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PUBLISHER'S MEMO

We Have a (Personal) Story to Tell the Nations

By Doug Birdsall

“Evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Savior and Lord with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God.” - Lausanne Covenant

“Evangelism is the outflow of hearts that are filled with the love of God for those who do not yet know him.” - Cape Town Commitment

The rapid development of communications technologies in the modern era has greatly expanded the tools of evangelism. Christians around the world are actively and fruitfully employing print, radio, television, and the Internet to reach diverse audiences with the good news. The Lausanne Movement celebrates and encourages the use of all available means to bear witness to Christ. But in this issue of *Lausanne World Pulse* we explore the original and timeless method of sharing the gospel: personal testimony.

The message of Jesus Christ is still most powerfully communicated when one person, whose life has been changed by the gospel, bears witness to another person who is in need of hope and love. Yes, our faith is propositional, historical, social, textual, and contextual, but it is also inescapably personal.

At Lausanne II in Manila in 1989, American businessman Ford Madison conducted an informal survey of how the four thousand congress participants came to know Christ. He first asked how many converted at a large evangelistic event. About one hundred people raised their hands. How many found God through TV, radio, or other forms of mass media? Another one hundred hands went up. How many through literature—a tract, book, or magazine? A few more hands. Each response was followed by polite applause.

Then Madison asked how many came to faith in Christ through the witness of an ordinary person—a friend, neighbor, relative, or co-worker. Nearly the whole assembly rose to its feet, bursting into enthusiastic applause. “This is how it works,” Madison remarked. “This is how the gospel spreads.”

Madison was right. God can bless our use of any number of technologies, but there will never be a replacement for the simple low-tech act of bearing personal witness to the redeeming work of Christ in one’s life.

This lesson was driven home yet again at Lausanne III. Some of the greatest highlights of Cape Town 2010 involved personal story. The single most talked about Cape Town address (and most watched video online) did not come from a distinguished theologian, Bible scholar, or denominational leader, but from a meek North Korean teenager. She told the story of her family's unwavering commitment to Christ through the fiery trial of horrific persecution inside communist North Korea. As she finished, the assembly of four thousand leaders from nearly two hundred countries responded with a standing ovation.

While the gospel has many important communal dimensions and social implications, it is most fundamentally the story of how the person of Jesus Christ transforms individuals. Christianity is an incarnational faith. God entered the human story, enabling his follows to become part of his great story of redemption. Most of us will not have dramatic accounts from North Korea or Afghanistan, but our salvation is no less miraculous if it happens in Argentina, Austria, Angola, or Australia.

Wherever God may have placed us, we have an opportunity to tell the story of his work in our lives. We can find ways to share our testimony in a variety of settings—over dinner with neighbors, during a tea or coffee break with co-workers, on a commute or airplane ride. Given the importance of our message, we must take great care to speak lovingly, respectfully, and winsomely, and to live in a manner that validates our witness.

I am delighted that this issue of *Lausanne World Pulse* features several excellent articles that will help us think carefully and creatively about the role of personal testimony in Christian mission. The mission of the Church is of course broader than evangelism, but evangelism is at the heart of mission—and evangelism, at heart, is personal.

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

NEWS BRIEFS

May News from around the World

AROUND THE WORLD: Bible.is App Expands Global Gospel Outreach by Adding Arabic

Bible.is, the popular Bible app from the Audio Bible ministry Faith Comes By Hearing (FCBH), is now available for use in Arabic. Spoken by more than 221 million people throughout the world, Arabic now joins Spanish and English as the major trade languages available for users to navigate the app. Since their Digital Bible Project started last year, Arabic has consistently been in the top five languages accessed across the multiple platforms offered by FCBH. In addition to the Bible.is app, the ministry's Audio Bibles can be accessed via podcast on iTunes, as well as streaming and download directly from its website, all free of charge. FCBH currently has Audio Bibles in 538 languages, with 188 of those available for reading and listening on the Bible app, helping make the Digital Bible Project the world's largest resource of Bible recordings and texts. (Faith Comes By Hearing)

COTE D'IVOIRE: Persevering Amid Crisis

Côte d'Ivoire is in a desperate situation after a political impasse has created violence in the streets. The death toll has reached 400 and over 450,000 people have been displaced. Nearly 77,000 have registered

as refugees in Liberia, and many are stuck suffering with nowhere to go. As the situation deteriorates, TWR continues to broadcast radio programs that bring hope to the afflicted. While the medium wave transmitter in Benin broadcasts to the whole country of Côte d'Ivoire, the programs are also heard over an FM station in Abidjan. (TWR)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: MAF Shuttling Vaccine, Humanitarian Workers to Combat Measles Epidemic

MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship) is airlifting emergency immunizations and humanitarian health workers into remote areas of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to fight a measles epidemic sweeping this embattled African nation. With the logistical support of MAF, the international nonprofit Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières) is at the forefront of combating this highly contagious disease. "Even the few existing roads in DRC are in poor condition from lack of maintenance, and in the rainy season they're totally impassible, hence air travel is the sole means of transport to most of the country," said John Boyd, MAF president and CEO. Health and humanitarian workers report that the measles virus has spread beyond a few rural areas to cities and is poised to move beyond five provinces to the rest of the country. The highly contagious disease can lead to pneumonia, severe dehydration, blindness, and death, especially among children. (Assist News Service)

IRAQ: "Religicide" Exterminating Iraqi Christians

More Christians have been fleeing Iraq in recent months than ever before. Carl Moeller with Open Doors USA says extremists are calling for the complete extermination of believers in the country. "We've been calling this a 'religicide,' which is the systematic destruction and elimination of a religious group simply for being that religious group. And we see this now unfolding in a very shocking way," says Moeller. The number of Christians in Iraq has dropped dramatically in the last few decades from 850,000 believers in 1991 to 345,000 believers in early 2010. Today, this number is perhaps less than 250,000. The loss of so many believers in just a year can be attributed in part to one significant event: the sixty Christians who were killed in October 2010 in a terrorist attack by al-Qaeda-linked groups at Our Lady of Salvation Church in Baghdad. At the current rate of the exodus, Iraq will not have any Christians left in three years, according to an Open Doors' field worker. (Mission Network News)

KENYA: Kenya Christians and Muslims Debate Hijab in Schools

Muslim leaders in Kenya are calling for government action on Christian schools that have banned students from wearing the hijab, the head covering traditionally worn by Muslim girls and women. Church leaders have defended the ban, saying teachers have the right to determine dress code in the schools, according to a denomination's religious traditions, discipline, and philosophies. Sheikh Juma Ngao, the Kenya Muslim National Advisory Council (KMNAC) national chairman, said denying the hijab was an affront to the rights of Muslim followers and could trigger mass withdrawal of Muslims from the schools. (Ecumenical News International)

MIDDLE EAST: Refugees Find Healthcare, Comfort at Church Clinic

The recent political and humanitarian turmoil in the Middle East has created a host of needs. As conditions get increasingly worse, many are fleeing. However, one church has become a beacon of hope and health for many who have fled. More than one million Iraqi refugees—Sunnis, Shiites, and Christians—have flooded into this undisclosed nation over the past dozen years. For most refugees, healthcare is more or less out of the question. In 1998, the church asked an American internist and pediatrician to host a monthly free clinic for Christians attending the church. With the support of ReachGlobal, the clinic is now open twice a week and sees patients from numerous other countries and religious backgrounds. (Mission Network News)

SAUDI ARABIA: Christians in Prison, Beaten

International Christian Concern (ICC) has learned that two Indian Christians working in Saudi Arabia have been arrested in Batha, Riyadh, and sentenced to forty-five days in prison. They were accused of proselytizing. ICC contacts in Saudi Arabia believe they were arrested to keep them from practicing Christianity privately in their home. While in prison awaiting trial, their apartment was ransacked. They face uncertainty regarding their future. An employer has returned the passport of one of the Christians, making it clear that his job is no longer available, and that he will be expelled. The other Christian awaits information regarding his legal status and job. Saudi Arabia has a long history of quietly cracking down on Christians. (Assist News Service)

THEMED ARTICLES: The Power of Personal Testimony

Storytelling: Opening Hearts to the Gospel

By Julianne George

My vacation was over and I was back in India, my home of two and a half years by this point. A day to rest and one more to get over the worst of the jet lag, then off to visit Sazin, a new Muslim friend. Arriving at her home, Sazin, her husband, and her in-laws greeted me excitedly and sat me down for chai tea and a snack—a rather large one since I had not been to her home in weeks. “How was your trip? How is your family? What was the weather like?” began the slew of questions. I answered in turn and fancied their intoxication in knowing every detail of life in America.

