

LausanneWorldPulse.com

Lausanne World Pulse, P.O. Box 794, Wheaton, Illinois, USA, 60187

Email: info@lausanneworldpulse.com

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

May 2007

WORLD NEWS BRIEFS

AROUND THE WORLD

Fifteen key organizations that work with the Persecuted Church around the world launched a global network in order to cooperate more intentionally together. Meeting in Amsterdam, Holland, the group formed the Religious Liberty Partnership (RLP), with charter organizations that include [Christian Solidarity International](#) (CSW), [Open Doors International](#), [Christian Solidarity Worldwide](#), [Voice of the Martyrs](#) (Canada) and the [Religious Liberty Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance](#). The partnership will meet annually while a leadership team of five will oversee the work during the year. Mervyn Thomas from CSW in UK was named as chair of the RLP leadership team. The new partnership will attempt to coordinate joint activities, share information and avoid duplication of work. Two ongoing working groups were established for 2007 to address advocacy issues and to identify common best practices. “Obviously, the great winners in this important partnership are our suffering brothers and sisters,” said Johan Candelin of the WEA. “It sends a very strong, positive signal to the global church and is a historical milestone, much needed to be able to serve those who are under growing pressure for their faith in Christ.” ([Christian Solidarity Worldwide](#))

AROUND THE WORLD

Nearly 3.3 million Bible studies were completed worldwide during 2006 in areas with active [Bible League](#) ministry—that’s 376 every hour. Bible League provided 19.3 million scriptures in 2006—a twelve percent increase from 2005. Since 1938, the Bible League has provided more than 712 million scriptures to people around the world. Two examples of the tremendous growth last year are Thailand and Cameroon. In Thailand, 61,377 Bible studies were completed last year, an increase of nearly three hundred percent over 2005. In Cameroon, the number of Bible studies increased by 106 percent. “We give thanks and rejoice, not only for all that God has done, but also for the faithfulness of his people who serve in and through Bible League ministries around the world,” said Mike Southworth, executive vice president of ministries for Bible League. ([Bible League](#))

CHINA/ENGLAND

Increasing interest in Christianity among Chinese intellectuals is transforming China’s religious landscape, says Edmond Tang, an academic and consultant on China for British and Irish churches. “Today it is an open secret that Christian fellowships, a new kind of ‘house church,’ run by Chinese professors and students, are active in most Chinese universities,” said Tang in comments marking the re-launch of the China Study Journal, a publication analysing religious policy in China. More than thirty academic facilities and research centres in China are now dedicated to the study of a “once maligned religion,” whereas a few years ago there were only three, Tang noted. ([Ecumenical News International](#))

EL SALVADOR

When an earthquake struck El Salvador in 2001, the **Christian Reformed Church** (CRC) in Santa Tecla was so badly damaged that it had to be torn down. But the congregation itself was not destroyed. Meeting in makeshift quarters, church members laid plans to rebuild. And in March 2007, a new sanctuary was dedicated to the glory of God and for service to the community of believers and beyond. The event was a milestone for the work of Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) in El Salvador, which began in the late 1970s. Rev. Carlos Mejia, the pastor at Santa Tecla, came to the CRC through the denomination's literature ministry. The CRC's work in El Salvador continues through the work of CRWM missionary Ruth Padilla DeBorst, who is currently in the United States on study leave, along with her husband Jim, who worked for many years in El Salvador with the **Christian Reformed World Relief Committee** (CRWRC). (**Christian Reformed Church**)

GREAT BRITAIN

The number of people in Britain going to church is falling rapidly and only one in ten adults attends church weekly even though fifty-three percent of adults or 26.2 million people in the United Kingdom identify themselves as Christian. A survey, "Churchgoing in the UK Today," by Christian relief and development agency **Tearfund** said this reflects a drop of twenty percent in weekly church attendance from a similar survey conducted six years ago. The survey shows that 7.6 million adults go to church each month. One in four (12.6 million) attend at least once a year. (**Ecumenical News International**)

INDIA

Despite opposition and threats of beatings, a team of seven women who are part of **Gospel for Asia** (GFA) Women's Fellowship gave out fifty thousand tracts at the Kumbh Mela festival earlier this year. Coming to the Ganges River in Uttar Pradesh, India, to dip in its "holy" waters, sixty million people attended the Kumbh Mela over six weeks in January and February. Many Hindus believe this pilgrimage will give them forgiveness of sins. The women passed out tracts along busy roads to drivers, roadside vendors, security officials, traffic police and even the "holy men," many of whom received the tracts eagerly. (**ASSIST News Service**)

MEXICO

More than sixty thousand people recently attended the three-day Festival of Life 2007 outreach in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, the capital city of Chiapas, Mexico. Of these, more than six thousand people gave their lives to Christ. Nearly four hundred American Christians joined with more than seven hundred Mexican believers to stage mini festivals, free medical clinics, women's breakfasts, BMX bike stunt riders and other events all over the city and surrounding communities. The stadium outreach was carried in television broadcasts on four thousand Latin American channels, including eight hundred Mexican stations and fifty stations throughout Europe and Africa. Mike MacIntosh, senior pastor of Horizon Christian Fellowship in San Diego, California, USA, spoke each night. (**ASSIST News Service**)

NIGERIA

Rev. Kefas Kane Mavula was elected bishop of the United Methodist Church in Nigeria 3 March 2007. Mavula's appointment comes at an exciting time for Nigerian United Methodists, who have been experiencing rapid growth over the past decade. According to Mark Tooley, Institute for Religion and Democracy United Methodist action direction, the United Methodist Church in Nigeria has gone from ten thousand members to over 400,000 members in the past fifteen years. "Africans now constitute about twenty-five percent of the United Methodist Church," he said. "With this membership shift to theologically conservative churches in the Global South, United Methodism is slowly moving away from twentieth century liberal Protestantism, which wreaked havoc on America's mainline denominations." In addition to rapid church growth in Nigeria, United Methodism elsewhere in Africa is growing quickly. There are over one million United Methodists in the Congo and over 600,000 United Methodists in the Ivory Coast alone. (**Institute for Religion and Democracy**)

RUSSIA

A senior official of the Russian Orthodox Church has told attendees at a meeting in Moscow that human rights cannot be considered only from a secular standpoint, which he said often fails to take into account questions of morality, and the difference between good and evil. “To speak of freedom and not speak of good and evil is impossible,” said Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, the chairperson of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of External Church Relations. “This is what is absent from the absolute majority of contemporary documents that describe the rights and freedoms of people.” ([Ecumenical News International](#))

SOUTH AMERICA

Nearly one thousand leaders from Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela gathered in their respective countries as National Iberoamerica conferences sparked a renewed priority for evangelism and holiness. In addition to spending much time at the altar, people of all ages received practical training during various ministry workshops. General superintendent James H. Diehl, South America regional director Christian Sarmiento and field strategy coordinator Dwight Rich spoke at each event. The national conferences concluded with ordination services where Diehl ordained seven new pastors, including two indigenous pastors from Ecuador. ([Nazarene Communications Network](#))

WALES

The major contribution made by thousands of faith communities to Welsh society is to be quantified in the nation's first faith audit. The audit, “Counting for our communities,” will survey the voluntary work carried out by faith communities for the benefit of people outside their congregations, assessing the economic value of this work. It will also look at the use made of their buildings, the aspirations of faith communities in this regard and the contacts they already have with government. The project, which aims to report back at the end of the year, is led by Evangelical Alliance Wales initiative Gweini—the Council of the Christian Voluntary Sector in Wales—in partnership with the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA), and is being backed by the Welsh Assembly. There are around five thousand faith communities in Wales. All faith leaders—including Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Christian and other faith groups—are being approached to build up the sample frame for the project. Questions cover a range of topics including what activities are facilitated by the congregations, how they work with their local community and how many volunteers from the congregation are involved in running community projects. ([Evangelical Alliance Wales](#))

PUBLISHER'S MEMO

[The Finish Line Is Not the Finish](#)

By Lon Allison

Evangelism is discipleship isn't it? The great command of Jesus was to “make disciples” of all peoples. We have truncated the two disciplines by making each too narrow. Here is what I mean.

Yesterday, I went to a meeting with a team that will run the Chicago Marathon (Chicago, Illinois, USA) in October. Each team member is hopeful of running the 26.2 mile/44 kilometer race and finishing it. Many of our team are new to this kind of running. I am not. I have run three marathons. It is an extremely difficult task, but if completed, extremely rewarding.

One mistake a new marathoner makes is to think the finish-line is the finish. It is not. Rather, one must labor for almost an hour after crossing the finish-line, doing specific activities or doing damage to one's body. First, **the marathoner must restore warmth to the body**. After four or more hours of running, the body is depleted of

energy. Hypothermia is a dangerous reality. At the Chicago Marathon, hundreds of volunteers meet runners at the finish line with “space blankets” to cover the body and hold in what energy/heat remains. Second, **new energy must be put in the body**. That means food and fluids. Again, able volunteers offer the runners yogurt, hamburgers, energy bars, Gatorade, candy, almost anything that will put calories/energy into the depleted body. We are told to eat and drink even though we do not feel hungry or thirsty, because our bodies are under attack from deprivation. Third, **finish-line runners must keep walking for fifteen minutes or more** so the body does not tighten up and cramp. All the runner wants to do is lie down, but he or she must not. He or she must walk and stretch and walk and stretch and walk and stretch some more. The warming, feeding and gentle walking and stretching must actually continue for the next twenty-four hours or more in order for the finish-line runner to be restored. And even then, it takes several days for the soreness and energy levels to return to full healthy levels. The finish-line is not the finish.

Evangelical theology rightly believes in the new birth as a requirement for being a Christian. We call it regeneration. I liken this to the spiritual “finish-line.” Our problem is how we evidence that supernatural reality in the outer life. For some, the outward evidence is for the seeker to pray a prayer. Others ask for public acknowledgement through coming forward, raising a hand, baptism or many other expressions. Many, like me, argue caution at calling any “initial” outward expression proof of regeneration¹. But regardless of when the “finish-line regeneration” occurs, that is not the finish. It is here that evangelism and discipleship must better meet.

A pastor once told me that the “forty days” following a spiritual commitment to Christ were the most important. He based this loosely on the forty days of Jesus in the wilderness and the forty days of Jesus with the disciples following the Resurrection. Whether it is forty days is not the point. The point is that the first days, weeks and months following the commitment are times for the Church to provide “urgent care.” Different churches do it differently. In my opinion, very few do it well. We put so much effort to get people to commit to Christ (cross the finish-line) that we poorly provide the all important and pervasive aftercare. This aftercare, just like the marathon, must be given by real people providing prayer, care, counsel, friendship and the like. The relational nature of after care is more important than the curriculum utilized. It is about God’s people wrapping people in Christian warmth, offering them the food and drink of the Word and worship, and lots of instruction on stretching the new soul into Christ-likeness.

Endnote

1. See Lon Allison and Mark Anderson. 2003. *Going Public with the Gospel*. 149-150

Lon Allison is director of the [Billy Graham Center](#) at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, USA. He also serves as director for the [Institute for Strategic Evangelism](#) at Wheaton College. He is co-publisher of *Lausanne World Pulse*.

WORLD EVANGELISM & MISSIONS REPORTS

[Making Waves: Trans World Radio Helps Students Create a Splash for God](#)

By Dawn Overman

Today’s young people are quite the expert cybersurfers, having grown up navigating surges and swells in the ever-changing sea of technology. And, since most of them turn to the Internet for everything from entertainment and shopping to social communication and education, it is more imperative than ever that we harness current and new media to catch their attention.

That is why **Trans World Radio** (TWR) recently launched a new **website** sub-portal, aimed at piquing the interest of 20-somethings and encouraging them to take a new look at world missions—and their role in it. TWR debuted its “Making Waves Since 1954” campaign at the **2006 Urbana Student Missions conference** in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. A key part of the initiative is several online videos describing how missionaries today are needed in a broad range of vocations and expertise.

“We decided to produce a series of short-form conceptual videos targeting the so-called ‘YouTube generation,’” said TWR public relations director David McCreary. “We wanted to create something that would resonate at Urbana, but then could also have broader usefulness for at least a year or so beyond that conference. We also produced several thousand mini CDs to put into the hands of young people and drive them toward ‘Making Waves’ online.”

According to Chris Overman, one of TWR’s exhibitors at Urbana, “TWR’s main purposes in attending Urbana were to present the work of the mission to the next generation of young people and to offer them opportunities to become involved in what God is doing around the world. It was fantastic to see thousands of young people with a strong and fervent desire to use their skills and abilities to serve God wherever he calls them.”

