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PUBLISHER'S MEMO

Determining “As” in Building a Solid Foundation for Mission By Lon Allison

“As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you” (John 20:21).

These words of Jesus to his post-resurrection disciples surely authorize—and in fact, provide—an imperative for mission. But what does “as” really mean? Perhaps more than we imagine at first glance. “As the Father has sent me” signifies not only that the Father sent Jesus, but perhaps that how Jesus was sent is important.

In this issue of Lausanne World Pulse we offer insight on the topic of **building a solid foundation for mission policy and praxis**. Jesus brought a thorough theological foundation to his missional focus. Do we? On several levels we ask such questions in this issue, and our authors guide us in finding biblical and relevant answers. You will value the articles by Enoch Era and Jim Harries. Both opened new vistas of thought for me.

My meager offering on the topic comes from the wonderful work of Dr. Christopher Wright, titled *The Mission of God*.¹ In it, Wright calls us to do thorough biblical reading and reflection of the mission of God from the scriptures. This isn't a new idea, but he argues that we can't understand the mission of God by depending on only the New Testament (and especially the Book of Acts) for our theology of mission. Rather, Jesus had—and this is where my use of John 20:21 comes in—a far deeper knowledge of the message and meaning of God in the Old Testament than we do. I confess that my preaching on the evangelism and mission of God in every place I go is derived primarily from the New Testament. Wright brings necessary improvement by asking us to see the mission of God as a controlling theme in the whole of scripture. He goes so far as to suggest we consider the “missional basis of the Bible” more than we do the “biblical basis of mission.”

In other words, our God is a missional God and the whole canon points to his relentless activity to save and redeem people and all of creation. This understanding may indeed help us to determine the “as the Father has sent me” passage. I concur with Wright. The mission of God is more than “a” theme of scripture. It is “the” theme of scripture. If this is the case, then we are allowed to be passionate for a lost world, just *as* Jesus was. We are allowed to be tireless in our pursuit of a lost world, just *as* Jesus was. We are allowed to be devoted to the whole plan of God for the redemption of souls and societies, just *as* Jesus was.

We hope you value this issue of Lausanne World Pulse as much as we delight and are passionate to bring it to you.

Endnote

1. Wright, Christopher. 2006. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*. Downers Grove, Illinois, USA: InterVarsity Press.

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NEWS BRIEFS

ARGENTINA: Largest Faith Celebration Ever in South America

Over 800,000 people recently filled Buenos Aires' famed Ave. 9 de Julio for global evangelist Luis Palau's *Si A La Vida* festival, which lasted two days. It was the largest faith celebration ever seen in South America. The media coverage surpassed any experienced by the Palau ministry in over four decades of outreach. More than twenty-three thousand trained "Friends of the Festival" provided personal counseling to the thousands who responded to Palau's invitation to follow a life of faith in Christ. More than sixteen thousand decision cards were collected, with officials anticipating thousands more as festival follow-up continues. ([ASSIST News Service](#))

AROUND THE WORLD: Global Prayer for China during the Summer Olympics

In a historic move, key organizations that work with the persecuted Church around the world launched a global campaign calling for prayer for China. In what is called "The Zurich Statement," the Religious Liberty Partnership (RLP), with member organizations that include [Open Doors International](#), [Christian Solidarity Worldwide](#), [Voice of the Martyrs \(Canada\)](#), and the [Religious Liberty Commission of World Evangelical Alliance](#), have called the worldwide Christian community to pray for China during the summer 2008 Olympics. "The call for prayer is rooted in the fact that the RLP felt it was time to acknowledge some progress in China's attitude toward religious liberty and also the part Christians play at all levels of Chinese society," stated Mervyn Thomas, CEO of Christian Solidarity Worldwide, UK, and chair of the RLP leadership team. "There is still a very long way to go and religious freedom is something very alien to many Christians in China." ([World Evangelical Alliance](#))

AROUND THE WORLD: MTI Offers Lifesaving Antibiotics to Children Worldwide

In recent weeks, [Medical Teams International](#) (MTI) has shipped more than 5.5 million USD in donated medical supplies from Abbott Labs and Henry Schein, including basic but lifesaving antibiotics, syringes, and sterilizing equipment to help children in Liberia, Gaza, Lebanon, Jordan, and Mexico. "These medical donations are the difference between life and death for so many children in impoverished countries," says David Beltz, director of commodity support at MTI. "It's heartbreaking for our staff and volunteers to know that children suffer needlessly or die because they don't have a 10USD treatment course of antibiotics." Last year, MTI surpassed one billion USD in humanitarian aid shipped around the world. ([Medical Teams International](#))

AROUND THE WORLD: Mission Aviation Planes Grounded Due to Lack of Fuel

[Mission Aviation Fellowship](#) (MAF), which serves more than eight hundred Christian and non-profit agencies in remote areas (as well as thousands of isolated people in Africa, Asia, Eurasia, and Latin America), has been forced to ground missionary pilots due to a shortage of aviation fuel or "av gas." Because of the shortage, some 150 airstrips are currently without service. In response to the crisis, MAF is embarking on an aggressive 10-year plan to acquire twenty of the new Kodiak 100 aircraft, manufactured by Quest Aircraft. Not only does the Kodiak use jet fuel, which is more readily available and cheaper, the plane is also larger, flies faster, and can still get in and out of small airstrips. The Kodiaks come at a discounted cost to the ministry. When available, av gas can cost up to 12USD a gallon, whereas jet fuel is 3.50USD a gallon. The new Kodiaks will allow MAF to reach more of the isolated peoples in remote places around the world. ([ASSIST News Service](#))

AROUND THE WORLD: Seven New Languages Available on Audio Bible Recordings

The audio Bible ministry [Faith Comes By Hearing](#) recently announced the availability of seven audio New Testament recordings. The following languages are now available for ministry efforts: Afrikaans, Chuj San Mateo Ixtatan, Javanese Caribbean, Kirghiz, Kuranko, Otomi Mezquital, and Thai. Individuals can download these new recordings, as well as other MP3 Bibles, for free at: www.faithcomesbyhearing.com. These new offerings, which represent more than 105 million people on four continents, bring the total number of audio scriptures available to 341 recordings in 287 languages. Faith Comes By Hearing's goal is to record audio

Bibles in two thousand languages by the year 2016, reaching ninety-seven percent of the world's population. ([Faith Comes By Hearing](#))

BHUTAN: Historic Election May Lead to Freedom of Religion

The world's only Buddhist kingdom conducted its first democratic elections 25 March 2008. Bhutan's 2.3 million residents cast their votes for parliamentary representation after living under the rule of the Wangchuk hereditary dynasty since 1907. The newly elected officials will form the National Council, which will set in motion the creation of a constitution and the platform for a democratic government. [Gospel for Asia](#) president K. P. Yohannan says it is still too early to tell if the yet-to-be created government will allow true freedom of religion. It is illegal to share the gospel in Bhutan, and missionaries are limited to supplying humanitarian aid, as long as they do not talk about their faith. Less than one percent of Bhutan's population professes to follow Christ. Believers can be expelled from the country and stripped of their citizenship if their new faith is discovered. ([Gospel for Asia](#))

CHAD: Bible Society Provides Scripture in Braille

A simple ceremony was held recently at the resource center for visually impaired young people in N'Djamena, the capital of Chad. Approximately sixty blind and partially sighted young people between ten and twenty years old live at the center. During the ceremony, Pastor Jérôme Altana, general secretary of the Bible Society of Chad, and his team contributed ninety-six scripture volumes in Braille. A blind law student read a speech he had written in Braille, saying, "We are delighted to accept these special gifts you have brought us. Please be assured that these Bibles have arrived at just the right time; we are eager to read the good news as well as listen to it." ([United Bible Societies](#))

NETHERLANDS: Country with Second-Largest Number of Christian Denominations and Religious Movements

The reputation of the Netherlands as being a country with many Christian denominations has been boosted by the publication of a new reference book detailing church information. The authors tallied a list of 648 churches, congregations, and meetings, making the Netherlands the country with the second-largest number of Christian denominations and religious movements in the world, after the United States. ([Ecumenical News International](#))

NORTH KOREA: College Students Arrested for Reading the Bible

Ten college students in Ham Kyung Book Do Chung, North Korea, were recently investigated and arrested for reading a Bible and watching a video CD about the Bible. According to Free North Korea Broadcasting, Mr. Jung, former vice president of GumRung Company of the Rodong Dang Labor Organization Department, reported the case and has since escaped to China to avoid arrest by the National Security Agency (Bowiboo). According to Jung, in March 2006, two hundred Life Bibles and several hundred CDs were purchased in China and secretly placed in flour bags before being smuggled into North Korea. This Bible smuggling was headed by GumRung Company employees who were influenced by Christianity in China and underground Christians in Nasun City. All the leaders except Jung have been arrested and are being severely tortured. In the Free North Korea Broadcasting report, Jung added that most of the arrested students attended Chung Jin College. "These students shared the Bible and video CD with their friends. They also distributed the Bibles and video CDs to the other college towns," he said. ([Voice of the Martyrs](#))

RWANDA: Rural Pastors Commit to Planting Churches and Sharing the Gospel

Kiramuruzi, a small town with little electricity and running water, served as host to a recent Global Advance Frontline Shepherds conference, which drew over six hundred rural pastors and church leaders. The conference focused on strengthening the family, answering God's call to ministry, the marks of a true shepherd, God's desire for church growth, and the call of a missionary. Almost every pastor in attendance committed to plant a new church within the next twelve months and approximately seventy dedicated their lives for missionary service. ([Global Advance](#))

UNITED KINGDOM: Muslims to Outnumber Traditional Churchgoers by 2020

Research shows that the number of Muslims worshipping at mosques in England and Wales will outstrip the

numbers of Roman Catholics going to church in little more than a decade. The figures (based on government and academic sources and the latest edition of Christian Research's *Religious Trends*) show that if current trends continue, the number of Catholic worshippers at Sunday Mass will fall to 679,000 by 2020. By that time, statisticians predict, the number of Muslims praying in mosques on Fridays will have increased to 683,000. The Christian Research figures also suggest that, over the same period, the number of Muslims at mosques will overtake Church of England members at Sunday services. Church spokespersons point out, however, that a growing number of Anglicans worship at other times of the week. ([Telegraph](#))

UNITED STATES: Paul Tokunaga Named VP of Strategic Ministries for InterVarsity USA

Paul Tokunaga was recently appointed vice president and director for strategic ministries for [InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA](#). In his new role, effective 1 July 2008, Tokunaga will provide vision and leadership to expand the impact of current strategic ministries and initiate the creation of new strategic ministries. For the past fourteen years, Tokunaga has served as InterVarsity's national Asian American ministries coordinator. In that position, he has overseen significant growth of both Asian American students and staff. In addition, he has created and implemented the Daniel Project, a leadership development program that identifies and nurtures promising staff of color. Tokunaga succeeds Barney Ford, who was appointed vice president and director of advancement in September 2007. ([InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA](#))

UZBEKISTAN: Christians under Increasing Pressure

Practicing their faith is becoming increasingly difficult and dangerous for Christians in Uzbekistan. The government, who fears the increasing influence of Islamic extremism throughout the country (eighty-eight percent of the country's population of twenty-seven million people is Sunni Muslim), continues to implement even stricter laws against religious activities, both Muslim and Christian. Christian converts from Muslim backgrounds face particular pressure not only from the authorities but also suffer persecution from their own families and communities. Many new young Christians in rural areas have been beaten severely and told to recite the shahada, the Islamic creed, to renounce their Christian faith and return to Islam. Older converts are being isolated and ostracized in their communities. ([Barnabas Aid](#))

THEMED ARTICLES: Building a Solid Foundation for Mission Policy and Praxis

[Building a Solid Theological Foundation for Mission Policy and Praxis](#)

By Samuel Escobar

[The Lausanne Movement](#) started at a momentous point of evangelical convergence in the twentieth century.

