<sup>1</sup>

Recently, a friend from another faith was referring to the altars in some churches as the *sanctum sanctorum*s of the churches. Additionally, in India, we tend to think that we make ourselves visible by conducting large meetings or crusades and making the same available through loud speakers to unwilling and invisible listeners.

The above instances illustrate how people perceive Christianity. Is that how the Lord Jesus wanted his people to be in the world?

A quick glance at the Christian landscape worldwide and church history reveals that it is littered with large Gothic structures, ornate ecclesiastical orders, and elaborate worship patterns. The story is the same with the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and even Protestant churches. For most Christians and non-Christians, “church” is something that is visible as a structure or on a Sunday morning.

"Church" is synonymous with the church service and is practically non-existent the rest of the week. What else explains the emphasis most churches give to the planning, preparation, and conducting of excellent Sunday services with military precision? Many mega-churches use the Sunday services to reach the unchurched through polished music, multimedia, and sermons taken from popular culture and other familiar themes.

Do we actually need physical structures in order to worship God? Do we need a Christmas to celebrate the birth of the Lord, so that the detractors of Christianity can use it as a handle to harm us? Why are we so disturbed when our church buildings are demolished? Is the building a sacred place where the *sanctum sanctorum* is?

### **The Right Kind of Worship**

First, let me address the issue of right kind of worship. In response to the statement by the Samaritan woman, the Lord Jesus clearly stated that true worship does not depend upon its physical location or its geography, but is in “spirit and truth.” There are two words used in scripture to refer to worship:

1. *Proskuneo* means “bowing down” in Greek and is used in the context of temple worship in the Old Testament, the Gospels, and in the Book of Revelation, thus suggesting that it is worship given to God in the context of his “real, physical” presence.
2. *Latreia* means “service” in Greek and is used in the rest of the New Testament. This suggests the kind of worship that is given to God in the “church age.” Hence, Paul’s plea in Romans 12:1: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship [*latreia*].”

Our worship of God is seen in our service to the world. This is not to suggest (according to the popular aphorism) that “service unto others is service unto God.”

The kind of worship the Bible talks about is service to others because of love for God. This is also implied in the words of the Lord: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”* This is in agreement with other verses in scripture:

- **Isaiah 58:6-10:** *“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.”*
- **Matthew 5:14-16:** *“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*
- **James 1:28:** *“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”*

If this is what constitutes true worship, I wonder why we have started building sanctuaries and having elaborate ecclesiastical systems to enable us to worship God. I then wonder why these structures are empty on Sunday mornings (as is the case in many European churches). I wonder if Mother Teresa was right in starting a service centre called Nirmal Hriday in Kolkata rather than building a cathedral. Quite often, the sanctuary mentality to worship has also given rise to what could be called *Babel Syndrome*—our itch for perpetuity and recognition like the Babelites.

We have created the impression that worship has to do with sanctuaries, chapels, prayer houses, ecclesiastical orders, and liturgical formats. True worship of God calls not for functional church buildings, music of FM radio quality, or slick church services. Of course we have gotten our aesthetics right; image or visibility seems to be everything in a consumer-oriented culture. Does this not reduce Christian spirituality to the status of folk religion? Does this not enslave the people rather than liberate them, which is what the Bible teaches?

### **When the Church...**

True worship of God calls for greater involvement in issues of poverty and hunger, of righteousness and justice, of love and compassion, of oppression and enslavement. It is then that the world will begin to see who (and what) the Church is.

When the Church is about loving and caring not only for one another in order to build each other up in the Lord but also about reaching out to the hurting, the bruised, the battered, the broken, and the enslaved, then the world will begin to see the Church (John 13:34-35).

When the Church learns to handle its own differences of doctrine and practise with love and understanding, and begins to practise what it means to be one in Christ without any differences of caste, colour, creed, nationality, or culture, then the world will see what the Church is (John 17:21).

N. T. Wright has said,

When the Church is seen to move straight from worship of God to effecting much-needed change in the world; when it becomes clear that the people who feast at Jesus' table are the ones at the forefront of work to eliminate hunger and famine; when people realize that those who pray for the Spirit to work in and through them are the people who seem to have extra resources of love and patience in caring for those whose lives are damaged, bruised, and shamed—then it is natural for people to recognize that something is going on that they want to be part of.<sup>2</sup>

May the Lord help us to shine in right ways and in right places.

### Endnotes

1. “Growing Symbolism and Assertiveness of Christianity in India.”

2. 2008. *Surprised By Hope: Rethinking Heaven, The Resurrection, and The Mission of the Church*. New York: HarperOne.

