



# Lausanne World Pulse

Providing Evangelism & Missions News, Information and Analysis

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

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## PUBLISHER'S MEMO

### Bringing God's Best to Our Broken World in 2010

By Doug Birdsall

*The Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart....the earth was filled with violence. (Genesis 6:5-6, 11)*

**With the fall of humanity, sin, pain, and suffering have marred our world.** Advances in information technology and global communication have made the images, sounds, and stories of the pain and suffering of millions of people around the world more tangible in our living rooms at a touch of a button. From the wars in the Middle East and Central Asia, to the ethnic conflicts in Africa and Southeast Asia, famine, tsunamis, HIV/AIDS, slavery, trafficking, and exploitation, it is evident that death, violence, pain, and suffering are ever with us. What can we say and what can we do in the face of such bleak and overwhelming darkness?

It is into *this* world, a very broken world, that Christ calls us to boldly follow him as his disciples and to share the good news of his love and grace. It is counterintuitive and even subversive for us to follow him and to become like him, as it calls upon us to first relinquish our own powers and abilities and submit to his. As our brother Isaiah Dau (Sudan) writes,

We live in the tension of faith and suffering even as we walk in the “already and the not yet” of our salvation and deliverance from all that ails us. This faith offers us the option of continuing to trust God even while we accept the limits of our humanity...

This faith calls for us to follow Christ on his terms, in his strength, and in his spirit, not our own (Zechariah 4:6).

In the opening address of the first International Congress on World Evangelization held in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1974, Billy Graham spoke of the Spirit of Lausanne. This Spirit of Lausanne is a spirit of humility, reflection, partnership, study, and hope. It is with this Spirit we look to face the great and many challenges of 2010.

As Christians, we are not immune to what is happening around us, and often we are even complicit in the brokenness of this world. But it is with this spirit that we must seek the Lord to shed light on where we

have been complicit in the sufferings of those around us, with humility confess our sin, and take hope in the power of the Lord to overcome such adversities.

Just as Christ himself was not exempt from hunger, loneliness, persecution, violence, and death *yet* he overcame, we too shall overcome. Just as he carried his cross, he calls his followers to carry their crosses and to follow him. We do this because our hope is in his promise to be with us until the very end of the age (Matthew 28:20). Our hope is in his promise to return and to restore all things, and make all things new (Revelation 21:1-5)—all things to be as they should be.

As we begin the New Year, we stand at a crossroad. We can either continue to go as we have always gone, or we can do something different. We celebrate the New Year with hearts full of hope because we desire to leave the old behind us and to start afresh. Many make resolutions and resolve to change their ways; but sadly, many fail to make any lasting change to their lives.

Experts say that the failure of New Year's resolutions is often due to a lack of effective strategy and lack of accountability. As we enter this New Year, let us resolve not to leave things in this broken world as they are, but to boldly follow Christ together and to bring his message of healing and hope in a new and revolutionary way.

Just as the men of Issachar were noted for understanding their times and knowing what Israel should do (1 Chronicles 12:32), so too must we seek the Lord to become men and women with keen perception of our times to develop vision and a cohesive strategy to grapple with the issues of our times. As we are now engaged in the twenty-first century, it is vitally important to bring together both old and new generations to identify the greatest challenges our world face today, how are we to face them as we follow Christ, and how are we to embody Christ for our broken world.

This is our missiological challenge: to follow and become like Christ in the context of our broken world in all its different shattered pieces. It is for this reason the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization is being convened this October 2010 in Cape Town, South Africa—to have a Congress that provides hope for the world as we live in a time of great suffering, fragmentation, and fear. As we look toward Cape Town 2010, let this not be the goal itself, but rather only the beginning:

God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and...has committed to us the message of reconciliation...We are therefore Christ's ambassadors. (2 Corinthians 5:18, 20)

May the Lord bless our studies, discussions, strategies, and endeavors toward being Christ to our broken world. God's best to you.

