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PUBLISHER'S MEMO

God, the Evangelist

By Lon Allison

My plane was to leave Singapore for Jakarta at 7:00 a.m., very early in the morning. I was weary after seven hours of preaching and teaching the previous day. My plan was to sleep on the plane, which is usually quite easy for me, especially when I am tired. But not this day. I simply could not sleep, and would very soon understand why. This was to be my first visit to Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world. I didn't know a soul in the country. My seatmate in 16A was a young woman returning to her home in Indonesia after many years working in Singapore. I was surprised she was open to talking, and within a few minutes, I began to see God's plan in placing us together on a one-and-a-half-hour flight on this precise day. God had arranged for me to sit next to her in 16C from the foundation of time.

Nora was raised as a Muslim in what both she and I would term a somewhat nominal home. Only two months before her return to Indonesia, a co-worker asked if she was interested in attending a Christian church. She said yes. She had seen the lives of Christian friends, and understood the positive impact Christianity had on them. She started to attend the church and had an immediate attraction to Jesus. As she voiced to me, "I talk with Jesus all the time about everything"—and this after only two months of being in any kind of Christian community! I admit to being a bit skeptical. I know that many Muslim people are a great distance from accepting Jesus as the Son of God and more, as the one who died for the forgiveness of sins. But Nora has taught me to never underestimate the power of God. The more we talked, the more I was in awe of God, the evangelist.

It seemed that Nora has readily accepted Jesus as the Son of God. Further, she nodded yes when I asked if she believed he died to forgive her sins. She even sang songs (in her native tongue) about Jesus right on the airplane. How about that for evidence of new birth? We talked further and I learned that only the day before our flight, two strangers had knocked on her door. These two women were missionaries from mainland China who just happened to visit her home before her departure back to her Muslim country. They spent three hours together in fellowship and study. Again, this was a clear sign of God, the evangelist. Now, a few hours later, the Lord had arranged for us to be seat partners. Here I was, an evangelism leader from the United States, seated next to her. His attention to "saving" detail was amazing. I would learn more as we continued our flight. Her sister had married a Western man a few years before; he was a Christian and had been telling Nora about Christianity for years. Thus, at least five Christians had been placed in her life to walk with her on her salvation journey.

I was number five in her story, and my joy was immeasurable. In this short flight to a place I'd never been, to be with people I did not know, to preach of Christ in a Muslim land, I was honestly frightened. I surely wondered if my life and preaching could be of any value here. I hoped I was not wasting the time of the churches who invited me. So God gave me Nora, and God gave Nora me, and in the end angels were dancing. So was I. We prayed together before leaving the plane, and I encouraged her to find a Christian church. I hope she will contact me by email, but if not, I know we will fellowship in eternity.

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation for ALL who believe (Romans 1:16). I learned the truth of that passage again on an airplane to Indonesia. May God be praised, and may readers be encouraged.

As one of your publishers of Lausanne World Pulse, I want to be an encourager for readers. I know we all have our share of disappointments in ministry. Sometimes we make ministry more complex than it is. I believe in the necessity for training and education. I believe in strategic development. I believe in all of it. But today in this column, I want every reader to know that I believe more than anything in the “saving power” of God the evangelist.

P.S. I also had a remarkable time in Indonesia. I was hosted by the [Abbalove Ministry network](#) and saw a tremendous ministry that is reaching a city and a nation for Christ. Perhaps Abbalove will be the theme of my next article.

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NEWS BRIEFS

AZERBAIJAN: Censorship Goes against Constitution

Azerbaijan’s State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations has denied that the required approval of all religious literature is censorship. Censorship, according to the leader of an Azeri religious community, violates the country’s constitution. A committee official stated that government “merely checks” to see what books are “not appropriate” for distribution. Human rights activists and religious communities expressed frustration over the highly restrictive system, which includes postal censorship and police confiscation of banned books (including the Bible). ([Forum 18 News](#))

BRAZIL: Potential for Greatest Mission Movement Ever

Tim Moody of the [Association of Baptists for World Evangelism](#) (ABWE) reported that the beginnings of a youth mission movement are happening in one of the world’s largest cities: Sao Paulo, Brazil. An ABWE youth ministry called PEPE has led to a mission movement in Brazil that empowers students to evangelize in their own country. Moody noted that training and sending out native missionaries is cost effective, and native missionaries are more effective in communicating the gospel overall. With the possibility of establishing the movement’s base in Sao Paulo, Moody said Brazil has the potential to become one of the greatest mission-sending countries in history. ([Mission Network News](#))

CENTRAL ASIA: Restrictions Heavy in Post-Soviet Countries

Immediately after the collapse of communism, mission work was largely unhindered by governments in Central Asia. However, in the mid 1990s those governments began to institute heavy-handed tactics to control the resurgence of religion. One of the most difficult issues facing post-Soviet Christians is the registration of churches, which makes a church legal but also gives authorities greater control of its activities. Uzbekistan requires all church members to disclose their names and addresses, making it potentially very easy for police to find and persecute converts from Islam. In Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan anti-Christian persecution is particularly intense, with currently no legally registered churches. ([Barnabas Fund](#))

CHINA: House Churches Forced Not to Meet during Olympics

Chinese house church pastors were forced to sign a document saying they would not participate in religious services during the Olympics. [China Aid Association](#) (CAA) reported the document specified that house churches refrain from organizing and joining “illegal” gatherings and receiving donations, sermons, and

preaching from foreign religious groups. According to CAA, the document also prohibits house churches from meeting in their communities for more than three months surrounding the Olympics. Violators would be subject to disciplinary action by the Chinese government. ([China Aid Association](#))

CHINA: Well-known “Bicycle” Pastor Arrested

Pastor Zhang “Bike” Mingxuan, known for evangelizing across China on a bicycle, was arrested just two days before the opening of the Olympic Games. He was taken by authorities while delivering medicine to his ailing wife, who was also arrested, as was another pastor. Mingxuan was the inspiration for a recent partnership between [Voice of the Martyrs](#) (VOM) and [China Aid Association](#) to create the Olympic Prayer Band. VOM also learned that Chinese authorities have launched an investigation of the project which distributed more than 800,000 prayer bands to house church members in China. ([Voice of the Martyrs](#))

CHINA: Universities Add Christian Studies to Curriculum

More than forty Chinese universities now have Departments of Christian Studies or Religious Studies. Chinese students and religion scholars are thankful to their government for the permission to establish such programs. Further, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, a federally-funded entity, includes a Department of Christian Studies in its religious division. With the growing popularity of Christian studies programs, China’s universities are eager for Western scholars to teach in their religion departments. (Christian Studies International)

ECUADOR: Spanish Edition of HIV Devotional Debuts

The only Christian HIV/AIDS devotional has been translated into Spanish by Professor Galen Yorba-Gray of Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego, California. The original English version, entitled *In His Shadow*, was written by the professor’s wife, Joan, who is HIV-positive. *In His Shadow* is now in its second printing and being translated into several other languages. Distributing copies of the devotional, the Yorba-Gray family recently visited Quito and Guayaquil, Ecuador, on a mission trip for [He Intends Victory](#), an evangelical Christian HIV/AIDS ministry operating in twenty countries worldwide. According to Joan Yorba-Gray, Ecuador has a growing HIV infection rate of 17.3 per 100 thousand people. ([ASSIST News](#))

ETHIOPIA: Attacks on Christians Increasing

In a recent example of increased violence against Christians in Ethiopia, two Christian men were stoned by a mob of Islamic extremists on 19 July 2008 in the city of Jijiga. Although one man suffered a severe concussion, both men survived the attack. According to [International Christian Concern](#) (ICC), Jijiga, a city on the border with Somalia, is the capital city of Somali Regional State, where the majority of residents are ethnic Somalis and most are Muslim. ICC reported that Christians have been attacked in the past in Jijiga, noting that the Ethiopian Full Gospel Church was bombed for a second time in August 2007. ([International Christian Concern](#))

GEORGIA/RUSSIA: Churches Damaged while Assisting Locals

In August, three evangelical churches in the South Ossetia capital city of Chinvali were damaged during the conflict between Georgia and Russia. According to [Russian Ministries](#), the churches were offering physical and spiritual help to refugees pouring out of South Ossetia into North Ossetia and other Russian provinces. South Ossetia, which borders Russia, is predominantly made up of Russians, and although the province is governmentally autonomous, many South Ossetians want to split from Georgia and unite with the Russian province of North Ossetia. ([Russian Ministries](#))

INDIA: Gospel for Asia Missionary and Students Attacked

Four men, one a [Gospel for Asia](#) (GFA) missionary and the others GFA Bible college students, were brutally beaten by a large mob in Karnataka, India, in July 2008. The three students and their leader were on a field internship when a mob of approximately seven hundred people attacked them. The attackers were said to be extremists with active support from local officials. The victims were then taken into custody and held without bail for allegedly forcing people to convert to Christianity and “offending the sentiments of the people.” ([Gospel for Asia](#))

IRAN: Risking Death for Conversion

Frustrated by the lack of social liberties since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iranians are being driven away from the state religion, which accounts for ninety-eight percent of the country's sixty-six million people. There are no statistics on how many have converted to Christianity in recent years, but the advent of satellite television has reportedly spurred growth in Christianity. Currently, Iranian law does not mandate death for "apostasy"; however, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has introduced legislation that, if passed, would impose execution. Regardless, "apostates" do suffer beatings and death from vigilantes leveling their own judgment. There is no penalty for a Muslim who kills an "apostate" according to Islamic Shariah law. ([SFGate](#))

JAPAN: Poor Nations Discussed at G8 Summit

The G8 Summit (July 2008) concluded with aid agencies hopeful that rich nations will increase funding. Director of the [Christian Reformed World Relief Committee's](#) (CRWRC) U.S. office Andy Ryskamp reported President George W. Bush made a strong opening statement stressing the importance of reaching out to Africa while taking into account environmental concerns, which were the primary focus of the summit. Ryskamp said increased funding is essential to reducing the number of people who are living on less than \$2 USD per day. CRWRC receives government funding for its programs which offer physical help with an optional Bible study. ([Mission Network News](#))

KAZAKHSTAN: Churches Continue to Face Closures

In a recent example of government attempts to control religious minorities and close their places of worship, the fire department of the Kazakh city of Semey closed a local church, claiming the newly constructed facility did not meet safety requirements. Forum 18 News Service reported that the church had been under construction for four years, but was only charged by the fire department after building completion. Church members say all necessary building permits are on record, including the permit from the fire department. However, court authorities are ignoring the documents. A highly restrictive religion law which will prevent small religious communities from owning property is currently in process in Kazakh parliament. ([ASSIST News](#))

MIDDLE EAST/NORTH AFRICA: SAT-7 PARS Connecting Viewers to God's Word

Satellite television is offering programs to millions of people in the Middle East and North Africa who have no church to attend or Bible to read. SAT-7 PARS, in particular, offers programming in Farsi twenty hours a day and features teaching programs, children's dramas, and chatrooms on its website. Especially popular with young adult Christians, the chatrooms serve as an important source of discussion, community, and encouragement. ([SAT-7](#))

NEPAL: New Government Brings Hope to Christians

Nepal has a new government after two hundred years as the world's only Hindu monarchy. Over the course of those years, Christians have suffered beatings, threats, exclusion, and imprisonment. A Maoist leader in Nepal has initiated meetings with the country's Christian leaders and indicated that the Maoists would guarantee religious freedom. Gospel for Asia regional leader Narayan Sharma expressed hope that "Nepal will change continuously from past history to new reality...from darkness to the light of the Gospel." ([Mission Network News](#))

NORTH KOREA: Franklin Graham Makes Historic Visit

Franklin Graham, president of [Samaritan's Purse](#) and the [Billy Graham Evangelistic Association](#), made a historic visit to North Korea in July and August 2008, meeting with high-level government officials, visiting relief projects, and preaching at a newly-constructed church in the capitol of Pyongyang. This is Graham's second visit to the country, but his family has a long history with North Korea, going back to 1934 when Ruth Bell Graham attended mission school in Pyongyang. In the past year, Samaritan's Purse has been involved in two breakthrough projects in North Korea, responding to last year's floods and distributing food provided by the U.S. government. ([Samaritan's Purse](#))

SAUDI ARABIA: Deportation Ordered for Fifteen Christians

On 5 August 2008, two weeks after King Abdullah called for reconciliation between Muslims and Christians, fifteen Christians were ordered to be deported from Saudi Arabia. The Christians were raided in a house where they were a holding prayer meeting in April 2008. [International Christian Concern](#) reported that police initially accused the Christians of preaching the Bible and singing, but then later changed the charge to holding a “dance party” and collecting money supporting terrorism. According to International Christian concern, the individuals, who are immigrants, were interrogated, held incommunicado, and forced to sign police statements written in Arabic, which they did not understand. ([International Christian Concern](#))

SIERRA LEONE: Bible Society Project Targets Youth

Children under fourteen make up more than forty percent of Sierra Leone’s population, and the [Bible Society](#) is making the spiritual needs of these children a top priority in their project entitled “Penetrating Youth Culture.” Bible Society workbooks and flipcharts have been successful in teaching children scripture in communities torn by civil war. With the support of other Christian organizations, the Bible Society also organized a one-day children’s camp in the southeast part of the country, providing some four hundred children with stories and comics introducing biblical messages. ([Bible Society](#))