It had been preceded by the amazing growth of evangelical missionary activity after World War II and the surge of the United States as a dominant nation in both world politics and Christian mission sending. Protestant missionary enterprise and missiological reflection had entered a critical period, a time of radical criticism of traditional missionary activity, within the framework of wars and movements against European colonialism in the 1950s and 1960s, and the ideological battles of the Cold War period.

The genius of Lausanne was the ability to keep the motivation and momentum of missionary activism and at the same time to be self-critical in a mature way. This kind of balance characterizes the tone of the [Lausanne Covenant](#): "We are deeply stirred by what God is doing in our day, moved to penitence by our failures, and challenged by the unfinished task of evangelization" (Introduction). Such balance made the Covenant a source and inspiration of commitment to action but also a proposal for a renewal in missionary policy and practice. Correction and reform of missionary practice was to come from theological conviction as the Covenant offers a solid theological frame for its proposals.

During the three and a half decades in which the Lausanne Movement developed (from 1974 to present), there has been intensive growth in missionary activity. Using David Barrett's data, we see that by 1970 there were 2,200 foreign mission sending agencies, by mid-1998 that figure had grown to 4,650, and by mid-2008 the number had slightly declined to 4,550. The income of global foreign missions was estimated at three billion US dollars by 1970, growing to 11.2 billion by mid-1998 and to an estimated twenty-three billion by mid-2008.¹

This growth of activity and income includes missionary initiative now coming from churches in the Majority World of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. What is more difficult, if not impossible, to trace or measure is the quality of the missionary activity in relation to what degree the proposals of the Lausanne Covenant were put into practice.

I am of the conviction that the Lausanne Covenant, and the documents that registered the reflection on action that followed the 1974 Congress, are a good evangelical basis for developing missionary policies and shaping missionary practice in the twenty-first century. As I pointed out in a [previous article](#), John Stott edited documents in the book *Making Christ Known*² that record the process of action and reflection that took place in the twenty-five years between 1974 and 1989. These documents strike a balance between theological foundations and pragmatic consequences. Let me point to four areas in which the Lausanne Covenant exerted self-criticism and which are still points that those developing mission policies and shaping missionary practice would do well to pay attention to today.

1. Gospel Content

The Covenant begins with a restatement of theological convictions that are characteristic of evangelicalism. It starts with a trinitarian confession, a statement about the purpose of God, the authority of the Bible, and an expression about the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ.

These points have to do with the content of the message that missionaries and evangelists proclaim (Par. 1-3). It is in paragraph one that, after stating God's initiative in the sending of his people to mission, a confession comes: "We confess with shame that we have often denied our calling and failed in our mission, by becoming conformed to the world or by withdrawing from it" (Par. 1).

Within the postmodern trends of Western culture that are promoted at a global scale by the media, one way of conforming to the world is to water down the message in those aspects that are contrary to the "spirit of the age." This watering down provides a "user friendly gospel" such as the popular formulas of the so-called "prosperity theology," which is administered according to the practices of the great business corporations.

The person and work of Christ are central in the gospel. Every missionary and evangelist must be possessed by the Spirit of the Lord that in turn makes the person of Christ real to us here and now. Without a Christ-centered gospel there is no Christian mission.

2. Holistic Mission

The Covenant also expresses the concept of a *holistic* mission that retains the evangelical emphasis on *proclamation* of the gospel of Jesus Christ while also describing the kind of missionary *presence* it requires, and the call to discipleship and incorporation into the Church:

In issuing the gospel invitation we have no liberty to conceal the cost of discipleship. Jesus still calls all who would follow him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and identify themselves with his new community. The results of evangelism include obedience to Christ, incorporation into his Church, and responsible service in the world. (Par. 4)

We find here self-criticism of the type of dualistic spiritualization that had come to be prevalent in the practice of evangelical missionaries:

We express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive... both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbor and our obedience to Jesus Christ.

Today, the number of missionary projects that practice holistic mission has increased significantly. There are also many mission fields in which the only way to enter is through projects of service to desperate human needs. The challenge continues to be how to keep a balance. We cannot serve in the name of Christ without at some point offering a reason for our commitment and pointing to the source of our motivation and the strength and power that keeps us going.

3. Mission in Partnership

At several points, the Covenant addresses the issue of partnership in mission. Paragraphs 8 and 9 are most explicit about it. They state that in view of the urgency of the task of evangelization, “a re-evaluation of our missionary responsibility and role should be continuous. Thus, a growing partnership of churches will develop and the universal character of Christ’s Church will be more clearly exhibited” (Par. 8).

The Lausanne Movement provides many opportunities for networking and cooperation and the evangelical outlook in this area seems to be very positive. During the 2004 Forum for World Evangelization, an **Issue Group on Partnership and Collaboration** acknowledged that “the divisions in the Body of Christ are a primary roadblock to seeing major breakthroughs in world evangelization.” They also stated that “the natural tendency of Christian ministries, organizations, institutions, etc., is toward disintegration and fragmentation.”³ However, they committed themselves to work in a Task Force toward the development of an International Partnership Network, and then launched the “**Company of the Committed**,” which started to work immediately in the facilitating of information exchange.

Phill Butler, a mission statesman who has worked for years in the area of networking, has published a useful handbook written with a hopeful note and a practical approach based on experience. He states that “despite centuries of division, disappointment, and even despair, hundreds of individuals around the world are now proving every day that God’s people can work together.”⁴

With the notable growth of missionary concern and commitment in the Majority World, partnership in mission now faces a new challenge: the cooperation of old well-established mission agencies with their Asian, African, and Latin American counterparts. As we think of mission in the future, this new global situation should be kept in mind and faced with creativity. Elsewhere I have proposed that there is a need for new patterns of interdependence in mission. Partnership within global disparities requires special attention to the New Testament principles of mutuality and reciprocity that are evident in the Pauline patterns of missionary practice.⁵

4. Preparation for Mission

The Lausanne Covenant states: “We confess that we have sometimes pursued church growth at the expense of church depth, and divorced evangelism from Christian nurture” (Par. 11). The paragraph also explains the need to improve theological education as well as leadership training in churches around the world.

This is a crucial point in mission policy making today. At present, evangelicals continue to be challenged by this confession. Thus, in Latin America we are embarrassed by the fact that the reported significant church growth is not accompanied by moral and social transformation, and that the political clout that numbers have given to evangelicals has not been used in a significantly different way from traditional corrupt politicians. At the same time, with a misguided sense of urgency, some powerful mission boards have concentrated on church growth and have abandoned their contribution to theological education and Christian nurture, two things which are desperately needed.

Another aspect of the same principle at stake is the enthusiastic sending of missionaries without adequate training, nurture, and structures of financial and pastoral support. A study of missionaries, conducted in fourteen countries by the **Mission Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance**, tried to understand the reasons for

missionary attrition, the early return of missionaries to their sending base before completing even their first assigned term. Both old and new sending countries were affected by this problem. The frequency of the problem required a self-critical and realistic approach. The book *Too Valuable to Lose* summarizes the results of the study.⁶

A second study carried on in twenty-two nations during 2002 and 2003 tried, among other things, to follow up on the corrective measures proposed by the first study. This second study shows that there are reasons for rejoicing because there is in the fact an improving situation and there is hope for the future. The principles proposed by the Lausanne Covenant in terms of concern for depth and adequate training (Par. 10 and 11) and spiritual maturity (Par. 12 and 14) are a good theologically-based foundation for what could be called “Best Practices” in missionary sending.

Three and a half decades after the Lausanne Covenant was drafted, evangelicals around the world are still convinced that “worldwide evangelization will become a realistic possibility only when the Spirit renews the Church in truth and wisdom, faith, holiness, love, and power.”

So the planning and practice of mission requires the spirit of expectancy reflected in the call of the Lausanne Covenant: “We therefore call upon all Christians to pray for such a visitation of the sovereign Spirit of God that all his fruit may appear in all his people and that all his gifts may enrich the Body of Christ” (Par. 14).

Endnotes

1. Comparative data taken from David Barrett and Todd M. Johnson’s 1998 article “Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 1998.” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research (IBMR)* 22(1): 26-27; and David Barrett, et. al., 2008. “Missiometrics 2008: Reality Checks for Christian World Communions.” *IBMR* 32(1): 27-30.

2. Stott, John, ed. 1996. *Making Christ Known*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA: Eerdmans.

3. Claydon, David, ed. 2005. *A New Vision, A New Heart, A Renewed Call*. Vol 1. Pasadena, California, USA: William Carey Library. 558.

4. Butler, Phill. 2006. *Well Connected*. Federal Way, Washington, USA: Authentic-World Vision.

5. Escobar, Samuel. 2002. “New Patterns for Interdependence in Mission.” In *The Urban Face of Mission*. Eds. Manuel Ortiz and Susan S. Baker, 97-114. Phillipsburg, New Jersey, USA: P & R Publishing Company.

6. Taylor, William D, ed. 1996. *Too Valuable to Lose: Exploring the Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition*. Pasadena, California: USA: William Carey.

Samuel Escobar was born in Peru and ministered in Latin America under the **International Fellowship of Evangelical Students**. He was chair of missiology at Palmer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania, USA. He spoke at Lausanne 1974 and was a member of the committee that drafted the Lausanne Covenant. Presently he lives and teaches in Spain.

The Doors Are Closing for the Gospel: A Call to Re-visit Our Theology of Missions and Strategies

By Enoch Era

“Hello. I am Bhasker.”

His neighbour responded, “Hello. I am Lenny.”

“Are you from _____?” (mentioning the destination)

“Yes, I am studying there.”

“Are you a Christian?”

“Yes.”

“Which church do you go to?”

He mentioned the name of a church and further questioning revealed that he was Catholic.

“Do you read your Bible?”