**Enoch Era** is an itinerant preacher and writer based in Hyderabad, India. He mentors two fellowship groups called *Aradhana* and *Ashirvad*. He also leads Rupanthar, a group working toward transformation; one of their current projects is for the improvement of traffic safety in Hyderabad. His email is [enochera@yahoo.com](mailto:enochera@yahoo.com).

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## URBAN COMMUNITIES

### The Haitian City and the Unease of the Church

By Jules Monel

**Haitian cities crave love, but they are no longer loved.** In spite of an increase in urban populations, cities are not cherished. As Jean-Bernard Racine reminds us, history is moving toward an urban future.<sup>1</sup> Our Haitian rural regions continue to decline; our cities are saturated. Peripheral areas and suburbs are annexed as unending ghetto regions. Misery in all its forms tramples our aging urban structures. Cities become great boroughs which are transformed into endless areas of poverty; villages are abandoned and people find their home in problematic popular neighborhoods often called “bidonvilles.”<sup>2</sup>

Carrying the strict necessities (including voodoo), “le paysan” is an urban dweller followed by the voodoo spirits (*les Laos*). This “paysan” melts into the city, still haunted by hunger. He or she is forced to beg, and the spirit of voodoo perpetuates his or her state. A vicious cycle ensues. Often, such a person converts to Protestantism without taking notice of his or her real state of “lostness.” The cycle continues.

### Haitian Cities

The most recent census (1997) affirms that our cities/regions—Port-au-Prince (three million), Cap Haitian (750,000), Les Cayes (120,000), Les Gonaïves (120,000), and Jacmel (120,000)—are mixed with wealth and slums. Each of these coastal cities has colonial roots; each grew slowly but has increasingly fallen on very hard economic times.

Haiti has a rural past which continues today. However, the last three demographic studies underscore rapid urbanization.<sup>3</sup> The urban population has tripled in the last thirty years—mostly in the city/region of the capital that represents more than sixty percent of the urban population of the country.

The two largest cities (Port-au-Prince and Cap Haitien) have rich political, economic, and historical significance. Unfortunately, on their streets many Christians are not thinking biblically or theologically. However, we believe a theology of transformation is critical—God desires to change our cities, individually and socially.

Port-au-Prince is a primate city in spite of all its contrasts—symbols of modernity mixed with a highly defective infrastructure developed at the turn of the twentieth century to house 180,000 people. Development has been late and slow. Although globalization is evident everywhere, the city is slow to adapt.

Cap Haitien was the tourist stop. Over the past thirty years it has been exposed to multiple wounds. The main city is still visible; however, it has been rendered invalid by in-migration. The “ghettoization” of the city is clear for all to see.

Both cities share a common destiny: filth which can lead to ecological and health disasters. However, cities are still the principal attraction of people from rural regions. Throughout the 1980s, population was quite stable and cities maintained their charm. However, in-migration broke the charm and put an end to slow and accidental urbanization.

Port-au-Prince, as a primate city, represents the country. More than fifty percent of the economy is generated here, including all the principal industries: textiles; oil importation; food sources; and all political, financial, and consular activities. It is also the most unstable of all cities with its violence, especially the kidnappings of the past three years. It is unique at all levels.<sup>4</sup>

Cap Haitien developed around the tourist industry—the Citadelle, the old French colonial ruins, and its unique style. Since the instability of the 1980s, many political uprisings have started here and the city is grossly overpopulated for its infrastructure. It is, however, the primary city of commerce that leads from Port-au-Prince.

In a way, these cities represent a polemic. One struggles for predominance in the political, economic, and cultural fields. The other tries to withdraw for its domination. Port-au-Prince strives for modernity and commerce; Cap Haitien tries to win through the art of tourism. If Port-au-Prince continues to be “a city at risk,” then Cap Haitien stays “uninterested” in the political turmoil and strives for peace.

### **The Church and Urban Issues**

The Church is called to care for her cities. The Protestant Church in Cap Haitien is striving to multiply and be relevant. Dominated by Baptist movements, it tends to be very traditional and marginalized. Congregations in Port-au-Prince, however, recruit leaders widely. In the north part of the country where Cap Haitien is located, there is a more professional aura of leadership. Again the polemic is obvious. One issue is common to both: a total disinterest in urban issues.