SOUTH ASIA: Affordable Tools Needed to Spread God’s Word

People in South Asia need an affordable biblical resource for pastors who have little access to libraries and other educational institutions. In response, [John Stott Ministries-Langham Partnership International](#) has partnered with other organizations to support the development of the *South Asia Bible Commentary* (SABC), a publication to be available by 2012 in English, then later in Hindi, Nepali, and Sinhalese. The SABC will serve as a much-needed tool for grassroots level pastors and evangelists who have little or no formal theological education. Thirty thousand copies of the SABC are expected to sell in the first year. ([John Stott Ministries](#))

SUDAN: People Uniquely Ready to Hear the Gospel

While Sudan remains a nation in conflict, the southern region has shown promising church growth. [E3 Partners Sudan](#) (E3) has started a Bible school to train pastors and leaders, giving them doctrinal training and encouragement to plant new churches. E3 strategic coordinator Mike Congrove says that North Americans on short-term mission trips are also part of the effort. He explained that North Americans are effective in Sudan because Sudanese culture respects visitors and welcomes what they have to say. Congrove further added that while improvements are seen in areas of Sudan, people are traumatized after years of war and are ready to hear the hope of the gospel. ([Mission Network News](#))

UNITED STATES: Renowned African Children’s Choir Thrilled at Passage of AIDS Bill

The [African Children’s Choir](#) performed for President and Mrs. George W. Bush during a July 2008 ceremony celebrating the signing of H.R. 5501—the Global AIDS Initiative Renewal Bill. As the initiative affects many African children, it was a cause important to the renowned choir and its founder, Ray Barnett, who formed the choir following the aftermath of Idi Amin’s brutal rule over Uganda. The legislation approves several billion USD in spending on malaria and tuberculosis, the leading cause of death among those infected with AIDS. The current \$15 billion USD act, which would have expired in September, has brought life-saving, anti-viral medications to approximately 1.7 million people and supporting care to nearly seven million people. ([African Children’s Choir](#))

UNITED STATES: No Cost Audio Bible Distribution a Reality

[Faith Comes By Hearing](#) (FCBH) has just made it possible to send the Bible around the world at no cost. Bloggers, webmasters, and social network users will now be able to spread the gospel in audio using sites such as MySpace, Facebook, Digg, and Reddit. FCBH has developed an Audio Bible widget which can be placed on websites, blogs, or social networking profiles, allowing visitors to sample any of nearly three hundred Audio New Testaments in FCBH’s collection. Users can then select and download a free Audio Bible. ([Faith Comes By Hearing](#))

UNITED STATES: Thrift Centers Help Spread the Gospel

Amidst economic downswing and reports of recession, **Bible for Missions Thrift Centers** across the United States are raising millions of dollars to extend God's message of hope to thousands of people without Bibles. The thrift centers are a volunteer-based effort comprised of thirteen stores that sell used clothing and other donated goods. Profits from sales help to fund **Bible League** ministry worldwide. Last year, the thrift centers provided nearly \$1.5 million USD toward Bibles and training in ten countries; this year's funds are expected to exceed that. Each center adopts a specific country where Bible League has ministry. Currently, those countries include Bulgaria, China, Haiti, and Kenya, among others. (**Bible League**)

THEMED ARTICLES: The Strategic Importance of Student Ministry

Why Bother with Student Ministry?

By Lindsay Brown

Charles Malik, the Lebanese former president of the United Nations General Assembly, once wrote, "If you want to change the world, start with students." Clearly, he saw the strategic nature of Christian ministry among students. Why is this work so important? I suggest at least five reasons.

1. Student ministry provides us with an opportunity to make known the gospel among relatively young people (often between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four) **at a time when they are framing the value system upon which they will base decisions throughout their lives.** Surveys in virtually every country indicate that the vast majority of people become believers before the age of twenty-five, so it does seem sensible to target young people without wishing to exclude the need to communicate the gospel to people of all ages.

Although the student world can sometimes be characterised by apathy toward the great issues of life, it is nevertheless the case that students are often idealistic and more open to new ideas than are most other generations. Student ministries would do well to focus their evangelistic efforts on a style of evangelism that is:

- *Thoughtful*, seeking to start where students are and answer questions they raise as a means of moving on to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- *Christ-centred*, introducing and confronting students with the person and work of Christ. It is still the case in many countries that although students can be disillusioned with the institution of the Church, they are still intrigued, if not fascinated, with the person of Christ.
- *Persuasive*, calling students to repentance and a response to the claims of Christ.
- *Creative*, seeking to win them by all means possible.
- *Courageous*, taking on hostile worldviews or perspectives which are hostile to the person and work of Christ, lovingly seeking to answer their questions, and boldly introducing them to Christ.

2. Engaging with students, and helping them to come to faith, provides an opportunity to help believers become disciples of Christ and put down deep roots as Christians, which will set them up for a lifetime of service. This starts with the encouragement of developing a personal walk with the Lord and developing intimacy with Christ, engagement in Bible study, and attachment to a good local church where the Bible is taught. But it goes beyond the disciplines of personal devotion to helping them understand and flesh out the ethical implications of the gospel.

John Stott and others have often written of the importance of developing a Christian mind, by which they mean the importance of learning to see how scripture applies to every area of life. It helps students enormously to understand that the scriptures have something to say to every area of academic study, as well as to their personal walk with the Lord. This form of investment can help them to develop a value system which affects and governs their decision-making in whatever profession God calls them to serve in the years beyond study.

3. The impact of graduate student ministry on the life of the Church has been extraordinary. For sixty years, the **International Fellowship of Evangelical Students** (IFES) has demonstrated that many key leaders in the Church worldwide have graduated from student ministry. To give two examples, the student movement in Chad has formed eighty percent of the current pastors of churches in N'djamena, the capital. In fifty years of ministry through the KGK Japan, the evangelical student ministry has led to the formation of three hundred pastors and fifty theological educators in Japan. This can be demonstrated in many other countries of the world, particularly in countries where student ministries have existed for more than twenty years.

Student movements should not be seen as parachurch groups (i.e., alongside the church), thus giving the impression of being in competition with the church. Rather, they should be viewed as: (1) a *specialist* ministry of the church, (2) a *bridge* between the church and that part of the world which happens to be the university, (3) a *partnership* between students and the wider church in engaging the university with the gospel of Christ, and (4) an *outflow* or extension of the ministry of local churches into that part of the world which happens to be the university.

Just as the Church of Christ should be concerned to reach children, old people, business people, and others, it should be concerned to reach the student world. It is unfortunately short-sighted if church leaders do not see the potential strategic value in the formation of future key church leaders through student ministry.

In addition to many pastors and teachers, God has raised up thousands of Sunday School teachers, deacons, elders, and others to serve in local churches. Incidentally, many key leaders in the history of the **Lausanne Movement** have had a background in student ministry, including John Stott, Samuel Escobar, and Gottfried Osei-Mensah. It is wise for church leaders to support Christian students when they are in university for only three to five years. That three to five years of investment can often reap fifty years of service, which is a very good investment indeed! Churches should not, therefore, short-sightedly view student ministries as being in competition with the church, but rather as a means of forming many who may be part of the next generation of leadership in local churches.

4. Graduates of student ministry are often engaged in taking the gospel to other countries. Many mission agencies testify to the fact that a high proportion of their key cross-cultural workers have graduated from student ministries. In recent years, ministries that have a particular focus on the student world, including **Campus Crusade for Christ**, IFES, and **The Navigators**, have indicated a growing interest among students around the world in taking the gospel to the ends of the earth. The huge Urbana conference organized by **InterVarsity Christian Fellowship USA**, an affiliate of IFES, occurs every three years and is attended by some twenty thousand students.

In addition, recent years have seen large student conferences focusing on missions in other parts of the world, including Korea, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, India, Taiwan, and Mexico. This will undoubtedly lead to a growing number of cross-cultural workers from these countries in years to come. Again, short-term investment stands to bring about significant payback for the cause of Christ around the world.

5. Society is often impacted by committed Christian graduates who have been helped to put down deep roots in Christ and form a Christian mind while they are undergraduates. Bobby Sng, a medical doctor and evangelical elder statesman in Singapore, has said that the best way to judge a student ministry is to look at what the alumni, or graduates, are doing twenty years after graduation. The Church of Christ needs to have believers acting as salt and light and communicating the gospel by all means in every area of society. The alumni of

student ministry can often play a key part in the fulfilment of this vision as they become doctors, engineers, politicians, lawyers, etc.

So what kind of student ministry should we encourage? One which is:

- *Evangelical*, firmly focused on acceptance of the absolute veracity of God's word, and its relevance for the modern world.
- *Evangelistic*, focusing on taking the evangel or gospel of Christ to the university, and thence to all areas of the world.
- *Biblically-rooted, discipleship-orientated*, focusing on helping students to put down deep roots in Christ.
- *Mission-minded*, challenging students to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.
- *Interdenominational*, because denominational groups often appear to give the impression of a divided Church on the campus, which is very unattractive to non-Christians. Evangelical Christian students gathering together are often stronger, as the gifts given to believers from different churches can be brought together as a corporate whole to enhance a united testimony to Christ.
- *Focused on student initiative*, enabling students to work out the best means of connecting with their non-Christian friends, gaining experience in exercising leadership, and learning from their successes and failures so that in the long run they have more to offer in serving Christ wherever he calls them.

I commend the support of student ministry to you.

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The Strategic Importance of Student Ministry: What Are You Living For?

By Jerry Root

All ministries for the Kingdom of Christ are both strategic and important. Nevertheless, the focus of this article directs attention to the high value of ministry to college and university students.

I knew an old dairy farmer who once told me that when he was starting out he bought young cows that had not yet reached their peak capacity in milk production. A friend of his bought old cows that were at their peak—although their past revealed a glowing record, they were in decline. The old farmer told me his business succeeded where his friend's had failed.

This illustration will not translate perfectly into ministry, for older Christians can be insightful, having grown wise from years of service; but, this is not always the case. Some grow old and become calloused, jaded, and bitter. Nevertheless, there are things common to nearly all young people—particularly those in universities—that makes ministry among them a valuable use of time. Unique characteristics of the university student underscore why mentoring and deploying laborers for Christ's vineyard from among this group is a wise use of time.

1. **University students are bright.** Some university students may be lazy; however, very, very few are unintelligent. Most, in fact, are highly intelligent. Ministry to university students harnesses this intelligence for kingdom work.
2. **University students are likely to emerge into positions of leadership wherever they go, and are thus strategically placed.** Tomorrow's leaders are studying in universities today. Investing in these men and women is an investment in the future. Furthermore, in countries where international students tend to go and study, an investment in the lives of those students can produce a significant impact on tomorrow's world. Ministries that reach out to international students are equipping, in the most efficient way, those who will need no language training or cultural preparation. These students will be fully equipped to serve their world.
3. **University students tend to be passionate about their beliefs.** There may be exceptions to the rule, but by-in-large students in universities, when directing their energies toward some endeavor, will be enthusiastic about it. Furthermore, they tend to recruit others to become involved in their interests as well. They have a natural proclivity for making disciples.
4. **University students tend to have energy.** They can work or play long into the night and still have energy the next day. This seeming tirelessness can also be harnessed and directed toward kingdom service.
5. **University students are mobile and less tied down; therefore, they can go wherever called to serve with little difficulty.** The older people are, and the more settled, the more difficult it is to motivate them to move out of their comfort zone into places where the needs may be greatest. University students, upon graduation, are more easily deployed to do kingdom work.
6. **University students have fewer bad habits engrained in them than older adults; consequently, they are more flexible and able to adjust to new challenges.** Anyone can pick up a habit that, given time, can become a bad one. University students have not lived long enough to have their habits so engrained. Consequently, the university student is more likely to have fewer bad habits to unlearn and will adjust to a new ministry more quickly.
7. **University students are more open to new ways of solving problems.** They may figure out how to accomplish tasks in ways others, who are more set in their ways, could not conceive.

These, and more qualities besides, reveal why ministry to university students is so strategic. It was Elton Trueblood, the Quaker theologian, who once observed that a person is beginning to understand the meaning of life when he or she can plant a tree under the shade of which he or she knows he or she will never sit. What Trueblood had in mind was to challenge others to invest in future generations.

Christianity is always one generation away from extinction. God has always been committed to building up believers to invest in the next generation. Elijah the prophet once thought he was the only faithful one left still serving God. In essence, God told him, "Are you kidding me! I have thousands you do not even know about." God was at work in the world building into the next generation of leaders who would serve him. Therefore, a commitment to ministry among young people generally, and collegians specifically, is getting in step with the work of the Holy Spirit.

Essentials in a Healthy Ministry to University Students

There are several essentials to developing a healthy ministry to university students:

1. A ministry to university students should concentrate on building infrastructure. A ministry cannot grow larger than the number it can serve logistically; therefore, a work with university students must identify potential leaders and cultivate their skills. Let your leaders develop their capacities for nurturing, caring, and training

others younger than themselves. This development of leaders must be ongoing, for students come to university campuses for a short time and the turnover is high.