The conversation followed along typical evangelistic lines for the rest of the journey. The talk could be heard several seats away; indeed, most of the co-passengers were able to hear. It was a late evening journey between two major cities in a foreign country. The bus was filled with people returning home after a busy day—most of whom wished to relax for the 2-hour ride. As the above conversation was loud, many of the passengers shot impatient glances their way.

Bhasker was a Christian. He wanted to get to know the person next to him, and since the conversation led to it, he was also presenting the gospel.

In the same bus a few seats ahead there was another Christian man sitting next to a woman. Both overheard the above conversation. As they neared the destination the woman gathered her belongings. The man looked at her and said, “Hello. Are you getting off at the next stop?” To which she responded, “And the next question will be... ‘Do you read your Bible?’”

Why did the woman respond this way?

Obviously, she was annoyed by the other conversation, and since she had seen both men together earlier, her response was to preempt any further conversation. Such sensitivity toward the gospel and Christians can take the form of violent attacks and worse in many parts of the world. It certainly does in India, where both the men in the above conversation come from. The **Evangelical Fellowship of India** reports several incidents of violence against pastors and Christians nearly every week in nearly every part of India. But such sensitivity and antagonism toward Christianity and to the preaching of the gospel is not just an Indian phenomenon.

The anti-Christian wave we have witnessed in India in the last two decades is neither new to the Church in India nor to the Church at large. The Lord Jesus Christ himself and later his disciples made it very plain in their teachings and writings that opposition to the gospel will come (John 14:33; Acts 16; 2 Timothy 3:12). The subsequent history of the Church is a witness to it. While opposition to the gospel should not surprise us, there is an urgent need for Christians worldwide to introspect, investigate, and revisit our theology and our ministry strategies and practices. In many cases, “the doors are closed” not so much to the gospel, but to the way we preach that gospel.

Below are thirteen areas which Christian leaders need to reinterpret and redefine before presenting the gospel:

1. **Examining the charges.** There is an urgent need to examine if the charges leveled against Christians are genuine. For instance, in India, some of the charges raised are: forced conversions, mass conversions, conversions causing a cultural divide, inducements offered to converts, and the church as anti-national.
2. **Defining conversion.** There is a need for a clearer definition of what conversion is. Does it mean breaking all ties with one’s family? Does it mean changing one’s name and adopting a Western or Hebrew/Greek (biblical) name as is the practice among most Christians in India? Does it mean adopting a Western lifestyle?
3. **Redefining the mission of the Church.** There is a need to rethink and redefine the mission and priorities of the Church. Is it to fill the church with more and more members, so that “my church” is the fastest growing one in town? Charles Colson calls for such a need in his book, *The Body: Being Light in Darkness* (1993): “It’s no surprise that nonbelievers don’t really know much about the Church’s identity or mission. But when Christians themselves are undergoing widespread identity crisis, then we are in big trouble. This confusion strips the Church of its authority....When compared with the previous

generations of believers, we seem among the most thoroughly at peace with our culture, the least adept at transforming society, and desperate for the meaningful faith. Our *raison d'être* is confused, our mission obscured, and our existence as a people is in jeopardy. Worst of all, our leaders know it—but seem unable to do anything about...It is hard to imagine, therefore, a more urgent or critical task than the recovery and restoration of the biblical view of the Church.”

4. **Comparing the Great Commission with the Great Commandment.** Over the last few centuries the Great Commission has become the priority of the Church. This has led to the spawning of many evangelistic ministries. In some instances, this has happened to the total neglect of the Great Commandment. Because of this, in many cases, conversion has become the main agenda. We need to remember that the term “Great Commission” is an interpretive term and not given by the Lord.
5. **Comparing the Great Commission and the Second Coming of Christ.** The linking of the Great Commission with the Second Coming of Christ on the basis of Matthew 24:14 has led to an overdrive (in the form of Mission 2000, etc.) in our evangelistic strategies and goals. To what extent is such a linking appropriate?
6. **Looking at the role of the individual and local church.** To what extent should evangelism and mercy ministries be done by institutions and with national or global goals and objectives? To what extent should they have large budgets, large publicity, large programmes, and large workforces? What is the role of the individual and the local church? Is it just to support financially or through prayer? Hasn't the institutionalization of ministry led to the undermining of the individual and the local church to be “salt and light” and to be agents of transformation?
7. **Redrawing criteria for success in ministry.** If success is measured on the basis of numbers or largeness (big budgets, big projects, big buildings) of the ministry, then surely our strategies call for aggressive evangelism to bring in the numbers. But is this the right criteria? What constitutes a successful life and ministry?
8. **Increasing cultural engagement.** Our cultural engagement with society and the world at large is minimal. This is reflected in the fact that we are so biblical in our language that we do not have a language (or in many instances, a context) to engage the world in meaningful communication. This is evident in the fact that we shift to “gospel talk” within a few minutes into a conversation, thus antagonizing people. This also gives the impression that our primary agenda is conversion.
9. **Relooking at separation.** Our lack of cultural engagement with society is a result of our teaching about “separation” from the world. We need a relook at the whole teaching of what separation in scripture means.
10. **Understanding funding from abroad.** Most ministries in India today depend upon funds from abroad—this in itself has generated fears of Western imperialism invading India through the Church. A rethink is badly needed about such ministry by the Western Church and the funding agencies.
11. **Understanding fund-raising and spending.** A serious introspection is needed in the areas of fund-raising and fund-spending. Quite often, in order to keep the flow of funds, there is dishonesty in reporting and a lack of accountability.
12. **Addressing start-up churches and ministries.** We need to know the “who and how” of starting fellowships, churches, and ministries. The trend has been to start churches and organizations at random—in most cases, as a competition, because of personality clashes, or even because of minor differences. Can anyone, anywhere, start a church or a parachurch? To whom is such a person accountable? Only to the Lord, the head of the Church? Should there be doctrinal, moral, and financial accountability systems—and to whom?

13. **Understanding citizenship.** There is also a need for introspection about our credentials as patriots, and how to manage the tension between being citizens of God’s kingdom and citizens of a particular country.

Each one of the above areas and questions needs to be addressed by evangelists and Christians today. These have contributed directly or indirectly to the present antagonism against Christianity. Our faulty understanding and approach should not be the cause of offense to the world. Where we can avoid such a situation by making corrections we should sincerely engage in such an exercise.

We need to rediscover the way our Lord and his apostles served. May the Lord help us.

Enoch Era is an itinerant preacher based in Hyderabad, India. He is also involved in training and mentoring preachers, in evangelism/apologetics, and in expository preaching. Previously, he served as an evangelist through Ambassadors for Christ India and **Ravi Zacharias International Ministries** in India.

Partnership, Cooperation, and Vulnerability: Building a Solid Foundation for Mission Praxis in Africa

By Jim Harries

Recent decades have seen radical changes in mission methodologies. Talk has turned to partnership. Increasing numbers of short-term missionaries from the West offer weeks, months, or even a few years of their lives in service. This essay explores some of the implications and outcomes of three approaches (models) to “mission” in Africa in particular, and then makes suggestions for adjustments.

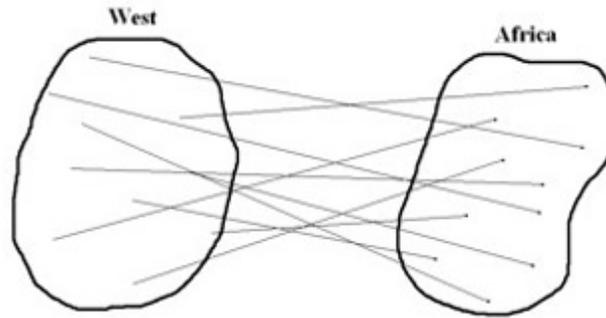
The **partnership model** is taken as that in which a direct link is made between a Western church or organisation and an African partner. The **cooperation model** concentrates on the building of bridges of intercultural understanding leading to contextualised mission. The **vulnerable model** emphasises the need for open communication within intercultural mission relationships.

Partnership Model

The partnership model for mission appears to have arisen in an attempt to overcome paternalism and neocolonialism¹ following “an emphatic demand from people in the Two-Thirds World to their right of self-determination, coupled with an insistence that they remain connected to the West, albeit on different terms than have obtained here before.”² Instead of Western missions “running the shop” in Africa (i.e., “the traditional missionary mentality carrying the image of a parent-child relationship”³), the West is to be a helper, facilitator, or a junior party in a partnership agreement, offering expertise to “oil the wheels” of a process that would anyway be happening in its absence. That type of expertise has tended to be financial and technical.⁴

The communication revolution, which allows almost immediate and constant contact, has extended this model significantly. Today, numerous churches and individuals in the West can enter into partnership with African churches and ministries. This situation is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Intercultural Partnerships



Someone from almost any geographical location in the West can enter into partnership with almost any of a wide range of African individuals, churches, or groups. The prevalence of European languages in Africa has aided this process. For many, this has been a liberating and invigorating model. In the West, a church can engage in *frontier mission* across a vast cultural divide while bypassing somewhat cumbersome “tradition bound” mission structures. A church is free to make almost any kind of arrangement with its partner, thus local churches are also empowered. Meanwhile, among the benefits for the African is direct contact with a wealthy potential donor who, not being hardened by previous contrary experiences, can prove to be financially helpful.

Unfortunately, the partnership model of missions also has serious shortfalls. One is its aversion to learning. Because partners listen to each other, Western churches entering into partnership with Africans will attend to the latter relationship more than listen to the voices of experienced fellow missionaries. According to Robert Reese, “Under the title of partnership local churches or associations have been able to circumvent established missionary policy based on field experience.”⁵

The partnership model makes implicit assumptions about cultural differences; it assumes those cultural differences will not be a serious hindrance to communication, and that culturally diverse people can enter into meaningful and helpful joint activity. While being a means of crossing cultural as well as geographic gulfs (with all the benefits and excitement that this engenders), it does so, I want to argue, on the assumption that the cultural divide is inconsequential. It assumes, in other words, that the best—if not only—advisors on what should be done and how it can be done are the members of the partnership. That is, that the Western partner needs to be guided primarily by the African partner and vice versa.

Were the two partners of the same or similar culture, then one would not expect advice from one “partner” to be much different from another. But in this cross-cultural situation, it may be different. What is the African to do if the advice coming from the westerner makes little sense?

What is the westerner to do if the advice from the African seems counter-rational? There will be a limit to how often they can simply reject such advice without putting at risk the very partnership that they have worked so hard to achieve, and very likely have already so publicly acclaimed. Instead, each side can end up working on the basis of very limited understanding.

A connected question relates to multiple-partner arrangements. Unless an exclusivity clause is included in the agreement made, an African church can, for example, enter into partnership with more than one Western church or mission. (Is it right to include exclusivity clauses? If they are included, will they be kept to?) But then, how will those groups relate to one another? Their being closely related culturally (being fellow westerners) means that it will be easier for them to understand one another than to understand the African. But if they cooperate and this cooperation is not initiated and guided by the African, it would seem to be contravening at least the spirit of the agreement they have entered into.