“Why did you not come visit us the day you returned?” they inquired. Ah, how to explain jet lag to someone who has never left his or her own time zone...I settled on developing the exhaustion of multiple flights and layovers. “What is it like in an airplane?” they wondered. I laid out the view and the physical feeling, but felt it easiest to take them along on the journey with me. Thus began the stories of those I met on the plane. One particular story I especially shared in detail:

On one of my flights I was sitting next to a Buddhist boy from Thailand. He studies at a college in Texas. I asked him to explain Buddhism to me, and he thoroughly told me all his beliefs and thoughts as I continued to ask questions to gain an understanding of his personal convictions. He said he doesn't follow all their religious rules. Shyly giggling, he told me he likes to drink alcohol. According to his beliefs, he must continually face punishment after death for his sin and then be reborn into the world to try again in another life. All the while, he's shooting to reach the state of Nirvana, becoming one with god in heaven. The ironic thing is, he is not afraid of the punishment or coming back again because he knows he will never live a perfect life or get to Nirvana. He just did not care because he knew it was impossible to escape the cycle.

“Really?” I interjected. “I disagree with that last part. I've heard of a way you can escape the cycle...there is a way you can break free from that punishment and be guaranteed heaven, the oneness with God! Do you want to know?”

He expectantly shook his head yes. I proceeded to tell him the Creation to Church story: how God created humanity for relationship with him, but humans disobeyed and broke that relationship, causing separation from God. But God sent a Savior, Jesus, to give his life as the payment for us. He conquered death and now sits at the right hand of God in heaven, offering forgiveness to all who believe in him and guaranteed escape from death. In five minutes, he heard the whole gospel in story form.

He asked, "How do you know Jesus really forgives you?" I went on to tell him my own story of how I found salvation and knew I had been forgiven. I also told him about how my life had changed since then and how God is working in my life today.

"But how do you pray?" he asked. "Let me show you," I responded, and then prayed with him.

This is the story I shared with Sazin and her family. Afterwards, her husband was shocked. "How do you know so much about God?" he asked.

"I learned about God from the stories," I stated. "You can learn about him too, if you want to learn the stories with me. You will have to learn to tell them also, or else you'll forget them. And we have to discuss them afterwards so you can see all that God is teaching you from it, for his word is holy and he will teach you through studying it."

"Okay," they both enthusiastically chimed. "Come back later this week, earlier in the day, so we have enough time." And of course, I did! I went back later that very week and told them the first story of Creation and of what it means to have a perfect relationship with God. They...ate...it...up!

After I told it, I somehow convinced them to act it out with me, as well. The three of us, adults, acting out God creating and relating to Adam and Eve...it was wonderful! After acting, each retold the story on his or her own; they had learned the first two chapters of Genesis! Finally, I facilitated a discussion of what they learned from the story. They could not wait for the next one, and I was able to meet with them more to continue sharing stories from the word of God.

I am now living back in America and this Muslim family has not yet come to place their trust in the saving grace of Jesus. However, they now have the word of God in their hearts and the images of the stories (from acting the stories) dancing around in their heads.

I know that all I need to do is plant and water the seed. I pray that others will water it as well. But ultimately, it is God who will make the seeds grow (1 Corinthians 3:6). I also do not know what came of the Buddhist boy whom I met on the plane that day. However, I pray that the word of God, which he heard, will also work in mighty ways, and that he may meet a disciple of Jesus in Texas who will continue to share the stories of Jesus with him.

Praise God who speaks through his word. And thanks be to him that he lets me be a part of it.

Julianne George spent three years in India sharing stories with those who don't know Jesus. She is now married and living in Oklahoma, where she and her husband continue to share stories with neighbors in the hopes of making disciples.

For Real?!

By Rachel Fields

I'm not one who passes on those sensationalized, urban-legend-type stories about what God is allegedly doing in a given area. Please understand, though, that I totally expect some sort of massive spiritual awakening to occur in the Middle East during my lifetime and that there are already foretastes of that here and there.

But that's not the point.

The point is: I don't like passing things on that (a) aren't true, (b) paint some sort of phony picture of how deliciously miraculous every moment of every day is, or (c) take away from the reality that sometimes we just have to buckle down and sweat hard to see one measly grape sprout from the vine of our ministry.

But today I want to pass on to you a story I think is pretty cool. I assure you it's not exaggerated one bit, because I heard it firsthand from two very dear, level-headed friends of mine who are one hundred percent involved in it. To add to the credibility of the story, you should know that it takes place a stone's throw from my apartment. For real! (If my arms weren't so weak, I could probably throw a rock from my balcony and break these people's window.) Here's the story.

Sixty-five years ago, "Hakeem" was born into a Muslim family. His two older siblings had died, so—reasoning from superstitions—Hakeem's parents took their infant son to a church and had him baptized—something unheard of and potentially dangerous for Muslim parents to do.

Throughout his life, Hakeem was drawn to Jesus, although he never really knew much about him. As a child, when he was scared he would occasionally run to a church and hide in the back to feel safe—again, something extremely odd for a Muslim to do. As far as I know, he had no involvement with true followers of Jesus for most of his life.

Around the age of 55, through Christian broadcasts, Hakeem came to embrace the truth about Jesus. He had no real believers with whom to interact on a personal level—only the broadcasts and the Spirit of God. Under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit, he grew in his faith, and soon his whole family began to follow Jesus with him. A few years ago they all actively started to share their beliefs with other Muslims.

Just a few months ago, Hakeem began to realize he needed help with all that was happening, so he wrote to the Christian station to see if they could send someone to assist him. Station personnel contacted my friend "Ray," who went to meet Hakeem.

As Ray sat with the now-65-year-old man, Hakeem began to pull out papers that contained the names of numerous people and showed how these people were networked together. It was like a family tree, with branches sprouting off here and there.

It was a chart of the *fifty-five Muslim followers of Jesus* for whom Hakeem was responsible...because he, one of his family members, or one of the newer believers had led them to Jesus! With absolutely no help—no in-person input from a single Christian, Hakeem had been "pastoring" all these people, who were spread out among multiple reproducing house groups throughout the city!

For real? For real! But that's not all.

Since Ray has been *helping* Hakeem for the last few months (I emphasize the word "helping," because Ray emphasizes that Hakeem does not need Ray teaching him or showing him what to do, since the Holy Spirit has done a stellar job of that), *the number of believers has grown from 55 to 124!*

For real! I'm not exaggerating. Ray and his wife told me the update to this amazing story two weeks ago. I'm sure there are even more believers by now.

Ray, his wife, and I just laughed and laughed as we talked about how it just flies in the face of our whole paradigm for how God is supposed to work. Oh, how important and knowledgeable we think we are, but really...hmmm...

Please ask the Holy Spirit to breathe even more life into Hakeem's ministry. More, Lord, more!

Rachel Fields (pseudonym) has lived in the Middle East since 2003. She leads a church-planting team and is the assistant director of an English center which accommodates about four hundred students per course. Her passion is to see a church-planting movement among Muslims in the Middle East.

Power of Personal Testimony in the Muslim World

By Ron Kernahan

This just in: an incredible testimony! An old lady opened her atlas and began praying for a city not far from Tehran. Years later, an Iranian came to her church. After the service, she dashed over to him. "Where are you from in Iran?" she asked.

He replied, "You won't have heard of it; it is an insignificant city," but shared the name of the town.

"I've been praying for this city for thirty-four years!" she blurted out through tears.

"Thirty-four years?" the Iranian brother asked incredulously. "I got saved thirty-four years ago and now lead four hundred believers in the city."

The prayers of one old lady helped birth a congregation of four hundred believers in a Muslim country. Praise the Lord! What an encouragement. This makes me want to pray more. (And I only have fourteen years to go since I've been praying for the Muslim world for twenty years.) More importantly, this testimony has been used to release both prayer and workers to the Muslim world.

Testimonies are so vital to us. The Bible is full of testimonies of the grace and power of God. We are encouraged over and over again with records, facts, and faith builders. The more we read, the more faith is released in us.