Of the 115 solid contacts that TWR’s team made at Urbana, nearly one quarter of them have followed up about pursuing an internship. According to missionary care coordinator Heather Johnson, “I have had more preliminary questionnaires [returned] in the past two months than I processed in the latter half of last year.” She said that included people who had not attended Urbana and had come upon either the Making Waves **site** or the opportunities page on TWR’s main site.

“Young people today are looking to make a difference with their life. They want to use their skills, abilities and passions to make an impact for God,” said Overman. “But most believe these skills and passions won’t fit into missions. TWR’s Making Waves site shows them there is a huge need for people like them, and that God can use them anywhere in the world.”

As the Making Waves **site** poses: “From one distant point, a radio wave or a computer click can ripple out into hearts half a world away. You want to make those sort of waves for God? Then send us an email for more info about ways you can jump in and make a lasting difference.” In many of the responses that Johnson has received, students considering missions today express that they are interested in being the ones to start that ripple effect. Here are a few responses:

- “From what I hear, God is doing great things, but there is a need for more workers. Also, from the sound of the type of work that is being done, it would be a good way to serve Christ with my hands and heart.”
- “It has been on my heart for a while to use my gifts and abilities for God’s work and TWR is a mission in which he can use the training I have received thus far in college.”
- “My major is mass media...A friend told me about you and I was really interested. There was finally a way to share the gospel throughout the nations on radio! I’m called to the mission field. Working with TWR I believe would give me a chance to get a start in the right direction.”
- “TWR’s priority to target unreached people groups, and training pastors where there is a need. It would be fun to be part of something so big, so I could make a big impact. And, it looks to be a strategic move for the kingdom.”

- “I would like the experience of working toward promoting a ministry in an international setting. I feel that it would lead me in the direction which God is calling me to, which is missions, by enabling me to use my skills and abilities to bring God into people’s lives around the world.”

In addition to encouraging young adults toward internships and short-term missions with TWR, the online videos are also fun. Johnson said she’s received several positive comments about them, like one web visitor who wrote: “The videos on the site are hilarious, especially Amy getting locked in the bathroom and wearing the happy camper shirt.”

Anyone interested in pursuing stateside or international internships is encouraged to visit www.twr.org/makingwaves and complete the preliminary questionnaire or click the “Contact” link.

Greater Europe Mission Names New President

Greater Europe Mission (GEM) announced recently that Henry L. Deneen will succeed Ted Noble as president, effective 1 September 2007. Deneen has twenty-seven years of experience in law, pastoral ministry and missions.

The search for a new president followed Noble’s announcement in May 2006 of his conviction that, after fifteen years as president, he had completed his work at GEM. It is also a strategic time for the ministry. Because the rate of Christian growth in Europe is one of the lowest worldwide, churches around the world recognize Europe as a priority mission field.

“Believers in Europe are asking for highly trained and motivated individuals to serve alongside them,” says Tim Wilson, GEM’s director of mobilization. “Henry’s experience in Europe is invaluable, and his enthusiasm for the task ahead is contagious.”

Noble agrees. “From the beginning of this transition, my prayer has been, ‘Lord, lead in such a way that we will see you doing this, for only you know our future needs,’” he says. “Based on Henry’s experience, I see many reasons to be excited about his new role with GEM, but most of all because I believe that God has done it.”

Deneen, his wife Celia and their four children lived in France for four years, collaborating with organizations to develop initiatives and strategic partnerships in and around North Africa. In 2004 they returned to the United States, and in 2005 Deneen founded the [Center for Global Strategies](#) in Columbia, South Carolina, a nonprofit organization.

“I believe that under God’s leadership GEM can be a part of dynamic, innovative, God-led strategies throughout the world,” says Deneen. “Leading and supporting field workers, staff and administrative personnel at GEM, I envision many opportunities to see dramatic changes take place in Europe and beyond.”

In addition to a law degree, Deneen has a master of divinity degree from Golden Gate Theological Seminary and is working toward a doctorate in ministry from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

Before attending Golden Gate Seminary, Deneen worked for thirteen years as a trial attorney and municipal judge. He led weekly Bible studies in the governor’s office for more than fifty government employees and others and oversaw a weekly Bible study for more than two hundred employees from the South Carolina State House.

GEM has more than 444 staff serving in twenty-seven nations of Greater Europe, which includes Russia and countries of the Mediterranean Rim. Its mission is to assist the peoples of Greater Europe in building up the body of Christ so that every person is within reach of a witnessing fellowship.

(This article was edited from a [Greater Europe Mission](#) news release.)

20th Edition of the Mission Handbook: The Most Comprehensive One-volume Reference on the North American Overseas Mission Effort

Since it was first published in 1953, the *Mission Handbook*, under different names, different publishers and in different formats, has been providing thousands of readers with comprehensive information on United States and Canadian-based Protestant mission agencies engaged in overseas missions. The [Mission Handbook: U.S. and Canadian Protestant Ministries Overseas, 2007-2009](#) edition gives complete information on more than eight hundred North American ministries that are changing the world for Jesus Christ. This invaluable resource includes information such as agency name and contact information, purpose statement, areas of ministry, countries of ministry, number of personnel and more.

According to Jonathan Bonk, executive director of the [Overseas Ministries Study Center](#) and editor of the [International Bulletin of Missionary Research](#), “No other source comes close to matching the *Mission Handbook* for comprehensiveness, reliability and usability.”

History of the *Mission Handbook*

The *Mission Handbook* first appeared in 1953 with the title *Foreign Missionary Agencies in the United States: A Check List*. It was compiled and mimeographed by the Missionary Research Library (MRL) in New York. The MRL was founded in 1914 at the initiative of John R. Mott who chaired the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1910 and headed its continuation committee.

In 1968 the publication became a cooperative effort of MRL and the Missions Advanced Research and Communication (MARC) Center, a division of [World Vision International](#) near Los Angeles, California, USA. The title was changed to *North American Protestant Ministries Overseas Directory*. In 1973 the title included “Mission Handbook” as the publication began to include related articles and expanded analyses of the survey data. In 1976 MARC became the sole publisher. The Mission Handbooks of the 1990s contained chapters by MARC director Bryant Myers which provided a global perspective of evangelism and missions using maps, charts, graphs and pictures.

In 2000 the [Evangelism and Missions Information Service](#) (EMIS) of the [Billy Graham Center](#) at Wheaton College near Chicago, Illinois, USA, became the publisher of the *Mission Handbook*.

The 20th Edition of the *Mission Handbook*

This edition includes not only information on U.S. and Canadian-based mission agencies, it also includes more than fifty pages of in-depth analysis on trends and comparisons in North American missions.

“Global mission efforts are increasingly multifaceted initiatives. The *Mission Handbook* is the single source that I can go to for quick and thorough access to information for the networking and planning so necessary for mission effectiveness,” says Byron Klaus, president of [Assemblies of God Theological Seminary](#) in Springfield, Missouri, USA.

Steve Moore, president and CEO of the [Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies](#), adds, “The *Mission Handbook* provides a unique combination of accessible and comprehensive information concerning the North American mission effort. It is a must for every mission leader, educator or researcher.”

For more information or to order, visit www.missionhandbook.com.

London Soccer Stadium to Be the Focus for Mass Christian Prayer

Since its conception five years ago, the Global Day of Prayer (GDOP) has reached over 400 million Christians worldwide from 198 countries. This year’s GDOP, to be celebrated 27 May 2007, will have its UK hub in West Ham football stadium in London, England.

“London is a world-class city; it contains people from every nation of the world,” the Bishop of Barking, David Hawkins said. “Many people around the world look at London as an iconic city. I couldn’t imagine a better place to host the 2007 Global Day of Prayer.”

According to Pastor Jonathan Oloyede of Glory House, “We are asking Christians to pray for London, for east London in particular and West Ham football stadium, where the Global Day of Prayer is held this year.” Christians will be focusing on the spiritual, physical and economical growth of east London ahead of the Olympic Games in 2012.

“Churches from almost every borough in London are getting involved in this year’s Global Day of Prayer,” said Peter Kerridge of Premier Christian Media. “Premier is particularly excited as we have a very strong radio audience based across the whole of London and we’re hoping many of them will turn out for this internationally recognized event.”

An official partner of the GDOP, Premier is asking churches to pray regularly as a lead-up to the big day. “As a multi-denominational Christian media group, it’s our aim to reach as many people across London as possible, to share our dream about the 2007 Global Day of Prayer and a positive future for the capital,” Kerridge said. “I am proud to be a Christian living in London. Already, the speed of which people have taken up this vision and challenge is impressive.”

The [Global Day of Prayer](#) takes place 27 May 2007. Further details can be found on www.premier.org.uk.

Premier Christian Media consists of a radio station, IPTV channel and three magazines. Their studios are based in Victoria, London.

(This article is edited from an ASSIST News Service [news release](#).)

WORLD PERSPECTIVES

Evangelism and Discipleship

By Kumar Abraham

Which came first—the chicken or the egg? I suppose for creationists that is an easy question to answer—the chicken!

But which comes first—evangelism or discipleship? Some argue that without doing evangelism, discipleship is impossible. Some say it is only a disciple of Christ who can evangelize. Others may ask why we should even separate the two.

Our theologies and interpretations of scripture are always coloured by the strengths and weaknesses of our personalities, our own biases, prejudices, cultures, denominations, churches or organizational upbringings. Some cultures have a tendency to see things as integrated; other cultures tend to see things as segregated and sequential. As fallen beings living lives that are redeemed and renewed by scripture, we must listen and learn from one another instead of isolating ourselves from others.

The natural flow in our maturing process is to become a “disciple” first and then to start sharing the gospel. The idea seems to be a noble one of giving priority to growth. However, I see many problems in this. We must ask ourselves, is this a biblical model?

Historically, the local church has waited until a new believer has bonded to a congregation (the “come see” stage) and then has moved on to the discipling (the “come and follow me”) stage which includes the “bearing fruit” stage.¹ David Watson seems to advocate something similar: “Naturally they were not launched into powerful and effective evangelism overnight. Gently Jesus had to help them to loose their fears, to overcome their inertia, to see the urgency of the harvest and to watch and pray.”²

While agreeing with Watson, there is no need for the Church to make this a standard for all. Andrew, for instance, shared with his brother Peter on the day he met Jesus. John 1:41-42 reads, “The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.” Isn’t this evangelism? Jesus did not say “wait until they come to you” or “wait until they seem ready to start on discipleship.” He said “go and make disciples.” This may seem difficult if you believe that one must be trained (discipled) in order to evangelize. Jesus never implied that any maturation was needed to prepare one to do evangelism. All that is necessary is to know the “evangel”—the good news of the gospel. According to my friend Dr. Bronson Stilwell, if someone is really a Christian, then the person can do evangelism.

Encouraging New Believers

Clearly defining when a Christ-follower is mature enough to do evangelism can be difficult. Discipleship should emphasize evangelism from day one of the Christian life. By compartmentalizing and programming spiritual growth to seasons and periods, we have limited the work of the Holy Spirit in people’s lives. It is best to encourage new believers to do evangelism immediately after conversion. This could be done by asking them to share their testimonies. Bill Hybels illustrates with a graph the predicament faced by evangelicals worldwide. The longer we live our Christian lives, the less interaction we have with those “far from God.”³

At conversion, the Christ-follower experiences the “first love” stage. The individual still has his or her circle of unbelieving friends intact and is excited to share what Christ has done in his or her life. Instead of extricating him or her from his or her world of lost friends in order to join the new found gathering of “saints,” we should strengthen the person to reach his or her lost friends for Christ. Instead of making the individual choose between the two worlds, we should disciple him or her on how to live in tension with both worlds. We should encourage the person to be “in the world but not of the world.”

A Biblical Model

There are at least four encounters Jesus had when the one who encountered him went on to share his or her testimony without any further discipling or spiritual growth experience. There are also at least two other New Testament examples of this phenomenon.