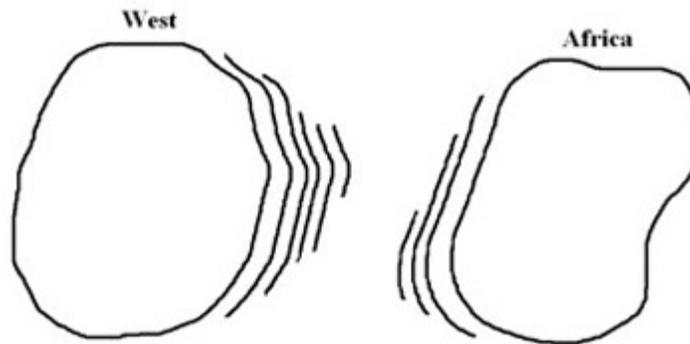
So then, given the difficulties an African would have in creating relationships between such groups of “foreigners,” interaction between fellow missionary groups can be at least strained, and even tense or hostile. I have explored this in more detail elsewhere.⁶

Arrangements labelled as partnerships in which one side donates a disproportionate amount of resources can be a concealed form of paternalism.⁷ Partnerships are effective in situations in which there is a high degree of mutual understanding and where aims are held in common. This may not always apply in relations between Western and African churches. Dialogue does not in itself create mutuality.⁸ Partnerships are easy to form, and can just as quickly disintegrate. The former is often proclaimed with a trumpet blast, but the latter embarrassingly swept under the carpet. Such concealing of failure of such partnerships can hinder the establishment of effective learning curves on the development of such relationships.

Cooperation Model

An alternative to the above is the cooperation model. That is, cooperation between Western churches in their efforts to reach out to Africa. Partnerships are between people of vastly different cultures, whereas cooperation (as I am here defining these terms) is between people of similar cultures. One would hope that such cooperation would be mirrored on the African side. Whereas partnerships can be likened to an adventurous crossing of choppy waters from one island to another in a raft (Figure 1), cooperation is like building a bridge (Figure 2). By this I mean a bridge of understanding which links people with disparate worldviews, and not primarily a bridge aimed to bring about an exchange of personnel.

Figure 2. Cooperation and Moving toward Bridge-building



Bridge building is here seen as a way to reduce or (eventually) close the gap between Africa and the West. As in constructing a physical bridge over a wide gulf, this is an involved and complex affair requiring considerable cooperation. Acknowledging the need for a bridge is accepting that there is a gulf to be crossed (that is, that there is real difference).

Acquiring cultural and linguistic understanding is the bread and butter of this building process that eventually enables helpful intercultural communication. Building the bridge requires experts (and novice participants who will pay attention to those experts). It is not practical for every individual or church to build their own bridge alone.

I suspect, however, that many of today’s generation may have rejected this option. Many westerners do not simply want to learn “about Africans” from experts in classrooms—they want to meet them face to face and talk to them one on one. Today’s society has an aversion to top-heavy reliance on experts who may also be seen as not always agreeing among themselves. African people themselves may also prefer that communication be direct between themselves and the Western public—not only through mediators or cultural brokers.

My response to this rejection is two-fold:

1. The partnership model is not working. Failures are constant, but often complex and almost invariably hidden by those who are trying to avoid adverse publicity.
2. In some cases, experts are acquiring their expertise through misguided means. For instance,
 - Assumptions made in research about language and translation have been far too simplistic. Scholars have been wrong to assume that a particular language of a particular people and culture can accurately represent another people and culture to them.
 - The spread of European languages across Africa has resulted in increasing numbers of Western “experts” operating and thus acquiring their learning through the thin, fluid, and imprecise means as international languages.⁹
 - Westerners living and working in Africa invariably having a role of “donor” (i.e., patron) in respect to the communities they are reaching means that they are usually not privy to insights that may discourage donations. That is, much of African life is kept concealed from experts who are also donors.
 - The use of over-simplified quantitative research methodologies in formal research in Africa by the West has tended to confirm misconceptions.

These means, which I believe are faulty, have contributed to the unpopularity of the cooperation model, which has in turn resulted in the popularity of the partnership model. Replacing cooperation with the partnership model has unfortunately not resolved issues, but rather kept them out of sight.

Cooperation between missionaries is important. Learning from experience must be better than repetition of errors. Claiming to express Christian love to culturally-distant African people while ignoring one’s fellow westerner working in the same field results in poor Christian testimony.

In summary, the weaknesses of “partnership” models of mission are that they result in tensions if more than one group gets involved, they may be a cover for what is actually paternalism, and they encourage repetition of errors by discouraging learning from experience. The alternative “cooperation” model, on the other hand, does not provide sufficient opportunity for face-to-face meetings and the building of inter-cultural relationships.

Vulnerable Model

The weaknesses of both the partnership and the cooperation model can be overcome if combined with a third model of **vulnerable mission**. This model advocates that mission be done in the language of the people being reached, without outside subsidy for whatever ministry is engaged in.

The vulnerable missionary entering into ministry on a basis other than that of material provision cancels most of the disadvantages of the partnership model. Paternalism cannot be a part of this model if there is no lever or influence, such as finances. In this model, “success” depends on the use of wisdom instead of foreign finance, meaning that those seeking to enter into cross-cultural ministry will be keen to benefit from the experience of others. Not investing funds into a project by an African church will avoid clashes with other Western churches that support apparently conflicting aims. Because finance is not at stake, African Christians will be more honest with their Western partners.

Face-to-face meeting will not need to be discouraged if Western parties agree not to try and force their position. Because relationship is openly accepted as being part of a learning experience and not to be entered into for the purpose of planning funded projects, there will be no embarrassing loss of funds should things go wrong. Vulnerability to the people, financially and linguistically, will ensure that “experts” are properly informed.

What vulnerable mission does not do is to claim to bring “development” in the traditional sense of the word. That is, it takes social and economic development as being something that arises from a people themselves, and not from outside investment. It takes a knowledge of God as being “empowering” of itself, and not requiring a boost from the Western scientific and economic apparatus. The approach of the people being reached with the gospel to the globalising world is left up to them. The missionary can give advice, but only if it is wanted.

Problems in the cooperation model that “partnership” has attempted to resolve are here found to have been rooted in over-simplistic assumptions of intercultural communication that are resolved if either of these models are implemented using the principles of vulnerable mission.

Both partnership and cooperation need to be honed in by serious attention to being vulnerable in the areas of missionary finances and linguistics.

Endnotes

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4. See Lauber, Ed. 2001. “The Effect of Western Materialism on Partnership.” In *Ethno-Info* 49: 2-7.
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8. Harries, Jim. 2008. “Intercultural Dialogue—An Overrated Means of Acquiring Understanding Examined in the Context of Christian Mission to Africa.” In *Exchange: A Journal of Missiological and Ecumenical Research*. 37(1).
9. This can be “like a thin wash, marvelously fluid, but without adequate base.” Steiner, George. 1998. *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*. Third Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 494.

Dr. Jim Harries is chair of the **Alliance for Vulnerable Mission**, which seeks to encourage mission using the language of people being reached through non-subsidised ministries. He is also a missionary to the Luo people of Western Kenya.

The Whole Gospel as Focus of Lausanne Theology Working Group Consultation

By Sandra S. K. Lee

From 11-15 February 2008, the Lausanne Theology Working Group (LTWG), in partnership with the World Evangelical Alliance Theological Commission, convened its working consultation on “The Whole Gospel” in Chiang Mai, Thailand. This was the first in a 3-year project led by LTWG chair, Dr. Christopher J. H. Wright. The series focuses on three expressions used in the Lausanne Covenant: **the whole gospel** (2008), **the whole Church** (2009), and **the whole world** (2010). Key theological and missiological challenges facing

the Church will be discussed in preparation for the **Third Lausanne Congress** to be held in Cape Town, South Africa, in 2010.

Thirty-one participants representing twenty countries (with sixty percent of the countries represented being from the Global South) were in attendance for the strategic 5-day meeting. Three members of the Lausanne Strategy Working Group were also present to encourage robust communication, cooperation, and cross-fertilization between the two working groups.

“The Whole Gospel” consultation followed closely the tone set by the LTWG’s 2007 Limuru consultation on “Following Jesus in Our Broken World.” The group discussed theological issues, missiological implications, and case studies along six main themes:

1. The gospel in biblical revelation
2. The gospel and the achievement of the cross
3. The gospel and the power of the Spirit
4. The gospel in historical reception
5. The gospel in mission and culture
6. The gospel and ethics

Participants grappled with identifying what the *whole* gospel is, where it is manifested, how it is communicated, and above all, how it is demonstrated in changed lives and communities.

The group affirmed that the full gospel requires the full Bible. Every part of the Bible contributes to what makes the gospel to be good news, though clearly the centrality and objective reality of God’s accomplishment through the cross of Christ must be affirmed as the key to the whole biblical story.

Other essential dimensions of the gospel include the powerful work of the Holy Spirit and his demonstrated victory over all other spirits and the very existence of the Church as the community of reconciled sinners, transformed and transforming.

The gospel is good news that must also address the unjust and oppressive conditions that perpetuate poverty and all that it entails, for the whole gospel is for the whole person in every dimension of human experience.

The group also reflected on the balance in tension of recognizing, on the one hand, that God has done in Christ all that constitutes the gospel, but on the other hand, the fullness of that accomplishment is eschatological and will be seen in all its glory only when people from all ethnic and cultural identities throughout history bear witness to the transforming power of the gospel in their own differing contexts. In that sense, we *have* the whole gospel in the historical accomplishment of Christ, and we *have yet to see* the whole gospel in its eschatological fullness.

The group also acknowledged the powerful ethical core of the gospel, especially in the clear demands of Christ on what it means to be a disciple, to respond to the good news in radical obedience to his teaching and following his example. This led the group to recognize the need for the Church to be self-prophetic and repent of, on the one hand, the glaring inconsistency between our profession and our practice, and on the other hand, our complicity in promulgating incomplete and false expressions of the gospel, our reduction of the gospel to mere assent to cognitive doctrines, the promotion of a prosperity gospel, and the commercialization of spiritual experiences. These considerations will lead naturally to what it means to be the “whole Church” if we are to be the bearers and the model of the authentic gospel.

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PERSPECTIVES

[Rwanda—Bible Society NSW’s Project Making a Difference in the Heart of Africa](#)

By Daniel Willis

The teacher had her Bible open to Genesis. Her 8 and 9-year-old primary students opened their Bibles to the same passage—Genesis 3—and together they read the story of the fall of Adam and Eve.

I was in the Rwandan town of Gisenyi on the shores of Lake Kivu, near the Congo border. We had come from Sydney to see how [Bible Society NSW](#)’s Reconciliation project, run in association with local partner [African Enterprise](#) (AE), was working.