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

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### **AROUND THE WORLD: Trans World Radio Changes Its Name to TWR**

Effective 18 November 2009, International Christian ministry [Trans World Radio](#), a pioneer in media missions, changed its name to TWR. TWR has also adopted the positioning statement "Speaking Hope to

the World" to fortify its new identity. "While our commitment to radio broadcasting remains steadfast, the name Trans World Radio no longer fully conveys the scope of our organization," says TWR president Lauren Libby. "TWR is more than radio. It is a multifaceted media ministry. By changing the name to TWR, we will maintain radio as a keystone communication component, all the while employing a strategic integration of new media platforms. In fact, we will even seek to enlarge our broadcasting footprint." Libby explained that TWR is committed to leveraging digital advances such as the Internet, MP3 players, video, and other mobile-device formats. "In recent years, modern technology has enabled us to make significant strides in engaging with our global audience," he said. "Whether it's by radio or other new media means, TWR is dedicated to helping fulfill Christ's Great Commission." ([Trans World Radio](#))

### **CHINA: The Preaching Movement in China**

Although an estimated seventy million Christians live in China today, there are only twenty-three seminaries (which graduate one thousand people a year) in the entire country, leading to the potential for a weaker biblical foundation for pastors. To address this issue, the JSM-Langham Preaching program partnered with two organizations at work in Hong Kong to offer training seminars to forty-five pastors. There are plans to run a follow-up seminar in the near future with the group and an additional seminar with a new group of pastors. ([JSM-Langham Partnership](#))

### **COLOMBIA: Christians Held Captive and Told to Renounce Their Faith**

In November 2009, it was reported that sixteen Christians belonging to the Kogui indigenous people group in Colombia were being held captive on their reserve in an attempt to force them to renounce Christianity. The group of believers, which includes men, women, and three babies, was captured during a meeting called by the Kogui governor. Community leaders shouted abuses at the believers throughout the night. They were later taken to a remote area of the reserve and told they would not be freed until they renounced their faith in Christ. At last report, two of the kidnapped infants were seriously ill. The governor and his allies also humiliated non-Christian leaders who had supported the Christians in the community and protected them from being expelled. The governor reportedly intends to capture remaining Christians and force them to renounce their faith. ([Voice of the Martyrs](#))

### **INDIA: Hindu Radicals Targeting Christians**

There is evidence now that continued violence against Christians in India is fueled by animosity toward the conversion of many Hindus to Christianity. President of [Mission India](#) (MI), Dave Stravers, says the evidence comes from hard-line Hindu groups. "We [received] a PowerPoint presentation from a Hindu extremist group warning people in the state of Karnataka that the Christians are growing so fast that they're worried that the state might actually become a majority Christian state." According to Stravers, the Hindu radicals also believe the state of Andhra Pradesh could become Christian if something isn't done. Stravers explains that the Hindus are shaken by the growth of the Church saying, "It used to be when you went through the villages, you saw only temples. But now you're seeing churches, and the temples are being closed. It's really confirming our experience that there is a powerful movement of Christ in India." Hindu radicals are doing something about it. They're threatening and attacking pastors. It was reported that one pastor was attacked in the middle of a service by a group of men who ran into the church wielding clubs. MI supports the local church by helping establish children's Bible clubs, literacy classes and pastoral training. ([Mission Network News](#))

### **MIDDLE EAST/NORTH AFRICA: SAT-7 Strategically Sharing the Gospel through Satellite Television**

SAT-7's four channels, SAT-7 Arabic, PARS (Persian), KIDS (Arabic), and TURK, are watched in more than seventy nations, including more than twenty across the Middle East and North Africa. Up to ninety-five percent of the people in some of these ME/NA nations have access to satellite television, making SAT-7 a strategic ministry to reach this part of the world for Jesus. According to Rev. Dr. Samah

Maurice, senior pastor of the Kasr El Dohara Church in Cairo (the largest Protestant church in the Middle East, "If you see most of the cities in the Arab world now, even homes in the poorest areas have satellite dishes, and they are even more common than refrigerators or ovens....The local church cannot do what the satellite can do these days." (SAT-7)

### **MIDDLE EAST/NORTH AFRICA: 10/40 Window Most "Gospel-Deprived"**

Nations located between ten and forty degrees north of the equator fall into a span dubbed the "10/40 Window." Thousands of unreached people groups inhabit the 10/40 Window, and approximately half of these groups have no access to Christian literature. "It is the most gospel-deprived, gospel-needy area of the world," says David Shibley of [Global Advance](#) (GA). After nearly a decade of evangelistic focus and effort, Shibley says the region is producing a harvest. Churches planted throughout the 10/40 Window are now sending their own believers out to plant the word. GA's Frontline Shepherds leadership conferences impart a vision in pastors' hearts to further the gospel in their region. According to GA's website, each year the organization hosts and sponsors over one hundred of these conferences around the world. But as the gospel grows throughout the 10/40 Window, so does the resistance. Shibley adds, "There is a tremendous opposition against the gospel. I have met pastors this year who have been imprisoned, who live with constant threats against their lives for simply proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ." ([Mission Network News](#))