The more faith we have, the more we can personally testify of Christ so others will be changed. Many people come to Christ because they heard a personal testimony from a friend or neighbor. The Bible says, "All Syria knew of him" (Matthew 4:23-24). The reason for this is that Jesus had been teaching, preaching, and healing the sick. News about him spread as people talked to one another about Christ and testified of what he had done for them.

In our church, we sometimes have a testimony time. The testimonies are mostly on the theme of answered prayer. Dave shared how he got a job and Matt shared how just the right amount of money came in to cover a bill. Other testimonies are from new believers who share how they received Jesus. These testimonies release faith into us and encourage us to start the new week in prayer and with excitement of the power of God.

In the Old Testament, the word “testimony” comes from the root word *`uwd* (meaning to return, repeat, do again). When we give our testimony, we open the atmosphere for the miracle to be repeated. Testimony carries with it the power of change. If we speak out of our experience in God, we are not just giving information, but are sharing the power of transformation.

Testimonies are important because we get to boast in God, about God. That is why our testimony must be an honest eyewitness accounts of what God has done. If the testimony is exaggerated or made up, it will not carry with it the authority of God. It will not have the effect of changing the circumstances whereby non-believers will want to come to Christ.

I have been with people who start to tell a story of how God saved them out of a terrible life, and no one responded. Why? Because it was a story; it was not factual. It did not bear witness of God in truth. God cannot use your story, but he can and will use your testimony. The Hebrew root word of “testimony” also means to “affirm solemnly, to exhort, or enjoin solemnly.” And because the word also means “to bear witness” (like in a court of law), we understand our testimony must be true. So when you share a testimony, it needs to be an eyewitness account and it must be in the love of God.

Perhaps the most powerful personal testimony is not what we share with words, but rather what we share with our lives. The following story illustrates this well.

Pastor Paul* went to the house of the commander of the Muslim Hezbollah in the area and knocked on the door. His reception was less than civil, but after initial threats the leader asked Paul, “What do you want?”

“I want a cup of tea,” he replied.

He was invited in for tea, such is the duty of hospitality in these countries, and then left. The next week, Paul returned, knocked on the door, again requested a cup of tea, was invited in, drank, and left.

He did this for an entire year. When a tsunami struck, Pastor Paul went to the commander’s house, knocked on the door, and asked him if he would bring all his militant officials to work with his group of pastors in the tsunami-affected area for two weeks. The commander agreed. For two weeks, the Christians and Muslims slept in the same house, ate the same food, and together, helped rebuild the lives of those shattered by the tsunami.

At the evening meal, as the time drew to a close, the commander started crying. “Your love has broken my heart,” he wept. “I have burned your buildings and killed your brothers, and you have responded only with love.”

Over the next two years, Pastor Paul’s congregation grew and needed a bigger building. The only problem was that the Indonesian authorities did not give permission for churches to be built. However, the Hezbollah commander went to the authorities and pleaded with them to grant the Christians permission to build. And permission was granted!

At the civic ceremony which opened the new building, Christian pastors and Muslim militants shared the head table with civic dignitaries. Pastor Paul presented the commander with a book which talked about dialogue instead of fighting as a way Muslims and Christians can relate.

The commander again could not keep back his tears. As this man (whose hands had murdered Christians and commands had caused the burning of numerous churches) stood on the platform with tears running down his face, the “despised” Christian put his arm around his shoulder and stood there, comforting him.

“You have shown us that there is a better way,” said the commander.

Pastor Paul shared the power of transformation through his life. The commander could see the love of God through this man. His deeds were the means of releasing the life-changing power of God in impossible circumstances. And God responded by doing what he loves to do—bring healing and salvation to all who will respond.

Perhaps you are thinking, *I don't have an exciting, powerful testimony. And even if I did, I don't have the Hezbollah around me to share it with!* If you allow God to use you, to let your life speak to others around you, he will make sure your testimony is used. You can do good deeds to your neighbor, asking God to use them. You can share even the little things God did for you in your house group or church. God will use it to release faith in someone else. Whatever you do, your personal testimony will impact others in your area if it points back to Christ in your life.

Be encouraged. Boast in God, about God. Not just with your words, but also with your lifestyle. This will touch your neighbors and cause them to want to know more of Christ in you. As Billy Graham once said, “We are not cisterns made for hoarding, we are channels made for sharing.”

* pseudonym

Ron Kernahan's passion for mission began in China. Prayer was viral, revival was explosive. After China, he teamed up to birth national/regional and global prayer movements. For more, visit www.30-days.net.

The Power of Personal Testimony: Part 1, Sharing the Story of Our Lives

By Laurie Fortunak Nichols

(Editor's note: This is Part 1 in a two-part article on the value of both sharing our stories and listening to the stories of others. See [Part 2 here.](#))

“This is the story of my life. I am now 24 and I am dying from AIDS. One of my greatest fears is that when I die, no one will come to my burial.”

These are the words of Chantha, a beautiful, 24-year-old Cambodian woman who was sold to a brothel at the age of 13. She has been raped and beaten hundreds of times over the past ten years. And now she is dying of HIV/AIDS.

“This is the story of my life. When I was 24, God rescued me from an 8-year addiction that almost killed me twice. One of my greatest fears is that when I die, I won't have used my new life and story to the fullest for God's glory.”

These are my words. I grew up in a beautiful home in Midwestern America. I had little care in the world, except for one ache of self-doubt that started as a pebble and ended up a mountain of regret, shame, and pain. But God. And now I am fully alive.

Two stories. Equally powerful, each with the potential to impact people for good. The first, toward intense compassion and a desire to make the wrong, right. The second, toward hope, that God really does reach down from heaven to save the broken and lost.

We all have a story—our story. As Christians, it is our claim to fame. “Just wait until you hear what God has done for me!” we can begin. “Once upon a time...” And so it starts. Along the narrative line are one or more, “But God!”s and then a conclusion, which proclaims, “God’s work in progress, but on the way to heaven!”

When working in tandem with the Spirit of God, our story is the most powerful tool we have to impact our not-yet-Christian friends for Christ. In her best-seller, *Out of the Saltshaker*, Becky Pippert explains, “We do not simply give the gospel, we are the gospel.”¹ We, ourselves. Not just what we carry, but our very lives.

In 2 Corinthians 3:2-3, Paul tells those in Corinth that,

You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

We are the gospel and God has given each of us a powerful story that fits into his story-telling, Spirit-guided nature that loves to woo people to himself in unique and creative ways. This is not to say apologetics and systematic theology aren’t important in making a case for Christ. But often we either at best forget, perhaps ignore, or at worst, dismiss the fact that what God has done personally in our lives may be the most effective way he wants to reach into the hearts of people who don’t yet know him.

Even scripture

...is neither a catalogue of spiritual insights nor a collection of moral guidelines and principles. It is a story. As a story, Scripture can be read through the central plot of Creation, Fall, Promise and Restoration—a plot that is in essence the movement from old creation to new creation.²

When we proclaim, “I am a new creation,” do we hit the double-click button and give more details? Why *are* you a new creation? What exactly *has* God done in your life? If our living God saw story as so vital that he would dedicate well over half of his holy word using it, then wouldn’t we do well to use our stories in wooing others to himself as well?

We are the gospel. There is a part of me that would like to italicize every word in that sentence separately. *we. are. the. gospel.* This means that we don’t simply recite scripture passages verbatim to questions of faith. We share our journey, our path from creation to fall to promise to restoration. Like the Apostle Paul, we share our pre- and post-Damascus Road experiences.

So next time you have a conversation with or field a question from a non-Christian friend, will you consider beginning with, “Can I share with you the story of my life?” So that, along with the Apostle Peter, we will passionately exclaim, “For we cannot but speak of the things we have seen and heard!” For you never know where the power of story can lead...perhaps toward another person reflecting on his or her own story and God’s part in it...and then another person...and another. Until we have ad infinitum the ongoing story of God.

“This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.” - Jeremiah 31:33

Endnotes

1. Manley Pippert, Rebecca. 1999. *Out of the Saltshaker & into the World*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 98.
2. Katongole, Emmanuel and Chris Rice. 2008. *Reconciling All Things: A Christian Vision for Justice, Peace and Healing*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 63.

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The Power of Personal Testimony: Part 2, Listening First in an Upside-Down Kingdom

By Laurie Fortunak Nichols

(Editor's note: This is Part 2 in a two-part article on the value of both sharing our stories and listening to the stories of others. See [Part 1 here](#).)