The project was developed by local AE staff and is funded by Bible Society NSW. Although it had only been running a short time, everyone involved, from the creators to the teachers and students, could see it was having a real impact.

Being Reconciled

As the teacher continued her lesson, she talked about the concept of reconciliation. An AE staff member from Kigali translated from Kinyarwanda into English. She spoke about the barriers that exist between all of us at times and then asked if someone in the class was prepared to nominate another class member with whom they might have a disagreement. After a moment or two, a student put up her hand and indicated another class member. The issue between them was quite minor, but the teacher asked them to stand in front of the class and “be reconciled.” After this first couple volunteered, others did the same. Soon, more than eight pairs of students had apologised to each other.

What a great way of helping children understand the meaning of reconciliation—not only as it is described in the Bible, but also as it is applied to overcoming the barriers between the Hutu and Tutsi tribes that had been the catalyst for over one million deaths in 1994.

None of these children had experienced the Rwanda genocide firsthand; however, they had heard of it from their parents and older family members. In many families, the memories of what happened were very real as they coped with huge gaps in the family structure. In fact, we did not meet one person who had not been personally affected by the deaths of family members in the genocide. In most cases, this was a mother, father, uncle, aunt, and/or grandparent. Teo was one of our drivers, and at twenty-seven, he was the only member of his family still alive.

After our school visit we dropped in on a class of local pastors being trained to run the course in their churches. They were looking at the same Bible passages we had seen discussed at the school. The lecturer developed the Adam and Eve story and shared that even though humanity had sinned against God and broken his laws, we are still able to be reconciled to God through the death of Jesus Christ.

The story of Jacob and how he was finally reconciled with his brother Esau was used as an example of how, despite wrong on both sides, we can still overcome differences and be reconciled.

At School—At Home

At a meeting of teachers, I heard remarkable stories of how the project had impacted their students and their personal lives.

Vincente told me how she had suffered through the genocide but that going through the teaching meant she had been healed and was now able to help students:

It has been a life-changing experience. I have a nephew who was an orphan from the genocide. He was ten months old when I got him and he grew up to be impossible to handle. One day he said to me, “You are not my mother; you cannot tell me what to do.” He was almost impossible to control, but now he is very active in the Unity Club at school for reconciliation.

Through the teachings, she has seen a real change in him.

I also spoke to students who had taken part in the program. Their response to my questions about what they had learned was inspiring:

Before I went to the club, I was a very angry child and I did not like to pray for other ethnic groups, but since the training, it has helped me. The booklet shows that we are all from the same man, so reading about creation and how God created Adam and Eve and when man committed sin, we started looking at the consequences. This has helped me look at this in my own life and at my own suffering. I now understand we need to put an end to that mentality so we never see the genocide again. - Grace

I learned to ask for forgiveness. Reading from the booklet about Jacob, it touched me and taught me about reconciliation. - Innocent

Particularly encouraging was the way the project impacted parents as the children told their parents what they were learning at school. Over and over again I heard stories about how children told their parents that they didn't want to be like them by putting one tribe above another. The message that we are all equal in God's eyes seems to be getting through.

I also met with Fatuma Ndagiza, executive secretary of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, who complimented Bible Society NSW and African Enterprise on the project:

We recognise that children born after the genocide have been affected by the wounds of their parents and/or teachers and this has created an issue within schools where children have been writing and doing terrible things. So we are trying to create Unity Clubs to help this issue; therefore, when AE came to us with an outline of their project, we accepted and are happy to support it.

The challenge of the visit was that everyone we met—teachers, pastors, and children—wanted us to expand the project to more schools and areas of the country so the Bible-based message of the project could be heard by as many people as possible.

We did some calculations and realized we would need to raise over two million AUD to deliver the project to the 1.3 million primary school students in the country. This is a real challenge for us and our donors as we look at how we might be able to expand the project throughout the country.

Charles Murigande, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, also complimented Bible Society NSW and AE on the program's effectiveness:

We may not be able to change the mindset of those in the past, but we, as a responsible government, must prevent any future acts. We need a better generation and that is why I consider your program a very important part of the future of our country. You include God as part of your program—without that, it would not be as effective.

Murigande echoed the sentiment that the future of Rwanda was in the hands of its children: “We need to create a new generation who will not even be tempted to do what their parents did.”

We all came away from our visit both challenged and inspired—challenged at the size of the task ahead, but inspired by the way the people of Rwanda are taking the issues of reconciliation and unity seriously. That we can be a part of this process through our Bible Society NSW project is a real God-given privilege.

Rev. Daniel Willis is CEO of **Bible Society NSW** and the International Deputy Director for the **Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization** South Pacific (Australia/Oceania) region. He is involved in mentoring younger leaders around the world and holds degrees in business, theology and education.

Prepare the Way—Remove the Stones

By Colin Harbinson

*“Go through, go through the gates!
Prepare the way for the people.
Build up, build up the highway!
Remove the stones.
Raise a banner for the nations.”
- Isaiah 62:10*

Since 2004, when I served as convener of the Lausanne Forum for World Evangelization’s Issue Group on the Arts, I have had the increasing sense that the recommendations of the “**Redeeming the Arts**” paper from that Forum needed urgent implementation on a global scale.

During my seven years as dean of the arts at Belhaven College in Jackson, Mississippi, USA, I developed the program to train students in music, visual arts, dance, and theatre in their craft within a biblical worldview. Today, the college has beautiful facilities, a world-class art faculty, and a vibrant missional student arts community. It is one of only twenty-five universities and colleges in the United States to be nationally accredited in all areas of the arts. Seeing those things accomplished, it seemed it was time to take the vision to another level.

After prayerful discussion with Belhaven’s president Dr. Roger Parrott (chair of the 2004 Lausanne Forum), the college has launched **StoneWorks**—a global arts partnership for cultural transformation. An exciting vision to educate the Church, disciple the artist, and transform the culture is underway and gathering momentum. The following is an overview of the vision and its current implementation.

Vision Overview

In Babylonian exile, God’s people discarded their musical instruments and wept (Psalm 137). They were struggling with their identity. With their homeland in ruins, they had begun to lose hope. When they did eventually begin to return home, it was with a mandate to rebuild, restore, and renew the ruins of their city (Isaiah 61:4). Before the restoration work could begin, however, they had to prepare the way, build a highway, and remove the stones.

Comparisons could be made with Christian involvement in the arts. At certain times in history, the arts have played a strategic role in the life and mission of the Church that championed artistic endeavors to the glory of God. At other times, Christians largely abandoned the world of the arts. Seeing it as broken and spiritually bankrupt, they went into self-imposed cultural and artistic exile.

The neglect of the imagination in life and faith has impoverished the Body of Christ. However, during the past few decades there has been a global renewal of interest in the arts and the imagination among believers. Like the ancient Jews in exile, it is time for God’s people to weep over our cultural disobedience and neglect of God’s good and creative gifts. It is time for the artist and the Church to weep together over their mutual alienation. And, it is time for our tears to turn into action. The stones need to be removed. A highway must be constructed.

There has probably never been a time in which a biblical understanding of the arts is more needed by the Church than in our present visual and image-oriented postmodern culture. The 2004 Forum's Lausanne Occasional Paper, "Redeeming the Arts," speaks to this challenge. In response to this challenge, StoneWorks has been established to be a global arts partnership for cultural transformation and the recovery of the imagination in the life and mission of the Church.

The Need

Christ has called believers to disciple the nations. Today, it is the secular arts and entertainment industry—in particular film, television, and music—that has taken over that role in our contemporary world.

The biblical pattern in expressing God's love and redemptive purposes was approximately seventy-five percent story, fifteen percent poetry, and ten percent instructional and didactic in nature; ninety percent appealed to the imagination! At a time when our world has become more visually and image driven, the Church has reversed this biblical pattern. Today, only ten percent of the way we express the transforming narrative of the gospel is creative and imaginative.

If the Church is to fulfill the purposes of God for this generation, there must be a recovery of the imagination, both in the church and the culture. Those gifted and called by God to be artists for his glory must come out of spiritual exile and learn how to integrate their faith and their gifts in a holistic way. The "stones" in their lives, the church, and the culture that cause them to stumble and fail to reach their God-given destiny, must be identified and dealt with. The Church must be educated, the artist must be disciplined, and the culture must be transformed.

The Vision

Healing and restoration, important as they are, must be seen within the overarching purposes of God for his world. The vision to restore, renew, and rebuild the brokenness of the arts world is a vision to see the arts restored to God's original intention, for beauty and for his glory. In turn, the arts will be a powerful way to bring truth, beauty, and healing to the lies, ugliness, and sickness of a world alienated from the God of creation.

StoneWorks calls Christians involved in the arts to be healed, restored, and renewed. It is a call for the Church to once again embrace the arts and the artist. It is a call for the nations to embrace a vision of creative and cultural restoration. It is a call for "such a time as this" in the purposes of God.

StoneWorks

StoneWorks is a catalyst to empower artists—and the arts—as a transformational voice in the Church and the culture.

Mission: Forming artists to reform culture

Spheres:

- *Church.* Educate the church to embrace a biblically-based understanding and practice of the arts.
- *Marketplace.* Encourage spiritual, artistic, and worldview excellence that is culturally transformational.
- *Academy.* Establish witnessing communities of art students and faculty on university campuses. This will require looking at new models and paradigms.
- *Missions.* Train mission organizations to understand the role of the imagination in discipling nations. Every nation in the world lives by a story and affirms and passes on their story through the arts (music, stories, language, dance, theatre, etc.). The importance of the arts in mission must be recognized and affirmed.

Partnership Values:

- Common vision
- Sustained relationship
- Mutual empowerment of vision
- Shared resources

Three-fold Structure:

- *Summits* are where we generate ideas for strategic initiatives and bring together key people to talk and share ideas that can be formulated into strategic initiatives. There is a great need to create symbols that have meaning for the culture.
- *Institutes* are, in essence, discipleship and worldview mentoring programs.
- *Initiatives* are partnerships in culture-shaping projects and program development.

StoneWorks plans to hold numerous summits (local, national, regional, international), institutes (in churches, missions organizations, the academy, and in the marketplace), and initiatives that work toward the three-fold vision of:

1. a global movement of believers who are excellent in art and Christian character,
2. a global Church that integrates God's good gifts into its life and mission, and
3. a culture that will be impacted and transformed through the creative expression of truth.

Events in 2007

There were seven types of events held in 2007.

1. Inaugural Summit. The inaugural StoneWorks Summit took place in June 2007 at the Belhaven campus. Recognized and emerging leaders from mission organizations, universities, and professional arts entities came together to discern how to educate the Church, disciple artists, and transform culture. Some of the ideas generated are already being used in institutes and initiatives.