God is at work in Haiti. His hands design contextual plans which have far-reaching impact. The action of God becomes obvious by the witness of congregations and multiple para-ecclesial movements. The most vulnerable among us, emigrating from poorer rural areas and abandoned by most, are served by these groups—even when the State often neglects them. If an inventory of what Protestant groups are doing



was taken, it would show they are the champions of social assistance. Yet the Church is totally disengaged from the renewal of urban systems.

In large part this is because most pastors are not aware of the need of an urban theology. They work in the city and labour among its citizens, but never take time to orient their ministry in a truly urban fashion. The authors of one French text on the city put it this way: “What a passionate task we have in urban ministry! What a privilege we have to be an ambassador for Jesus Christ in a large city!”<sup>5</sup> Incarnating this reality in Haïti can be the only perspective for a leader.

Haitian churches of all denominations do not have difficulty in uniting for evangelistic crusades. However, initiatives that seek to address urban issues like urban ecological degradation, insecurity, and the precarity of life in our cities never attract an ecclesial crowd. We are quiet concerning these challenges and those of superstition, spirituality, and the root causes of poverty.

### **The Need for a Truly Urban Theology**

Accentuating the need for a truly urban theology begins with a contextual reading of the biblical text. This will serve the people of God to understand their role in God’s creation. Micah’s words serve as a good point of departure:

Listen to what the Lord says: “Stand up, plead my case before the mountains; let the hills hear what you have to say.” Hear, you mountains, the Lord’s accusation; listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth. For the Lord has a case against his people; he is lodging a charge against Israel. “My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer me. I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam. My people, remember what Balak king of Moab plotted and what Balaam son of Beor answered. Remember your journey from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the Lord.” With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown all you people what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Listen! The Lord is calling to the city... (6:1-9)

The prophet calls these actions the pursuit of “the good.” Acting justly, loving others, and walking humbly with God form the basis of a true theology with the city. It is the welfare of the place rather than chaos and evil that is in view. It is seeking the peace, the lost harmony of Eden, to which the stewardship of the community is called. Therefore, an urban theology begins in the geographical community, in the lives of people, in their ministries, and then in the surrounding neighborhoods. Like concentric circles formed by pebbles thrown into water, the actions of the people of God touch everything.

No culture is either totally sacred or demonic. Israel was chosen neither because of its culture nor its religion, but because of God’s choice rooted in revelation. Therefore, no society has the right to crucify another because of what happens in its milieu—God has his place at all times. Gilbert Bilezikian reminds us of this when he writes, “No matter which community it is, it is the result of divine creation; it is the reflection of the intrinsic eternal reality in the human person and its environment.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Valuing the Arts**

The Haitian Church must begin to work for the redemption of its culture by developing a true urban theology. This will be marked by caring for the people and the environment. Protestantism must be

reconciled with the Haitian urban realities and our culture. This is no utopian dream. Valuing the arts is a good place to begin. As Voltaire stated, “When a nation knows its art....it comes out of its ruins.”

While most Haitian Protestants denigrate the artist, Calvin Seervelt<sup>7</sup> puts the person in a good light. He defines art as a response of the person to the call of God. This call is to cultivate the earth, to preserve it, and to make it beautiful for the glory of God. An artist, Christian or not, receives from God a mandate to restore creation and to worship the creator. An artist is by definition a worshipper of the creator. Protestants, like Jews, are often iconoclastic and see dialogue with the arts in a bad light. However, the artist and his or her art is a call to spirituality and an acknowledgement by the artist to be steward of the ecological sphere of creation.

Haitian cities find themselves in a decrepit condition: corroding infrastructure; streets full of ugliness; and people, who without realizing it, have become artists of the ecological disorder. We abandon our communities to voodoo and its distorted view of sin and superstition. The Protestant Church, particularly in cities, can work for the redemption of our communities by integrating a new view of art. The redemption of all of life calls the Church to adapt a new theology and an appreciation of the arts within our biblical worldview.

### Endnotes

1. 1993. *La Ville entre Dieu et les Hommes*. Genève: Presses Bibliques et Universitaires, 258.
2. These bidonvilles include: Cité Soleil, Lumière, Boston, Brooklyn, Wharf, Linthau, Bélékou, St. Martin in Port-au-Prince; Raboto aux Gonaïves; Cité du Peuple, La Fossette, Lòtbòpon, Nan Bannann, Shada, Laborie in Cap-Haïtien; Ravine-des-Cayes and Lan Savann in Cayes, Ste Hélène; and la Source à Jérémie.
3. Chéry, Frédéric Gérald. 2005. *Société, Economie et Politique en Haïti, La Crise Permanente*. Port-au-Prince: Editions des Antilles S.A., 29-30.
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6. 2000. *Solitaires ou Solidaires*. Paris: Empreinte Temps Présent, 12.
7. 1998. *La Foi et l'Art*. Québec: Editions La Clairière.