Significant energy must always be directed toward leadership development and expansion of the infrastructure of the ministry. Furthermore, students who learn to serve in the enlarging ministry are then able to go out into their world and take the skills they have developed in order to serve the Church wherever they go. Moses developed a one in ten infrastructure when he led Israel in the wilderness. There is much to suggest that the early Church operated similarly through house churches and small groups led by its emerging leadership. A university model of ministry can follow these examples and those committed to this kind of ministry can study these biblical examples for further insight and application.

2. A ministry to university students should be biblically centered. In the brief time university students are within your sphere of influence teach them to know the Word of God and to study it for themselves. Young birds still in the nest must be fed by older birds. But, eventually it is time for the young birds to fly out of the nest. They will not survive if they have not learned to feed themselves. Teach students how to dig into God's word to find answers to the fresh challenges they are likely to face in the years ahead. Let them gain confidence in the wisdom they can find on the pages of scripture. University ministries thrive when they learn to love and value the scriptures. Furthermore, students nurtured in these ministries survive and thrive wherever they go.

When Ephesians 4:12 instructs the pastor-teacher to "equip the saints" for the work of ministry it becomes necessary to develop along these lines within student ministry. The Greek word for equip had many uses, but most frequently it was employed in two contexts:

1. **As the term used in medicine.** It referred to the mending and resetting of broken bones in the hopes that these limbs would become useful again. University students will come to Christ with their own forms of brokenness. Teach them how they might mend in the context of that perfect love of Christ which casts out fear and insecurity. The result will increase the student's confidence in the love of God to transform. He or she will also be better equipped to help others mend as well.
2. **As a nautical term which spoke of rigging a new built ship for full sail.** In this way, the ship could go out of the harbor and fulfill the purposes for which it was intended. Students may go into any number of vocations, but each is called to serve the Church and fulfill its Great Commission purpose in the world. University ministries must help students discover their God-given purpose. Help them to get out of the harbor of your ministry and launch them into the larger world. Ministry to university students must direct these students toward a lifetime of service. Deploy them.

3. A student ministry should cultivate an evangelistic passion in the lives of those who associate with it. This is relatively easy to do as universities are communities where students live among other students twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Teach the students in your ministry to pray for those around them. Teach them to share the gospel with those in their world in a manner that reveals authenticity and integrity.

As your students see others come to Christ, teach them to nurture and follow up with these new believers, folding them into the fellowship where they can also grow and flourish. This capacity to care for the souls of others will testify to the growing maturity of the students and prepare them to go out into the world to serve Christ and his kingdom.

Getting Started in a Ministry with Students

If ministry to university students is strategic, then this is a ministry worth developing wherever there are students. It is also worth beginning such a ministry as soon as possible. None of us is very life-skilled. Throughout life, we are likely to discover ourselves entering awkwardly into any new endeavor. A toddler learning to walk falls down and gets bruised. A 6-year-old taking the training wheels off the 2-wheel bike will fall and gets abrasions. An adolescent taking up a skateboard and trying to ride it for the first time is likely to

fall down and maybe even break a wrist or sprain an ankle. Every new endeavor is characterized by some degree of awkwardness.

In fact, if you are not awkward at some place in your life, you are just not growing. It is common to hear someone say, “If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing well.” On the other hand, G. K. Chesterton wrote that if a job is worth doing, it is worth doing poorly. If a job is worth doing and nobody is doing it, better someone do it poorly and awkwardly than not do it at all. Strategic ministries, such as this, need to be done if the Church is going to be equipped with leaders for tomorrow. It all gets down to this: which generation are you living for?

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Is Student Ministry Important?

By Mike Barnett

Do you think student ministry is important? Is it strategic for God’s mission to all nations? Or is it peripheral, a transitional phase of missions and ministry, a “necessary evil” compared to more vital aspects of missions? Does student ministry put a strain on resources? Is it basically a sacrificial aspect of the ministry of the Church or parachurch—or is it in fact a most effective means for communicating the gospel? Is student ministry primarily event-driven and entertainment-oriented—or does it flow from the personal relationships housed in authentic communities of young believers?

Be honest. When you contemplated answers to these questions, were you thinking of student ministry as something others do to/for students? Or were you thinking of something students do to/for others?

Most Strategic for the Mission of God Today

Student ministry—the kind done by students to/for others—is *most strategic* for the mission of God today. It has always been so. God worked with and through youth in biblical times. Think of David, the young shepherd boy loading his sling for battle against Goliath. Or the teenaged Joseph, the youngest son of Israel. How about Timothy, the pastoral student of Paul? Most scholars agree that the disciples of Jesus were in their late teens or twenty-somethings.

God also used students and youth to accomplish his mission throughout post-biblical history. Francis of Assisi, the thirteenth-century Italian, began his pilgrimage as a contrarian, rebel, mystic, and servant of the poor when he was a teenager. The Swiss Anabaptists students of Ulrich Zwingli, “first lights” of the free church movement of the sixteenth century, were martyred at the hands of Protestant and Catholic churches alike. Remember the outflow of young, talented, student missionaries from Europe and America during the decades following the Haystack Prayer Meeting (1806) or the remarkable mobilization of the gospel through the subsequent Student Volunteer Movement (1888)? How about the generation of students during the 1960s Jesus Movement?

Historically, God has used students and youth to expand, even explode, the gospel of Jesus to impact the nations for his glory.

Still Today

Open your eyes and look around the world. Do you see them? Students and youth are stepping up to serve as witnesses and disciplers among all peoples. Majority World youth and students, inspired and led by God’s Holy Spirit, are “salting and lighting” their worlds for Jesus Christ (Matthew 5). Do you see them? Take it from this old Baby Boomer, they are there—still today!

In Zurich, a church movement of students and young professional Christ-followers swept through cities in Switzerland and Germany in the past decade. This European mega-church network (International Christian Fellowship) resembles others around the world. Yes, its top leaders are older, but the energy comes from the youth, the twenty-somethings. These kinds of youth-driven churches are rising up around the world.

How many international students attending universities in China were catalysts for church starts in that country? History will show that God used students on the leading edge of his multiplication of churches in East Asia and beyond. As I travel the world, I discover students meeting in coffee shops, relating to each other in authentic communities, discussing faith issues, and dealing with global realities through the eyes and ears of postmodern, global citizens. They are uniquely aware and refreshingly naive at the same time.

Who Are These Students?

There are five characteristics which set these students apart.

1. *They are passionate about Jesus.* As always, students are passionate. They are willing to sacrifice and even die for the cause. God keeps using these radically passionate youth in his mission.
2. *They want to make a difference.* Although they may not know how, when, or where, they absolutely want to be used by God in extraordinary ways. Maybe they have seen their parents or elders arrive at too many meaningless life destinations. In fact, this is how God made youth. Their ideals have yet to be ground down. They want to be about something that can change the world.
3. *They want to do it together.* They are uncommonly communal. I'm writing this article from the Eastwest College in New Zealand (a [WEC International](#) ministry). This week I have thirty-one students, half are twenty-somethings from six countries—all training for the mission field. They don't always get along with each other; however, they want to work together. This need to "hang out" together is a natural model for biblical discipling and church planting.
4. *They are brutally transparent.* The younger they are, the more transparent they are. They see anomalies the rest of us miss. They have little patience for superficial politics and social fluff, but they may not speak out boldly against such. They simply disengage and seek out what is "real." Sounds like the youth and students of the Bible and history.
5. *They may not have a clue how God wants to use them.* Less performance-driven than Boomers and more engaged and concerned about others than Busters, today's students and youth lack direction. They want to make a difference; however, they seem in no hurry to do so. They contemplate next steps, experiment with possibilities, and venture into short-term experiences. In short, they need direction.

What Do We Do with Them?

There are six things we must do with them.

1. *We must accept them.* After all, we were once them! We must acknowledge that they are the future, not us. We need to remember that youth have always seemed irresponsible and impetuous to older, wiser ones. But, God is still using students to break through the darkness of the world and shape the future of the Church.
2. *We must empower them.* We must release them to lead and disciple others in Christ. We must be willing to allow them to make, and learn from, mistakes as we did. We must free them to make changes they feel led by God's Spirit to make.
3. *We must exhort them.* We must speak the "truth in love" (Ephesians 4) as we walk alongside them. Like Paul to Timothy, we must continue to teach them the basics of the faith, and when they seek us out (and they will), we must hold them accountable not to our standard, but to God's.

4. *We must coach them.* We must take the time to coach them along the way. The most strategic thing I do is not teaching in class or advising field missionaries. It is sitting one-on-one and in small groups with students. It is listening and then speaking into their lives as they allow. They will seek out our coaching if we make the time for them. It may be the most important thing we do.
5. *We must learn from them.* Perhaps the greatest blessing in working with students is learning from them. Sometimes it's re-learning some beautiful aspect of the gospel we've long forgotten. It might be a subtle reminder, or a challenge to our thinking. Often it comes with a jolt or shock and can be quite embarrassing. It must honor God to see his younger children teach his older ones. I think he smiles when it happens.
6. *We must celebrate them with God.* We must pray for them and thank God for how he uses them for his mission and his purposes. We must let them know we are proud of them and bless them.

Conclusion

After thirty years of international business, missions, and intercultural studies, and as a student of the history of God's mission, I am convinced that the *most strategic* thing for us to do is to release these students and youth to be on mission with God among all peoples. At its core, this just makes good missiological sense. Most of the least-reached world is young. Who better to reach them for Christ than the young? They are best suited to equip the saints to evangelize, disciple, and plant churches among the least-reached.

Churches, stop trying to conform twenty-somethings into your mold for their lives. Just keep them in front of Jesus, his word, and the Holy Spirit, and watch what he does through them. Mission agencies, stop fooling yourselves that investing in students and youth is peripheral. It is at the core of our task of world evangelization. Christian leaders, don't be afraid of their ideas. Let them experience what you did. Be patient with them as they test their faiths, stumble, and rise again, stronger and wiser than before. Majority World church leaders, don't lord your power and influence over your students and youth. And please don't use your culture and worldview as a scapegoat for not releasing your students to fulfill the Great Commission.

If you are a student—go for it! Don't let anyone grind down your Jesus-centered radical rough edges. But make sure you are radical for Jesus, not yourself or others. As Paul said Timothy, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). Launch out for Jesus, that all might know him. Be smart, find some older and wiser coaches and draw from their wisdom. Teach them along the way and they will be blessed. The older I get, the younger I think. Thank you for that, Lord!

Is student ministry important? What do you think?

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Claiming Back Our Campuses for Christ: An Example from South Africa

By Greg Smerdon

It would appear South Africans have forgotten that their 14-year-old democracy was born at the cost of many lives. The build-up to the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994 was foreshadowed by a possible bloodbath; however, God stayed the storm. In recent weeks, South Africa experienced a tidal wave of xenophobic-related violence, which has contributed significantly to the already escalating crime rate. This sudden, unforeseen spate of attacks has startled our nation, bringing to mind again the inhumane images that were synonymous with the apartheid era. The resurgence of a paradigm that "life is cheap" has resulted in the

death of sixty fellow Africans who had optimistically sought asylum and/or opportunities for employment in our “rainbow nation.”

Have we neglected the miracle of our democracy—as well as the God who delivered us—as did the children of Israel? The generation of Israelites, who came after Joshua and the elders who had taken possession of the promise, had forgotten that the Land was a gift from God. They “... knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel,” (Joshua 2:10) hence Israel plummeted to a state of apostasy, anarchy, and apathy, and the end result was inevitable: “... everyone was doing what was right in their own eyes” (Judges 21:25).

Asking the Hard Questions

The apprehension about the future of South Africa has caused many to pack their bags “for Perth.” Many who cannot afford to leave, and others who choose to stay, are asking the question: “What can be done to turn the tide of moral decay, of violence and crime that our nation is rapidly heading toward?” My avid response is that we, the Church, should adopt an enduring approach by *investing substantially into our children, youth, and young adults*. A place of immediate departure would be an effective, well-organized, and strategic plan to restore godly values on South African university campuses and schools, one that can pave the way to a sound moral and spiritual climate in our nation.

At NIRSA (National Initiative for the Reformation of South Africa), 450 Christian leaders from a number of different domains cleared their diaries in a matter of eight weeks and responded to a clarion call to seek God’s solution to the problems in our nation in the spirit of Jehoshaphat: “Lord, we are powerless, our eyes are on thee...we don’t know what to do.” (2 Chronicles 20:12). These representatives of the Church re-affirmed, through thirty-nine resolutions, that we must move beyond repentance for our silence and live out, in a practical manner, the biblical meaning of being “the salt of the earth.” This call was a fresh reminder that we should not lose sight of the fact that our campuses are churning out the next generation of leaders, who, if not grounded in the faith and having an understanding of how to live out a kingdom lifestyle, will perpetuate the current situation as was the case with Israel, post Joshua.

The kingdom of darkness seems to understand the strategy of investing in youth as a means to promote its purposes as is evident in the story of Daniel. When Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem, he not only plundered the temple of its valuable pieces of furniture and godly vessels, he also usurped Israel’s most valuable resource: its youth and young adults. He knew that if you want to cripple a nation, you go for its youth and brainpower; he thus ordered his chief eunuch to bring to the palace “young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king’s palace” (Daniel 1:3-4). If a heathen king knew the young adults of a nation are the foundation stones to establishing an empire, how much more should we in the Church be pouring ourselves into the lives of young South Africans who are the key building blocks to a morally-sound nation?