2. Online Arts Community. StoneWorks consulted with artists and arts organizations and is now developing a multi-faceted, interactive, online community for Christians in the arts. This is a huge felt need that, when completed, will help facilitate relationships, resources, dialogue, creative partnerships, artistic expression, research, academic papers, mission opportunities, and much more.

3. Transformation Media Project. Collaboration between StoneWorks and [InterVarsity USA](#) is underway to film and produce innovative DVD modules to motivate arts students and faculty to develop a vision for witnessing communities on college campuses. This media project will have far-reaching impact. The accompanying original music will form the basis of worship and performance at StoneWorks events and beyond—thereby reinforcing the vocabulary and concepts related to transformation.

4. Global Partnership Summits (GPS) are the highest level of focused dialogue, ideas development, and leadership influence sponsored by the StoneWorks Institute. They bring together established leaders and gatekeepers in the arts, church, education, missions, and the marketplace for intercessory prayer, evaluation of our current position, and mapping out ways to effectively reach the stated destination of church and cultural transformation. They do this through a combination of strategic initiatives, global partnerships, and shared resources.

5. StoneWorks Arts Leadership Training (SALT) identifies and brings together emerging arts leaders in church, marketplace, academy, and missions, to mentor them in moral, intellectual, and spiritual life to be transformational leaders who are faithful to the gospel and their call to follow Christ and influence culture.

6. Artists & Cultural Transformation Symposiums (ACTS) bring together key culture-shapers in the arts community (writers, directors, producers, choreographers, composers, visual artists, film makers, patrons, etc.) for community, renewal, artistic input, insightful dialogue, spiritual empowerment, and intentional orientation toward transformational vision.

7. Arts, Reconciliation & Transformation Seminars (ARTS) develop a Christian perspective on the arts and the imagination in life, worship, and mission. These church-sponsored seminars will affirm the arts and imagination as gifts from God to be celebrated, and will explore their important role in culture formation and transformation within the biblical context of creation, fall, and redemption.

Events Planned for 2008 and 2009

An ACTS is being considered for professional dancers in the fall of 2008. GPS are in the planning stages for Australia and Europe for 2009. An academic-focused SALT is planned for the summer of 2009. ARTS are ongoing.

StoneWorks Global Partners

There are a growing number of StoneWorks partners whose organizations and networks span 140 nations. There is enormous potential for worldwide influence, as Christians in the arts bring transformation within their own unique cultural frameworks. Along with the strategic partnership with InterVarsity on college campuses, StoneWorks has also entered into a formal partnership with **Operation Mobilization** to engage the arts and the imagination in world missions.

Partnerships are also developing with many artists and arts organizations that share a vision to support and disciple artists working in the marketplace. We are encouraged to see a growing number of these groups using the language of cultural transformation in their vision.

Arts Manifesto

In June 2008, a diverse group of thinkers and practitioners will convene at Belhaven College to continue the initial work of formulating an Arts Manifesto. When this phase is completed, the draft document will be widely disseminated for others to review. Based on responses, the Manifesto will be edited, rewritten, and signed by numerous individuals, organizations, and groups as an affirmation of the arts in the life and mission of the Church and its members, and as a statement to the broader culture.

Prayer Network

We are also in the process of establishing a global StoneWorks Prayer Network. As we move forward with a common vision and shared resources, we need to bathe our work and our partner relationships in prayer. Please join us in prayer for this important work. You can visit us at: www.stoneworks-arts.org.

Colin Harbinson has been involved in the arts and missions in over sixty nations. He is international director of **StoneWorks**, a global arts partnership for cultural reformation and the recovery of the imagination in the life and mission of the Church. Harbinson is founder and president of the International Festival of the Arts and the **Lausanne** Senior Associate for the Arts.

[The Effect of the Dollar on the American Missionary Sending “Enterprise”](#)

By J. Shaw

Every American foreign missionary develops incredible exchange rate acumen relative to the average person over time. The average missionary can spout off the top of his or her head the approximate exchange

rate of the US dollar against the currency of his or her country of residence, and often, several different currencies. He or she develops incredible calculation ability: in a mere second the person can tell you that 800INR (Indian Rupees) equals about 20USD (United States Dollars). Missionaries understand much more than the average American consumer the day-to-day relevance of exchange rates.

The current US dollar crisis should be of concern to missionaries and their agencies alike. Lately, many people are thinking about the devaluation of the US dollar. In 2002, the euro (EUR) was worth \$.86 of the US dollar. On 21 November 2007, the dollar hit a new low of \$1.49 against the euro. That is a quarter of the dollar's value lost in five years.¹

Most economic pundits are frantic about the rising costs of imports, falling interest rates which contribute to inflationary pressures, the related subprime mortgage crisis, and increasing skepticism among investors in America and abroad as to the robustness of the dollar. However, the devaluing of the dollar not only impacts firms and consumers; it also affects the nontraditional economies of everyday life, such as the missionary sending "enterprise."

Most mission agency executives are not trained economists. They are likely not thinking ahead to the potential impact of exchange rate fluctuations on missionary sending and effectiveness. This article was written to help all of us better understand the impact these fluctuations will have on the missionary sending enterprise if these fluctuations do not stabilize. My points are mere estimations; however, they are rooted in basic economic logic. Over time, of course, decreases and increases in the US dollar might counterbalance each other and, if the missionary sending enterprise is able to endure the present financial crisis in America, not much will change. But if either the present crisis continues unabated or if the missionary sending enterprise does not have the financial backbone to endure this crisis, the effects will indeed be felt. There are four main effects that are likely:

1. Sending American missionaries abroad becomes relatively more expensive. As a simple example, at the dollar's peak in 2001, a missionary unit heading to Europe to reach Muslim immigrants might have needed 50,000USD to cover living and ministry expenses; in late 2007, it cost 86,627USD. This, of course, assumes all other variables (exchange rates of other countries, consumer preferences of missionaries, etc.) are held constant.

Put another way, to maintain the same level of ministry as in 2001, the example missionaries to Muslim immigrants in Europe must raise thirty-six thousand more USD due to exchange rate fluctuations. This means more time spent in America traveling, speaking, meeting potential funders, and stuffing newsletter envelopes. In economic terminology, we are speaking of the "real value" of money.

2. The amount of prayer for missionaries likely increases. This is the residual effect of the increase in the price of sending missionaries. People pray for the things to which their money goes. Increased need for funds for Americans living abroad requires either greater giving to missionaries by the same number of funders or greater numbers of funders giving the same mean amount. In the latter case, that means more people giving and praying for missionaries and their ministries. For example, whereas in 2001 you needed one thousand people to give 50USD each to raise 50,000USD, in late 2007 you needed about 1,733 people giving 50USD each to raise at least 86,627USD. An increase in prayer, of course, is exponentially beneficial for the advance of the Kingdom of God.

3. The average standard of living abroad decreases. If the amount of funding and the number of missionaries abroad remain constant, the average standard of living for American missionaries abroad will decrease. If the missionary to Muslim immigrants in Europe raised in 2007 what he or she raised in 2001, he or she had less real income for the sake of living and ministry expenses. Additionally, in countries where the currency is "pegged" to the dollar, such as in Jordan and some of the Persian Gulf countries, inflation due to the dropping dollar also threatens to decrease missionaries' standard of living.

This might likely be a positive development to the extent that missionaries today are living above the average wage of the people they are seeking to reach. I have been in missionary homes in the Muslim world that are far more elaborate than those not only of their ministry targets, but also of the national Christians. Thus, a decrease in the average standard of living would encourage greater appreciation of local lifestyle.

Additionally, it would lead missionaries to consume fewer items (such as Snickers and Dr. Pepper), which are imported for Western expatriates to the unreached world. This would also encourage greater reliance on the Holy Spirit to produce life transformation and kingdom expansion rather than hugely funded programs. After all, what is needed most—namely, the simple act of sharing the gospel in word and deed—comes without any inherent programmatic costs.

4. The opportunity cost for funding missionaries abroad increases. Consider that as the dollar decreases in value classical economics hints that the interest rates will likely fall which, in turn, encourage investment. The idea behind financial investments is that they would yield financial gain in the short or long term. Profitable investments, of course, do not always mean financial gain. The value of an investment is the value placed on the return—financial or non-financial—by the investor.

In the case of funding missionaries, investors realize that, with the exception of tax benefits, there are usually no foreseeable financial gains to be made. Therefore, in pure financial terms, the cost of funding a missionary is not just the amount given to the missionary, but the amount that could have been earned in investing elsewhere. In economic terms, this is the idea of “opportunity cost.” If I give 1,000USD to a missionary or overseas ministry that will likely not yield financial profit for me in the future, the “opportunity cost” of this donation is not 1,000USD. It is what I would have gained investing the money over the next year.

Responding to the Crisis

What can we take of value from the financial crisis? First, we are reminded that the advance of the Kingdom of God and our calling to complete the Great Commission stands unaffected by financial fluctuations. The command of Jesus remains upon us no matter the conditions: “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you” (John 20:21).

We are to obey Jesus no matter how great the real cost and opportunity cost. If the present economic drag continues in America, churches will have to make more acute decisions as to where to “invest” their money. In order to maintain stateside lifestyles and fund local ministries at the same amount, continued economic downturn might lead churches to give less to overseas missions; less especially if the dollar remains low. This would be a truly unfortunate decision on the part of the church. Our calling is not conditional upon our economic prosperity.

We are also reminded of the sovereignty of God over currency values and over the advance of his kingdom. God is not surprised by the devaluation of the dollar. Nor is God’s promise to bring about the great gathering of all of his people (Revelation 7:9-10) through the means of the testimony of his Church (Acts 1:8) affected by financial crisis.

Financial crises, like all crises, strip away futile hopes in the wisdom of the world (i.e., “money equals power”) and should drive us to greater faith in the promises of God. Where do we place our hope when we send out missionaries and start new overseas projects?

Do we place our hope in the missionary’s social ability, in the new ministry’s strategy plan, in the influence of the new business as mission endeavor, or in the funding available? Or do we place our hope in the unchanging power of the gospel? The dollar will always fluctuate; the value of the gospel and its power to transform individuals and societies never fluctuates. Perhaps God even ordains financial crises to lead us to put back at the center of our missionary endeavors the greatest of all assets and strategies, namely, the gospel.

Endnote

1. "Losing Faith in the Greenback." *The Economist*, 1 December 2007, p. 85. As of 19 March 2008, the euro stands at 1.56USD, another all-time high against the dollar.

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URBAN COMMUNITIES

A Lesson on "Community Development" from Cambodia: A 10-Year, Bottom-up Approach By Kristen Jack

After more than ten years of living with Servants to Asia's Urban Poor among the urban poor in Cambodia, and praying and working to see the lives of the poor and their communities transformed, I have learned some key lessons about "development." The most important being: "good plans follow good people, and good money follows good people with good plans."

What I mean is this: when we come into a situation of great need, and want to see deep and abiding change for the better, the first thing we should do is seek a few good men and women. In those few (maybe only one or two) lie the seeds of change and renewal. Maybe this is what Jesus was talking about when he commanded the disciples to "search for some worthy person" (Matthew 10:11) as they launched out into mission.