1. **The Samaritan woman in John 4.** After her encounter with the Messiah, the Samaritan woman immediately left her water jar, went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” (4:28-30). The Samaritans first believed because of the woman’s testimony (4:42). She told them about the Messiah and the Holy Spirit gave instantaneous fruit to her witness. Afterward, Jesus stayed on for two days and many more believed (4:41-42).
2. **The demon-possessed man in Mark 5.** Immediately after he was delivered, the demon-possessed man in the region of Gerasenes begged to go with Jesus (5:18). However, Jesus encouraged him to “Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you” (5:19). But the man “went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed” (5:20).
3. **The blind man in John 9.** The blind man was willing to identify himself with Jesus even in the face of impending persecution at the hands of the Pharisees (9:25-34). After being healed, the man courageously declared, “Whether he is a sinner or not, I do not know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see” (9:25).
4. **Matthew in Matthew 9.** Immediately after being chosen by the Lord to be a disciple, Matthew the tax collector invited many tax collectors and sinner acquaintances to join Jesus and his disciples for dinner (9:10-11). This gave Jesus an opportunity to share his mission statement (9:12-13).
5. **The early believers in Acts 2.** After Pentecost, the church in Jerusalem instantly devoted themselves to their new lifestyle of discipleship. “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (2:47). Much of this could have been the enthusiastic witness of the three thousand who were saved that day (2:41). Today, much of the fruit of evangelism is through the witness of Christians going about their day-to-day lives.
6. **Paul in Acts 9.** After Saul’s (Paul’s) conversion, he “at once began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God” (9:20-21).

The above six examples show that early Christians could not wait for the discipling process to begin. They had found something and they wanted to tell the world around them.

Evangelism and Discipleship Hand in Hand

The reason for placing discipleship before evangelism could be because of an over correction within the Church to a lack of good follow-up or discipleship. So often the local church and evangelists are quick to report “decisions for Christ.” Being a proclamation evangelist myself, I could say that faithful follow-up is the Achilles heel of evangelism as a whole. While there is no excuse for not following up on new converts, a lack of it should never determine whether we do evangelism or not.

Jesus’ parable of the sower (Matthew 13) teaches us two lessons: (1) the importance of sowing the seed of God’s word and (2) the reality of the seed falling on unprepared ground. Although it is convenient for us to hold discipleship and evangelism separately, I am of the conviction that both should be integrated into one whole experience and not be held separate or in any preferred order.

On the one hand, although most evangelistic associations plan and prepare for good follow-up of converts, they do not see much of the fruit of evangelism preserved. On the other hand, groups that emphasize strong discipleship are perceived to be weak in evangelism. There is much tension in the Church as result and negative reaction from these groups when weaknesses in their methods are pointed out. The Church must learn to bring strengths together and to blend them in a happy marriage.

In Church history we see how the visionary leader evangelist Billy Graham befriended and invited Dawson Trotman (the founder of the **Navigators**, a movement dedicated to strong discipleship of converts) to help him with the thousands who were coming to Christ at his meetings. At the Amsterdam Crusade in 1954, there were forty thousand people in the stadium Graham was preaching at. Of this event, Graham writes, “The Navigators had trained one thousand counsellors....But even after the training, the counsellors were still unprepared for the overwhelming response. Nevertheless, they pressed on, doing what they could, encouraging those who made commitments to grow in their faith through prayer and Bible study, as well as involvement in a local church.”⁴ History must repeat itself.

An over-reliance on Matthew 28:19-20 to be the “only” or the most popular verse that refers to the Great Commission can also lead many to give greater importance to making disciples or discipleship. That is, discipleship that is solely self-centred on improving one’s self, local church or denomination. None of the other “Great Commission” passages refer to making disciples. The other Great Commission passages talk about “proclaiming” (Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47), “witnessing” (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8) and being sent (John 20:21). These passages tend to emphasize evangelism. The Church must hold all of scripture in tension.

The Bible teaches the integration of evangelism and discipleship. “We proclaim (announcing the gospel publicly) him, admonishing (warn believers) and teaching (the word) everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ” (Colossians 1:28). While evangelizing, we disciple; while discipling new believers, we encourage them to share the gospel.

Today, most evangelical Christians lack commitment to Christ and therefore to evangelism and discipleship. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:11) should be equipping the believers in local churches and organizations in this area (Ephesians 4:12-13). Evangelism and discipleship are two graces that a Christ-follower could not live without and the world will perish without.

Endnotes

1. Hull, Bill. 1984. *New Century Disciplemaking*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA: Fleming H. Revell. 225.
2. Watson, David. 1981. *Discipleship*. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 187.
3. Hybels, Bill. 2006. *Just Walk Across the Room*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA: Zondervan Publishers. 62-63.
4. Graham, Billy. 1997. *Just As I Am*. London: Harper and Collins Publishers. 242.

Dr. Kumar Abraham is a Sri Lankan national living in Melbourne, Australia and has served as a missionary in the Philippines for twenty-one years. He is an evangelist, a trainer of evangelists, equipper of Christ-followers in evangelism and a Bible school lecturer. He can be reached at: kumarabraham@bigpond.com.

Beyond Evangelism: Authentic Disciples

By Rose Dowsett

Some Sobering Stories

In Singapore, a young woman happily signed up to The Four Spiritual Laws and prayed a prayer “to receive Jesus.” This delighted the foreigner who had met her on the street. The young woman then went home and added an offering to Jesus to her already well-populated god-shelf.

In London, an evangelical church elder insisted that he was glad to be a Christian; however, he said he could not possibly believe in the resurrection or miraculous conception of Christ, nor in the miracles recorded in the New Testament.

An African told me how good it had felt to smash a machete through the skull of a tribal rival, why he had put spirit strings on his baby son and, all in the same breath, how happy he was “to belong to Jesus” since his own childhood.

In China, where the Church has grown enormously in many areas in recent years, there is also an explosion of wild deviation from historic Christian faith, with cults and sects abounding. Many house churches do not have a single Bible among their members, and leaders are frequently eager but ignorant of the scriptures.

Facing the Facts

All these and a thousand more similarly depressing and disturbing stories can be replicated all around the world. On the one hand, the twentieth century saw unprecedented geographical expansion of the Church as previously unevangelised people groups began to respond to the gospel. On the other hand, it is arguable that never has the Church been so shallow and so vulnerable in country after country—and that evangelicals are as compromised as any other stream of the global Church.

In fact, some would argue that in our haste (which we could regard as commendable) to carry the gospel far and wide, in our urgency to “reach” as many people as possible, evangelicals have been the most guilty of all in tragic gospel reductionism. In the most terrible irony, evangelicals—our very name means “gospel people”—have too often betrayed the Lord by adopting ministry patterns that are deeply flawed and fail to produce authentic, truly transformed, life-long disciples. This has especially been a problem in the last forty years, when the evangelical world has been awash with confident strategies by means of which the whole world could be reached within a given time span, with too much faith placed in human endeavour and too little humble recognition that only the Spirit of God can bring life out of death and we do not know where and when he will choose to blow.

Perhaps this sounds rather judgemental and miserable; however, I believe it to be true of all too much of the world Church, especially where it has grown rapidly, and especially where cultures are not challenged. We need to face the fact that numerical expansion is not the same as deep-level conversion and life-long growth in discipleship.

Being an authentic disciple, essential if we are also to become authentic disciple-makers, is rooted in a deep relationship with the living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which governs every part of our lives. This is far more profound than assenting to a handful of propositions, and is entirely different from the self-centred therapeutic approach which too often passes for evangelism. (“Do you want peace and joy/healing/prosperity? Then just ask Jesus into your life!”)

By contrast, the Lord calls us first of all to repentance, that deep and ongoing recognition that he is the boss, that we are by nature totally bent in the wrong direction, that he wants to change our minds and hearts and values and that he alone can deliver us from judgement and death. He does not hold out to us a cosmic aspirin to make us feel better, but commands us to take up the cross day by day: a symbol of shame and suffering; a painful putting to death of old ways of thinking, behaving and being. We cannot bypass the “being identified with him in his death” to get to the triumph of “being identified with him in his resurrection.” Indeed, until glory, the two must run side by side, day after day. We are pilgrims, going on a life-long journey; we know our ultimate destination, but there may be many hard days of travelling along the way.

If our evangelism does not make explicit the cost as well as the privilege of being disciples, we have distorted the gospel and encouraged people to make professions of faith which will not stand up against the realities of truly following Jesus in obedient love. The evangel is good news. However, it is only good news if it is rooted in truth which includes the fact that conversion is a vital first step that in turn is to usher in a lifetime of love and learning, obedience and faith. The state of much of the world Church suggests that we have too often been seduced by easy-believism and cheap grace. That is as true of London and Los Angeles as it is of Lagos or Beijing or Bangkok.

What Then Should We Do Now?

All is not hopeless, though. There are seven things, we as evangelicals can do.

1. **Acknowledge the reality of the problem.** We all like success stories; however, as Christians we need to be more eager for truth stories. There are wonderful things to praise God for, but that does not change the fact that in many respects we have created some disasters in the name of evangelism. We have much to repent of.
2. **Abandon our love-affair with counting numbers, adopting slogans and targets and relying on strategies** that may be appropriate for the world of multinational corporations but which marginalise God. It is not that we should have no plans or strategies, but it does mean that they will always be secondary to the recognition that the growth of the true Church is a profoundly Spirit-birthed matter, and we cannot organise that.
3. **Have far greater integrity in our evangelism**, and while holding out the love and grace of God (which is beyond words wonderful!) we must also insist (and model) that following the Lord Jesus involves a lifetime of commitment, and being willing to give ourselves to costly obedience. Wherever we are in the world—in the post-Christian West or in the midst of another world faith as in all of Asia—being a disciple of Jesus Christ takes us into a collision course with much of our culture, and requires us progressively to put off the old life and put on new values, new understandings of what constitutes truth, new priorities, a new everything.
4. Whether we are involved in pioneer evangelism among an unreached people group, or sharing the gospel with our next-door neighbours, we need to **give far more attention to “what happens next.”** It is irresponsible to encourage people to “follow Jesus” unless there is provision to follow through with ongoing discipling. That will include engaging in long-term mentoring, enabling people to become students of God’s Word (orally if they are illiterate), embedding them in healthy Christian communities and helping them learn how to change and be changed in line with the will of God in every dimension of their lives.
5. **Accept that in most cases authentic evangelism involves long-term commitment.** We all know of occasions where in the sovereign leading of God we have met complete strangers, been able to share the gospel with them and perhaps have even seen them profess faith. However, the norm is different. Discipling involves committed relationships, and relationships take time to mature meaningfully. If the Lord Jesus himself needed to spend three intensive years discipling a small group of men, living with them, sharing every part of daily life with them, then we surely need to examine whether we have sacrificed depth to quantity. Yes, the Lord taught the crowds as well, but he invested very heavily in the twelve apostles.
6. **Place far more emphasis on the whole word of God instead of on a few selected verses.** We all need the whole word, not just bits of it. And we need to know how to study it and to teach it so that it enmeshes prophetically with the issues of everyday life, both personally and for society as a whole. It may be a salutary exercise to examine whether we spend more time and effort in reading fiction and

watching TV than we do in serious Bible study. If we do, we should not be surprised if they shape us more than scripture does. There is no deep-level conversion without constant exposure to the mind and heart of God.

7. **Be deeply jealous for the glory of God.** The Lord's people should reflect his character, his truth, his deeds. For that, we need to pass beyond evangelism, and recapture the breadth and depth, the privilege and the urgency, of making disciples. After all, that is what the Lord asked of us.

Rose Dowsett is conference and training minister at large for **OMF International**.

Evangelisation and Discipleship within God's Global Mission

By Glenn Smith

In any discussion on evangelisation and discipleship, someone usually comments, "In our congregation, we are pretty good at sharing our faith but not very effective at discipleship." My experience in urban mission, particularly in the large city/regions of the francophone world, has convinced me of one thing. If we do not get discipleship right, we probably will have a deficient understanding and practice of evangelisation. Dallas Willard states it very clearly:

The reason for the recent abrupt emergence of the terminology (of spiritual formation) into religious life is, I believe, a growing suspicion or realization that we have not done well with the reality and the need. We have counted on preaching, teaching and knowledge or information to form faith in the hearer, and have counted on faith to form the inner life and outward behaviour of the Christian. But, for whatever reason, this strategy has not turned out well. The result is that we have multitudes of professing Christians who well may be ready to die, but obviously are not ready to live, and can hardly get along with themselves, much less with others.¹

In this article, I would like to explore why the renewed interest in discipleship, now sometimes called Christian spirituality, just might be "the doctor's best medicine" for missiology² and the Church's engagement in God's global mission. We will begin by wrestling with the biblical notions on discipleship and then examine how Matthew's Gospel can point us forward in evangelisation: that the whole Church seeks to take the whole gospel to the whole world.

Some Biblical Notions

In broaching this subject we need to define certain key notions.