### **MYANMAR: Minority Karen People Flee into Thailand**

For nearly twenty-five years refugees from Myanmar have fled into Thailand. According to Patrick Klein of [Vision Beyond Borders](#) (VBB), there are currently over 150,000 refugees who have come into Thailand from (Myanmar) Burma, and there are still more flooding across the border. Many of the refugees are of the minority Karen people, who are among the most discriminated against in Myanmar. Klein believes Myanmar's effort to rid itself of the Karen people is both ethnic and faith-based. Many of the Karen are Christians. In the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis, which devastated the country in early May 2008, Burmese authorities reportedly denied relief aid to several Christians. Klein reported that on his last visit to the area, Myanmar junta soldiers had threatened to kill a group of eighty-six orphaned refugees. The group fled into Thailand in the middle of the night. ([Mission Network News](#))

### **NEW ZEALAND: Call2Next Generation Gathering Set for January 2010**

In January 2010, thousands of university-age students from six continents will gather in Tauranga, New Zealand, at the Bethlehem Institute for the historic Call2All Next Generation Gathering. Mark Anderson, president of [Global Pastors Network](#) (GPN) and [Call2All](#) said, "Something supernatural is building up for the Call2All Next Generation. Not only is there great excitement, there is a deep sense that God is going to use this gathering to launch a new move towards missions among the next generation." He noted that the event, scheduled for 19-22 January 2010, will receive thousands of participants from across the world, adding that they've already offered scholarships for the first one thousand delegates from the Developing World. As of November 2009, many of these delegates had already registered. According to Anderson, the Call2All movement began in March 2007, envisioning that the Body of Christ would come together and see the Great Commission fulfilled. The movement grew quickly and in June 2009, the Call2All International Congress was held in Hong Kong with three thousand Christian leaders from more than one hundred countries in attendance. ([Assist News Service](#))

### **NIGER: CURE to Open Its Eleventh Clinic**

In September 2010, [Cure International](#) (CURE) will open its eleventh clinic to provide diagnosis and treatment for disabled children and their families. Executive director in Niger, Leron Lehman, says early research into the project showed a generous community welcome. CURE doesn't expect any resistance or opposition to the new clinic, even from the Muslim community. In some locations, sharing the love of Christ through medical care raises hostility. "Early indications, based on some of the relationships we've

developed there, are that they're welcoming us with open arms," Lehman says. "[It] appears that it's a little bit of a different flavor, so to speak, [in the Niger Muslim community] than maybe we've experienced in some of our other hospitals in the Middle East." ([Mission Network News](#))

### **PAKISTAN: Christians Freed after Efforts by Life for All**

In November 2009, fifty-nine imprisoned Christians in Pakistan were freed, thanks to efforts by the Pakistani-based Christian organization Life for All. The prisoners, who have been in various jails in Pakistan, got the welcome news of their freedom after hard work made by Rizwan Paul, president of Life for All, who had presented a petition to Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari for the pardon of these Christians who he stated had been "falsely accused of minor crimes." Zardari reviewed the petition and approved the release of the prisoners. He vowed to address the release of other prisoners after reviewing the nature of their crimes. It is estimated that more than 2,500 Christians remain in jails all over Pakistan and cannot afford the legal assistance for their release. Many church-based and Christian/Muslim civil society organizations claim to provide legal aid assistance to Christians and other poor people, but the poor in Pakistan still may be implicated on false charges and sent to jail for years. Life for All did not receive local or foreign aid for the release of the fifty-nine Christians. Rizwan stressed that Christian organizations "need to work together for the development of the community" in Pakistan. ([Assist News Service](#))

### **PHILIPPINES: Cooperation between Protestants, Evangelicals, and Roman Catholics in Bible Translation**

Cooperation between Protestants, Evangelicals, and Roman Catholics is growing strong a century after the Bible was translated into a local language in the Philippines, say Christian leaders. "We now come and celebrate together for this great gift of God through which his word, through translation, has become alive in us since one hundred years ago," said Methodist Bishop Nathanael Lazaro, president of the Philippine Bible Society. Lazaro was speaking on 2 December 2009 during centennial celebrations in Baguio City of the translation of the Bible into Ilokano, one of seven major languages in the Philippines, which has more than eighty languages and dialects. ([Ecumenical News International](#))