Mother Teresa once said that she “did mathematics differently” than most people. Instead of worrying about ministering to a large number of Indian Hindus, she and her colleagues looked at each individual separately. Her mathematics “considered the one she was loving right now as the total of God’s universe at that moment.”¹

Nearing the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus too halted all other duties and obligations to be present with his beloved Mary and Martha as their brother, Lazarus, had passed away four days prior (see John 11). Although Jesus had the power of heaven to raise Lazarus from the dead (and indeed would), it was as though every eye of every angel in heaven was fixed on Jesus as he went to the women and did something quite extraordinary.

He stopped.

Seeing their intense sorrow, “...he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled....Jesus wept. So the Jews said, ‘See how he loved him!’” (John 11:33-35).

At that moment, the Son of Man was pouring out the compassion of heaven on this one family.

We must share the grand narrative of our lives with those who don’t yet know him—the perfect story only our wonderful God can weave together. But we must always and *ever* first listen, engage, spend

time. Without listening to another and being fully present with him or her as though he or she were the most important person in the world at that moment, we are but hot air blowing on dying people in a sun-scorched land.

No matter how powerful our story may be, without the ingredients of empathy, compassion, and uninterrupted thoughts and time, we may well cause more harm than good. Before Jesus healed Lazarus, he stopped.

He listened. He watched. He engaged. He mourned. Then he healed.

Throughout the Gospels we see that each person Jesus encountered was the most important person in the world in that moment. With a sea of humanity desperate for healing and life, over and over Jesus halted all of heaven's activity to cherish the person he was with.

Similarly, when Mother Teresa engaged in ministry, each was her Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in that moment. She stopped. She engaged. She mourned. Then she did what she could to pour the sum total of the love she had on that one person who had infinite worth in the Kingdom of God.

In Cambodia, a young 22-year-old named Sopheap was dying after a short, torturous life of abandonment and abuse which left her deaf and infected with AIDS. One loving community stopped all they were doing when they heard Sopheap's story.

They engaged. They mourned. They loved. Then they cared for her as she had never been cared for and loved on her with all the love they had to give.

They spoke of the hope of heaven, and when Sopheap died three days later, "though her brief, brutal life and tragic passing did not garner headlines...every moment of her last three days was front-page news in God's upside-down kingdom."²

The author who shares this story goes on to charge us:

In fact, [Sopheap's] last three days with us could have been seen as a loose thread in a clumsily stitched pilgrimage. There was little glamour in Sopheap's life....This story reminds me that if we, as the people of God, are going to meet the Sopheaps of this world squarely, as Christ did, we are going to have to reach into the deepest pockets of our souls and pull out more than the loose change of the world's clichés.³

We must pull out a divinely-inspired, deeply-passionate understanding that each and every person we encounter deserves the sum total of our attention, our love, our comfort, ad infinitum, in that moment.

We must stop. We must listen. We must engage and mourn and weep.

Only then can we have earned the right to share our story.

"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience..." - Colossians 3:12

Endnotes

1. Adeney, Frances. 2010. *Graceful Evangelism: Christian Witness in a Complex World*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 183.
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PERSPECTIVES

Missional Global Partnerships

By The Rev. Canon Mark Oxbrow

Christian missions do not have a good track record in collaboration. In the early days of the nineteenth century, the activities of missions in Africa closely resembled the land grabbing campaigns of European nations in the so-called “rush for Africa.” In *Eating Africa*, Cedric Pulford records that in Uganda, “The Catholics felt it their duty to counter the heretics. The Protestants felt a parallel duty to correct the errors of the Church of Rome.”¹ A few years later bitter rivalry broke out between competing missions in Zanzibar, rivalry which played into the hands of local Muslim rulers.²

Of course, evangelical missions have not only competed with Catholics, but also with each other, and in some contexts continue to do so today. In the early 1990s we witnessed not the “rush for Africa,” but the rush into the ex-Soviet Union, with many missions claiming exclusive relationships with churches and church leaders in Russia, Romania, Ukraine, and elsewhere—a competition which sometimes led to corruption (as small national churches received multiple large donations, sometimes for the same purposes) and wasted resources.

The picture, of course, is not all negative. In the nineteenth century a series of “comity agreements”³ preserved the peace between rival bands of missionaries. The negative effects, however, of these agreements on Christian unity continue to this day, with a high degree of territorialism still evident in inter- and intra-denominational relations around the world. Where real partnership and collaborative ministry have taken place, it has often been occasioned by adverse contexts. Four examples will suffice.

Example 1: In 1949, Dr. Bob Fleming gained permission to enter the closed kingdom of Nepal with two colleagues. Struck by the medical needs of the people, they determined to meet these needs in the name of Christ. When, in 1953, permission was granted to open a hospital in Tansen, Fleming extended an invitation to any who would join him in this challenging country where conversion was illegal.⁴ So the United Mission to Nepal was born in 1954.

Example 2: In 1966, the International Assistance Mission began a similar way in Afghanistan, with a focus on eye care. It has remained in the war-torn country, currently bringing together workers from nearly forty different agencies.

Example 3: In Europe, when Albania first became accessible to Christian mission in 1991, a group of evangelicals formed the Albanian Encouragement Project, which now brings together over seventy mission agencies for collaborative work within that country.

Example 4: Also in 1991, a number of workers associated with Interdev began the Central Asian Consultation,⁵ which today continues to foster collaboration in that region and has spawned numerous regional partnerships.

Theological Principles

The implications of Trinitarian theology for collaborative mission have not always been readily understood. However, in recent decades Jurgen Moltmann⁶, Leonardo Boff⁷, Miroslav Volf⁸, and others have reminded us of the corporate and collaborative nature of the being and life of God in Trinity and its implications for those who find themselves created in God's image.

The *Missio Dei* is by definition a collaborative action by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (John 14:26) and also a divine action which invited human participation, if not collaboration: "As the Father sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21). God has no need to engage humanity as agents of his own mission; rather, he chooses the risky course of partnership. This point is further underlined by Jesus' own calling of disciples as co-workers to whom he eventually entrusts the task of global mission (Matthew 28:18-20).

It is also significant that Jesus seems to have chosen as his co-workers a group of disciples with quite different theological and social outlooks—zealots, Roman-sympathisers, Galileans, and even perhaps those with Essene links.⁹ He saw strength in building diversity-rich partnerships.

Paul, the Collaborator

Paul is often portrayed as the great pioneer of mission. He was—but he was not a "David Livingstone, go-it-alone" pioneer. Careful examination of the text shows that he was in fact an accomplished collaborator, building networks of shared ministry.¹⁰

He counted among his co-workers local ministers such as Aquila and Priscilla (1 Corinthians 16:19), fellow itinerant preachers such as Barnabas (Acts 13:2) and Silas (Acts 15:40), young recruits like Timothy (Acts 16:3), and many more (Romans 16:21-24). He also took to task churches who sought to create division within the growing missional network (1 Corinthians 1:12-17), the Church of Christ.

With this foundation of Trinitarian mission, the example of Jesus, and the practice of the apostles, a firm pattern has been established for collaboration and partnership in mission. But what might this look like in the context of the twenty-first century?

Faith2Share

The Faith2Share network of mission agencies and churches is a small example of what collaboration in mission might mean today. I use it first because I know its work intimately, but also because it sits on the cutting edge of many of the more difficult issues surrounding effective collaboration in mission. It is an experiment in doing things differently.

The story began in 1999, when leaders of five Anglican missions decided that 150 years of working apart was long enough. They wanted to explore what they could do together. For the first few years, it was no more than a fellowship (or a peer-mentoring group) of senior leaders of a few agencies. However, the

numbers grew and in 2004, meeting in Bangalore, India, they recognized that God was doing something special. Faith2Share was born.

Today, the network has twenty-one full-member agencies located on five continents, supports around six thousand mission workers, and works with about forty smaller indigenous mission movements. There are many networks of mission agencies; what is unusual about Faith2Share is that it has deliberately chosen to structure itself in such a way that it is forced to confront some of the more challenging issues in missional collaboration.

For example, although there are only twenty-one full-member agencies, the network is deliberately comprised of Asian, African, European, Australasian, Latin American, and North American agencies. (The five trustees and two staff are Singaporean, American, Kenyan, British, Canadian, Russian, and Ethiopian.) Being multicultural is not easy, but it puts us on the road to Revelation 7:9.