Spirituality is the process of developing and experiencing a deep relationship with God. It also deals with how Christians live their faith in the world. Spirituality cannot be divorced from the struggle for justice and care for the poor and the oppressed. The interest of Christians in the subject is not new, although there has been a renewed awareness of the subject in the past several years.

Curiously, the word *spirituality* in theological dictionaries is relatively recent, but the meaning of the term should not be separated from previous expressions, such as holiness, godliness, walking with God or discipleship. All of these ideas emphasize a formal commitment to being alive and being very connected with God through a deepening relationship with Jesus Christ. It implies a life of personal obedience to the word of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. We can say that spirituality is our self-transcendent capacity as human beings to participate in God's creative and redemptive activity.

Being a follower or disciple of Jesus Christ in the New Testament means living fully in the world in union with Jesus Christ and his people and growing in conformity to his person. We could say that it is a grateful and

heartfelt *yes* to God expressed both in act and attitude—the follower of Jesus lives in obedience and imitation of Jesus Christ and walks in the disciplined and maturing pattern of love for God by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others.³

Spiritual formation focuses our attention on the dynamics of how the Holy Spirit works in us to conform us to the image of God in Jesus Christ in every area of life. We pursue spiritual formation because of God’s love for us and the consequences of evil in the world since the Fall. It is the Trinitarian work of the Godhead to stimulate followers of Jesus in their individual lives and in the local community of faith to participate in God’s project for human history through the ways and means revealed in scripture. But spiritual formation is also about those spiritual exercises that the follower of Jesus pursues under the guidance of the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Spirit so as to more readily receive God’s transforming grace.

When we place these terms in the same arena as *Missio dei* (the mission of God), as well we should, embodying the good news takes on a fresh life. **Evangelisation** is that set of contextual, intentional initiatives of the community of followers of Jesus within the mission of God to demonstrate in word and deed the offer that God gives to everyone to change one’s way of living and follow Jesus in every area of life. In the confines of God’s global mission, it is therefore imperative to do what Jesus taught us to do; as we make disciples, we teach them to do everything he commanded us to do.

Matthew’s Gospel

As one reads and studies the Gospel of Matthew, one immediately notices many patterns that revolve around the idea of “following Jesus” or discipleship. What is it? What differences are there between authentic and false discipleship? What sorts of experiences are basic to becoming a disciple?⁴

Matthew seems to have been written in a time of persecution when there was a real effort to introduce either liberty from the law or legalism into the life of the community.⁵ Such threats would tempt people not to do evangelism. They might be afraid to confess Christ publicly or to receive fellow Christians who were being persecuted into their homes (10:34-42). Matthew focuses on the nature and meaning of discipleship. True disciples are distinguished by the fact that they not only say “Lord, Lord” or do miracles, but by the fact that they obey all Christ has commanded. They obey and make the good news known despite persecution (7:15-23; 25:31-46).

Matthew is also constructed so as to serve the purpose of instruction of Christians, a kind of catechism with a structure that aids memorization within an oral community. While the structure is complex, the major parts of the book alternate between a narrative section (which might have some brief discourses) and a discourse or sermon section. Signaling a transition between sections is the concluding phrase, “When Jesus finished saying...” (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1).⁶

Peter Ellis suggests the book be ordered by a chiasmic form, with the turning point in 13:35 where Jesus turns from the false Israel to the true Israel.⁷ Until that point he spends time with all people. From then on, he concentrates mainly on those who have responded and become serious disciples. Whether Ellis is right or not, the material is easily divided into units somewhat similar to what he suggests, as portrayed in this [chart](#).

A. **Narrative:** Jesus, Son of David, Son of Abraham, Messiah, New Moses (1-4)

Small discourse: John the Baptist on the one coming (3:8-12)

B. **Major Discourse:** Surpassing righteousness described of the true disciple (5-7)

C. **Narrative:** The authority of Jesus is shown in ten miracles (8-9)

D. **Major Discourse:** Persecution inevitable in the work of the disciple (10)

E. **Narrative:** Jesus opposed and persecuted (11-12)

F/F¹ Major Discourse: Parables of Kingdom--understanding separates false and true disciples (13)

E¹ **Narrative:** Jesus is understood and misunderstood (14-17)

D¹ **Major Discourse:** True disciples are bound together in community by mutual acceptance based on humility and forgiveness (18)

C¹ **Narrative:** Acceptance recommended of various groups (unmarried, children, the handicapped, the publicans and sinners, Gentiles) and rejection of the Jewish leaders by God (19-22)

B¹ **Major Discourse:** Warning: Judgment will fall on false disciples when the Son of Man returns (23-25)

A¹ **Narrative:** Judgment falls on Jesus—Crucifixion and resurrection (26-28)

Small discourse: Make disciples until the end of the age (28:16-20)

This chart is only a brief outline. You will note that the discourses generally sound a particular note in their teaching. Only the Sermon on the Mount varies from this, but it ends with the multitude astonished because Jesus taught as one having authority (with his “I say to you...” set against the understandings of the law and righteousness common in his day). The following narratives tend to pick up the theme and give stories that have a somewhat similar point. For example, the discourse in Chapter 10 stresses conflict and persecution that await the disciples who are sent out to preach and heal. The narrative in Chapters 11-12 is made up largely of stories about opposition or potential opposition: from John the Baptist and his followers; from Chorazin and Bethsaida; from the wise and understanding; and from the scribes and Pharisees.

One other interesting facet of Ellis’ theory is the continuities and contrasts that exist between Matthew’s corresponding parts. In his theory, the first Major Discourse (5-7) is matched with the fifth Major Discourse (23-25). They both are about the same length, both associated with a mountain, and with Jesus taking the seated position of a teacher. The one has beatitudes; the other woes. Both close with a judgmental scene in which the condemned address Jesus as “Lord, Lord.” Similar sorts of parallels and contrasts can be drawn between other sections. The structure is an intentional pedagogical tool for disciples as learners.

Therefore, in his structure and content, Matthew gives us a distinctive theology of the Christian life:

1. His basic theme is discipleship as learners—the sense that one is an apprentice of Jesus.
2. The basic activity of the disciple is “following”: learning the teacher’s viewpoint, adopting the lifestyle and path of the teacher, doing what the teacher commands and suffering the same fate as the teacher.⁸
3. The basic explanation of discipleship is given throughout Matthew’s Gospel, but especially in the five major discourses.
 - **The sermon on the mount (Matthew 5-7).** This sermon gives the style of life, attitudes and behavior that mark the authentic follower. Here is the ethical and spiritual heart of Jesus’ teaching about how we are to live life with a righteousness that surpasses that of the Pharisees and scribes. The comparisons for the teaching come from the city world of northern Palestine. To do righteousness is to obey the words and commands of the master teacher, Jesus Christ.
 - **The mission of the apostles and persecution (Matthew 10).** This tells us that disciples have a job to do in the cities and villages of Palestine, bringing the good news of the Kingdom of God and the power of the Spirit in healing and confrontation with the powers of evil. This teaches us some things about the ministry of the true disciple.
 - **The disciples and the Kingdom of God (Matthew 13).** This teaching instructs us in the nature of the Kingdom of God. Normally, we think of a kingdom as a controlling power. Yet the Kingdom of God

comes humbly, quietly, in a form that can be rejected. Its followers still suffer in this world. Its coming does not banish all evil or evildoers. Once again, the comparisons for the teaching come from the city world of northern Palestine, especially life in and around Capernaum. Everything depends upon our response to the word of the kingdom given in Jesus Christ. We need to listen to and understand the message of Jesus about the kingdom's presence and its priorities.

- **Brother and sisterhood in the community of disciples (Matthew 18).** Jesus explains to his disciples how to manage relationships within the community of the king. What do we do when Christian brothers and sisters do not live by the Sermon on the Mount—what about corruption among the disciples when they fall into serious moral or doctrinal error? What about disciplining other disciples?
- **Discipleship and watching in light of the coming judgment (Matthew 23-25).** This discourse reminds us that Jesus is coming again. True disciples watch for that coming while remaining faithful in service. They serve the poor and continue to preach the message of the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ to all the peoples of their cities. Then, and only then, will this age come to an end and the triumphantly powerful, visible kingdom will come to earth.

The book of Matthew is best read by considering its “bookends,” Matthew 1 and 28:18-20. The Gospel is rooted in the first chapter's genealogy. We learn through the women mentioned in the text that Jesus is multi-racial. The so-called Great Commission states the theme: those who have been made disciples are now to make more disciples of all peoples in the city. The material prior to the Great Commission shows Jesus making disciples and in various ways gives an exposition of what a true disciple is. The disciple's work, given in this final passage, is the climax of the Gospel. The emphasis here, as it is throughout the Gospel, falls on doing or observing God's law given through Jesus as the true teacher, as opposed to simply knowing and talking about it. Jesus is the positive example; the Pharisees and the false disciples are the negative examples.

But there is an interesting twist, which gets clarified in John's Gospel. In Matthew, Jesus states that he will always be with them. In John, this was to be through the presence of the Holy Spirit. Jesus mandates his disciples to make apprentices of all the ethnic groups of the world and this would be done through the power and presence of God himself in them. Within the scope of God's global mission, discipleship was front and center. It needs to recover its proper place today.

Endnotes

1. Willard, Dallas. 2006. *The Great Omission*. New York: Harper and Row, 69.
2. Missiology is the exegetical, theological and cultural study about the mission of God in the world and the ensuing mission of the Church. For that reason it is often defined as an inter-disciplinary field of reflection and action. It begins on the exegetical level (Christian faith is a missionary faith rooted in Jesus' practices, the hope of the rule of God and his justice) and follows with historical, theological and practical reflection and initiatives. It is inter-disciplinary because it takes into account cultural studies, holistic community transformational development theory and practice, a critique of the past, contextualization and strategies that move the people of God in their local situation forward.
3. Michael Wilkins defines a disciple as “...a person who has been called by Jesus to eternal life, has claimed him as Savior and God and has embarked upon the life of following him.” *In His Image*, 55. Greg Ogden defines discipling as “...an intentional relationship in which we walk alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ. This includes equipping the disciple to teach others as well.” *Transforming Discipleship*, 129.
4. Several authors draw our attention to this as the key focus of the Gospel of Matthew including: M. Wilkins. 1988. *Discipleship in the Ancient World and Matthew's Gospel*. Leiden: Brill; Donaldson, Terrence. 1996. “Guiding Readers—Making Disciples: Discipleship in Matthew's Narrative Strategy” in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed.

R.N. Longnecker. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 30-49; Bosch, D.J. 1991. *Transforming Mission*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 56-83.

5. This idea is further developed by Gundry, Robert H. 1982. *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans.

6. An alternative structure includes the repetition in 4:17 and 16:21.

7. Ellis, Peter. 1974. *Matthew: His Mind and Message*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.

8. The key discipleship term for Matthew is “follow” (note: 4:20; 9:9; 10:38; 16:24; 19:21; 20:34; 27:55). The crowds also follow him (note: 4:25; 8:1, 10; 12:15; 19:2; 20:29; 21:9).

Glenn Smith has been the executive director of **Christian Direction** in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, since 1983. He is a professor of urban theology and missiology at the École de théologie évangélique de Montréal at the Université de Montréal and at the Université chrétienne du Nord d’Haïti. Smith and his family were involved in pastoral ministry with an Anabaptist Francophone congregation in Montreal for twenty years.

Why Must Evangelism and Discipleship Go Hand in Hand?

By Jerry Root

Asking the question, “Why must evangelism and discipleship go hand in hand?” is like asking, “What came first, the chicken or the egg?” Yet, on closer inspection one observes that Jesus gave the Great Commission to his disciples and told them to evangelize in order to make more disciples. Here the sequence is clear: disciples evangelize in order to produce more disciples. The word “disciple” in the New Testament literally means “learner”; being a disciple is being a perpetual learner when it comes to the character of God and his call on the disciple’s life to do his work in the world.

When Jesus called the twelve to himself, “he appointed twelve; so that they might be with him and that he could send them out to preach” (Mark 3:14). The word translated “appointed” is the Greek word *poieo*; it is the word from which comes the English word *poem*, and literally means *to do, or to make*. The text literally says that Jesus “made twelve that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach.” He *made* the twelve; he built into their lives and shaped each of them uniquely according to their particular personalities and gifts that each could be effective in ministry. Discipleship preceded the evangelistic mission; God begins the process of building the men and women he uses, then he sends them out.