Singapore, a city-state with very meager natural resources (i.e., it has to buy its water from Malaysia and has no minerals) invested substantially in human capital and has now become one of the fastest growing economies in the world, with minimal crime and unemployment. If the Church could make a significant input into the lives of the future leaders in schools and on campuses around the country, South Africa could reap a similarly beneficial harvest in years to come.

The University Clarion Call of African Enterprise

It is our desire at [African Enterprise](#) to generate adequate financial and human resources and enlist the help of people who are called to be part of a vision that will impact the next generation of leaders currently on university campuses. Our vision is to establish six groupings (with three universities in each):

- Kwa Zulu Natal (Pietermaritzburg and Durban, Westville, Zululand)
- Pretoria/Tshwane (Pretoria University, UNISA, University of the North)

- Johannesburg (Wits University, Johannesburg University)
- Orange Free State/North West (Potchefstroom, Orange Free State University)
- Cape Town (Stellenbosch, University of Western Cape, University of Cape Town)
- Eastern Cape (Rhodes University, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Fort Hare)

Each university in these groupings would have a major mission every third year, with smaller follow-up missions taking place in between. Our goal is to have a full-time worker taking care of the networks established on each combination of three campuses. This was the strategy that kept universities like Princeton, Harvard, Oxford, and Cambridge focused on the reason for their existence, namely, *the quest for truth*.

Since we have a unique understanding of truth, Christians have a unique right to be woven into the life and soul of university campuses. We know (from the life we now live) that truth is not a body of knowledge (Greeks held onto this philosophy to their peril); rather, it is a person—Jesus. He is the only one who ever existed who has been able to boldly proclaim (John 14:6) “I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me,” and he substantiated this claim with an offer of eternal life by dying on the cross (1 Corinthians 1:18).

When the Apostle Paul writes in Colossians 1:16-17 “For by him all things were created...He is before all things and in him all things hold together,” it compels us to revisit the original motto of Oxford University—“*Dominus Illuminatio Mea*” (“The Lord is my Light,” Psalm 27). If all things in life are created by God and for him, how can we provide effective service to his kingdom in South Africa and beyond without having him illuminate the minds of the next generation? How then can young adults (youth and children) be sufficiently equipped to provide godly leadership in key positions of government, business, education, etc, if they rely solely on academic knowledge for their preparation for the working world?

At African Enterprise it has been our great privilege to facilitate major missions on campuses across Africa. We have seen amazing and encouraging results in our recent missions at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), Rhodes, Wits, and the University of Zululand. We are eagerly awaiting the anticipated mission to the University of Johannesburg later this year and to Durban University of Technology in 2009.

We give God praise that the 3-year cycle is already working with Rhodes and Wits universities, both of which have mini follow-up missions planned for later this year. The far-reaching effects of these missions can be seen in many testimonies. Recently, I received a phone call from two former UWC students currently exerting a Christian influence on matters surrounding the leadership of a city in the arenas of health and the environment.

As this vision grows and becomes a reality, I am convinced we can positively affect the moral climate of South Africa and the continent, and witness increasing signs, evidence of the reign of the Kingdom of God. Please pray and search your heart about this vision and about how you might help support the many societies on South African campuses that are already doing a sterling job of nation building. Pray for unity, for a wider vision, and for greater impact as these societies work together. Pray that they will have a wider vision to reach our youth and young adults for Christ. The illumination that only the Spirit of God can bring into the darkness of this world is needed now more than ever in South Africa.

Greg Smerdon is team leader/CEO of **African Enterprise** South Africa. He preaches in Africa and abroad and is involved in leadership development and church planting. Smerdon leads a community church and lives in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, with his wife and children.

Reaching Future Leaders through Word and Deed

By Dana Ryan

In August 2006, International Bible Church (IBC) in Tempe, Arizona, USA, held its first official service. Twelve of us met in Quo Vadis, a Christian bookstore located a stone's throw from Arizona State University (ASU). Our goal was, and still is, to reach the world's future leaders.

The neighborhood surrounding the bookstore, where our church continues to meet every Sunday, was deemed by the 2000 U.S. Census as the most densely populated and most diverse in Arizona. The area covers only about one-eighth of a square mile, but is home to more than 3,100 residents which is equivalent to about 26,000 people per square mile—a population density comparable to that of New York City. Within the small area there is a broad range of ethnicities. Our church mirrors the neighborhood, with more than fifteen nations represented in our group of about forty to fifty people.

Many of the international students who study at Arizona State University are among the brightest and best from their respective countries. Some return home to hold powerful positions of influence in corporations, universities, or government. The leadership of IBC aims to communicate God's transforming gospel to the next generation of leaders so that they will use their influence to bring God's message to their home nations.

Most of the international students who attend IBC are graduate students with demanding academic schedules and rigorous study habits. They enjoy learning, discussing, and investigating. Some even view attendance at our church as a mere cultural experience—a pleasant augmentation to their American education. The challenge, then, is to communicate the gospel in a way that leads to transformation rather than just the addition of more head knowledge. But how can this be done with such gifted and highly trained intellectuals? How can the church leadership help make that connection between the mind and the heart?

The Inquisitiveness of Tao

I still remember how excited our core group of believers was when Tao,* a student from China, said, "China needs this," after listening to a message about God's love and the importance of treating all peoples with respect. One day Tao observed that people in China didn't care for one another. If they did, the whole nation would be transformed. The next day, Tao took part in a square dancing event hosted by one of ASU's Christian student organizations. Also in attendance was a group of pilots-in-training from China. When Tao heard about the pilots, he seemed intrigued. After the event, my husband asked Tao if he had talked with any of the pilots and Tao responded, saying, "To be honest, they're not very educated so I don't really have any interest in talking with them." The message of God's love still had not penetrated Tao's heart.

Intellectually, the idea of loving others made sense to Tao. If people treated one another with kindness and respect, the world would be a better place. Less war, more peace—who wouldn't jump on that bandwagon? But Christianity is not just a collection of ideas to be debated and studied; Christianity is a way of life. That is why the Apostle Paul talked about believers as the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27). Non-believers must understand that Christianity is not simply a "religion," but an experience of the Body of Christ. That means including non-Christians in what we do as Christians. That means loving them even when they vehemently disagree with us, as was the case with Yujin.*

The Transformation of Yujin

Yujin, a visiting scholar from China, joined our weekly services, but always sat in the back with her arms crossed beneath a deep scowl. From the outset, she made clear her Communist beliefs and never hesitated to question a speaker after the service ended. She debated, argued, and became incensed. And yet, she kept coming back.

Believers in the church embraced Yujin. They invited her over for dinner and included her in holiday celebrations. At Christmastime, Yujin joined various groups to help serve meals to the homeless, give presents to needy children, and sing carols to the elderly. And as our small group of believers watched and prayed, Yujin

began to transform. Gone were the crossed arms and the deep scowl. Gone was the combative spirit. She still had many questions; however, there was a gentleness about her that hadn't been there before. She was somehow softer, as if something was wearing away the hard edges in her life.

On Yujin's last Sunday with our church, we gave her a send-off. As she came forward to be prayed over and to receive a gift, tears filled her eyes. And the next day she returned to the bookstore for one last goodbye. She gazed over the bookstore and said, "I just have so many warm memories from this place." What a testimony to the Body of Christ!

God is pursuing Yujin. She returned to China a different person. She also returned with the name of a Christian pastor written on a piece of paper. Her journey is not over.

Yujin heard the truth of God's Word preached every Sunday; however, she also saw it lived out on the days in between. Those of us in leadership positions at IBC know that students watch us closely. They want to know if we believe what we preach. They want to know if what we say on Sunday matches what we do on Monday. They want to see if Christianity is the answer to a broken world. They want to know if it is just a "Western thing" or if it transcends ethnic and cultural lines.

Teaching the gospel is paramount. People must know who God is and what he says. But as James said, "What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?" (James 2:14). Actions always stem from beliefs and if we, as leaders, claim to follow certain beliefs, our actions must be in alignment.

The Lessons of Sun

I was particularly challenged by Sun,* a Korean student, whom I had the privilege of discipling for a few months before she returned home. Our relationship grew quite close as we spent time together both studying the Bible and at various social events. In every situation, Sun's first thought was for other people: What did they enjoy doing? Were they comfortable? Did they need anything? Could she help in any way?

Her commitment to the needs of others convicted me. I was the Christian, but she, as a non-believer, was the one successfully living out the biblical principle of unselfishness. During one of our Bible studies, Sun commented about the selfishness of Americans. Her observation opened the door for me to acknowledge my own selfishness and to share how God had used her to teach me about thinking of others more. It was a humbling experience; however, if humility is to be a mark of a Christian, what better way to teach the principle than to let God use my weakness for his glory?

By God's grace, we can communicate the gospel to the leaders of tomorrow. We can display God's glory through our words and actions. To do so we must walk in integrity and truth. We must also walk in humility, confessing our mistakes and forgiving one another. If we are faithful in our leadership, the next generation will hear and see the message of redemption and, by God's grace, they will be changed.

*Name changed to protect identity.

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PERSPECTIVES

An Agenda for Change: Living Out the Social Gospel

By Joel Edwards

If you have ever stayed at the Holiday Inn Express hotel chain you will know they have a pretty well resourced department for consistency. I am currently in the middle of a United Kingdom tour promoting my new book, *An Agenda for Change*, and am fairly sure that one night my hotel room was in the city of Leicester and the following night in Norwich. But to all intents and purposes they were the same room. Every detail was identical—the layout, the bedspread, the pictures. Even the coffee stains looked familiar. Watch the movie “Groundhog Day” and you may get some idea of my disorientation.

The irony of this is that the subject of my book is the future of *evangelicalism*, a “brand” that could barely be less homogenous. We come in all shapes and sizes and have spent years debating exactly who and what an evangelical is.

And while one group gets bogged down on definitions, another has embarked on an altogether more radical project. Their belief is that *evangelical* has such a bad public relations problem that they want to ditch the word altogether. *Evangelical* is seen as synonymous with a moral myopia which carps on about abortion and homosexuality, but never talks about poverty, climate change, or social exclusion.

Rehabilitating Evangelical: The Challenges

Should we ditch the word *evangelical*? No, I believe there is an alternative: rehabilitation. The book and the tour are the beginning of a conversation as to how we can make that happen. How do we get the word *evangelical* to become recognized once again as what it simply means: good news? We face three key challenges if we are to achieve this:

1. We need to humbly reassess some of our tribal theological rigidities. The theological left must accept it isn't always right. This side often sees *evangelical* as an over-fifty club whose members forever discuss things nobody cares about. They are often embarrassed by the word, thinking it is linked with obsessions about personal morality rather than world hunger. Those from emerging church communities which often sit on the left can become fixated with cultural relevance and forget that history often gives us the best view of the future. No stigma-free faith wedded to its culture is likely to last the course. And whatever we feel about the sterile technicians of expository preaching, story-telling and funny jokes are no substitutes for an open Bible.

But if the left isn't always right, the right is sometimes wrong. There is invariably a kind of intellectual arrogance which comes with the certainties of conservative evangelicals. There is a tendency to mask grace in the name of truth without realising that truth without grace feels like a lie. Evangelicalism owes a great deal to those on the right. But their certainties can lock us into certain inflexible ways of doing church, the old agendas of a Moral Majority mindset, or even an uncritical Zionism with no interest in the pain of Palestinian Christians.

If evangelicalism is to reposition itself as a transforming movement in the twenty-first century, then it is the vast majority of people in the evangelical centre who are going to take us there. They have a left-right gene and the swing vote. As long as you walk on the foundations of Christian beliefs, people in the centre will let you take risks in the public square. But they will walk away from you if you step off those foundations of our faith.

2. We must present Christ credibly in cultures which have increasing vendettas against the idea of God in the public square. I do not say that lightly. The last thing I want is to come across as a whingeing Christian, protesting at the loss of religious influence in society. But there is a difference between demanding special pleading for faith and asking for equal status. My concern in recent years is toward a secular agenda determined to ditch the place of faith altogether. This is both dangerous for our society and profoundly undemocratic.

Even for those in our culture willing to accept some voice for faith, Christ is just one god among many. Our society is signed up to equality, human rights, and civil liberties; however, it struggles with exclusive claims about truth. It recoils from the idea that salvation can only be found in Jesus Christ. It ridicules the idea of hell. It cannot cope with divine judgement. For *exclusive*, read *fundamental*.

In this context, how do we present credibly a man who said “I am the truth”? To start with, we must not dumb down Christ’s Lordship. Credible Christianity means being as confident about who he was as he was about himself. In a liberal democracy we should be free to say that “Jesus Christ is Lord.” However, his Lordship is not a truncheon with which to beat other people. Our task is not to pull down Mohammed, Krishna, or Guru Nanak; it is to lift up Jesus.