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## LAUSANNE REPORTS

### Eurasian Lausanne Consultation for Younger Leaders

By Marina Stetsenko

## Day One

On 3 March 2009, 214 participants from different corners of the Eurasian Region entered the chapel of Ukrainian Evangelical Theological Seminary (UETS) in Kiev, Ukraine, to open the Eurasian Lausanne Consultation for Younger Leaders. Participants came from Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Philippines, and Ukraine.

The event began with prayer and singing, accompanied by UETS' choir. Dr. Anatoliy Glukhovskyy (Lausanne's International Deputy Director for Eurasia) made a presentation on the Lausanne Movement and talked about Cape Town 2010. Brian Birdsall, [Campus Crusade for Christ director in Ukraine](#), shared his experience and perspective on Lausanne and its call to world evangelization.

The first day ended with a roundtable discussion on "cross-cultural evangelism," in which participants from Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Ukraine shared their experience of ministering as missionaries. It was stressed that Christians must distinguish the eternal elements of the good news message and make it native to people using their cultural authenticity.

During the two-day consultation, younger leaders discussed thirteen issues:

1. How to reach the indigenous population of each country in the Eurasian Region
2. How to reach nations with authentic culture without changing it
3. New ways of evangelism to reach people preoccupied with materialistic success
4. Evangelism in university and student dormitories
5. Evangelism in the midst of financial crisis
6. Unity of denominations in evangelism
7. Evangelism between young people and their peers
8. How to motivate young people
9. Spreading the good news in contemporary society
10. Evangelism to young people in jails
11. Evangelism in the Orthodox context
12. Discipleship and how to keep and develop new converts
13. Charity and ministering to destitute people

Participants also enjoyed Lausanne International Director Lindsay Brown's teaching on how God uses people to work in cross-cultural evangelism. He outlined five biblical life principles for all Christian workers:

- To be strong in the grace of the Lord Jesus
- To pass on the truth you have learned

- To be prepared for hardness
- To be single-minded in devotion to Christ
- To stay a forbear like the farmer

He emphasized that what Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:1-7 is still relevant to the new generation of “Timothys.”

## **Day Two**

The second day started with a morning devotion and a short message from Rev. Fyodor Makan from Moldova, who spoke about true worshipers the Father seeks today—ones who bring glory to him.

During the second roundtable discussion on “studying without isolation from evangelism,” participants shared ideas of evangelism to students in secular universities and ways of being effective while getting an education in seminaries and Bible colleges. It turned out to be a vital topic, since there were many students from Bible colleges.

The third roundtable discussion on “evangelism diversity for the sake of unity in the Body of Christ” gathered participants from Armenia, Belarus, and Ukraine representing different evangelical denominations. After discussing examples of denominational cooperation, it was shared that many still seem to be fighting for traditions which to others seem to make no sense. While it may be impossible to have unity on every level, when we are setting right priorities, we realize there is something far more important that unifies us—the salvation of non-believers.

Brown also taught on how the gospel interacts with culture by using Jesus’ model of being salt and light to the world. Brown said the concept includes three principles:

- **Believers are called to be radically different from non-believers.** Because light clearly differs from darkness, we are called to be holy.
- **We must penetrate non-Christian society with radically different biblical principles.** The salt must be mixed with meat to prevent decay, the light must shine through the darkness, and we must be spiritually and morally distinct, but not socially segregated.
- **Christians can influence and change non-Christian society** by prayer and fasting; by thoughtful, creative, and courageous evangelism; by being a loving example; by argument; by compassionate engagement with people; and by testimony through suffering.

He shared that we may need double repentance for compromises with the world and pessimism about society. He emphasized that culture can be transformed by two percent of its population. We are called to make a “salty” influence and to be a light to society.

Rev. Vasiliy Raychynets from Ukraine spoke on the “evangelical marathon” according to 1 Corinthians 9:24, saying that it is the finish, not the start, that defines the marathon. Therefore, it is important to use your strength wisely and not to grow weak and stop running before achieving the finish.

He defined four issues impeding the run in evangelism today:

- **Idolatry:** everything that puts God in second place

- **Immorality:** God's standards being distorted
- **Temptation:** temptation to speak against God and his anointed ministers
- **Grumbling:** not as reaction to troubles, but chasing of better things

Our loyalty should be proved by time and action. The consultation was closed by singing and prayer.

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