God Uses Flawed Disciples

The disciples were not perfect men—far from it. Even today, God uses flawed individuals to accomplish his work in the world. Flaws are no excuse for mediocrity or arrested development. God expects his disciples to grow in him, and the process of growth is not completed before service is initiated and rendered to Christ. No one is ever fully ready for any significant endeavor. No one is ready to get married. No one is ready to have children. No one is ever ready to do evangelism and fulfill the evangelistic mission of the Church in the world.

We cannot wait until we are ready. Jesus made twelve to be with him and sent them out. This is still the obligation of all who would serve him. His disciples always learn more and more of his love and forgiveness; they are continually nurtured by his grace. Knowing him in this way lends authority to the message that “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.” In Acts 4:13, Peter and John preached boldly to those who needed the message of God’s love and forgiveness and the text says those who heard the disciples and noted their confidence “recognized them as having been with Jesus.” They were called disciples when they were with Christ during the days of his incarnation; they were called apostles after his resurrection and ascension. Apostle

means “sent one.” Discipleship comes first, then comes the sending out to evangelize. Then the work of discipling begins all over again. Evangelism begins and ends in discipleship. The disciples were not perfect; however, they stepped faithfully into a process that multiplies and has affected generations.

Reproducing Reproducers

While no disciple is perfect, every disciple should be maturing in Christ. Dawson Trotman, founder of the **Navigators** and the man who developed the follow-up ministry for the **Billy Graham Evangelistic Association**, once said, “A person is mature physiologically when he or she can reproduce physically; so too, a person is mature spiritually when he or she can reproduce spiritually.” The growing, maturing Christian is one who is committed to lead another to Christ and nurture that new convert until this person can also lead others to Christ and nurture them to be reproducers of reproducers. This is the way in which all evangelism is couched in discipleship. Disciples evangelize in order to disciple. This is not a self-serving process. The goal of discipleship is to bring people into an ever maturing relationship with Jesus Christ. Those who are with Christ will get to know and love him; they will also come to love what he loves: “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). True disciples want others to come to know him and love him as well. True disciples will be evangelistically fruitful.

Paul’s Conversion

If we piece together the accounts of Paul’s conversion (Acts 9:1-9; 22:6-11; 26:1-29), we find that Paul asked two noteworthy questions of Christ: “Who are you, Lord?” and “What would you have me do?” These are the questions every new convert and every disciple must ask continually.

In the first question, the disciple discovers more and more of Christ in order that he or she might grow in the context of that discovery. As we discover more of his love for us, we discover more of our sin and his power to forgive it and mend our lives. Such growing awareness of God’s love and our need for his love and forgiveness should be the daily experience of the disciple. There is always fresh insight and learning about God’s grace. Few things will make the disciple’s message more fresh and relevant than his or her personal growth in grace.

In the second question, the disciple gets his or her marching orders to go and do what Christ prescribes. Here the disciple discovers the love of God that equips God’s own that they might serve God’s purposes by ministering in his name. True disciples are *ambassadors for Christ!*

Similar to Paul, Moses was called by God. Moses asked questions similar to Paul’s. He wanted to know who God was; he learned in response that God was the all-sufficient one. To do the work of God, Moses had to be a continual learner, a student of the character and nature of God. The life of the disciple is prior to his or her ministry and the disciple’s continual learning about God in faithful relationship with him adds vitality to the disciple’s ministry. Each person must go deeper in the knowledge of the holy if he or she wishes to lead others to these depths as well. Once Moses was introduced to the depths of God, Moses was given his assignment from God. He defined himself and his mission out of his relationship with God. The vision was personal and particular. This idea has shaped how the Church has looked at its mission through the ages.

Isaiah’s Call

Medieval spirituality and service reflected on what was called the “Scale of Perfection.” The Scale must not be understood as a means toward perfectionism and performance. It is best understood as a pathway toward maturity in Christ. The Scale of Perfection was developed from an application of Isaiah’s call to ministry as it is recorded in Isaiah 6. It was a troublesome time, the year of King Uzziah’s death. Uzziah had reigned for fifty-two years. His life had been a sign of political stability and now he was gone and uncertainty prevailed.

In this world of mutability, even the most stable of times can dissolve in an instant. God’s calling on his followers is not contingent upon political stability, nor is it diminished by unstable times; it is based on the very

character and nature of God himself! And so, the prophet says that in unstable and uncertain times, “I saw the Lord lofty and exalted.” The prophet defined himself by who he was in relationship with God. This self-definition appeared to have at least three phases.

1. The **Purgative** is the moment when the disciple is aware of his or her own deficiency before a holy God. Isaiah’s attention was riveted on God’s holiness and by contrast he defined himself as unclean. Such awareness puts the disciple in a place of abject dependence upon God and his sufficiency. The evangelist must always remember this when he or she does his or her work.
2. The **Illuminative** is the moment when the disciple becomes aware of the grace, mercy and love of God that touches him or her and restores what is broken. There is joy in knowing that God loves unconditionally. The disciple has a sense of being accepted and defined by the love of God. This will empower him or her when reaching out to others.
3. The **Unitive** phase is the moment the servant of God sees the heart of God and his care for the world. Here the disciple is united to the purpose of God in the world and directs his or her energies toward service. God does not grant visions of his glory without a purpose. He calls all true disciples into ministry to others.

Conclusion

Evangelism begins and ends in discipleship. Perhaps “ends” is an inappropriate word, for the ministry of Christ in the world is ongoing. God grants to each generation both the responsibility and privilege of serving his purposes. To be a disciple of Christ is to know the love and calling of God and to assume the responsibility to tell others that they are deeply loved and forgiven by God.

Dr. Jerry Root is associate director of the [Institute for Strategic Evangelism](#) at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, USA. He has taught in the evangelism masters program for the past eleven years.

Eight Principles of New Testament Evangelism

By **J. D. Payne**

Although there are many evangelism tools and resources available today to assist us in our ministries, there is no better resource than scripture. An examination of the approaches of Jesus and the Apostolic Church to evangelizing their world included at least eight principles.

1. They proclaimed an exclusive gospel. The message of Jesus and the Apostolic Church was not just another message (1 Corinthians 1:23). Although it was good news, it was an exclusive type of good news. Salvation was found in no one other than Christ, and people had to place explicit faith in him (Acts 4:12). Jesus was seen as the only way to the Father (John 14:6). Repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus was proclaimed to Jew and Gentile (Acts 20:21). This gospel was proclaimed to those following the Jewish religious ways (John 3) and Samaritan faith traditions (John 4, Acts 8). It was also proclaimed to the extremely religious (Acts 17) and to the God-fearers (Acts 10). It was news of love, hope, freedom, healing, deliverance, reconciliation and forgiveness. It was a message of God incarnating himself among people, dying as atonement for the sins of the world and resurrecting from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

2. They were intentional in sharing the gospel. Evangelism did not just happen by coincidence. They were intentional in their efforts. Evangelism was not a backup plan in case the other good deeds of the Church did not work. John records, “And he had to pass through Samaria” (John 4:4). Although it is easy to miss the gravity of these simple seven English words, it should be remembered that no decent, right-minded Jew would ever travel

through Samaria when traveling from Judea to Galilee. Rather than journey through their region, Jewish people would circumvent the entire area. Jesus, however, intentionally entered into this area and encountered the Samaritan woman, who, along with her village, became a believer (John 4:39-42). Following this account, Jesus leaves the area. Apparently the primary reason Jesus traveled through Samaria was to reach these people with the gospel.

3. They were Spirit-led. It has been said that the Book of Acts should actually be titled, “The Acts of the Holy Spirit.” From the very beginning (Acts 1:8), the Holy Spirit was the one who enabled the Church to be effective witnesses throughout the world. He was the one who provides boldness to share the gospel (Acts 4:31). He worked through the apostles to perform signs and wonders (Acts 2:43). He called out missionaries (Acts 13:1-3).

Following a great awaking in a Samaritan city (Acts 8:4-8), Philip received word from an “angel of the Lord” (Acts 8:26) to take a southbound road leading from Jerusalem to Gaza and await further instructions. Upon his arrival, the Spirit told him to go up to the chariot of the Ethiopian who was ready to come to faith (Acts 8:29). Also, the Spirit led Peter to evangelize the household of Cornelius (Acts 10:19-20).

4. They understood the importance of culture. Jesus and the Apostolic Church knew about the value of culture in the communication of the gospel. For example, in Paul’s Mars’ Hill address, he began his message by stating what would have been a compliment to the Athenians, namely, that they were very religious people (Acts 17:22). He then decided to connect with his Athenian hearers not with a passage from the Old Testament, but by quoting from their own poets (Acts 17:28-29). In his defense before Agrippa, Paul made certain to conduct himself appropriately as any proper orator would have before such a statesman by stretching out his hand before proceeding to speak (Acts 26:1). Being aware of the various cultures of the people to whom they were speaking allowed the early evangelists to connect with their audiences and gain a hearing.

5. They were flexible to the context. Closely related to their understanding of the value of culture was the fact that the methods and gospel presentations of Jesus and the Apostolic Church varied from situation to situation. Jesus did not speak to Zacchaeus as he did to Nicodemus. Paul did not present himself in the same manner to Agrippa as he did to Lydia (Acts 16). Jesus’ encounter with the Gerasene demoniac required a different approach than how he engaged the Samaritan woman. Although the gospel message did not change (Acts 20:21), the contexts required different methods of engagement and communication.

6. They began where people were in their spiritual journeys. In many evangelistic encounters, Jesus and the Apostolic Church began with the people’s felt needs. Since Nicodemus believed that his genealogical account was sufficient to earn God’s favor, Jesus spoke of being “born again” (John 3:3). The Samaritan woman was not concerned with her heritage; rather, she was concerned with getting water from a well. Jesus used the felt need as an opportunity to speak of “living water” (John 4:10). Philip did not begin sharing with the Ethiopian a discourse about Adam and Eve; rather, he started preaching from the passage about which the man had questions (Acts 8:35).

7. They were sensitive to the fears, hurts and concerns of others while speaking the truth in love. Although Jesus could have spent much time speaking about the evils of adultery and fornication to the Samaritan woman, he acknowledged her wickedness and continued on in the conversation (John 4:17-18). Jesus could have scolded and severely rebuked Zacchaeus for having wicked business practices (Luke 19:7). He decided, however, to stay at his house, bring salvation (Luke 19:9) and gain the reputation as a friend of tax collectors and sinners (Luke 7:34). Jesus and the Apostolic Church never denied wickedness; instead, they always called people to repentance out of love (Mark 10:21), even when they spoke to the self-righteous.

8. They were post-conversion-oriented. Although evangelism is the first step of the Great Commission, the mandate to the Church includes making disciples (Matthew 28:19). The New Testament was not written to

provide its readers with every detail of the historic events. Sometimes, it is easy to wonder what happened to those first century people who were evangelized but are not mentioned again in scripture. Despite this silence, Jesus and the Apostolic Church were concerned with what occurred in the lives of people after they came to faith. A simple reading of the Book of Acts and the Epistles reveals that the new believers were gathered together in new churches. Paul followed up with the new believers through visits, letters and messengers.

Church planting was (and still is) a major part of fulfilling the Great Commission. Following the conversion of the Gerasene demoniac, the man begged Jesus to allow him to get into the boat and accompany him. Rather than agreeing to the man's plea, Jesus immediately calls the man to obedience and to bear fruit for the kingdom by sending him back to his region to proclaim the works of God (Mark 5:19). The man obeyed and "everyone marveled" (Mark 5:20). Also, Philip made certain that the Ethiopian was baptized (Acts 8:36-39).

Principles are timeless and translatable from culture to culture. As individuals concerned with global evangelization, may we consider how to apply these New Testament principles to our ministries for his glory.

J. D. Payne is a national missionary with the [North American Mission Board](#) and assistant professor of church planting and evangelism at [The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary](#) in Louisville, Kentucky, USA. He is the founder of www.northamericanmissions.org, a web-based resource for the multiplication of disciples, leaders and churches.

PEOPLES OF THE WORLD

[An Overview of North America and the Caribbean](#)

By **Justin Long**

North America

North America is bordered on all sides by ocean, covering about 24.5 million square kilometers (9.5 million square miles), or about sixteen percent of the world. It is the third largest continent after Asia and Africa, and with some 515 million people it has the fourth largest population. It has access to enormous natural resources, although its economy has been transitioning into one that is dominated more by services than by manufacturing.

North America's only land connection is to South America at the narrow Isthmus of Panama. For the purposes of this survey, the area from Mexico south is considered Central America, part of southern America. Greenland, a Danish self-governing island, is part of North America geographically; Bermuda is considered part geopolitically given its historical political and cultural ties to the continent.