But a credible response also needs to undomesticate the Christ evangelicals have held captive in fearful subcultures. We have become too comfortable with a risk-averse Christ who is not the Christ of the Bible. I’m not convinced that Jesus would be publicly identifiable with our moral agenda. I think he would have identified more with Make Poverty History than demonstrations about sexual orientation. I think the City of London would be more threatened by Jesus than prostitutes would. And religious establishments and our internalised budgets might feel his displeasure more than a transsexual. He would defend our children above the Blasphemy Act. We have tamed him so thoroughly that few people get a chance to know him. He belongs on the pavement, but we have chained him in our pulpits.

Presenting Christ credibly will also mean not shying away from the Christ of miracles, a fundamental part of his identity and credibility. Yet there is a problem with signs and wonders in the modern Church; it’s a wonder we see so little sign of them. Miracles cause us problems because charismatics can make exaggerated claims that often end in disillusionment, while conservatives don’t invite the inexplicable at risk of losing intellectual control. But presenting Christ credibly must include the idea of mystery. Rational arguments are only a part of what makes the Bible believable. If we deny the place of miracles we may find ourselves out of step with a culture far more willing to accept mystery and magic than we are ourselves!

A credible Christ is also a conversationalist. He will never throw out statements that no one can challenge. Look at the Gospels and see that he loves to ask questions which search out the human spirit and the soul of a society. Our challenge is to get involved in the world’s conversations and to bring the mind and questions of Jesus to the issues of our day. Good questions come from informed minds, and so a credible Church must draw from good research and thought-through reasons for our faith.

3. We must integrate long-term thinking. In the autumn of 2006 I spent a weekend in the English cathedral town of Salisbury. A fascinating exhibition told me the cathedral took almost forty years to erect. During a time when life expectancy did not exceed the mid-thirties, very few of the workers saw the finished product. However, they were building for the duration, and their long-term thinking means that 750 years after its completion we can still marvel at this living house of worship.

It is this kind of thinking that will be required if evangelicals are to be part of a movement for the spiritual and social transformation of our nations. We must become cathedral builders, because God is a long-term thinker. Before the world began Jesus was already commissioned to atone for sins we had yet to commit. The entire Bible is a statement of intentionality.

The trouble is that long-term thinking does not always come easily to evangelicals. We love things to happen immediately. However, if we want what we build to last the distance, we must build cathedrals, not prefabricated huts.

Not even revivals should detract us from our long-term agenda for change. Revival reminds me of the man who complained that I had prayed for him and he ended up in the hospital. I told him that had I not prayed for him, he may be dead! Revival is a snippet of heaven and a reminder that God still has our best interests at heart. But waiting for the revival that will change public life and society may be an abdication of our responsibility to work strategically with God to witness a broader change in our culture.

As American author Charles Colson put it: “Our job is not only to build up the Church, but also to build society to the glory of God.” And so we need to mobilise our churches for spiritual and social change: proclamation and

acts of kindness. Prayer *and* practical action. Evangelism *and* community engagement. Not either/or, but both/and. The old dichotomy between words and works is dying. Social action is not the same as the social gospel. As the theologian Alistair McGrath told me, “The social gospel got one thing right and everything else wrong, ‘What God has joined together let no man put asunder.’”

Christian citizenship must therefore be integral to our discipleship. Strategic Christian involvement in the marketplace, business, the arts, education, media, sports, local government, and community involvement is not an optional extra. If evangelicals become prophetically and strategically involved in the pain of our communities we may need less spiritual warfare concerning people we have nothing to do with. This is because central to our understanding of Christian citizenship is a radical commitment to serve other people, not just to protect our own interests, power, or influence. And let us have no doubts: governments and local authorities are desperate for our help—even where they are unconvinced about our faith.

So here is our agenda for change. It’s a united community of people who unveil Christ, presenting him credibly to government and culture; it’s a movement of people who are good news to the poor and marginalised; and it’s a Church mobilised for spiritual and cultural change, consumed by a long-term vision of a better society. As my friend Mike Morris once said, in this agenda for change “some will be saved, but everyone should benefit.”

[Joel Edwards’ book *An Agenda for Change* is published by Zondervan. Tour details can be found at www.eauk.org/a4c.]

Rev. Joel Edwards is general director of the [Evangelical Alliance UK](#). He is committed to seeing long-term change for the world’s poor and chairs the [Micah Challenge International](#) Council. Edwards leaves the Evangelical Alliance in September 2008 and will bring his passion for justice for the poor to two new roles as he joins Tony Blair’s Faith Foundation and becomes the first international director of Micah Challenge.

Fruitful Harvest from a Small Seed

By Gordon Govier

A church in Minnesota (USA) played a key role in leadership development for an international ministry operating in 150 countries. In March 2008 members of the Ebenezer Lutheran Brethren Church of Minneapolis hosted Daniel Bourdagné, the general secretary of the [International Fellowship of Evangelical Students](#) (IFES). The meeting was a joyous reunion of the type not particularly common in this world but anticipated by many believers upon their arrival in heaven.

As IFES general secretary, Bourdagné directs an international network of indigenous student ministries in 150 countries (including [InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA](#), one of the founding members of IFES). In each country, hundreds to thousands of college students play a unique role in the growth and vibrancy of the Christian faith in that country.

Bourdagné’s Christian heritage is linked to the [Lutheran Brethren denomination](#)’s commitment to the Great Commission. In 1920, shortly after his marriage at Ebenezer church, the Lutheran Brethren sent J.I. Kaardal and his wife as missionaries to Africa. For decades, Kaardal traveled by foot and horseback through the rural villages of southwestern Chad, sharing the gospel with the residents. Daniel Bourdagné’s father was among those who responded; he later became a leader in the church in Chad.

Lutheran Brethren missionary Donald Raun led a team that translated the Bible into Moudang, Bourdagné’s tribal language. He also baptized Bourdagné and his mother.

J.I. Kaardal has passed on, but Donald Raun and his wife Orpha joined denominational leaders, fellow missionaries, pastors, and church members in hosting Bourdagné in the joyous reunion in March. Bourdagné

brought his Moundang Bible and his mother's hymn book with him, as further evidence of the importance of the work of Lutheran Brethren missionaries in his family's heritage in the faith.

Bourdanné graciously thanked the church and its denomination, and U.S. Christians in general, for sending missionaries to Africa. His encouraging words warmed the hearts of many adult children of Lutheran Brethren missionaries who were present. Among them was a woman whose parents were murdered in Cameroun and another whose father led a team that translated the Bible into the Fulani language.

The Lutheran Brethren family rejoiced in the privilege of praying for Bourdanné, his family, and the ministry of IFES. Recognizing that simple obedience to God's calling had produced a rich harvest, they celebrated God's work in the life of Bourdanné's family and the church in Chad, and also celebrated Bourdanné's call to IFES, and through IFES, the blessing of participating in God's work in 150 countries.

Gordon Govier is a journalist in Madison, Wisconsin, USA. He is employed by [InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA](#).

[New Religions and Spiritualities: Engaging the Contemporary Religious West](#)

By Michael T. Cooper

In the spring of 2005 I presented a paper at the Midwest regional conference of the American Academy of Religion held at DePaul University in Chicago (USA). The paper addressed factors that contribute to the growth of a contemporary Pagan religion. After the presentation, several in attendance came to me with questions. One question stood out: "Dr. Cooper, are you a Pagan?" It was an honest question from an individual who assumed anyone speaking favorably about Paganism must be a Pagan as well. I was happy to respond, "No, I am not a Pagan. I am an evangelical Christian."

With that response, a collective look of disbelief fell over the faces of those standing around. Such a look, as well as some individual comments, communicated the immediate respect that I gained in their eyes for demonstrating an understanding acquired from dialogue and observations.

Over the years, I have had people disagree with me on my approach to engaging religious others. In a recent email, one such detractor wrote: "Why in the world are you occupied with a study of Paganism? All the nonsense of communicating the message of Christ's love and hope to make some adherents is futile."

Others have responded less radically, such as: "I found your applications not only applicable to Christians reaching out to Pagans, but to all Christians attempting to reach out to anyone. Your principles were very universal and insightful." While not all will share my particular academic emphasis on understanding other religions, most might agree that respect for religious people as created in the image of God is a necessary Christian virtue, especially when one is attempting to engage such people with the gospel.

At the very heart of Lausanne Issue Group 16 is the desire to understand and respect the people we encounter. In this vein, the Issue Group has partnered with Trinity International University (Deerfield, Illinois, USA) and the [Western Institute for Intercultural Studies](#) to co-sponsor an international conference addressing new religious movements and spiritualities. New religions are generally thought of in terms of religious groups forming out of the dominant religion of a culture. These often-called "deviant religions" break with the dominant religion and shape into new religious movements. Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses are most commonly associated with such movements.

However, recent attempts at understanding new religious movements in the West have included Western and non-Western religions surfacing as the result of immigration, globalization, and/or Easternization, as well as pre-Christian European religions that result from the revival of native, reconstructed religions.

Religion continues to play a significant role in the spiritual marketplace of the religiously unregulated West. The corresponding decline of religious fervor once associated with the secularization thesis is challenged by the notion that a significant majority of westerners identify themselves as religious and/or spiritual. Today's Christian will be confronted with multiple religious worldviews, whether in ministry, in the workplace, or in their neighborhood. Developing the academic knowledge and practical skills to effectively engage these worldviews is a necessary part of equipping Christians to engage their local and global contexts.

Hosted by the School of Biblical and Religious Studies at Trinity International University in Deerfield, Illinois, USA, the 16-19 October 2008 conference is a gathering of practitioners and scholars addressing the decline of Christianity in the West and the concomitant growth of new people groups expressed in religions and spiritualities such as modern Paganism, Western Esotericism, New Age, and other alternative spiritualities.

Plenary sessions and parallel workshops will address the topics of the future of religion in the West, the make up of the alternative religious marketplace, and approaches in engaging adherents of alternative spiritualities. Because we believe this is an important conference, registration is only \$60USD for the ten plenary sessions and twelve parallel workshops. Graduate course credit can also be obtained through Trinity Graduate School. More information about the conference is online at: www.tiu.edu/postchristendomconference.

The conference will be an opportunity to hear leading evangelical scholars address the growing significance of the religious shift in Western society. Plenary sessions include:

- *Sacred Rights: The Claims of Indigenous People to Their Sacred Places*, Stephen Paul Kennedy (Trinity Graduate School)
- *From paganism to Paganism: The Continuing Evolution of Western Religious History and the Emergence of New Religious Identities*, Michael T. Cooper (Trinity Graduate School)
- *From the Occult to Western Esotericism: Catching Up with Changes in the New Age Movement*, J. Gordon Melton (Institute for the Study of American Religion)
- *Complex Identity, Christian Conversion, and Missiological Praxis*, Terry C. Muck (Asbury Theological Seminary)
- *Evangelicals and the Emergent Church*, James Beverley (Tyndale Seminary)
- *The C1-C6 Contextualization Spectrum Applied to Evangelical-LDS Conversations*, Craig Blomberg (Denver Seminary)
- *From Cult to Sect? Theological and Structural Reformation in the Family: The Children of God since the Death of the Prophet*, James Chancellor (The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary)
- *The Primacy of the Pastoral/Subjective Evidential Apologetic for Post-Christendom Spiritualities*, Ross Clifford (Morling College)
- *How Would the Church's Earliest Theologians Respond to New Religious Movements?* Gerald R. McDermott (Roanoke College)
- *Western Institute for Intercultural Studies Panel Discussion*, John W. Morehead

In addition to the plenary sessions, the conference has scheduled twelve parallel workshops with sessions ranging from Buddhism in the West to a theology of the discernment of spirits.

We live in a cultural milieu not all that dissimilar from first century Athens. As Luke noted, the Athenians enjoyed hearing new ideas (Acts 17:21). Similarly in our context, the creation of thousands of new religious movements and spiritualities in the last half century testifies to the same. The Apostle Paul demonstrated how the Christian should live and act in the marketplace by respectfully engaging in dialogue while learning about people. As Christopher Partridge has reflected,

Christians will need to speak to their friends in other faiths as Christians and address the specific concerns and needs of the Christian community (e.g., provide reliable information for churches, theologians, pastors and missionaries). As such, the study of religion is part of the larger task of constructing a Christian worldview and responding to Jesus' Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20).¹

Endnote

1. 2002. "The Study of Religion." In *Dictionary of Contemporary Religion in the Western World: Exploring Living Faiths in Postmodern Contexts*, ed. Christopher Partridge, 144. Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA: Intervarsity.

Dr. Michael T. Cooper is associate professor of religion and contemporary culture and the director of the master of arts in communication and culture at Trinity International University in Deerfield, Illinois, USA. He has contributed numerous papers, articles, and chapters dealing with missions in Western society and the revival of Pagan religions.

URBAN COMMUNITIES

Short-term Student Ministries with Slum Communities

By Glenn Smith

This summer, thousands of university students from the Global North moved into urban slum communities in the Global South to live alongside the poor.

(See the statistics in the sidebar.)

Working Definitions and Facts

“Urban poor” defined: Those living on less than US\$1 or US\$2 per day (Millennium Development Agenda). Those living with inadequate income, shelter and access to infrastructure and basic daily services. Those who have an unstable asset base, little to no access to their rights as citizens and are voiceless and powerless in their communities.

Number of urban poor: est. 2 billion

“Slum community” defined: Communities with inadequate access to safe drinking water and sanitation, poor structural housing, overcrowding and insecure residential status (UN-Habitat).