### **SOMALIA: Pastor Attacked Returning Home from Worship Service, Dies**

A human rights group has learned that members of al-Shabaab (a Somali Islamic extremist group) have killed yet another leader of an underground church in the Somalia capital of Mogadishu. On 10 October 2009, Pastor Ali Hussein Weheliye was returning home from a worship service when two masked members of al-Shabaab ambushed and shot him. He later died at Darful Shifa Hospital from his wounds. Ali converted from Islam to Christianity in 1999 while working in Somalia's capital as a linguist. In 2002, he started pastoring an underground house church. He is survived by his wife and a daughter who are now in hiding fearing for their lives. Al-Shabaab previously declared Somalia as an Islamic state, vowing to eradicate Christians. Just this year, the group has killed a dozen Somali Christians. Several Christians have also left the country due to the intense persecution. Despite the killings by al-Shabaab, the Somali Church is growing rapidly. ([International Christian Concern](#))

### **SOMALIA: Young Christian Executed for Trying to Convert a Muslim**

In November 2009, Islamic extremists controlling part of the Somali capital of Mogadishu executed a young Christian they accused of trying to convert a 15-year-old Muslim to Christianity. Members of the Islamic extremist group al Shabaab had taken 23-year-old Mumin Abdikarim Yusuf into custody on 28 October 2009 after the 15-year-old boy reported him to the militants, an area source told [Compass Direct News](#) (CDN). Al Shabaab, said to have links with al Qaeda terrorists, controls parts of Mogadishu and much of southern parts of Somalia, as well as other areas of the nation. Their accusations against Yusuf had led the extremist group to raid Yusuf's home in Holwadag district, Mogadishu, sources said. After searching his home, militia didn't find anything relating to Christianity but still took him into custody.

CDN says that before Yusuf was executed, reports filtered in to the source that he had been badly beaten and his fingers broken as the Islamists tried to extract incriminating evidence against him and information about other Christians. ([Assist News Service](#))

### **ZIMBABWE: Frontline Fellowship Provides Aid amidst a New Wave of Violence**

A new wave of violence is gripping Zimbabwe and [Frontline Fellowship](#) is providing books, Bibles, food, and medicine to churches, missions, hospitals, and prisons. Although President Robert Mugabe's Marxist ZANU-PF government has been repeatedly rejected by voters at elections, the Marxists refuse to step down and people are being beaten, tortured, and killed. ([Frontline Fellowship](#))

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## **THEMED ARTICLES: Being Christ to a Broken World**

### **South Africa and 2010: The Church's Role in Countering Human Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation**

By Gill Dobson

*"To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others." - Nelson Mandela*

**2009 marked fifteen years of freedom from the chains of the apartheid era for South Africa, a time to celebrate the successes of a peaceful transition to democracy and the many improvements to the lives of ordinary men and women in the intervening years.** Sadly, however, not all is rosy in this fledgling democracy.

Ongoing widespread poverty and unemployment mean many of South Africa's citizens go hungry. HIV and AIDS is ravaging the land, leaving thousands of orphans in child-headed households. While successful economic policies have resulted in a booming economy, a negative spin-off has been the thousands of immigrants, legitimate and otherwise, who have flooded into South Africa seeking to share in these newfound material benefits. Sadly, some of these new immigrants are members of crime syndicates—criminal parasites who have introduced South Africans to a frightening new twenty-first-century reality, one that feeds off the vulnerability of the poor, the unemployed, the uneducated, and the orphaned. Human trafficking, as in many parts of the world, is becoming a booming business on the tip of the African continent.

#### **Human Trafficking—Fast Facts and Figures**

Human trafficking, a modern-day form of slavery, is acknowledged to be the third largest international criminal activity, after arms smuggling and drug trafficking. Worldwide, trafficking in persons generates profits in excess of US\$12 billion a year for those who, by force and deception, sell human lives into slavery and sexual bondage.<sup>1</sup>

The U.S. State Department estimates that approximately 800,000 people are trafficked across national borders annually, while many others are trafficked intra-nationally. Trafficking is a lucrative business, because unlike arms or drugs which are sold once, humans can be sold and resold again and again, and the majority of those who are trapped, tricked, and trafficked, are sold for sexual exploitation as prostitutes.<sup>2</sup>

#### **2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup**

The staging of the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup in South Africa from 11 June to 11 July 2010 has been

cause for national celebration, and has provided thousands of jobs as hundreds of man-hours and materials are poured into the construction of soccer stadiums and preparations for hosting the tournament in venues around the country. South Africans are justifiably proud of being chosen to host this prestigious world sporting event.