With 314 million people, North America is the fifth most populous region in the world. It is growing slowly; by 2025 it is projected to reach 388 million. Most of the population is urban, and it is growing more urbanized every day.

North America shares a strong common cultural identity, although it is made up of a diverse number of ethnic groups. The three dominant cultures include white Euro-Americans (making up two-thirds of the continent), Hispanics and African-Americans. Asians and Middle Eastern cultures together make up nearly ten percent of the region and are found in significant concentrations particularly on the coasts. Over 240 languages are spoken in North America, although the most prevalent are English, Spanish and French (the latter having been historically significant and still strong in certain regions, particularly Canada and Louisiana, USA).

North America is the world's wealthiest region; however, its share of global wealth is in decline with the rise of China's and India's economies. Nevertheless, the region has been blessed with riches, small percentages of

which trickle into missions. The average per person giving of three percent equates to billions of dollars for evangelism and cross-cultural work.

In spite of North America’s wealth, extreme poverty, crime, drug use and diseases such as HIV/AIDS can be found. AIDS is not widespread; there are perhaps one million people living with the disease, most of whom are adults.

Christianity in North America

Historically, Christianity first came to the region with European colonists in the 1600s. The Americas were colonized for nearly two centuries, but the United States declared independence in the late 1700s. In the 1800s, several missions movements were launched; the late 1800s were notable for the beginnings of the Student Volunteer Movement and related plans to evangelize the world (which was impactful, but nonetheless failed). The impact of two World Wars, the Cold War with the Soviet Union, the civil rights issues and social revolutions of the 1960s, the liberalization of the 1970s, the commercialism of the 1980s and the technological revolutions of the 1990s all left their mark on the region. In the 1990s, another attempt to evangelize the world was a strong influence; however, the attempt failed.

Today over eighty percent of the region’s people would consider themselves Christians; however, apathy and nominalism are widespread. Over fifteen percent of professing believers are not affiliated with any church and do not attend services on a regular basis. About twelve percent of the region considers itself non-religious. Although the number of Christians is increasing in nearly every country, their share of the overall population is declining. It is unlikely that the majority role of Christianity in the region will be lost any time soon, but the growing numbers of non-religious, disaffiliated, unaffiliated and minority non-Christians is steadily eroding its presence. Minorities present in North America often remain culturally isolated and unreached by the gospel.

Despite this, North America continues to be a strong mission sending force. Over seventy thousand missionaries are sent out by Protestants and Independents, and a nearly equal number of Catholic missionaries are sent through their various orders and societies. Although there are growing problems with American missionaries in various parts of the world (largely due to the political trends America faces today), those working in partnerships with Africans, Asians and Latins are part of significant ministries in the unreached world. Along with agencies, the impact of affluent megachurches are beginning to have a significant impact on missions.

Statistics for the Five Countries of North America

Name	P'00	P'25	C'00	%	C '25	%	75-00	00-25	Issues affecting the future
Bermuda	0.1	0.1	0.1	91%	0.1	87%	+-	+-	
Canada	30.7	37.8	23.9	78%	27.8	74%	+-	+-	
Greenland	0.1	0.1	0.1	96%	0.1	95%	+-	+-	
Saint Pierre	0.0	0.0	0.0	95%	0.0	92%	--	+-	
United States	284.2	350.1	239.4	84%	287.2	82%	+-	+-	

The Caribbean

The small islands dotting the warm waters of the Caribbean are prime destinations for tourists, corporations and criminals. The hot climate and warm nightlife has lulled many into sleepy structures of sin that are difficult to break out of.

Few of the islands have any significant natural resources beyond their beaches, climates, fishing and sugarcane. Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Dominica, Haiti and Puerto Rico are the exceptions, possessing timber, minerals

and some rare metals (gold and silver). The economies in the region produce fifty-one percent of Latin America's Gross National Product (GNP), and are a mixed bag: some endure abject poverty, while others are relatively well off. Tourism is the staple industry, but offshore banking is also common. The Caymans are a particular example of this, but with it comes a dark side: much of the wealth that moves through these tax-free havens is money being laundered by criminals.

Drugs are traded on some of the islands, and shipped through others, although this is declining due to recent policing. Sexual sins are widespread; many births are illegitimate. The Bahamas and Trinidad & Tobago both have AIDS epidemics.

In perhaps the ultimate irony, the tourist-friendly position of the islands also puts them directly in the path of annual hurricanes and tropical storms. Devastating natural disasters reduce the numbers of tourists and destroy the local economy, forcing impoverished countries to spend hard-earned money to rebuild their infrastructure. Martinique has averaged a disaster every five years. Montserrat, sitting on top of a volcano, was nearly reduced to ashes and has only recently begun to rebuild.

Although most of the countries are at peace, the notable exceptions are Haiti and Cuba. Haiti's long period of political turmoil has led to endless poverty and violence. Cuba's isolation under Castro has locked the largest potential missionary force in the region away from the rest of the world.

Christianity in the Caribbean

Most of these countries profess Christianity but it is of the most nominal kind. Many are Catholics, although Protestants and Independent churches are also widely found. The Church is growing, but none except the Church in Cuba are growing faster than the population. It is hard to maintain growth when over ninety percent of the people already consider themselves Christians.

More revealing is the widespread lack of mission-sending efforts. Mission mobilization is a key need. The wildcard in the region is Cuba after Castro. It is clearly unlikely he will survive to 2025, and perhaps not to 2010. What happens after he is gone is not certain, but further liberalization is possible. Persecution in Cuba is on the decline, and restrictions have been loosened. Explosive church growth is the norm and will likely continue. Perhaps one day Cuba will send missionaries to the countries where Castro once sent troops. What impact could Cubans—and Caribbeans as a whole—have on the unreached world?

Statistics for the Twenty-four Countries/Territories of the Caribbean

Name	P'00	P'25	C'00	%	C'25	%	75-00	00-25	Issues affecting the future
Anguilla	0.0	0.0	0.0	92%	0.0	89%	+-	+-	Few resources, poverty, tourism/banking, hurricanes, water
Antigua	0.1	0.1	0.1	94%	0.1	92%	+-	+-	Water, hurricanes, tourism, some unemployment, drugs
Aruba	0.1	0.1	0.1	96%	0.1	92%	+-	+-	Tourism, relatively wealthy, Christian radio
Bahamas	0.3	0.4	0.3	92%	0.4	91%	+-	+-	AIDS, tourism, declining drug trade, unemployment, nominalism
Barbados	0.3	0.3	0.3	96%	0.3	95%	+-	+-	Tourism, sugar, relative wealth with some unemployment, apathy
British Virgin Islands	0.0	0.0	0.0	84%	0.0	83%	+-	+-	Tourism, prosperous economy, materialism, nominalism

Cayman Islands	0.0	0.1	0.0	78%	0.0	69%	+-	+-	Offshore financial center, wealthy, tourism, money laundering
Cuba	11.1	11.3	5.9	53%	6.4	56%	++	++	Declining restrictions, Castro transition, poverty, church growth
Dominica	0.1	0.1	0.1	95%	0.1	94%	+-	+-	Agriculture, hurricanes, economic restructuring, poverty, nominalism
Dominican Republic	8,3	11.2	7.9	95%	10.6	95%	+-	+-	Hurricanes, unemployment, political turmoil, poverty, rich/poor gap
Grenada	0.1	0.1	0.1	97%	0.1	97%	+-	+-	Tourism, unemployment, poverty, nominalism, church unity
Guadeloupe	0.4	0.5	0.4	95%	0.5	93%	+-	+-	Hurricanes, unemployment, poor, nominalism
Haiti	7.9	10.9	7.6	96%	10.2	94%	+-	+-	Absolute poverty, violence, political instability, unemployment
Jamaica	2.6	2.8	2.2	84%	2.2	78%	+-	+-	Tourism, socioeconomic ills, unemployment, poverty, hurricanes
Martinique	0.4	0.4	0.4	98%	0.4	95%	+-	+-	Unemployment, poverty, nominalism, average one disaster every five years
Montserrat	0.0	0.0	0.0	96%	0.0	93%	--	+-	Volcanic activity, half the island uninhabitable, reconstruction
Netherland Antilles	0.2	0.2	0.2	94%	0.2	91%	+-	+-	Tourism, unemployment, apathy, Christian radio
Puerto Rico	3.8	4.3	3.7	97%	4.1	96%	+-	+-	Growing economy, politics, unemployment, addictions
St. Kitts and Nevis	0.0	0.1	0.0	95%	0.0	95%	--	++	Tourism, drugs, no known missionaries from the island
St. Lucia	0.2	0.2	0.1	96%	0.2	96%	+-	+-	Growing economy, unemployment, nominalism
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	0.1	0.1	0.1	89%	0.1	84%	+-	+-	Tourism, tropical storms, marijuana, drug transshipment point
Trinidad & Tobago	1.3	1.3	0.8	63%	0.8	59%	+-	+-	AIDS, poverty, violence, corruption, tourism, offshore banking
Turks and Caicos Islands	0.0	0.0	0.0	93%	0.0	90%	+-	+-	Tourism, unemployment, immigration, offshore banking
Virgin Islands	0.1	0.1	0.1	95%	0.1	91%	+-	--	Tourism, hurricanes, oil refining, materialism, crime

Key to the above charts:

P*00 - Population, AD 2000

P*25 - Population, AD2025

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

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

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

00-25 - Growth rate projected for AD2000-2025

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

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

A Focus on North America and the Caribbean: Eighty-eight Least-reached People Groups Remain

Overview

The thirty countries in North America and the Caribbean include three of the largest countries of the world: Canada, the United States and Greenland. Communities from every ethnic group in Europe have settled in the Americas. It is probably the region with the least religious discrimination and it has been the largest sending base in the world for missionaries; however, this is rapidly changing. Eighty-three least-reached people groups remain here. Canada has the largest percent of population that is least-reached with 4.6% in sixteen groups (nearly 1.5 million people); however, the United States has the largest population of least-reached people at over 3.5 million in twenty-four people groups. Mexico has almost half a million people in eighteen people groups.

If the gospel is not sent, sometimes people come to hear the gospel in a land where churches are plentiful. This could be the legacy of North American Christianity. Students, immigrant communities and indigenous peoples remain a challenge for the gospel in the world's wealthiest continent and the economic engine on which the world's economy depends for growth. Less than fifteen percent of international students in the US today are touched by any Christian ministry. Additionally, seventy percent will never see the inside of an American home and eighty percent will never have a Christian friend. Sadly, American churches pray for Muslim countries but do very little to reach Muslims in their own communities. In addition, only in Greenland are Native Americans a majority; elsewhere they are often a marginalized underclass alongside a large majority that overran their continent.

Pray for a re-energizing of the body of Christ in North American and the Caribbean to come alongside the rapidly emerging harvest forces from China, Russia, Latin America, India, Africa and other places.

Prayer Points

- **Turning obstacles into opportunities.** Pray that God causes North American/Caribbean believers to value all the redemptive gifts in every culture. Pray he gives them the ability to respond with his grace and love to the challenges of building relationships across cultures.
- **Seekers to find Jesus.** Pray for those who have migrated or come as students, overseas workers, immigrants or refugees seeking education, opportunity or fleeing war, famine or deprivation to find Jesus as their resource, refuge, teacher and friend.
- **Turning the hearts of the fathers to the children.** Pray for God to supernaturally reconcile the older generation with the younger, so that families are God-honoring examples and faith in God is passed from the older generation to the younger. Pray for the changed lives of those coming to Christ as young people—and that they will win their families to Christ.
- **Building bridges of friendship.** Pray for God to empower believers to creatively build friendships. Pray that he will help believers share his love as they connect with those different in language, culture or belief.
- **Relevant faith.** Pray for God to be alive in believers of North America and the Caribbean so their lives are the message. Pray they live lives worthy of imitation and bring a living witness to least-reached peoples. Pray for a re-energizing of the people in the body of Christ in North America and the Caribbean.

Links

- **Resources** to pray, to mobilize prayer and to do outreach.
- **Discover** North America and Caribbean's eighty-eight least-reached peoples.
- **Pray** for the peoples of North America and the Caribbean region.
- Obtain **daily prayer guides** for peoples of this region.

Background

Is North America Running Out of Unreached People Groups?

(by Keith Carey)

Putting together an issue on North America is both maddening and delightful. It is maddening because there are so few unreached people groups that we sometimes have to broaden the definitions more than I would like. But it is also delightful because there are so few unreached people groups that the task is nearly complete in this part of the world! Mexico and her two English-speaking neighbors to the north have different problems in reaching the remaining unreached people groups.