The network also includes agencies of different sizes and financial resources. These differences enable us to explore, sometimes painfully, the issues of power and control.

As well as giving structure and purpose to Faith2Share, the 2004 meeting in Bangalore had two additional outcomes. First, it saw members adopting a clear mission to become a resource base out of which new mission movements might grow. Second, it became a place where those who were recently becoming a mission movement might find encouragement, mentoring, fellowship, and prayer. That vision remains central to the self-understanding of the network. The network exists to advocate for collaboration and to encourage the birthing of a myriad of new mission movements wherever God's Spirit is moving.

The Dark Side of Collaboration

This article has argued that missional collaboration is required as a true expression of the collaborative nature of the mission of God. Faith2Share sees itself as an advocate for collaboration, but it has not always been easy. I share the below five struggles we have experienced so that other networks and agencies could better prepare for obstacles in partnership.

- **Lack of trust between leaders.** Trust needs to be built up over extended periods of time with a focus on prayer, fellowship, and personal (not ministry) relationships.
- **Misunderstandings over resources, principally money.** Resources can easily be used as power, and power without vulnerability divides.
- **Differing cultural styles of leadership.** We have had to learn how to appreciate different styles of leadership and to be brave enough to honestly (and humbly) critique each other.
- **Different understandings of accountability.** Some think of accountability in terms of finances, others in terms of personal relationships, or the use of time, while still others focus first on spiritual accountability. Which takes priority?
- **Inertia.** It is much easier (we think!) to go on doing things alone, exactly as we always did. But we need to look around. Do multinational companies act alone? Do academics not collaborate on global research projects? And what about political activists? Does God act alone?

As God so graciously invites us to participate in his mission, we need the grace to recognize that “our mission” does not mean “my mission”—it means “God’s mission.”

Endnotes

1. Pulford, Cedric. 1999. *Eating Uganda: From Christianity to Conquest*. U.K.: Ituri Publications, 44.
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3. Falconer, Alan. 2004. “The Future of Protestantism: Ecumenism and the Mainline Denomination.” In *The Blackwell Companion to Protestantism*. Eds. Alister McGrath and Darren Marks. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley-Blackwell.
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10. See Schnabel, Eckhard. 2008. *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic.
10. See Schnabel on “co-workers.” *Ibid.*, 249-255.

The Rev. Canon Mark Oxbrow is international coordinator of the Faith2Share network and previously served as assistant general secretary of the Church Mission Society (CMS). During his twenty years with CMS, he had a particular responsibility for building missional relationships with churches in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Internet Evangelism Day and the Majority World

By Tony Whittaker

Guess how many mobile phones were sold since this time yesterday? Figures for mobile and web usage are mind-blowing. About 4 billion people own a mobile phone, and 1.29 million new phones were sold in the last 24 hours! Over 2 billion use the Web, and of these, 500+ million are regularly on Facebook.

Even more significant: over half these people are in the Majority World, often in very unreached areas.

Since 2005, Internet Evangelism Day (IE Day) has been promoting the potential of digital media evangelism through an annual worldwide focus day for Christians and a year-round online resource guide covering all aspects of web and mobile evangelism.

This year, IE Day is set for 15 May, with the added emphasis of May being Digital Outreach Month. Our hope is that individual Christians, churches, mission agencies, and other groups will examine the growing opportunities to share the good news online. Our free downloads—video clips, PowerPoints, and handouts—can create a group presentation of five minutes or fifty minutes.

Digital Evangelism from a Mission Perspective

Digital communication culture. The Web has changed communications forever. The new digital communication culture is very different from the linear, one-way print and broadcast cultures of previous years. Information, discussion, and relationships across continents are available in real time, 24/7.

Privacy and anonymous intimacy. For the first time, subject to availability in their language, inquirers can easily read evangelistic articles and scriptures in relative privacy. They may also ask deep questions—a web phenomenon called “anonymous intimacy.”

Evangelistic websites in multiple languages can explain the good news clearly, telling real stories of people who have found faith, creating the space to ask questions, and offering online help through e-mentors. The tragedy is that more than fifteen years after the mainstream Web began, there are many language groups in which there are few, if any, sites of this sort.

The Bridge Strategy can engage non-seekers by connecting within common interests, such as popular culture, sport, or felt needs.

Church websites. Church sites can be a window for the wider community. Unfortunately, many websites present the church (using insider language) as a building with a program of meetings, rather than a community of people on a journey who want others to join their family.

Mobile phones. For many in the Majority World, a mobile phone is the only digital device they will own. Increasingly, mobiles can access the Web. Across Africa and parts of Asia, Facebook access is free for pay-as-you-go phone users. Phones prices and call charges are surprisingly cheap in many countries, with good coverage in rural areas. Of course, people may supplement mobile web access with Internet Cafe visits.

Mobile phones are transforming societies. You may have seen reports of Masai cattle-herders networking by mobile about the best water sources, Chadian nomads maintaining family contact across the miles, Kenyan traders using mobile cash transfers, or remote health diagnosis by mobile phone camera with microscope attachment. Distance-learning courses are springing up, both secular and Christian, mediated by mobile phone.

Smartphone and tablet sales are dramatically increasing. iPad sales for 2011 are predicted to be forty-eight million, and there are many cheaper tablets coming to the market, jostling for position. Phones can

download apps such as Bibles and books and audio and video clips, thus enabling a phone to be both a personal library and one-to-one conversation-starting tool. Read more here.

Social networking. Social networking has become the predominant online behavior. Multilingual Facebook is global, with regional equivalents also used in some countries.

Even before the Web, people's God-given desire to build/maintain non-local relationships found expression in dial-up bulletin boards and chat rooms. The Web enables this with zero technical knowledge, and is a major opportunity to share our faith. But this is only if we truly understand social networking—it's not a pulpit to preach a message. Rather, it's a café for conversations.

Facebook fan and group pages also have big potential in evangelism and discipleship (as well as mission advocacy for Christians).

Video clips. The advent of fast Internet access, coupled with cheap digital cameras, has fueled the incredible popularity of YouTube. Twenty-four hours of new video are posted to YouTube every minute. Many mobile phones, cheap digital cameras, camcorders, even webcams, can record video of sufficient quality to post on YouTube. Anyone with creativity, an appreciation of visual story, and free editing software, can now be a film clip producer.

In an increasingly visual culture, five-minute video clips are a powerful way of personalizing communication and starting discussion.

Pulling It Together

Don't view these opportunities in isolation. Mobile phones, video clips, and social networking are a seamless garment within the wider context of the Web. They represent an incredible opportunity for world mission for at least three reasons.

- Mobile phone ownership is high and growing.
- Video clips share visual story (arguably the most memorable way of communicating).
- Social networking is relationships (which have always been the bridge that the gospel flows over).

Some major tools are being developed include the following.

1. Mobile Advance encourages mission agencies and national Christians to use mobiles for evangelism in many ways: downloading conversation-starting video clips onto mobiles to share one-to-one, SMS messaging, Bluetooth literature distribution, app creation, and much more.
2. Kiosk Evangelism is an initiative to offer free audio Bibles, video clips, and other resources in multiple languages from a self-service "vending machine" in airports and other public places. A large touch-screen enables downloads direct onto SD-cards.
3. Launching in 2011 is a new outreach tool—a browser toolbar which will enable any Facebook user to post video clips onto his or her page. With one click, he or she can choose evangelistic and conversation-starting video clips in multiple languages and about numerous subjects.

Videos within the database go through an approval procedure. There is the opportunity to embed video clips into blogs and websites, or download to a mobile phone. The strategic significance of this tool cannot be underestimated. For the first time, this is a networking tool that any Christian can use, sensitively and in the arena of his or her existing relationships. Discussions about video clips that result on the Facebook page remain within the context of these existing relationships, rather than pointing people to third-party websites.

Helping You Connect

It is not the purpose of Internet Evangelism Day to oversell digital evangelism, or suggest that it is a pain-free alternative to costly long-term mission, evangelism, and discipleship. But we believe it is a God-given ministry multiplier and a digital word-of-mouth tool to share the good news through the biblical methods that have always worked best—relationships, discussion, and visual story.

It's a vital opportunity for both mission teams and national believers, as our Open Letter to Mission Leaders outlines.