Number of people living in slum

In **February**, Rebecca Atallah recounted the ministry she pursues with the garbage villages in Cairo. On a recent visit with her, she shared the marvellous contribution that InterVarsity students make each summer in her city. Teams serve with the children in the Mokattam community and with Sudanese refugees living in Cairo. I thought it would be appropriate to tell their story. In June, Scott Bessenecker wrote about **InterVarsity Christian Fellowship's** ministry across the globe in slum communities. (Visit www.urbana.org/feat.trek.home.cfm and his **blog** for an excellent resource on ministry with the urban poor. Consult the book list below for texts Bessenecker has contributed on our theme.)

communities: est. 924 million

This month, a former Canadian student, Julia Smith-Brake, writes about her experience with child-headed households in Kigali. She did an internship as a student in Rwanda.

Over the past nine months we have walked with practitioners into Cap-Haïtien, Phnom Penh, Luanda, Angola, Bhopal and Calcutta, Cairo, Freetown, with Roma communities in Romania, and with the poor in Nordic cultures. We have also seen that poverty is a broad concept. It touches economic, social, physical, and spiritual realities. It affects peoples' identity and includes social exclusion, absence of harmony in life and well-being, deprivation at every level of life, and one's ability to participate in the welfare of the community.

However, as Jayakumar Christian points out, the causes of poverty can be traced to "inadequacies in the worldview." A worldview can be a powerful instrument in perpetuating chronic poverty. All cultures and societies have within their worldview construct aspects of fallenness. And as we have seen, true Christian spirituality cannot be divorced from the struggle for justice and care for the poor and the oppressed. Spiritual formation is about empowering Christians to live their faith in the world. As students work alongside the poor, they learn about inadequacies in their own worldviews and experience incredible personal transformation.

Worthwhile Books to Consult on Slum Communities

- For an introduction to urban missiology, I would recommend the urban reader, *The Gospel and the Urban World*. This "book" travels as a cd-rom and contains seven hundred pages of some of the best articles on urban ministry that have been printed in the past three decades, including good articles on slum communities. You can consult the reader and order it online at: www.direction.ca/boutique/cederom.htm.
- The 2003 United Nations global report on human settlements *The Challenge of Slums* (London: Earthscan) is a must-read for everyone interested in knowing more about the subject. It is a thorough study with plenty of charts and details.
- Scott Bessenecker has written the very readable 2006 text *The New Friars* (InterVarsity Press). This book underscores principles and tells wonderful stories of men and women doing ministry with slum communities around the globe. He also edited the 2005 book *Quest for Hope in the Slum Community* (Waynesborough: Authentic). This is a very good collection of articles on the numerous challenges of ministry in these communities.
- *Planet of Slums* by Mike Davis was published in 2006 (London: Verso). It is an excellent exploratory book on the subject of slums. It is quite thorough and very readable.
- *Shadow Cities—A Billion Squatters, a New Urban World* by Robert Neuwirth was published in 2006 (Milton Park: Routledge, 2006). This investigative reporter spent months living in squatter communities in places like Mumbai and Istanbul. He paints an upbeat picture of life in these unique places.

Glenn Smith is senior associate for urban mission for the [Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization](#) and is executive director of [Christian Direction](#) in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. He is a professor of urban theology and missiology at the Institut de théologie pour la Francophonie at the Université de Montréal and at the Université chrétienne du Nord d’Haïti. He is also professor of urban missiology at Bakke Graduate University in Seattle, Washington, USA.

Community in Post-Genocide Rwanda

By Julia M. Smith-Brake

As part of my undergraduate degree in international development studies, I did an internship in Rwanda in the summer of 2006. Because of the 1994 genocide, it made an interesting case study and I knew quite a bit about the country. I could describe its history, from pre-colonial times to the present; I had read many articles and arguments on the causes, circumstances, and impact of the genocide. In addition, I had written papers on its economic situation and future.

My theoretical knowledge of Rwanda was incredibly valuable; however, what I learned from working and living in Rwanda made it pale in comparison. One thing I observed early on was that there was calm in Rwanda—a lack of chaos that one envisions for “Third World” African countries. In the months I spent there, I got to know a culture that is recovering, and yet is still haunted by its past. Although still struggling with extreme poverty, regional unrest, and the ongoing challenges of reconciliation, the Rwandese are people with a single vision—for genocide not to happen again, development is the answer.

Sidebar: Gacaca as a Means to Enforce Community Justice after the Genocide

One disputed and controversial way of remembering the genocide is the practice of Gacaca. Gacaca is the pre-colonial Rwandan court system set up to enforce community justice. It is based in the community at the village level and was traditionally used to settle land claim or family law disputes. Its ultimate goal is reconciliation and compromise for both the plaintiff and the accused.

Because of the huge numbers of perpetrators in the genocide, they could not all be incarcerated and tried in a legal or international court system. Consequently, the government instituted a purely Rwandan solution to this problem by setting up Gacaca courts in every town in Rwanda.

Once a week, all businesses close down for half a day, all activity is brought to a halt, and villagers gather at the court to discuss claims and disputes. At Gacaca, either victims can accuse a person of a certain crime committed during the genocide or a criminal may come forth and confess of his or her own will. Once the crime is denounced, appointed judges and mediators seek to reconcile the two parties involved and sentence the accused according to his or her crime (this usually involves a certain number of years of community service and

The field of international development and multilateral and bilateral aid over the past decades has been characterized by top-down development projects and state-led initiatives. Aid has been “delivered,” regardless of the receivers’ actual self-stated needs or desires. There is a slow and gradual shift taking place from top-down development to community-based projects and an emphasis on capacity development.

In Rwanda, a country that hosts over four hundred Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the 1994 genocide influences the kind of development work being done and how it is being done. The needs of a weakened society due to genocide and the call for grassroots-led development form a paradox. There are some community-based initiatives being encouraged; however, stating a need for stability and rebuilding, the government rules with a tight fist and often instructs how development will be carried out. This paradox is the center of community development in Rwanda.

What Is Community-based Development?

Community-based development “refers to those activities and programs focused on a specific locality and directed by the residents thereof. These are activities ‘in’ and ‘of’ the community’s citizens.”¹ The ideal for community-based development is for communities to survive and thrive without external help, especially financial help. The reality of the Developing World is that communities need external help to get out of the poverty trap in which they are caught.²

Therefore, the practice of capacity development can go hand in hand with the development of community-based frameworks. The outcome of combining community-based initiatives and capacity development is not only the creation of self-sustaining development programs, but also the fostering of ownership within these communities.

Community in Post-Genocide Rwanda

From April to July 1994, Rwanda suffered one of the most horrific and devastating events of the twentieth century. While the world turned a blind eye, over 800,000 people were slaughtered in the space of one hundred days, and millions of others displaced. In an act of protest against a corrupt government, the international community had initiated a sort of “funding embargo” on Rwanda in 1994 and most foreign NGO staff were quickly pulled out of the country for their protection.³

The genocide came at the end of a 4-year-long civil war that began when the RPF (Rwandese Patriotic Front), made up of children of exiled Tutsis, invaded Rwanda, fighting for the right to come back to their country of origin.⁴ The genocide and its aftermath affected how development is done in various ways.

sometimes a period of house arrest).

The effectiveness of this system is uncertain—although there are many success stories, there are also disclaimers. One such success story is that of a woman whose husband and son were killed by a neighbour during the genocide. During the Gacaca hearings, the killer came forward and confessed, asking the woman what he might do to repay her for a crime he had committed. In response, she told him to take the place of her son in her home and care for her as a son would care for his mother. This was not only symbolic of the reconciliation that took place between the two people, but also a practical way in which this man could pay for his crime; in Rwanda, women can become destitute without a husband, father, or son to support them. By taking the place of her son, the perpetrator was undertaking the woman’s well-being and survival, because he had taken that away from her by killing her husband and son.

Several disclaimers of the Gacaca justice system need to be noted. The first is the fact that the system was created to deal with petty crimes and family disputes, not crimes against humanity, such as murder and rape. The second is that it brings the reality of the genocide back to the Rwandese week after week; it is always present in their lives and will be for a long time. Criminals must be dealt with in order for Rwanda to have closure on the terrible events of 1994; however, there is also a need and a desire to move on. Community will always be fractured as long as people are looking to the past. With the focus constantly on past events, community members will not be able to focus their attention on what needs to be done to move forward.

Any discussion on current trends and policies in Rwanda must include the genocide because it changed the face of Rwanda and every Rwandese was affected in some way or another by the event. The genocide affected communities in Rwanda through unprecedented fragmentation and reconstitution of family and community units as a result of the deaths, exiles, and massive repatriation of refugees (both from the 1959 exile and returning genocide refugees in the years following the killings).

Another problem with the repatriation of refugees is that many returnees from the 1959 exile took over the land of genocide refugees (they could afford to do so because of the power they had gained by winning the war) and the latter therefore had no home in which to return. In many cases, reconstituted communities were nothing like they were before the genocide; many citizens were dead, others gone into exile, others traumatized by their experiences. Then there were the new additions to the communities: internally displaced people who chose to stay in different areas of the country and returnees from the 1959 exile, all of whom had grown up in different countries and, therefore, different cultures.

There is also a strange and haunting dynamic in post-genocide Rwanda: victims of the genocide living side-by-side with perpetrators of the genocide. The Rwandan genocide was unique in that it involved local citizens of a certain ethnic group rising up against another ethnic group. It was not only carried out by a guerrilla force or a minority of the population, but everyday people who responded to calls on the national broadcasting system to literally kill their neighbours.

Because of the vast number of executors of the genocide, it was nearly impossible to track all of them and try them in court. Therefore, many people are living in the same community, and in very near physical proximity to those who killed members of their families or victimized them in violent and horrifying ways. This affects community life and development in various ways—by:

- prolonging the trauma of the genocide for victims who are constantly reminded of what happened through the presence of the offenders,
- forcing victims to live in fear of more violence by the perpetrator, and
- allowing one or both sides to feel guilty for the atrocities committed.

For certain Rwandese, it is very important to remember and memorialize the genocide (see the sidebar); for others, it is too painful or shameful.

Endnotes

1. Pigg, Kenneth. 2006. Personal webpage. www.dass.missouri.edu/Faculty/kpigg/cbd.htm.

2. According to Kiminori Matsuyama, “Poverty trap is a self-perpetuating condition where an economy, caught in a vicious cycle, suffers from persistent underdevelopment. Although it is often modeled as a low-level equilibrium in a static model of coordination failures, we discuss the concept in a dynamic setting. This is because, in a static setting, we will not be able to distinguish poverty traps from (possibly temporary) bad market outcomes, such as recessions and financial crises, that are also often modeled as a low-level equilibrium in a static model of coordination failures.”

<http://www.faculty.econ.northwestern.edu/%20faculty/matsuyama/%20Poverty%20Traps.pdf>.

3. Plumptre, A., M. Masozera, and A. Vedder. 2001. “The Impact of Civil War on the Conservation of Protected Areas in Rwanda.” Washington, D.C.: Biodiversity Support Program.

<http://www.worldwildlife.org/bsp/%20publications/africa/145/pdf/Rwanda.pdf>.

4. In 1959, when Belgian colonisers pulled out of Rwanda, leaving the Hutu in positions of power after years of Tutsi domination, much of the Tutsi population was exiled in retribution for their abuse of power in previous years. They went to

other countries in the region, a large majority of them going to Uganda, where the RPF was later founded by Paul Kagame, who would win the war and become president of Rwanda.

5. Veale, Angela M. 2000. "Dilemmas of 'Community' in Post-emergency Rwanda." 3(3). Routledge.

Julia M. Smith-Brake and her husband live in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, working in prevention and aftercare research and implementation for sexually exploited children. Smith-Brake did a summer internship in Rwanda with Canadian Baptist Ministries. Since graduating, she has been doing contract work for a Canadian NGO, Urban Youth Adventures, which aims to end child and youth poverty in the poorest neighborhoods of Winnipeg, and a Toronto-based company, Winning Kids Inc., a consultation firm that helps organizations implement child abuse prevention policies.

Development with the Poor in Kigali: Child-headed Households in a Post-Genocide Context **By Julia M. Smith-Brake**

Kigali is the capital of Rwanda and is located in the centre of the country. Rwanda is still largely rural, with the majority of its population involved in subsistence agriculture. Kigali has a population of less than one million, approximately one-tenth of Rwanda's total population. It is estimated that the average household size is five people, and fifty-six percent of Kigali's population is under the age of twenty.¹

Also, because population growth has been incredibly high over the past two decades, especially in the years since the end of the genocide, the government and other social agencies have been unable to keep up with the growth in terms of infrastructure. The city lacks adequate social facilities such as schools and health clinics, water supply, power provision, and sewage and sewerage services; there is not enough housing and so slums have sprung up in many parts of the city. According to MINALOC, "In addition, the urban market status does not support the rural-urban influx and results in a severe unemployment crisis. In search for alternatives, many people are forced into criminal activities."