In Mexico, there are eighteen unreached people groups, according to the **Joshua Project** list. Of those, three are immigrant groups and the remaining fifteen are small subgroups of Mexico's Mixtecs, Zapotecs, Mixes and Nahuats. **Global Recordings Network** is doing all it can to make sure these groups get a gospel message in their own dialect. Because there are subgroups of each of these people group clusters that already have believers, it should be possible to reach them in the next couple of years.

North of the Mexican border there are very few unreached indigenous people group, according to the Joshua Project list. The United States has twenty-one unreached people groups and Canada has sixteen, almost all of which are immigrant groups. It will take a different approach to reach the immigrant communities in Anglo America than it does to reach indigenous peoples in Mexico.

Although there are many immigrant groups in the US and Canada that have a Christian witness, many of them do not. Those living in their homeland are extremely difficult to reach. For example, when was the last time you heard of a breakthrough among Somalis in Somalia or Kenya? But they can be reached in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Although there are efforts to reach Kurds in Iraq, and there are now a few Kurdish congregations in that part of the world, the work can easily run afoul of the Muslim majority. Kurds in San Diego or Nashville do not have the same hurdle between them and a Christian witness. Likewise, Pushtuns from Afghanistan are difficult to reach in that land where strife is an everyday activity. But many of them have settled in Fremont, California, where Christians can reach them if they are willing to do so.

North America's South Asian Mission Field

In the early 1900s, Punjabi Sikhs began to seek their fortunes in Canada. At first, few women came. The men earned relatively good wages in the lumber industry of British Columbia. Instead of returning to India as they originally expected, their women began to arrive and they raised families in this beautiful land. Several decades later, others went to California's fertile Central Valley to raise crops. Most of the latter are Jats, one of India's most accomplished agricultural groups. Jats learned the advanced agricultural techniques of the Green Revolution and have put these techniques into practice in Canada and California, as well as the Punjab.

In 1965, American President Lyndon Johnson signed a new immigration law that prevented "national origins" from being a basis for allocating immigration quotas to various countries. For the first time, the US could not give preferential treatment to European or Latin American immigrants. The only criteria was that the new immigrants had to be well-educated.

Since that time, India has been sending its best and brightest to the United States. For many years, the number of people trained in India's fine high-tech schools far exceeded the number of jobs offered in the subcontinent. American companies offered them jobs.

Those with business skills have helped the United States by creating startup businesses. Some of the richest people in the world are Indian nationals whose efforts straddle both countries. Many Indian entrepreneurs are in the high-tech field. A key group of Indian business people are from the western state of Gujarat. They are Patels, and many of them own motels. At this time, most are involved with small, cheaper franchises, but some are moving into the higher end market.

Why Is the Indian Diaspora so Significant in God's Economy?

We know that there are excellent efforts in India to reach out for Christ. For the most part, however, these efforts are affecting only the lower castes, and the high caste groups remain unreached. North America is a magnet for the high-caste people groups. The late Mahendra Singhal, a high-caste Brahmin himself, pointed out that his people have a knack for mastering complicated mathematics. They are prominent among the computer software engineers who live in America. Although [India Gospel Outreach](#) is doing a fine job of reaching Sikhs for Christ in India, it is still difficult to get through to the prosperous Jats, the same people who are easy to reach in California. A Patel Christian believer is unheard of in both India and the United States; however, in the latter, they have a chance to hear the gospel. There is an effort to reach the unreached Sindhi peoples, many of whom are prominent in businesses; however, there is still no fellowship of Sindhis in North America.

The problem is that the laborers are very few. There are those who are mission-minded in both Canada and the US; however, the difficulty is finding those who will reach out to the most unreached peoples on the continent.

Pray that God will raise up workers to reach out to the unreached Muslim groups of Saudi Arabs, Kurds, Somalis and Afghan Pushtuns. Pray that God will raise up his chosen servants to reach out to the most unreached of the South Asian Diaspora, such as the Patels, Brahmins, Jats, Bangladeshis and Sindhis.

How Do We Begin an Outreach?

Reaching out to people from another country is not easy. They may already have their friendship networks in place. Often they get suspicious that you are trying to "convert" them. However, there are groups out there that can help. One of them is [EthnoServe](#), whose mission it is to "place long and short-term partners around the US, focusing on networking with other organizations to help churches and individuals reach the ethnic communities within their neighborhoods. Their work may involve developing friendships, teaching English or providing other services as they share their faith in Christ."

Below are seven steps we can take to reach out to those around us:

1. **Begin with prayer.** Ask God to show you the doors he wants you to open. Pray with people from your church for direction.
2. **Get over the reluctance to speak of spiritual things with strangers.** To many people, especially Muslims, this is perfectly natural.
3. **Be hospitable.** Hospitality is a gift well honored in most of the world. Many of these same people may never see the inside of an American home otherwise.
4. **Equip yourself with some basic cross-cultural resources.** Here are some helpful websites that you will want to bookmark: www.ethnoserve.org, www.ethnicharvest.org and www.ethnicamerica.com.

5. **Develop networks of Christians** in all kinds of professions who will work together to plant churches among various people groups. You can work within the network you have in your own profession. Seek out believers in your profession and begin to formulate a strategy for reaching the unreached in your community.
6. **Adopt a people group.** Are there churches willing to send someone to live and work among the people group? You may have some believers who are ready to help.
7. **Serve immigrant Christians in your area.** They might need help with English lessons, etc. These people might be your best partners in outreach. (LWP editor's note: A great resource for ethnic mapping near you is www.peoplegroups.info.)

Into Their World...The Gheg Albanian of the United States

By Laurie Fortunak

The Gheg Albanian are thought to be descendants of the Illyrians, the original inhabitants of the western Balkan Peninsula. The Gheg are one of two major Albanian groups. The other is the Tosk. The two groups have historically been quite different, with the Gheg being more stern and courageous and the Tosk being more friendly and talkative.

Many changes introduced by the Communist regime in Albania in the 1940s affected the lifestyle of the Gheg Albanian. Previously, they had been a tribal people who lived in extended family units called fis. Blood feuds were so common that fortified stone buildings called kulas were created for protection during the feuds.

After the Communist regime collapsed in 1991, Albania was left in something of an identity crisis and today it claims the sad distinction of being one of Europe's poorest and least developed nations. For centuries, the Gheg Albanian practiced a type of folk Islam, which included occult practices such as praying to the dead, seeking cures for sickness and praying for protection against spirits and curses.

Although Albania declared itself the world's first atheistic state in 1967, with the fall of the Communist regime came a rise in religion, in particular an influx of Muslim missionaries seeking to evangelize the Gheg Albanian.

During the turmoil of the past few decades, over 100,000 Gheg Albanian immigrated to the United States where many seek to find refuge and new opportunities for themselves and their families.

Pray that the Gheg Albanian in the United States find the Lord Jesus Christ as they make their way in their new homeland. Pray that Christians in America will open their hearts and their doors to these people who have been through so much—but who are so loved by God.

For more information on the Albanian of the United States, visit:

<http://www2.bc.edu/~brisk/albania.htm>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albanian-American>

(Information compiled from www.joshuaproject.net)

(Note: The website links above are intended to provide you with more information about this people group. Some of the links are to groups that are not religious in nature but who provide information and background that may be helpful in researching this people group. The content of each of the websites linked to is the sole responsibility of the linked-to organization. Views expressed on these websites do not necessarily reflect the opinions and beliefs of the staff or writers of Lausanne World Pulse or those of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, Institute of Strategic Evangelism, Evangelism and Missions Information Service or Intercultural Studies Department.)

Laurie Fortunak is editorial coordinator of Lausanne World Pulse. She also serves as editorial coordinator for [Evangelism and Missions Information Service](#) (EMIS) at the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College and managing editor of [Evangelical Missions Quarterly](#) (EMQ).

STRATEGY, TRENDS & STATISTICS

Personal Bible Reading

By Peter Brierley

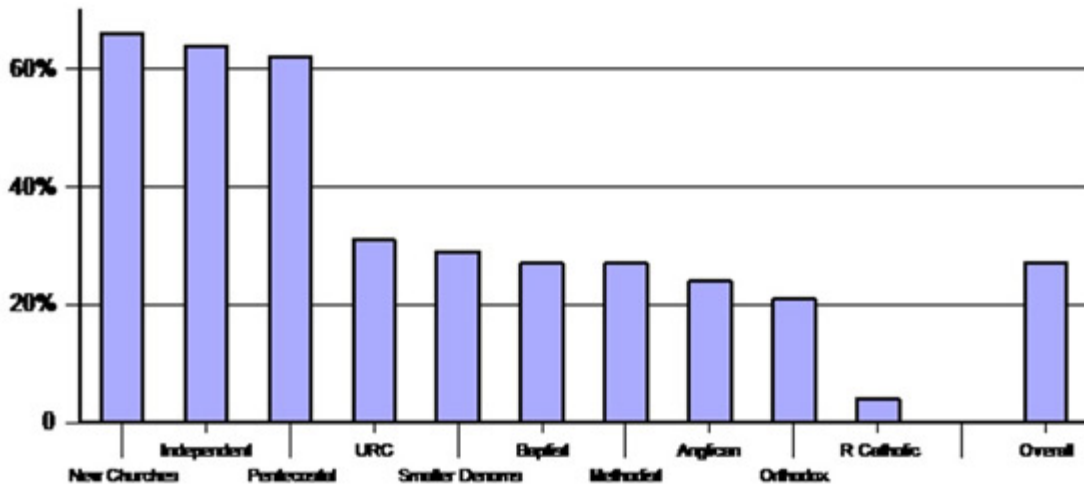
How essential is regular reading of the Bible for one's personal spiritual life? If we go to church each week, or attend a regular Bible study group, and hear the Bible being explained, do we need to read it ourselves as well? Most Christian people would answer with a very affirmative YES! While it is possible to become a Christian and to live as a Christian without access to a personal copy of the Bible in one's own tongue (as the experience of tens of thousands of people in countries like China testifies!), the norm in Western society is for Christians to have at least one copy of the Bible themselves with the expectation of reading it personally outside church services.

A large study in the UK in 2005 asked ministers how many people read the Bible in their church personally outside of church attendance. The overall answer, across all denominations, was that some twenty-seven percent of churchgoers in England claimed to read the Bible personally at least once a week. This percentage is between the forty-five percent of adults reading the Bible weekly in the United States¹ and the twelve percent of Finns who read it at least once a month.²

Variation by Denomination

Regular Bible reading varied considerably by denomination as Figure 1 below shows, with those attending the New Churches reading it most (sixty-six percent), followed by the Independent churches (sixty-four percent) and the Pentecostals (sixty-two percent). Roman Catholics read it least (four percent), and most other denominations were fairly close to the national average. For UK church leaders, these figures come as no surprise.

Figure 1: Percentage reading the Bible at least weekly by Denomination

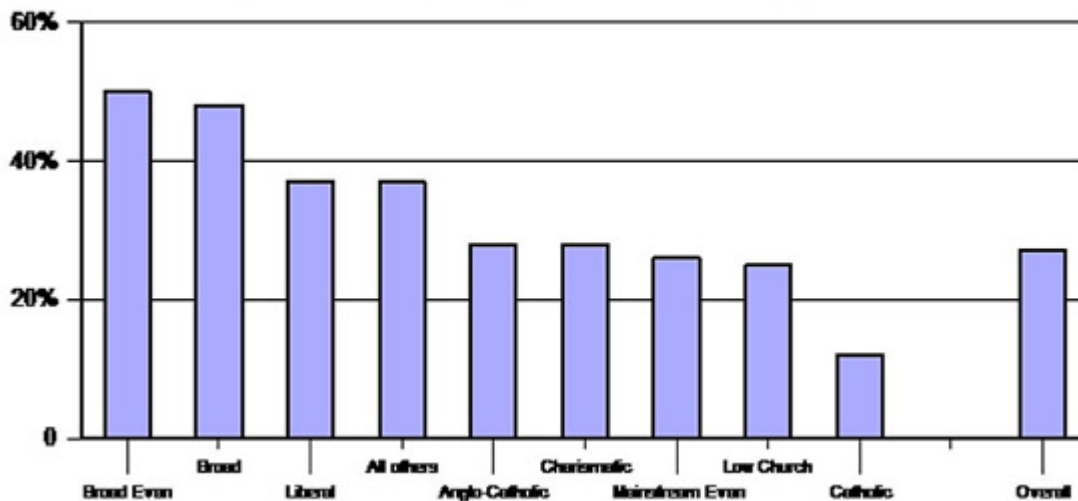


Those of a non-white ethnicity read the Bible much more than those who were white—forty percent compared to twenty-five percent.