We can help you:

- Connect with people in your language or region involved in mobile ministry, visual storying, and video clip production
- Find Facebook tools and apps
- Get news and ideas
- Link with existing networks to draw together online evangelism with e-mentoring, teams on the ground, and other follow-up
- Other advice
- Find speakers for consultations or conferences

Tony Whittaker is the coordinator of Internet Evangelism Day and a moderator for Guide Network. He lives in Derby, United Kingdom, and is a member of WEC International. He co-edits the free, easy-English SOON outreach paper.

Christians Collaborate to Fight Trafficking through the European Freedom Network

Human traffickers and pimps work together across Europe to cause huge suffering. Since summer 2009, the European Evangelical Alliance (EEA) has been nurturing a response, bringing together Christians who work to combat human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Now with ninety partners, the European Freedom Network (EFN) has become an official network of the EEA.

Niek Tramper, EEA's general secretary, said,

We cannot lose any time in combating these modern and sometimes hidden forms of slavery in our so-called free continent. I am impressed by the joy and energy reflected by staff and

volunteers within the European Freedom Network to obey the call of Jesus to “set my captives free.” With delight, I welcome EFN as one of the most strategic networks of EEA.

Julia Doxat-Purser, EEA’s socio-political representative, added,

The European Freedom Network is all about the Body of Christ working together to make a big difference. We are a family of ministries sharing ideas and resources, working together where we can, always encouraging local initiatives. Cooperation makes us so much more effective. A growing number of EFN partners are generously giving their time so that our collective work is stronger.

EFN focuses on finding solutions to needs and working on problems together. Already, EFN relationships have enabled coordinated expertise to assist growing work in Romania. The EFN advocacy team is working on public policy in several nations. The prayer team is developing resources to equip the Church for strategic prayer.

Jennifer Roemhildt Tunehag, EEA’s new associate on human trafficking and prostitution, said,

I believe that we have the opportunity and the obligation to respond in redemptive ways to this crisis of exploitation. The global Church, working together locally, can be a powerful force in the battle against human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

EFN partners include friends from the International Christian Alliance on Prostitution, the European Baptist Federation, Beyond the Streets, AGWM, the Salvation Army, CARE, Stop the Traffik, YWAM, and many national Evangelical Alliances.

For more information about the European Freedom Network, the issues involved, or to join, pray, or support in other ways, contact: Jennifer Roemhildt Tunehag at jenroemhildt@gmail.com or the European Evangelical Alliance office at office@europeanea.org.

Global Declaration on Care and Counsel as Mission Released

Christian mental health professionals who attended Cape Town 2010: The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization have released the Cape Town Declaration on Care and Counsel as Mission, a three-page document that outlines foundational principles for responding to the unprecedented level of global mental health needs both within the Church and beyond. Sections of the Declaration address theological foundations for care and counsel as mission, as well as the need for more holistic and systemic perspectives, increasing inclusion of indigenous forms and methods of care, and collaborative methods of understanding and responding.

“God is calling us to walk alongside the suffering people of the world as he does,” noted Bradford M. Smith, who leads Lausanne’s Care and Counsel as Mission interest committee. He continued:

Our hope is that this Declaration, rooted in the 2009 Lausanne Consultation on Care and Counsel as Mission held in Mexico City, will stimulate a global dialogue on the future role of Christian counseling or, more broadly, care and counsel in serving all people.

Noting the widespread adoption of Western psychology in Christian counseling training programs worldwide, the Declaration recommends the development of “integral (holistic) models of psychology and psychotherapy that utilize indigenous, Christian models of human functioning, wholeness, and resiliency drawn selectively and sensitively from the insights of psychologies from around the world.”

The Declaration will be of interest to pastors, counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, educators, mission organizations, and member care personnel. It is available at www.careandcounselmission.org, along with a growing list of endorsers worldwide.

For more information, contact Bradford M. Smith, director of Care and Counsel International at careandcounsel@gmail.com. Or call 1.781.710.8300.

World Hope International Impacts Our World for Jesus

By Megan Nykyforchyn-Clark

Q. Share an overview of World Hope International’s history.

A. World Hope International (WHI) was born out of Dr. Jo Anne Lyon’s desire to see the Church become more engaged in helping the poor and oppressed internationally. She served as CEO of WHI for twelve years, during which the organization grew from a bedroom in her home to a presence in over twenty countries around the world.

In 2009, Dr. Karl Eastlack became the second-generation CEO for WHI. Having served as a lead pastor for over twenty years, he brought to WHI a wealth of experience and a fresh vision for the future.

Q. Tell us about the ministries of WHI.

A. WHI currently works in seventeen countries around the world, the core of which are in Sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia. WHI’s programs focus on serving the poorest of the poor and the oppressed. We give women, children, and communities the tools they need to improve their lives in a sustainable manner. Specifically, this is implemented through rural development and clean water, health, economic development, education, and anti-human trafficking initiatives.

Q. How does the faith aspect of WHI work itself out in practical ministry?

A. The heart of WHI is obedience to God through loving our neighbors. All WHI staff, both at headquarters and in the country offices, are Christian. Through prayer and action we are able to show others the love of Christ. Christ has given us hope, and hope is what we carry to the individuals with whom we come in contact. Many of the challenges we face are certain patterns of thought or behavior that can only change through Christ. We count it a privilege to work alongside these communities and see the change that Christ brings, as we too are changed in the process.

Q. What do you see as two or three key issues the Church worldwide faces in the next ten years as it deals with transforming and empowering communities in poverty?

A. One of the challenges the Church will continue to face is individuals in poverty coming to Christ in hopes of material wealth, and then leaving the church if that material wealth is not realized. Another challenge the Church will face is the challenge of caring for its community members as increasing natural disasters and political unrest occur.

Q. Share an example of how others have come to trust in Jesus as a result of WHI ministries.

A. Through the Reach4Life program, many have come to know Jesus. This program shares the love of Christ with youth in Southern Africa who are suffering under the burden of HIV/AIDS. WHI present several HIV/AIDS-related topics (including faith) to high school students. Thousands of youth have come to trust in Jesus and have been discipled as a result of this work.

Q. Share one story that has impacted you during your time with WHI.

A. WHI utilizes national staff to lead its field work around the world. Working with our teams around the world has been very meaningful and rich. This past year, I have been particularly impressed by the caliber of our team in Haiti. A few weeks after the earthquake, one of our senior staff and I spent several hours negotiating with the United Nations to provide formula for babies who were dying in Leogane, ten kilometers from the epicenter of the earthquake. I was so thankful for his understanding of the complexity of navigating this environment so that we could essentially save the lives of many babies in that area. I was also grateful that despite the difficulty of the environment, he was committed to staying in Haiti and providing his skills and training to serve the vulnerable.

Megan Nykyforchyn-Clark is vice-president of programs at World Hope International, overseeing international programs in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. She received her MA in public health at the University of Texas, focusing on HIV/AIDS among indigent populations. Prior to her current role she worked as the HIV/AIDS program manager at WHI, directing HIV/AIDS programs in Southern Africa and the Caribbean.

LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Leadership Profile: Sadiri Joy Tira, Diaspora Ministry Mobilizer, Pastor, Canada

Q. Please tell us about your family.

A. I have been married to Lulu Tira for thirty-four years. She was a nursing student when we met during our university years and later a university nursing instructor. Since getting married, Lulu has worked in various jobs, including as nurse on board the Operation Mobilization ship MV Logos, supportive seminary wife, and devoted pastor's wife. She now serves along with me as a motivator and mobiliser of diaspora Filipinos. She conducts evangelism, discipleship, and leadership training among Filipino kingdom workers overseas.

Lulu is an incredible leader in her own right. If people think that I can be a "crazy whirlwind" about people on the move, they should meet my wife, who is constantly on her knees for the diaspora people.

Lulu and I have two adult children, two in-laws, and three grandchildren. They are all Canadians, but resemble most closely the "Nowherians" that *TIME* magazine travel writer Pico Iyer describes in his writings. Nowherians are people who are not exiles, expatriates, nomads, or refugees, but who have fallen between all these categories in a space of "blurred boundaries and global mobility." We are grateful that our children claim citizenship to heaven—the ultimate security of a "global soul." It is our family's prayer that our grandchildren will grow to be eloquent ambassadors of our eternal home.