Identifying and Encouraging Good People

By good people, I do not mean "highly moral" people; instead, I mean those whose hearts are moved by the things that move God (sickness, hunger, suffering, death, violence, abuse, addictions, etc.), who love those around them, and who are prepared to get their hands dirty and do something about injustice. These will be people of compassion and action, people who are already trying to help those in need.

As you gather together with these kinds of people, you can help nurture them. The mustard seeds of goodness and compassion that are within them will grow. There are several actions steps you can take to encourage these types of people:

1. Pray that God's kingdom might begin to come where they are (Matthew 6:10).
2. Encourage them to dream their dreams, for almost certainly those dreams come from God. These will be "kingdom dreams": dreams of healing, new life, and overcoming evil (Matthew 10:8).
3. Start to plan and plot together how you can let God's compassion flow through you to make a difference where you are.
4. Dream a dream and build a team. If plans are owned by local people and earthed in the local situation, good plans will emerge. Perhaps this is what Filipino theologian/activist Melba Maggay means when she urges us in her commentary on survival strategies to "nurture a strategic minority":

"Students of social change tell us that it is better to aim at consensus within a strategic minority rather than to waste time and breath at soliciting the conformity of the majority. Since a movement for change involves vision and sacrifice, it is not possible to start with the many. Very few people can see ten steps ahead of them. Most are too enclosed in the realities of the present to be able to imagine an alternative future. It takes a lot of imagination to believe that with the coming of Christ, a new order has come into being."

The Provision of God

Once good people have come together and made good plans—plans that have flowed from the heart of God and are moved by the brokenness of people's pain and need—all the necessary resources will follow. Many will be

found within the group itself. The resources may have been long buried and ignored, but they will emerge as people pray, dream, and share about their experiences and previous efforts.

But if more resources are needed, these also will come. The community itself will see what is happening, and resources buried in it will begin to emerge. If more resources are required, these too will come. If God is involved in the process, he will provide what is needed, no matter how much that may be. I believe this strategy holds true whether we are trying to foster community development, initiate a public health program, or plant a church.

Turning Things Upside-down

Nothing I have said so far sounds particularly startling, does it? In fact, it sounds perfectly reasonable, perhaps even obvious.

Yet the majority of “development” (and even “mission”) organizations tend to work the other way around (and the bigger they are, the more true this is). First, they assemble their money—often, quite a bit of it—to back up their master plan, their awesome strategy that will “blow those communities problems clean away.” Then they come, attract, and recruit “highly qualified staff” with their big payrolls and train them to implement the master plan. Usually, the results are disappointing, and well below what was hoped for given the amount of money spent.

Many big organizations try to “do development” (or “do mission”) this way:

1. Assemble good money,
2. come up with a good plan, and
3. attract good people (staff).

But it’s all back to front. Real community development, and real kingdom mission, happens the other way around, from the bottom-up.

1. Find good people,
2. come up with a good plan together (call it a program if you must), and
3. trust that whatever resources are needed will follow.

Good money follows good people with good plans. It always does.

For incarnational missions like Servants that live and minister with the poor, this is our natural way of working. By living at the local neighbourhood level, we are in a great position to “seek out those worthy people” who Jesus was talking about, those gems who bigger groups probably will never notice. In fact, we may struggle to notice them at first as well—they will usually be poor, uneducated, and needy themselves (1 Corinthians 1:26-28). However, we must ask God for the eyes to see them, and for the providential circumstances in which to meet them.

Replacing Short-term Goals with Long-term Vision

It takes time and patience to develop these kinds of eyes, eyes that can look beyond broken, rough exteriors and see the treasure buried there. Indeed, it takes years. And this presents a great problem for both “short-term missions” and for “development agencies” who so often work on 3-year funding cycles (meaning they will fund a project for up to three years, and then pull the plug if it is not successful).

To use a horticultural metaphor, three years might be long enough to grow flowers or shrubs, but it is not long enough to grow trees, and growing trees is what we are after in genuine community development. Flowers look pretty, but they are surface-level stuff. What the poor need are not cosmetic changes, but deeply rooted local agents of transformation living among them, those who bear the kind of fruit that reproduces over and over

(check out the oaks of righteousness mentioned in Isaiah 61:1-4, and where they have come from). A 10-year time frame would be much more realistic if we want to be a part of genuine community development.

This patient, incarnational approach to development requires us to be prayerful and attentive in all that we do, looking to see where God is at work in our communities and in the lives of those around us. As we live our lives for Christ and seek to see his kingdom come in our communities, we will be a watchful people, a listening people, a waiting people. Christ calls us not so much to be leaders as to be followers and joiners—those who hear where the Spirit is already going and follow; those who see what the Spirit is already doing and join in. We are called to be waiters. We are called to be servants.

Kristen Jack is the Asia coordinator for [Servants to Asia's Urban Poor](#). He and his wife have been living among the urban poor in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, for over thirteen years. He leads the Servants team in Cambodia, which works to bring health, wholeness, and justice to the urban poor.

From Manila to Phnom Penh: An Interview with Efren and Becky Roxas

By Craig Greenfield

Efren and Becky Roxas grew up in impoverished rural Filipino families. After meeting Christ, they plunged into ministry among the urban poor of Manila. For decades following, they were pastors, mentors, and friends to many individuals and families. More recently, they sensed a call to move out cross-culturally—to the urban poor of a nation that has suffered more tragedy than any in Asia: Cambodia. Craig Greenfield, international coordinator of [Servants to Asia's Urban Poor](#), interviewed them for this article.

Question: What influence did Servants missionaries and the Servants mission style have on your lives?

Becky: I was two years into my Christian walk when I first met a missionary from Servants to Asia's Urban Poor working in my community. Coming from a church that was preaching a health and wealth gospel, I was amazed to see how these “rich Christians” from the West were prepared to live among those of us who were poor and fully immerse themselves in the life of our community.

At first I thought they were crazy, extreme risk-takers of some sort. But then one day my oldest daughter fell sick and that missionary, Hugh Todd, came to visit our little home in the slum. We were in a needy situation, and he really helped us out. We became friends, and he would visit us often, and minister to us in so many ways. We really saw servanthood and a deep love for Christ being expressed in Hugh's life. As our friendship grew closer, his life began to challenge us. We began to ask the question: How can we serve our fellow poor using our gifts and abilities?

Efren later went on to pastor one of the Living Springs churches planted among the urban poor of Manila, to serve on the board and as a pastor to the Onesimo ministry to at-risk youth (mostly kids off the street and on drugs), and to

Overview of Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Cambodia is only slowly starting to recover socially, politically, and economically from the four years of Khmer Rouge rule from 1975-1979. In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, political and social unrest brought the Khmer Rouge to power. Once they took control of Phnom Penh in 1975, the Khmer Rouge began a gross reorganization of the country. The entire city of Phnom Penh was evacuated—its citizens sent to work camps around the country. The Khmer Rouge began to detain, torture, and execute people who were educated, working professionals, and those thought to be “traitors” to Khmer society. Religion, family, and all things considered Western were banned. During the four years under the Khmer Rouge communist regime, nearly one-third of the Cambodian population perished.

While the country is still trying to heal from the emotional, physical, and spiritual devastation of the Khmer Rouge regime, its progress has been crippled by new challenges: rampant political corruption, an increasing sex trafficking industry, and a looming AIDS crisis, all while millions of landmines remain unearthed and undetonated around the country.

Only one percent of the Cambodian population is Christian. Buddhism is a strong influence and is closely linked to Cambodian national and personal identity. There are small but growing Muslim and Hindu populations. Many still practice animism and idol-worship.

(Taken from [Urbana's Global Urban Trek overview of Phnom Penh](#).)

serve as a leader and mentor in Lilok movement for holistic and informal theological training for urban poor leaders.

Question: Tell me about your lives growing up. What were the highlights? What were the struggles?

Efren: I grew up in a rural province as the son of a poor rice farmer. We were a large family; I am one of eight children, including two half brothers on my mother's side. After I finished primary school my parents asked me to give up school for a year, as they needed my labour on the rice farm. I worked every day tending to our few animals and our rice fields. Because of this experience, I grew determined to work hard and do well if I ever got a chance to go back to school again. A year later, I got that chance. I did well and eventually gained entrance to a college in Manila.

Off I went to the big city. My tuition was free, but I still needed to raise the money to rent a small room, food, transport, and so on. I had to look for work to support myself. But by my third year things started to go wrong. I fell in with a circle of guys who introduced me to drugs and some other bad lifestyle choices, and after that I entered a tumultuous, risky period of my life.

Becky: I was also born into a poor family. My father was a fisherman who also ran a little store out of our house. From an early age, I remember being sent out into our community to sell vegetables in order to earn money. My father was very strict, and sometimes he would punish me severely. As a result, I grew up quite distant from my family, and instead grew very close to my grandmother.

Question: When and how did you hear the gospel?

Efren: After dropping out of school, I met Becky, we fell in love, we soon got married, and our first child followed fairly quickly after that. Our first five years of marriage grew increasingly rocky, and I got to a point where I felt I was up against a wall with no way ahead. I needed help desperately, and began to search for something else, something more powerful. I began to read the Bible and to search through the spiritual teachings of various religions. One day I happened to be watching an evangelist on television, and was seized with a strong sense of God calling me to personal repentance and renewal. From that day on I began my journey as a new person. After a year of observing positive changes in my life, Becky decided to follow in my footsteps.

Question: What was the main thing you learned while ministering and pastoring among the urban poor in Manila?

Efren: That although I was weak and poor, yet I learned to say that "I am rich and strong because of God who gives me strength." I discovered that as a poor person I have something to offer to others who are needy, not only in material things but also in spiritual things. I learned to empower others by setting an example of how to have faith in the midst of suffering and overwhelming needs. I learned to disciple and train other leaders, not only in the spiritual dimension of the gospel but in every aspect of life.

Question: How did you sense a call to minister overseas and cross-culturally to Buddhists/Cambodians?

Efren: In the 1990s I attended a seminar about the unreached Buddhists in Asia, and particularly in Bangkok. I felt a strong challenge to start praying for the Buddhist people group in Asia. That same year Becky and I received a Khmer visitor from Servants Cambodia who we hosted and orientated to Servants and Living Springs work among the urban poor in Manila. Through that visit I grew more and more drawn to hearing about Cambodia and its tragic, painful journey as a nation. Later, I had the chance to visit both Bangkok and Cambodia. Those two places became the focus of my prayers concerning cross-cultural mission. However, last year Becky and I traveled to both places again, asking God to clarify which of the two he was calling us to. By the end of that trip we knew it was Cambodia.

Question: Has it been an advantage to come from an Asian culture and go to another Asian culture (compared to non-Asian missionaries)?