Variation by Churchmanship

The same study also broke down the answers by churchmanship and these results, shown in Figure 2 below, are more unexpected.

Figure 2: Percentage reading the Bible at least weekly by churchmanship



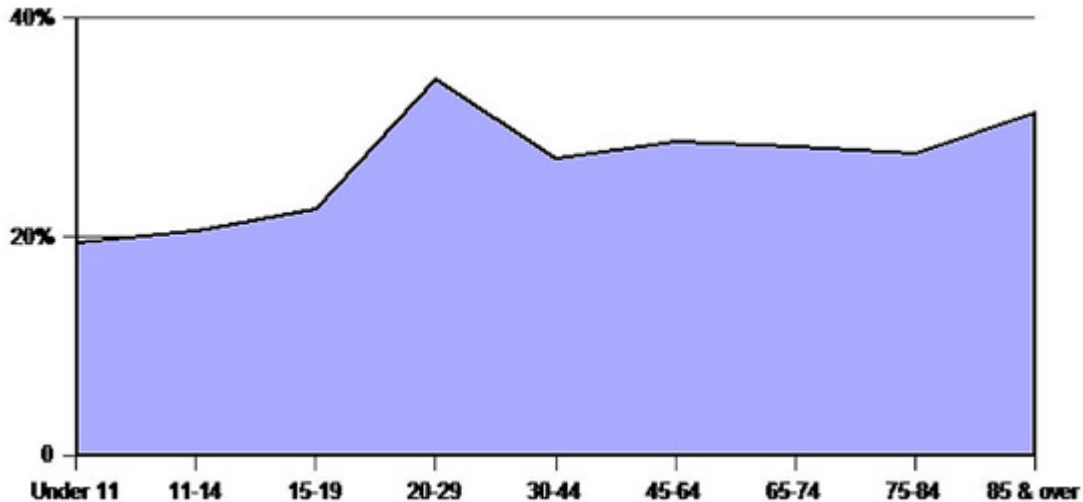
Those reading the Bible most describe themselves as Broad Evangelicals, who in total are six percent of all churchgoers, and of whom three-fifths are Anglican and a further quarter are Methodist or Pentecostal. These are followed by those who simply indicated they were “Broad,” a group representing nine percent of all churchgoers, and of whom half are Anglican, and most of the rest are Methodist or Roman Catholic. Half of these two groups said they read the Bible at least once a week.

The next group reading the Bible most frequently were the Liberals (not the Evangelicals), who collectively averaged twenty-nine percent, just above the overall figure. Of those who said they were “Evangelical” (called Mainstream Evangelicals in Figure 2 to distinguish them from the Charismatic and Broad Evangelicals), just twenty-six percent said they read the Bible personally at least once a week.

Variation by Age

The proportion reading the Bible at different ages is indicated in Figure 3 below.

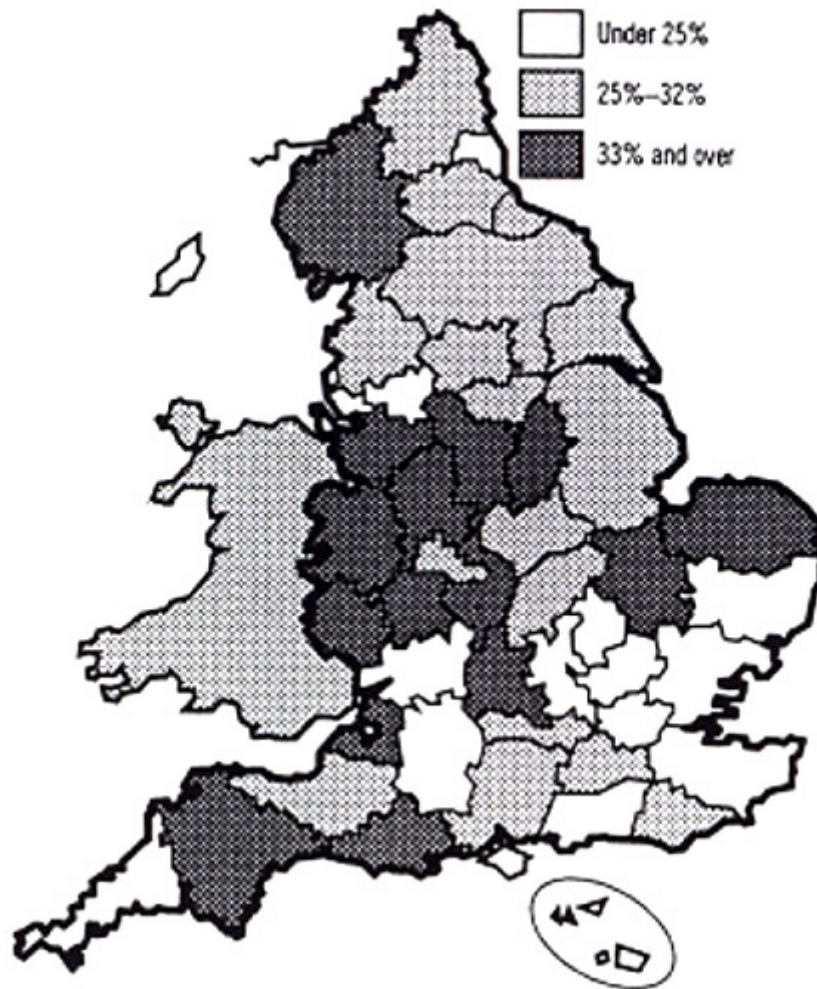
Figure 3: Percentage reading the Bible weekly by age-group.



This chart shows that those under twenty read it least of all, while those aged twenty to twenty-nine read it most, followed by those aged eighty-five and over. Those aged thirty to forty-four read it least, presumably because of the pressures of home, family, work and church for this age-group, indicating that other behavioural characteristics of Christianity are affected as well as church attendance (as this age-group attends less frequently than others).

Variation by Geography

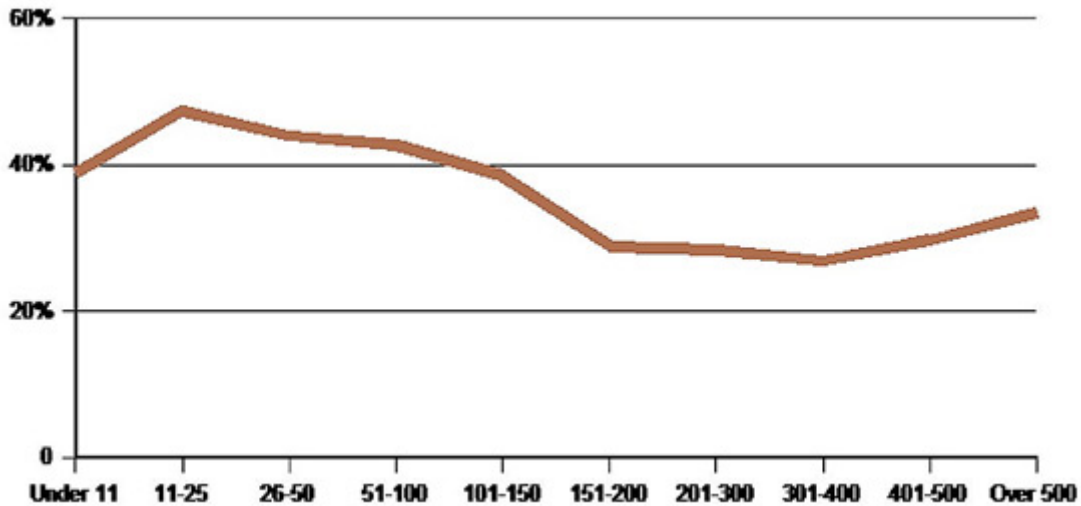
The twenty-seven percent who read the Bible regularly varied across the country with the highest percentages in Avon (forty percent), Cumbria (thirty-eight percent) and Norfolk and Wiltshire (thirty-seven percent each); the lowest numbers were in Inner London and Greater Manchester (twenty percent each); Gloucestershire and the Channel Islands (nineteen percent each) and the Isle of Man (eighteen percent). The map below shows these variations in Bible reading with churchgoers in the western Midlands and in a few scattered rural areas reading it most.



Variation by Size of Church

The proportion who read their Bible at least weekly is shown broken down by size of church in Figure 4 below. Apart from the smallest churches with fewer than eleven congregants on a Sunday, in general the larger the church, the smaller the percentage of the congregation who read the Bible regularly. This is until one reaches the larger Protestant churches with at least three hundred people in the congregation, where the proportion who read the Bible becomes greater.

Figure 4: Percentage reading the Bible weekly by size of church excluding the Roman Catholics



Variation by Frequency of Attendance

Those who attend church at least once a week read the Bible most (thirty percent); however, those who attend every other week or monthly read it less (twenty percent). Those coming less than once a month read it least (fifteen percent).

So What?

What does all this show? Perhaps those attending certain denominations are encouraged and taught to read the Bible. It is interesting to note that the numbers attending the Independent and Pentecostal churches are increasing. Is there a correlation between church growth and Bible reading? Does Bible reading promote or encourage church growth or does church growth encourage Bible reading?

Perhaps the biggest challenge, however, is not the proportion of people who are reading the Bible and how that varies, but the percentage who are not reading the Bible. How can they be encouraged to do so, and perhaps thereby grow in their Christian life and witness and contribute to the growth of the Church?

How much these results are replicated worldwide is not known, but perhaps they suggest that similar studies are worth undertaking.

Endnotes

1. Barna, George. 2005. *The Barna Update*. Ventura, California: The Barna Group. email of 11 April, 2005.
2. Kääriäinen, Kimmo, Maarit Hytönen, Katio Niemelä and Kari Salonen. 2005. *Church in Change. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland from 2000 to 2003*. Translated by Virginia Mattila, Publication 55, Church Research Institute, 23.

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

LAUSANNE REPORTS

Lausanne Appoints New Senior Associate for Stewardship

The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization has named Dr. Stan Toler as the Lausanne senior associate for stewardship. In creating this new position, Lausanne executive chair Rev. S. Douglas Birdsall said that “biblical stewardship is an issue of paramount importance to the global Christian community. We must seek ways to use our resources more effectively to advance the cause of world evangelization.”

Toler is senior pastor at Trinity Church of the Nazarene in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma USA. He is also a best-selling author, international seminar leader and speaker and executive director of the Toler Leadership Center at Mid-America Christian University.

Lausanne’s treasurer, Dr. Roger Parrott, president of Belhaven College in Jackson, Mississippi, USA, says Toler is passionate about helping Christians understand the worship and the joy in giving. Parrott added, “Stan is especially gifted in connecting the best ideas of stewardship across the distinctives of cultures and denominations in order for the whole Church to join in the blessings that come when our resources are committed to God’s purpose. His high level of expertise and gentle humble spirit will be an encouragement to the Lausanne network of leaders as we help guide the Church in the critical, and often complex, issues of stewardship.”

Toler’s passion is holistic stewardship, a term he uses to include more than stewardship of money but also stewardship of life. Toler says, “The world has used the term stewardship almost more effectively than the Church. We need to reclaim the word because stewardship is discipleship.” Discipleship, Toler adds, includes the appropriate use of what God entrusts to every person—time, talent, treasure and touch, which he defines as stewardship of relationships.

Toler believes stewardship is critical to helping Christians be effective witnesses for Christ because it involves the daily living out of a relationship with Christ in connection with others and the world around us. The ultimate stewardship, emphasizes Toler, is “redeeming the times,” recognizing the urgency to tell others about Christ. Stewardship is not just a Western concept, stresses Toler. Christian leaders worldwide recognize the importance of stewardship and he has had the privilege of traveling to dozens of countries to share a vision of the “cycle of victorious giving.”

Toler has written or co-written over sixty books, including *Building Kingdom Stewards: A Complete Plan for Developing a Giving Church* and *Cycle of Victorious Giving*. He and his wife Linda have two sons and live in Oklahoma.

Terms and Conditions of Use

All material from LWP is copyrighted by Evangelism and Missions Information Service (EMIS), its partners, and authors. All rights are reserved. Except for personal use, no part of LWP may be reproduced by any mechanical, photographic or electronic process, or in the form of an audio recording, nor may it be stored in a retrieval system, transmitted or otherwise copied for public or private use without written permission of EMIS. For information regarding reprints or permissions, email permissions@lausanneworldpulse.com.