Factors in Understanding Development in Rwanda

Any discussion about development in Rwanda, and about development in most of the Developing World, must also include an understanding of the AIDS crisis. Like the genocide, AIDS affects every person in Rwanda. Everyone knows someone who has AIDS or who has died of AIDS; many people have a family member with AIDS. AIDS preys on the most productive members of society, those between fifteen and forty years of age. This strips a country of its teachers, doctors, civil servants, agricultural labourers, etc., and makes the task development incredibly difficult, because people are generally striving for survival and have little time or energy to give to development projects and initiatives.

Another consequence of both the genocide and the AIDS pandemic is the creation of a new family unit: the child-headed household. A common definition of a child-headed household is "when a child/children take over as the head of their household and fend for themselves without any adults to look after them."²

Traditionally, when one or both parents die, other members of the extended family and community take responsibility of the orphaned children. However, the genocide claimed over a million Rwandan lives in 1994 and the number of deaths due to AIDS since that time is in the hundreds of thousands. According to ACORD,

The growing number of children left without parents ... means that often families can't cope with more children as they don't have enough money, especially if an adult in that household also died from HIV/AIDS, [leaving the family] with less income....Child-headed households are a growing problem because children have no one looking out for them and are therefore vulnerable. They often have to drop out of school to work and have to worry about where their next meal is coming from. Children can be treated badly by others they go to for support because they have no economic or physical power and people might look down on them for being the children of AIDS victims.³

Girls are more at risk because they are seen as more easily taken advantage of. They are forced to exchange sexual favours for food, clothing, and, ironically, hygiene products. Members of the extended family often force child-headed families out of their houses, leaving them homeless and penniless. There is rarely anyone who will stand up for these children who are abused and taken advantage of.

A recent demographic survey states that five percent of households in Kigali are headed by children. This does not mean to say that five percent of households are orphans; it means that five percent of households are orphans who have not been taken under the care of an aunt, uncle, grandparents, or neighbour. My experience with child-headed households in Kigali was limited to some fieldwork I did for my internship and information I gathered from various NGOs through interviews.

The fieldwork I did involved visiting small, community-based organizations created for people living with HIV/AIDS (or PLWHA). These associations exist so that PLWHA may support and encourage each other and pray and worship in the same church.

Through small weekly or monthly fees, assistance is provided for the dying and bedridden, and the associations often have collective farming and craft-making initiatives to provide food and income to the group. It is usually a pastor or community leader who runs the association; however, most members provide assistance and volunteer their time.

These associations face great challenges in caring for the many children in their communities. Orphaned very young by HIV/AIDS, children ranging from twelve to twenty-one years of age (some younger or older) find themselves raising their younger siblings. Many drop out of school to support the other children in their homes and struggle to find adequate work. Girls often face more difficulties in this situation; out of desperation, they willingly sacrifice themselves for the benefit of those in their households. They often resort to prostitution for survival. These orphans and vulnerable children often depend upon community organizations for food, school fees, housing needs, and counsel. Sometimes children of deceased association members will retain their parent's membership and continue going to the group for help. Many find a home with the association; however, the resources and capacity of the associations are not enough to meet all the needs of these children.

Aid for Child-headed Households

Many child-headed households (CHH), however, are denied support by the associations because they have nothing to give to the group in terms of material or financial contributions. Although associations try to sustain as many CHH as they can, many children are ignored because association members fear that if they give counsel or psychological support to these children, they will be solicited for other kinds of support, which they cannot afford, as they already care for their own family as well as other adopted children of deceased family members.⁴

Because child-headed households have been seen as a burden on a community, the children and youth in these homes are often not included in the processes of making community decisions, program planning and evaluation, and community needs assessments. Although a community might state they need additional support for the growing number of CHH, the CHH themselves are not consulted.

Recently, some NGOs have started consulting the CHH directly for their input on the programs intended for their benefit. The results of this new approach have proven very effective. Besides having a more precise idea of what these youth need through assessments, one of the goals of involving youth in the planning and implementation of pilot projects is to increase the youths' self-confidence and ownership of the programs designed to assist them. They are not only beneficiaries of the program, but are encouraged to take part in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program.

In a society where children are growing up in an environment of dependence upon outside assistance, this process aims at helping youth in CHH develop a high work ethic, a sense of ownership for their support programs, and an increased sense of autonomy.

Endnotes

1. MINALOC. 2004. "Third Census of Population and Housing of Rwanda—August 2002." Rwanda National Business Directory: A Project of the Rwanda Investment Promotion Agency. www.rwandagateway.org/article.php?id_article=1646.

2. 2006. "The Challenges of Women/girl-child Headed Households in Rwanda." April. www.acordinternational.org/index.php/news/The_challenges_of_Women/girl-child_headed_households_in_Rwanda.

3. Ibid.

4. Also linked to the increase in child-headed households (CHH) is the loss of means to pass on Rwandan customs and traditions from parents to children. The rural-to-urban migration has brought younger and younger people into the city. They come seeking work and survival and become isolated from their kinship group, family, and home community.

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LAUSANNE REPORTS

Iconoclasm: An Integral Part of the Church's Mission of Reconciliation?

By Nanci Hogan

I will not rehash old historical debates among evangelicals as to whether or not the Church should be engaged in justice and reconciliation ministries. Rather, I will start with what has already been done by evangelical leaders on justice and reconciliation.¹ From there, my main intent below is to explore a dimension of justice and reconciliation ministry that has not been widely discussed by evangelicals, namely, the notion that *an individual and his or her community's view of the nature of God, who God is, and what God is like informs both his or her theology and practice of justice and reconciliation ministry.*²

In one of its many tracks, evangelical leaders came together as part of the 2004 Lausanne Forum on World Evangelization in Pattaya, Thailand, and discussed the importance of reconciliation as being central to the mission of the whole Church, which is to bring "the whole gospel to the whole world." Consequently, they have published a **paper** entitled "Reconciliation as the Mission of God: Faithful Christian Witness in a World of Destructive Conflicts and Divisions." Based on their study of the scriptures and their ministry experience in reconciliation, participants decided that reconciliation was central to the gospel and should be an integral, if not central, aspect of world evangelization. I will take this premise, which they've so eloquently and ably established, as given.

The authors also defined their understandings of the concepts of justice and reconciliation, noting that reconciliation is "God's initiative....grounded in God's restoring the world to God's intentions, the process of restoring the brokenness between people and God, within people, between people, and with God's created earth." Their conception of justice is based on the notion of restorative justice, adopted from Desmond Tutu, which consists of "the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships, a seeking to rehabilitate both the victims and the perpetrators, who should be given the opportunity to be reintegrated into the community he has injured by his offence."³

Whose God?

One thing these leaders do not explore in depth, as I mentioned in the introduction, is that the behaviour of an individual, a community, or even a nation engaged in conflict is influenced by their view of the nature of God, and by who they think God is and what God is like.

Whether we admit it or not, because God is so much greater than our human minds can comprehend, the God we worship can only be known and understood through a mirror dimly (1 Corinthians 13:11-13). This mirror, through which we view God, is influenced and shaped by cultural norms and traditions. How much of the God we worship is actually consistent with what scriptures teach us about who God is—and how much of the image of God we worship is actually an idol fashioned from our own cultural worldview—is difficult to determine. That is why scripture admonishes us to be continually transformed by the renewing of our minds so that we become more conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 12:2).

For example, books have been written about the dangers of American civil religion where the American Church and nation have been conflated. True Christian discipleship in this instance means moving beyond the idolatry of supreme loyalty to the United States above God's commandments and exploring what it means to be loyal to God and his commandments first and foremost. It is to recognize that God's law and American laws sometimes conflict (Acts 5:29). Therefore, the ministry of justice and reconciliation must first and foremost be an iconoclastic one. Elizabeth Johnson, a Catholic theologian, explains it like this:

Since the symbol of God is the focal point of the whole religious system, an entire world order and worldview are wrapped up with its character. Specific ideas of God support specific kinds of relationships and not others....For example, God spoken of as a wrathful tyrant can be called upon to justify holy wars and inquisitional torture chambers. Language about God as a universal creator, lover, and savior of all, on the other hand, moves believers toward forgiveness, care, and openness to inclusive community. The symbol of God functions and its content is of the highest importance for personal and common weal or woe.⁴

Therefore, the critical questions for those involved in reconciliation and justice ministry, are: "Who is God?" and "Whose view of God is being used to reinforce systemic oppression?" In other words, "Whose God is being worshipped by those who are viewed as the oppressors?" and "Whose God is being worshipped by those who are considered the oppressed?"

In a postmodern world in which secularism is really just the flip-side of the coin of theism, the question is no longer the question of modernity—Does God exist? I would contend that in the secular, modern worldview found in most Western cultures, even atheists have a view of God. If God did exist, they believe, he would be a certain way. They often base their rejection of God on a certain preconceived notion of God, even while denying he exists.⁵

As a controversial African American black liberation theologian, Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright of the United Church of Christ Trinity in Chicago, Illinois, USA, recently observed in a television interview that the God worshipped by the slave trader on the deck of a slave ship was different from the God worshipped by those in the hold that were going to be sold into slavery.⁶

What constitutes justice and flourishing was different for the slave owner than for the slave. The slave trader saw nothing wrong with slavery, and the selling of slaves provided for their economic well-being. The God the slave trader prayed to was a God who reflected their cultural values of the time, who sanctioned the slavery of blacks because they were inferior. Very broadly, and not in all cases of course, Christian slave traders often justified the trade in African human beings from a particular interpretation of the biblical story of Noah. In their interpretation of scripture, these Africans were considered to be descendants of Noah's son Ham who were destined to serve the descendants of the other sons of Noah, or in their worldview, the white races. Their particular beliefs about God served to sanction slavery as being scriptural.

On the other hand, the people, or cargo, in the ship's hold identified with the captivity of the Israelites who had been sold into slavery. They identified with the God of the exodus who brought the Israelite slaves out of Egypt; they sang the Psalms of Ascent, those Psalms sung by the Israelites in their captivity. They identified with Joseph in prison, sold into captivity by his brothers in Egypt; and they identified with the Jews in captivity in Babylon, praying to the God of the oppressed. They looked to God as a deliverer. Neither picture of God constituted the entire picture of God. Rather, both were influenced by the daily experiences and culture of those who held those particular metaphors of God.

An example of why and how "Whose God" matters in conflict resolution activities can be seen in the work of Ayala Emmett, an American social anthropologist who studied women's peace movements in the Israel/Palestine conflict.⁷ Emmett produced an anthropological study of the women's peace movement in Israel prior to the signing of the Oslo agreement in 1994. Her basic thesis is that the activities of women's peace movements prior to Oslo created necessary preconditions for the Oslo agreement by creating a political climate favourable to peace.

The religious women for peace were Jewish religious fundamentalists from the same socio-economic background of Gush Emunim, the radical religious settler movement. However, they took a different approach to interpreting the Jewish scriptures and traditions than other members of the movement did. They had a different answer to the questions: "What is the nature of God?" and "What is the foundation for an ethical way of life for Jews in Israel?" Emunim, by-and-large saw it as a mitzvah, or a good deed, to settle the West Bank. Their understanding of Judaism was a messianic one in which the will of God revolved around settling the ancient Promised Land, an understanding which promoted militancy and violence toward the Palestinians. In contrast, the religious women for peace chose to focus on the God represented in Exodus 23:9-19, which talks about giving first priority to hospitality and to treating the stranger well.

As a result, they gave priority to making peace with the Palestinians and to not oppressing them. These women called what the settlers were doing a desecration of the divine name, or *Chillul HaShem*, whereas the settlers insist it was a mitzvah.

The struggle over who defines the nature of God, and whose interpretation wins, was of paramount importance. The questions about the nature of God and whose God counts—the settler's nationalistic God of War or the religious women's God of Hospitality—was critical. Emmett wrote, "Defining the nature of God profoundly determines the actions of human beings."⁸ Therefore, determining whose God matters most in this instance was a political question and had political implications for conflict resolution and peace-building.

Bringing Shalom

The final question in a ministry of reconciliation that needs to be asked is: "How can these different views of God be reconciled in a way that promotes the flourishing, the shalom, or the well-being of all human beings and not just that of the privileged few?"⁹ In other words, how can we test which views of God promote reconciliation and which promote oppression? Which scriptures and which interpretations of scripture about the nature of God should be privileged in a ministry of justice and reconciliation? What are the metaphors of God that should take precedence in a ministry of reconciliation? And how can the oppressed avoid becoming the new oppressors by maintaining rigid notions of a God who privileges them and their experience over those who have oppressed them?

There will be scriptures and interpretations of these scriptures that, when privileged, will promote a view of God that will facilitate justice and reconciliation, the restoration of broken relationships. I will not endeavour to give a comprehensive list here; instead, I will simply suggest a few places to begin. One example is Matthew 22:38-40 where Jesus states that the two greatest commandments, in which all the law has been summarized, are to love God wholeheartedly and to love one's neighbour as oneself. What views of God promote love in action toward another, and what views of God permit the persecution of another?

Another example would be Genesis 1:26-27, which notes that all people are created in God's image. So how do we view the other? Do we accord them with dignity as humans or do we demonize them? For instance, do we view Islamic fundamentalists as terrorists first or do we see them as like us, children of God for whom, according to John 3:16, Jesus also died? How might we see the image of God in them?