Q. Please give us a brief overview of your work and ministry.

A. Along with serving as the Lausanne senior associate for diasporas, I serve as chairperson for the Global Diaspora Network (GDN), which was formed during Lausanne III: Cape Town 2010. GDN is a catalytic movement that motivates and mobilizes diaspora Christians to partner for global missions. The

GDN met for the first time in February 2011 in Paris. The GDN replaces the Cape Town 2010 event-specific Lausanne Diasporas Leadership Team (LDLT), and functions under the umbrella of Lausanne.

The Filipino International Network (FIN), “a catalytic movement of Christians committed to motivate and mobilize Filipinos globally to partner for worldwide mission,” is also very close to my heart and I am blessed to work with Filipino kingdom workers in diaspora.

In the past, I ministered in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, for over two decades, where I served as founding senior pastor of First Filipino Alliance Church. Before immigrating to Canada, I worked as an engineer with the Operation Mobilization ship M/V Logos.

Q. What is your favorite quote?

A. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19).

Q. Who has been the most influential person in your life/ministry, and why?

A. I feel that I am "a dwarf standing on the shoulders of giants." There have been five remarkable persons who have influenced my life and ministry: Vergil Schmidt of the Christian & Missionary Alliance, my first supervising pastor who challenged me to commit to my calling; Enoch Wan of Western Seminary, who prodded me to sharpen my mind and articulate my views on ministry; Jack and Carol Klemke, a Canadian couple who have been gracious and faithful supporters and who prompted me to ask strategic questions about our times; and Ted Yamamori of the Lausanne Movement, who is a staunch advocate of the "people on the move."

Q. What is the best piece of advice you've received?

A. "If you don't know, ask. Don't assume that you know everything."

Q. What one issue do you believe is the greatest barrier or opportunity to evangelism, and why?

A. A lack of vision and laziness are great barriers to evangelism. We need vision to be proactive, and diligence to ask the hard questions and adapt to ever-shifting scenarios. There

Evangelism. On Point.

Q. Please describe a time in which you shared your faith in Christ with someone who didn't know him, and then saw God clearly work in that situation.

A. While in Oman in February 2011, GDN executive secretary Mark Sosmeña and I met Hassan* through his Christian Filipino wife, Lydia* (who met Lulu four years ago). Hassan invited us to his home and in a gesture of ultimate hospitality gave each of us one of his very own Omani gowns (*dishdasha*) and headress (*muzzar*).

Hassan and Lydia took us for lunch at a luxurious hotel and as soon as the meal started,

are so many opportunities in evangelism right now, but if we lack the vision and will to work hard to question and respond to the times, we miss out.

Q. What book do you most often recommend to others to read, and why?

A. There are many noteworthy books, but two continually inspire me to pray for the diaspora people:

Iyer, Pico. 2000. *The Global Soul: Jeg Lag, Shopping Malls, and the Search for Home*. Toronto: Random House of Canada.

International Organization for Migration. 2010. *World Migration Report 2010—The Future of Migration: Building Capacities for Change*. Geneva, Switzerland: IOM.

Although neither are "Christian" books, both are outstanding for those in diaspora ministry.

Q. What websites, bloggers, and Tweeters do you regularly follow?

A. I read the news. Thankfully, we now have access to journalism from around the world. Constant awareness of what is happening in the world is required in order to elicit strategic response. In the blogosphere, I follow the blog of J. D. Payne, associate professor of church planting and evangelism at The Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary).

Q. What would you like to be doing in five years?

A. In the next five years I hope to be actively involved in catalyzing the global Church for diaspora missions and seminaries regarding diaspora missiology. This involves a lot of networking, writing, and travel to different regions to convene diaspora missiology and mission consultations.

Q. How can people be praying for you?

A. Please pray for wisdom as I respond to many diasporic issues. Also for vitality and energy as I travel championing the Lausanne Global Diaspora Network partnership between churches and organisations leading to the Global Diaspora Missions Congress in 2015.

Hassan started asking me about the "Trinity"—a mystery that many Muslims find difficult to accept.

"Tell me why Christians have three gods," Hassan began. In a moment of God-inspired wisdom, I responded, "Hassan, tell me more about your drinking water. I knew Hassan and Lydia were advocates of hot drinking water. My question allowed Hassan to share his passion for hot drinking water, and in turn I was able to relate Hassan's experience with water to the Christian understanding of the Trinity. Praise the Lord that Hassan decided, over lunch, to give his life to Jesus, the Living Water.

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING

Satisfying Africa's Hunger for the Written Word

By Lawrence Darmani

During a critical leadership succession period in a publishing house in Côte d'Ivoire, the new CEO, Jules Ouoba, needed urgent help. Survival was uncertain, yet crucial for Centre de Publications Evangéliques (CPE), the largest Christian publisher in French-speaking Africa. Bob Reekie, Media Associates International (MAI) co-founder and president for many years, moved in to assist.

Several interactions later, a new leaf of hope came to CPE. It sprang back and began publishing life-changing literature.

For more than twenty-five years MAI has been training publishers, editors, writers, designers, and booksellers in Africa and around the globe. Publishing professionals from within the continent and beyond have volunteered their time and talents to impart techniques, sharpen skills, and deliver much-needed encouragement to launch new Christian publishing endeavors and resuscitate ailing publishers that could have flopped.

The Church in Africa has exploded in the last century, increasing the need for literature that can help it address critical issues such as discipling believers, battling AIDS, overcoming poverty, and stabilizing democracy. Church leaders also need written materials to help bring reconciliation and hope to those suffering from the scars of tribal enmity and other divisions.

Africa is the world's youngest region—children under 15 make up more than forty percent of our people. I meet with publishing leaders around the continent who are recognizing the need to encourage the next generation to read and to provide Christian teaching through quality literature.

The Influx of Western Literature

One of the sharpest issues that has confronted African publishers is the lack of locally-created and culturally-relevant material in the wake of the influx of Western literature. A significant majority of the books sold in Africa, including those in Christian bookstores, have been produced in the West, rather than by local writers.

Some African publishers rely upon the sales of book rights they have purchased from Western publishers to sustain their businesses. “The books are already well edited and neatly packaged, making things simpler for us,” one publisher said. Further benefits include operating with a leaner staff and cutting down pre-press capital, authors’ advance royalties, editors’ remuneration, and designers’ and illustrators’ fees. The books are printed in China or India, where printing costs are manageable, making them affordable and profitable.

Another advantage is the popularity of the authors. According to one publisher in Kenya, whose annual list includes eighty percent foreign titles, “The more famous the author, the higher the sales.” As a result, local authors are overlooked. This imbalance is a great cause for concern. Even publishers who rely upon foreign rights recognize the need to develop and publish local authors.

“It’s now our policy to reserve up to twenty percent of our titles for local authors, and this will increase with time,” one publisher asserted, evidencing an encouraging attitude. However, in order to create more effective and lasting advances in locally-produced literature, Africa requires training of writers, editors, and publishers, as well as advocacy to influence government policy.

Barriers to Locally-Produced Reads

Publishers in Africa face additional obstacles. When a young publisher in Kenya considered Christian publishing as a vocation, he was warned that it wouldn’t be viable due to the poor reading culture in Africa. Not intimidated, the publisher surveyed major bookshops and discovered that, indeed, Africans do read. They simply want value for their money and are willing to buy well-produced books. And this is what he set out to do.

Content is just as important as marketing technique to attract readers. “When you scratch where people itch, they will respond,” a publisher of motivational books asserted when discussing fast-moving books. He debunked the notion that Africans don’t read, arguing that when a book addresses the felt needs of people, people will read it.

Admittedly, mediocrity has been the bane of some publishing houses in Africa; however, this trend, like the so-called poor reading culture, is changing. At a workshop in Ethiopia last year, several participating publishers resolved that quality publishing—in content, printing, packaging, and presentation—was the way to sustain Christian publishing in Africa.

Also, many African publishers grapple with marketing and selling the books they produce. “Books are published for readers in the marketplace, not for warehouses,” one publisher lamented. “But our books move rather slowly.” This challenge of distribution is not insurmountable, however, as African publishers are embarking on book launches and community outreaches and utilizing modern technology to increase book sales. “Keep no stone unturned,” one publisher urges, “for no success is easy to achieve.”

On the financial side, rising costs of printing materials and services prevent some publishers from going to press with books that are ready for publishing. It is the same reason they’re unable to accept good manuscripts, thus frustrating authors. As a result, subsidy or self-publishing is prevalent. “Now that I publish my own books, I make profits and don’t have to wait to have my books published,” a marriage counselor in Ethiopia said.