Efren: Various Asian cultures do have similarities, which is obviously to our advantage. The sense of being an outsider is lessened in some ways. We can easily fit into the Asian culture. We even look similar, and at first glance, people assume we are Cambodians. Also, I think there is less expectation of us having big financial resources to throw around. Western missionaries also have certain advantages, however. Being so different in appearance and perceived economic status can create a kind of “charismatic attraction.” This is something the non-Asian missionary can use for good.

Question: Is it an advantage to come from an urban poor background in Manila and then go to the urban poor in Cambodia?

Efren: We are already familiar with urban poor conditions—heat, germs, over-crowding, lack of privacy, the overwhelming needs of the community—and are probably less likely to get sick physically and emotionally. Suffering is familiar music to our ears, and we can probably respond with more discernment than someone who has never had to face these dilemmas before. We have already had a lot of practice living with the creative tension between battling injustice and relying on grace. Overall, it is easier for us to integrate into a culture of poverty and into the living conditions of the urban poor.

Question: What are your dreams for the future and for ministry in Cambodia?

Efren: We are hoping our life-journeys, ministry experience, and all that God has taught us so far can now be used to serve the poor and advance God's kingdom on this side of the world. Looking ahead for the next three years, we are praying about several things. First, we want to be involved in local churches here. We dream Cambodian churches will express their faith in ways that are relevant and attractive to their own culture. We hope we can play a part in helping churches bear witness to Christ's love in ways that will tear down the walls of mistrust and hurt so present in Cambodia, in part due to Pol Pot's legacy. We dream of a church that will play a role in seeking justice, in pursuing peace, in alleviating poverty, in building God's kingdom in all areas of life.

Second, there is a present and growing breakdown in family structures due to all the war and genocide Cambodia has been through. More recently, it has been exacerbated by the AIDS catastrophe, and by other social and moral issues wrecking havoc on family life. On top of all this, there are the new dangers of consumerism and materialism being presented by the media. We are dreaming of ways to help strengthen family values through participatory discussions, seminars, retreats, forums, and so on. There are huge needs and huge opportunities for ministry in these areas.

One of my experiences in Manila was with a youth-at-risk training program. In light of this, we would be happy to be involved in a teenage drug rehabilitation programme that was recently initiated. Becky was a teacher for eleven years in preschool and then primary school. Once our language acquisition has reached a good stage, she may get involved with the educational needs of kids with physical disabilities and with AIDS orphans.

Question: What is the biggest struggle for you in Cambodia?

Efren: Pulling out our deep roots in the Philippines and trying to replant them here in Cambodia. We are trying to build new relationships with the Khmer people, but also with our Western Servants teammates. That's two sets of cross-cultural differences we are trying to bridge at once.

Also, Filipinos are extremely family and friendship-oriented. Leaving our grown-up kids, extended family, church, and friends behind in the Philippines has been very hard.

A third struggle has been financial. Our friends and church network back home have been amazingly supportive and generous, but coming from urban poor churches and communities is a real struggle. It's not quite enough to

fully support us financially. We are relying on the Body of Christ from all over the world to join with us and make up this gap.

Craig Greenfield is the international coordinator of [Servants to Asia's Urban Poor](#). For the past six years he and his wife, Nay, have lived among the urban poor in the slums of Cambodia. They are now pioneering a new Servants team in downtown Vancouver, Canada. Greenfield is the co-founder and former director of Project HALO (Hope, Assistance, and Love for Orphans), a ministry of Servants Cambodia, which has helped Cambodian communities care for nearly one thousand children orphaned and affected by AIDS. Greenfield is also founder of Big Brothers and Sisters of Cambodia, a rapidly spreading youth movement mobilizing and training Christian young people in Cambodia to be mentors to orphans. He is the author of [The Urban Halo: Hope for Orphans of the Poor](#).

RESEARCH

[The Internet: The New Missionary Challenge of the Twenty-first Century](#)

By Eric Célérier

While composing these few lines, like anyone writing for Lausanne World Pulse, my fingers are dancing over the keyboard of my computer. Indeed, the personal laptop has brought a dramatic change to our daily lives. Who could have foreseen the impact of this revolution just a few years ago?

As I write, Google Earth lights up a portion of my screen. Within the last two years, Google Earth has become one of the most popular software products. Free access allows anyone to catch an aerial view of his or her own home or to sneak a peek at his or her next vacation spot.

However, I am looking at Google Earth for a different reason. An international team with whom I work linked Google Earth to an evangelistic website that we currently have translated into seven languages. Each time a person indicates that he or she prayed to receive Christ as his or her Savior, I see in real time where that person is located. The image of the earth keeps spinning as one person after another becomes a Christian.

Witnessing this, I rejoice, minute by minute, as one person after another comes to know Jesus Christ somewhere in the world. During the last few moments, while I gathered my ideas for this article, people from Morocco, China, France, Egypt, Algeria, Canada, the United States, and England came to Jesus!

The Lord predicted that the good news of the kingdom would be preached all around the world, serving as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end would come.

It has been ten years since I started using the Internet to share the gospel. In the beginning, the site was used to promote our local church. It was very likely one of the first websites used in France for that purpose. A few years ago, the site expanded in order to meet the needs of French-speaking Christians. From that broader concept, and more recently, I decided to launch multiple evangelistic websites aimed at reaching all the major languages of the Internet. We want to help millions of people come to know Christ, one by one.

Missionary Field

I do not see the Internet as a tool. Instead, I consider the Internet to be a missionary field. In 1865, Hudson Taylor created the China Inland Mission because he had the vision to reach China with the gospel. The 1.2 billion people using the Internet are just as important as the ones Taylor was seeking to reach. Today, when people search for God, Jesus, the Bible, or faith, very often they make their search using the Internet. According to Google Zeitgeist, "Who is God?" was one of the most-searched phrases on the Internet in 2007.

Our calling is to go around the world preaching the good news to the entire creation. Why not send missionaries to our world's newest continent...the Internet?

A missionary called to proclaim the gospel on a continent, or to a people, must be sensitive to all the human needs he or she observes. While remaining focused on his or her vocation to preach the gospel, he or she also has an obligation to respond to all of the needs of his or her missionary field.

Therefore, through these few lines I am issuing my passionate plea. We have an urgent need for more missionaries on the Internet. These same missionaries, working in coordination with one another, could increase the visibility of Christian websites. When someone types the word “God” into a Google Search, 365 million responses are suggested. A person would have to visit one million web pages, every day, for one year, in order to see everything listed! That is impossible. A better option would be to strengthen the visibility of the few quality websites devoted to evangelism.

Moved with Compassion to Transform the World

Every Christian could take up this challenge. The number-one, most popular religious website on the Internet is a site devoted to Islam. According to the worldwide classification of websites on the Internet, that Islamic site is ranked as the *600th most popular site overall* with one million visitors per day.

By contrast, the number-one, most popular Christian website is ranked much lower at position number three thousand. It boasts only 300,000 visitors per day worldwide. We cannot continue to tolerate that kind of inequality. It is not a matter of rivalry with another religion, or a matter of competition; more accurately, it is a question as to the measure of our compassion for the lost and our obedience to God.

How can we explain the fact that Christians born in the country in which the Internet was invented (the United States)—and where the most technologically-advanced companies are dominating world markets—have not yet reacted to this spiritual challenge and been open to opportunity?

We need to revive the missionary mindset our spiritual fathers once possessed. When they discovered a new continent, they said to themselves, “Let’s go into that land and proclaim the gospel, or let’s give generously to those who are called to go.” All of us know that the only way anyone can truly obtain liberty and fulfillment is by coming to Jesus Christ. Let us send this message of hope throughout the newest continent in the world, the Internet. Let us ask the Lord to supply the human and financial resources needed for this worldwide mission.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he was moved in his heart because the people were lost and uncertain. They looked like sheep without a shepherd. Pray for the millions of people who connect to the Internet, because, like the crowds for whom Jesus wept, those surfing the Internet do not have a shepherd either. Ask God, “What do you want me to do?” Then follow him into the challenge he lays before you.

Would you like to be involved in the online mission field? If so, email me at: ec@topc.com.

May the compassion of God invade our hearts, once again, and together, let’s transform the world!

Eric Célérier is founder of Topchretien.com, an internet portal for Christians. A pioneer in evangelism with new technologies, he also founded ConnaitreDieu.com, a website for non-Christians which is available in seven languages. Every day, 1,200 people indicate a decision for Christ on these websites. Célérier is French. He can be reached at: ec@topc.com.

LAUSANNE REPORTS

[Lausanne Movement/MANI Southern Africa Younger Leaders Meeting in Johannesburg](#)
By Grace Samson

The Lausanne Movement/MANI Southern Africa Younger Leaders meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, was the first of its kind in Africa since the [2006 Lausanne Younger Leaders Gathering in](#)

Malaysia. Some thirty young leaders from different areas of ministry and work in Southern Africa were present. The partnership vision between **Lausanne** and **MANI** (Movement for African National Initiatives) provided a unique platform for these dedicated and passionate young leaders (between the ages of twenty-five and forty) to fellowship, connect, inspire, encourage, and strengthen one another.

As we talked about why we came together we focused on the common things that bind us, including: one commission, one generation, and one region. Emphasis was also placed on two key words: relevance and context.

Larry Russell, younger leader development coordinator with the Lausanne Movement, shared what other younger leaders are doing around the world. We also invited Peter Tarantal, the incoming Southern Africa coordinator for MANI Southern Africa to share the purposes of MANI and the involvement of younger leaders. Esme Bowers, Southern Africa regional leader for the Pan African Christian Women's Alliance and international chairperson for the board of African Evangelistic Enterprise, attended the meetings as an observer and encourager.

We got to know each other through ice-breakers and testimonies of what God is doing through some of the ministries in Southern African. Our conversations and interaction deepened as we began to engage with one another on the levels of personal challenges and requests for prayers. We met in small groups where we ministered and prayed together. The strength of connectedness was tangible during the worship sessions. These worship times attracted the attention of some of the early delegates of MANI who could not resist joining in.

On the final morning of the gathering, we gathered around tables in a creative forum tagged "Cafe Conversations." One main question was posed: "What are the main challenges younger leaders are facing in the Southern Africa region?" Some key areas raised included: the lack of understanding, trust and space to lead along senior leaders, and a non-existent network of relationships and support from other younger leaders. It became evident that there was a need for personal commitment to bring solutions to some of these challenges.

Individuals reflected and made personal commitments to seeking the way forward. Some participants attended the main MANI consultation later that day.

We hope to continue the dialogue that started in Johannesburg as we spread the word to other younger leaders within our region. We also hope to connect and encourage other regions in Africa who are planning their own events.

Thanks to all who have offered their unbending support and prayers; we are very grateful for your input and how you have championed us as senior leaders. We look forward to coming alongside you increasingly in the future. We believe that God is a God of all generations and we can finish the task as we work together.

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