Other passages pertaining specifically to Christian believers include 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 3:27-29, which insist that all Christians are bearers of the image of Christ and therefore are equally worthy of respect and dignity regardless of race, gender, or economic class. We must consider how bearers of Christ's image in our own society are oppressed on the basis of race, gender, or class.

There are no easy answers; there are only questions. However, one of the keys to conducting a successful, ethical, and godly ministry of justice and reconciliation is to begin by asking the right questions about ours and others views of God. Then, as a result of reflecting on the possible answers to these questions, we must be willing to have our own idolatrous images of God shattered.

Endnotes

1. Rice, Chris. 2004. "[Reconciliation as the Mission of God: Faithful Christian Witness in a World of Destructive Conflicts and Divisions, Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 51.](#)"
2. Ibid. 56. The bibliography of the Lausanne Paper on Reconciliation relies almost exclusively on evangelical theological books on this topic. These books include the writings of Desmond Tutu, John Paul Lederach, Miroslav Volf, Christopher M. Marshall, and Gregory L. Jones.
3. Tutu, Desmond. 1999. *No Future without Forgiveness*. New York: Doubleday. 55.
4. Johnson, Elizabeth. 1992. *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*. New York: The Crossroads Publishing Company. 36.
5. Jantzen, Grace. 1998. *Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion*. Manchester, U.K.: University of Manchester Press.
6. Bill Moyers interview with Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright, PBS, 27 April 2008.
7. 2003. *Our Sisters' Promised Land: Women, Politics, and Israeli-Palestinian Co-Existence*. Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA: University of Michigan Press.
8. Ibid. 115.
9. Shalom is another concept defined in the Lausanne paper on reconciliation. The authors of the paper define shalom as "a state of wholeness, well being, peacefulness, and flourishing of all that God has created in all of its dimensions and all of its relationships." It includes "right relationships of human beings with God, within themselves, with one another and with the created world" and it is "always rooted in justice and holiness."

Nanci Hogan has been involved in Christian ministry for more than twenty years. During that time, she pioneered the Strategy Coordinator program for [Youth With A Mission](#) (YWAM). Later, she co-founded YWAM England's Centre for International Justice and Reconciliation, where she was involved in international advocacy on gender issues at the United Nations. Hogan is a part-time doctoral student in international politics at the University of Manchester.

Lausanne Caribbean
By Las G. Newman

The Caribbean

Visitors to the Caribbean are often amazed at the extraordinary diversity, beauty, and complexity of this distinctive linguistic and cultural sub-region of the Americas. When speaking of the Caribbean, Caribbean scholars today speak of five Caribbeans. Over the last five centuries this distinctive sub-region has blended Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East into a potpourri of Creole cultures. This is the part of the world where five European countries—Spain, France, England, Holland, and Denmark—encountered Africa, India, and East Asia in the process of creating a new Atlantic world.

Comparatively, Caribbean demographics are quite small. With a population of over thirty million, the Caribbean is scattered across some thirty small, developing states in the middle of the Atlantic, encircled by the Caribbean Sea. The lush, tropical environment of this sub-region of the Americas makes the Caribbean an exotic place; however, beneath its exotic appeal lie some fundamental challenges. One Caribbean leader once described Caribbean life and society as a “struggle in the periphery.”

Challenges Facing Caribbean Christianity

Since the early sixteenth century, waves of European missionaries representing Catholic and Protestant forms of Christianity have made their mark across the region. Christianity is the dominant religion of the region, fifty-nine percent of which is Catholic, twenty-five percent Protestant, fourteen percent Afro-Caribbean religions, one percent Hindu, and one percent Islam and Judaism. Christian churches exist in every Caribbean country. An annual Antilles Episcopal Conference (AEC) provides an important trans-regional forum for Roman Catholic Bishops and Archbishops to guide the mission of the Church in the region. The AEC has been quite strong in its advocacy of a preferential option for the poor and works diligently among the poor and marginalized, even while seeking to renew the spiritual life of parish missions.

The Evangelical Church, on the other hand, has a strong regional organization, the **Evangelical Association of the Caribbean** (EAC), whose declared vision is to work toward ensuring that “every church is empowered to transform Caribbean society through biblical discipleship, so that poverty is reduced, peace (wholeness) is increased, public justice is ensured, and national righteousness develops.” Since 1984, a decade after the first Lausanne Congress in 1974, the EAC has hosted a biennial Caribbean Congress on Evangelization (CONECAR) which has grown from strength to strength. This has given greater organizational leadership and stronger ministry presence to evangelical churches in the region.

Today, Christianity in the Caribbean faces many challenges. Recently, several leaders identified key challenges facing the Caribbean Church:

- Discrediting of the gospel and the Church through failure of leaders
- Need to address nationhood under God
- Refusal, resistance to voices of warning, and counsel to repent
- Decline of biblical knowledge and biblical influence
- Need for a theology of social justice and spiritual engagement
- Insularity
- Weak networks
- Failure to engage the Caribbean Diaspora
- Lack of theological depth

- Weak praying Church

In addition to these concerns, the leaders also identified several challenges affecting evangelism in the region:

- Failure to live the gospel
- Threat of Islamization of the Caribbean
- Unwillingness to change, renew, and repent
- Growing influence of Rastafarian religion
- Failure of the Church to attract men
- Refusal to tap into newer evangelistic strategies, like sports evangelism
- Increasing secularisation, influenced by North America and Europe
- Perception of Christianity as European
- Failure of the Church to inform believers of Caribbean's role in world evangelization
- Lack of clarity and theological understanding of the gospel (a lop-sided gospel)
- Lack of evangelism training
- Lack of passion for evangelism

These challenges arise from other factors, like the ones listed below, at work in the region:

1. **Deepening social crisis.** There is a deepening social crisis in Caribbean societies caused by being mainly small, open, highly export-dependent economies. These societies are very vulnerable to external conditions of world trade, plus internal impacts of seasonal natural disasters such as hurricanes, droughts, and volcanic activities that have intensified in recent years. Manifestations of this crisis are seen in increasingly high levels of crime and violence; high levels of unemployment and underemployment; growing production and trafficking of illegal drugs; and human trafficking. According to UNAIDS, the Caribbean now has the reputation of being the second largest area in the world for the spread of HIV/AIDS. In fact, HIV/AIDS is one of the leading causes of death among people aged twenty-five to forty-four in the region, causing twenty-seven thousand deaths in 2006 and eleven thousand in 2007.
2. **Persistent poverty.** Despite vigorous poverty reduction strategies by state and para-state actors, poverty persists in much of the Caribbean. Although there are some improvements in living standards in several sections of the region, living conditions for many remain well below acceptable poverty levels. While Caribbean poverty is rooted in historical, social, and economic structures, belief systems, values, attitudes, and social practices also contribute.
3. **People's participation.** Most Caribbean states have achieved independence from various European colonial masters over the last three to four decades. However, so far, the failures of post-independence politics to deliver much of the expected benefits of national sovereignty, self-government, and decolonisation have impacted negatively on people's faith in politics and participation in their own society. The rate of external migration from the region is extremely high. Although the economic

benefits from remittances back to the region are significant, the negative impact of migration on Caribbean family life is a threat to social stability and sustained participatory democracy.

4. **Biblical and theological reflection.** The increasing secularisation of Caribbean society is not matched by a corresponding increase in biblical and theological reflection. A Caribbean theology project that emerged in the early 1970s collapsed within a decade. Today, there is no developed Caribbean theology from either the Roman Catholic or the Protestant Church communities. While increasing secularisation and de-Christianization are part of a global trend toward desecularization of society, their impacts on the Caribbean are extremely noticeable. Church attendance might be above average in many places; however, the impact of the gospel is less visible. In fact, in many parts of the Caribbean there is waning confidence in the Christian gospel. After centuries of Christian presence, shifts in contemporary Caribbean values, marked by importation of external values principally from North America, are taking a toll.

The Future of Caribbean Christianity

These challenges pose formidable threats to the future of Christianity in the Caribbean. How should the Church respond?

1. **New wave of evangelization needed.** It is of interest to note some current trends in Caribbean society and Caribbean Christianity. While confidence in the gospel is down, crime and violence in society are up. While interest in traditional evangelistic crusades has waned, cultural festivals have increased. The Caribbean is now saturated with a Carnavalesque culture. Where will a new wave of evangelization come from? From within the Caribbean itself. If more young evangelists are trained, encouraged, and supported, and if non-traditional forms of evangelism are encouraged and embraced, a harvest for God can be reaped in the Caribbean. Among the wonderful promises in Isaiah 55, God says that his word will not return to him empty (v. 11). There are sufficient numbers of Bible and theological institutions within the region from which a new generation of evangelists could be developed.
2. **Renewed confidence in the gospel needed.** A Caribbean theologian has described the Caribbean Church as a “potted plant,” not yet transferred and firmly planted in Caribbean soil. The Caribbean theology project that rose and fell must be revisited and renewed. A theology for the Caribbean that addresses the underlying search for identity and meaning among Caribbean peoples is urgently needed. Such a project must be rooted in the vitality of scripture and in the history and rhythms of Caribbean life. It must address the social crisis now engulfing the Caribbean. After five centuries of Christian presence in the region, the time has come for the Caribbean Church to be firmly planted in Caribbean soil. A deep cultural engagement of the Caribbean, tackling the deep issues of Caribbean reality, is needed. This engagement must include the realities of persistent poverty, the rich cultural pluralism, the innate search identity and meaning, the impact of global warming, the consequences of environmental degradation, and the longing for true freedom and redemption. The challenge is not to look backward with nostalgia, but to look forward with innovation and change. The phenomenal growth of the Seventh Day Adventists and Pentecostal churches in the region are pointing the way.
3. **Increasing influence of movements such as the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) are needed.** So where does a movement such as LCWE fit in? When asked, Caribbean leaders suggested there was a role and place for the Lausanne Movement in the Caribbean. The LCWE has generated a wealth of cross-cultural resources that churches could benefit from immensely. Such a role could be to:
 - *Enable leadership*, helping our top-level leaders to build greater networks
 - *Foster greater unity* to counter the propensity for fragmentation (there are over six hundred denominations in Jamaica alone)

- *Commission papers* for study and action relevant to the Caribbean context
- *Facilitate discussion and cooperation*, enabling working together, inter/intra denominational dialogue and action
- *Provide opportunities for theological discussions*, biblical understanding, and renewal of a vision for world evangelization

The Caribbean Church looks forward with eager anticipation to the historic 2010 Lausanne III Congress in Cape Town, South Africa. Our prayer is that God would use that moment to launch a new wave of evangelization for all peoples, and stir such concern for the peoples of the Caribbean.

Dr. Las G. Newman is the **Lausanne** International Deputy Director for the Caribbean region. He is also the Associate General Secretary for the **International Fellowship of Evangelical Students** (IFES). For the past three decades, Newman has been actively involved in student mission through the ministry of IFES. Born and raised in Jamaica, he was educated in Jamaica, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

Pan African Christian Women Alliance Leadership Conference

By Grace Samson

The Pan African Christian Women Alliance (PACWA) held a 5-day leadership conference at the Cooperative College Retreat and Conference Center in Nairobi, Kenya, 7-14 July 2008.

As a commission of the **Association of Evangelicals in Africa** (AEA), the conference was attended by some thirty-five women from about fifteen countries in Africa, including PACWA national coordinators from Swaziland, South Africa, Nigeria, Zambia, Liberia, Botswana, Burundi, Uganda, Madagascar, and Mauritius. The purpose of the event was to celebrate together, reflect on past victories and challenges, and strategize collectively toward creating a look for PACWA for the next ten years. The program was designed to provide training opportunities and time for strategic planning and discussions.

During the opening ceremony, Rev. Dr. Judy Mbugua, the continental coordinator of PACWA (and a member of the **Lausanne** Administrative Committee), explained the theme of the meeting—"10 times better"—which was taken from Daniel 1:20b. She challenged the women to pay attention to three key areas: taking care of their health; learning and studying to stay relevant with the times; and making a serious commitment to prayer.

Dr. Tokunboh Adeyemo, executive director of the Center for Biblical Transformation, led devotions with a series on grace. He spoke about "grace in service" and "grace in security and storm." Other sessions included: self-understanding; servant leadership training; proposal writing; fundraising; and sustainability.

Rev. Esme Bowers, the Southern African coordinator and co-chair of PACWA, facilitated group discussions. Participants spent time in small groups, processing questions raised during plenary sessions. In various breakaway groups delegates also brainstormed strategies and ways to increase ownership, thereby assisting PACWA to move forward.

Several projects and activities of PACWA were highlighted as testimonies. Examples include: a one million dollar project for AIDS and orphans in Zambia led by Leah Mutala and literacy programs and church planting among the Masai people group in Kenya.

PACWA currently operates in thirty-two countries in Africa; six regional coordinators oversee the national initiatives. The mission of the PACWA network is to mobilize and empower women through prayer,

evangelism, discipleship, and capacity-building to be all that God made them to be in the home, church, and society.

Grace Samson serves as director of Partner Relations for the **Call2All** Cape Town office, a global movement connecting the Body of Christ in all spheres of ministry. She is also a member of the national leadership team of **Youth With a Mission** (YWAM) in South Africa and is a member of the Communications Working Group for **Lausanne**. Previously, she headed the School of Video Production and Public Relations with **Media Village Cape Town**.

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