Achievements in African Publishing

Despite the challenges, bright spots in Christian publishing dot the landscape. With the Church in Africa growing numerically, Christian publishers have the opportunity to produce relevant books to nurture its members. Books on ethics, evangelism, leadership, discipleship, Christian education, and other issues that adequately address practical problems confronting African Christians are needed in churches and theological institutions.

Now the world can get a feel for today’s African Church and its leaders in the ground-breaking Africa Bible Commentary. Seventy African scholars contributed to this first one-volume Bible commentary produced in Africa by African theologians. The commentary’s African publisher is WordAlive in Nairobi, Kenya. The director of WordAlive, David Waweru, sensed God’s leading to start a publishing house while attending MAI’s international publishing conference, LittWorld, in England a decade ago.

Some Christian publishers have found their niche in specialized areas. Cluster Publications in South Africa, for example, concentrates on contemporary African issues from theological perspectives. Their “Signs of the Times” series, written in non-academic style, covers topics such as spirituality, economics, gender, justice, HIV/AIDS, and same-sex attraction.

Other publishers specialize in publishing Sunday school curriculum, hymn books, Bible study manuals, and devotional books. One such publisher said, “In the midst of competition, we’ve found our small niche in the local church where we believe we are meeting a need.”

At Step Publishers in Ghana, we produce Christian novels for schools in response to the government’s needs for supplementary readers. I believe this is a wonderful opportunity to reach youth with alternative Christian storybooks instead indecent ones that are capturing their minds.

Denominational engagement in mainstream publishing has become prevalent across the West African sub-region. Over a dozen megachurches have taken advantage of their large numbers to engage in prolific publishing.

One Christian leader doubles as the managing editor of the denomination's publishing house, which records, transcribes, and edits the sermons and teachings of the church's lead pastor and prepares them for publication. With large branches of the church established in major cities of Africa, the church engages in continent-wide distribution of their books. In some cases, the publications are used as textbooks by the students of their Bible colleges.

International Publishers Partner Together

Two other recent initiatives to foster African Christian publishing and authorship include HippoBooks and the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*.

Started through impetus from Langham Partnership International, HippoBooks is a shared imprint involving three African publishers and Zondervan. Several of Africa's French-language publishers may also get involved. The vision is to stimulate spiritual and intellectual growth in the African Church by developing books by African Christian authors who address African realities from an evangelical perspective.

Six books have been published so far, with more in preparation. The imprint includes a broad range of serious Christian and theological publications written especially for pastors, church leaders, and academics.

The Dictionary of African Christian Biography is an electronic database with biographies of African Christian leaders, evangelists, and lay workers chiefly responsible for laying the foundations and advancing the growth of Christian communities in Africa. An international team of scholars and church leaders—primarily Africans—is facilitating the project. Contributors are drawn from academic, church, and mission communities in Africa and elsewhere.

Since work began in 1997, more than 1,912 stories have been compiled. Entries are available not only in English, but also Swahili, French, and Portuguese. The Overseas Ministries Study Center of New Haven, Connecticut, USA, provides administrative and technical support.

Capturing the Insider's View

An email from Lillian Tindyebwa, co-founder of the Uganda Faith Writers Association (UFWA) and MAI training partner, sums up the need for uniquely African stories:

It is urgent that our stories are captured and written to give the insider's view of our modern faith versus the one of our fathers, to try and create a heritage for the future generations. People who have written about Africa often talk about our mellow heart, the joy and laughter in our bright smiles, and sometimes about our pain. What is not captured, however, is our faith—how we live our lives in the light of God's guidance and grace.

There are profound stories of the ordinary person's endearing faith, which compels them to smile even when they are not sure about the next meal. It is those stories about how we overcome such adversity that UFWA is interested in capturing and prayerfully endeavors to empower its members to write.

Lawrence Darmani is the CEO of Step Publishers and Media Associate International's Africa regional trainer. Although he combines publishing and editing in his day-to-day activities, he sees his calling and passion in Christian writing. He has authored over fiction and nonfiction books. He lives in Accra with his wife, Comfort, and two daughters.

A New Day for French-speaking Africa

By John Maust

“Being an evangelical publisher for the French-speaking world is the worst of two worlds,” quipped Greg Burgess of Editions Clé in France. “In Europe, the population has means, but there are very few Christians; in Africa, there are millions of Christians, but very limited resources.”

Christian publishing in Francophone Africa remains fragile at best. Publishers lack training and resources, and they struggle to survive amidst political instability and poverty. They have generally benefited from far less support than their English-language colleagues on the continent. Why?

“French-speaking Africa was often regarded as the poor man of the evangelical world because of its colonial past characterized by a low vitality of Protestantism in France and Belgium,” wrote Daniel Bourdagné, a native of Chad and general secretary of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES).

“Missiologically, French-speaking Africa was often neglected. This part of the world is culturally difficult and little known by the evangelical world dominated by American and Anglo-Saxon culture.”

Some twenty African countries have French as an official language. Media Associates International (MAI) hopes to spur the creation of the written word in these nations, as does director Jules Ouoba of the region’s largest publisher, Centre de Publications Evangéliques in Côte d’Ivoire. He has spearheaded regional publishing workshops in Benin, Cameroon, and Mali in recent years with MAI.

This September 2011, men and women from eight nations will gather in Brazzaville, Congo, for a marketing and writing workshop led by MAI trainers.

Key participants from the Congo workshop will be invited to the LittWorld 2012 international publishing conference in Kenya, 28 October to 2 November 2012. MAI is planning a weekend pre-conference exclusively for Africa’s French-speaking Christian publishing staff and writers. Both Daniel Bourdagné and Jules Ouoba will be speakers at LittWorld 2012.

LittWorld 2012: Save the date!
28 October to 2 November 2012

MAI’s unique international publishing conference, LittWorld 2012, will take place in Nairobi. “MAI returns to Africa with the goal of building on momentum from the 2009 conference, which ranked among the best so far, and to increase our training support on the continent,” said MAI president John Maust. For more information, [click here.](#)

Burgess recalls visiting a seminary library in a Francophone African country. The librarian proudly showed him the collection of thousands of books. Only one in five were in French. “That meant the better part of their library was of little use to the students,” he noted.

MAI envisions a day when Francophone Africa’s libraries, churches, bookstores, family bookshelves, computers, and even e-readers and mobile phones, are filled with books written by its own authors.

(This article was first published in Words for the World newsletter, March/April 2010.)

John Maust is president of Media Associates International (MAI), a publishing training ministry based near Chicago. He previously served as a missionary journalist with Latin America Mission, and as assistant news editor at *Christianity Today* magazine.

African Publisher's Title Shortlisted for Prestigious Award: *Eyo*, a Story of Human Trafficking

In her new novel *Eyo*, Nigerian author Abidemi Sanusi follows the journey of an illiterate 10-year-old girl as she is trafficked from the slums of Lagos, Nigeria, to the U.K., first as a domestic servant, then as a sex slave. Before sending her abroad, *Eyo's* mother says, "You must endure because you are a woman." *Eyo* does endure and survive, but at horrific cost.

The first piece of adult fiction published by WordAlive Publishers in Kenya, *Eyo* was shortlisted in the 2010 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book for Africa Region, an international award for outstanding fiction.

The book confronts readers with the deception in human trafficking, the helplessness of its victims, and the complications for those who escape. Nigeria is reputed to be Africa's largest source of trafficking victims. The character *Eyo* gives a face to the thousands of girls and women trafficked to Europe and beyond.

"I wanted to write a book about African children," says Sanusi. *Eyo* focuses particularly on "the status of the African girl[s] and the sacrifices they're called to make on behalf of their male siblings."

Eyo is fictitious, but the story is rooted in Sanusi's experiences growing up in Nigeria, her human rights work, and her relationships with activists who campaign against child trafficking.

Because African Christians are socialized to believe that reading fiction is not "spiritual," local publishers are cautious about publishing stories and novels. WordAlive's CEO David Waweru chose *Eyo* to launch the fiction line because the book is both well-crafted and culturally relevant.

Eyo "shocks the reader out of apathy," he says. One reader writes, "I cried and repented on behalf of mankind."

Eyo is available at WordAlive Publishers and will soon be available through Amazon.

(This article was first published in Inside MAI, March 2010. The review was written by Alyssa Keysor.)

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