But there is a major downside to the staging of the World Cup. Most experts in the field of counter-trafficking argue that there is a correlation between demand for the services of prostitutes and large numbers of male tourists attending major sporting events, and there is great concern that trafficking in South Africa will increase as thousands of tourists descend upon the country, visa requirements are relaxed, and schools are closed for a five-week, mid-year holiday period.<sup>3</sup> Many feel that this extended school holiday places already vulnerable and unsupervised children at further risk, as they are drawn to soccer venues or fan parks where they will be vulnerable to traffickers.

The influx of tourists, coupled with a relaxation of visa requirements, also provides both cover and opportunity for traffickers to import women and children for the purposes of prostitution. Justice Department sources say that they have information that women are already being brought in to the country and kept “underground” in residential areas in anticipation of increased demand for the services of prostitutes during the World Cup.<sup>4</sup>

While some, including former South African police commissioner, Jackie Selebi, have called for the legalization of prostitution ahead of the 2010 Soccer World Cup in order to “legitimately” meet the anticipated increased demand from soccer tourists and decrease the risk of trafficking, evidence from countries with legalized prostitution indicates that trafficking in fact increases when prostitution is legalized.<sup>5</sup>

Additionally, legalized prostitution makes it much more difficult for law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute trafficking offences. Although the South African Law Reform Commission reported recently that any new legislation around the issue is unlikely to see the light of day before 2011,<sup>6</sup> regardless of the eventual outcome of any such legislative changes, it is evident that there is an urgent need for concerted action on the part of both government and community structures (NGOs, faith-based organisations, community organizations, and churches) to develop strategies to combat the scourge of human trafficking in South Africa.

### **A Biblical Response to Trafficking**

Christians are called to follow the example of Christ, who came to “...preach good news to the poor... (to) proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 3:18-19). Indeed, the history of the abolitionist movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is filled with the names of Christians such as William Wilberforce, John Newton, Granville Sharp, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and others who worked tirelessly to end slavery. Likewise, twenty-first-century followers of Christ must heed the call to set at liberty those who are captive and oppressed.

### **The South African Church Response to Human Trafficking**

It is difficult to assess the scale of trafficking occurring in South Africa, but it is known to be both a major source and destination country for trafficked persons on the African continent. There are a number of churches, faith-based organizations, and ministries in South Africa that are already working to counter this scourge. Both the Catholic Church and the Salvation Army have put out position papers on human trafficking and have initiated national anti-trafficking programmes in their constituencies. Some of the other faith-based organisations and ministries involved in counter-trafficking work include [Inter Outreach Ministries](#), [STOP \(Stop Trafficking in Persons\)](#), and [Straatwerk](#).

Countering trafficking is no easy task and needs a four-pronged attack if success is to be achieved:

- Specific anti-trafficking legislation and legal structures need to be in place to investigate and successfully prosecute traffickers.
- Communities need information and education that will enable them to avoid the snares of traffickers.
- Those who are poor and unemployed need to be assisted and given skills that will make them less vulnerable and enable them to feed their families.
- Rescue and rehabilitation programmes need to be in place to assist trafficking victims.

The Church can make a positive contribution to all of these strategies. Here's how it can help:

**Legislation and legal structures.** The South African government has drafted comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation based on the UN Trafficking Protocol, and by the time this article is published in early 2010, this legislation should have been enacted. Additionally, anti-trafficking structures have been created within the South African Police Services and the National Prosecuting Service.

The Church has a duty to use its moral voice to influence the legislative process, and has been particularly vocal recently in its opposition to proposed changes in the Sexual Offences Act of 1957, aimed at legalizing prostitution. Legislation to criminalize the buyers of sex services could be another useful tool in the fight against human trafficking, and the Church can and should lobby government for the enactment of such legislation, which has proven to be extremely effective in Sweden.<sup>8</sup>

**Information and awareness.** "The strength of the Church lies in conversation." This is the opinion of Major Marieke Venter, who heads up the Salvation Army Anti Human Trafficking task team. Human trafficking is an "underground" crime, and many are unaware that it is happening on their doorsteps. The Church is the ideal vehicle to raise awareness of the issue in communities. Both churches and faith-based organisations are already currently involved in raising awareness and educating communities about the dangers of trafficking. But more could be done.

Churches *can and should* use the pulpit as a platform to warn and educate congregations on relevant moral and social concerns surrounding trafficking. Church members should be encouraged to take the message out to their communities, in particular to those such as teachers, nurses, and social workers who work with vulnerable sectors of the population. Many churches also have ministries working to alleviate poverty or provide skills in vulnerable communities, and these ministries could be used as platforms for spreading awareness.

**Prevention.** It is a sad fact that many victims are trafficked by family members, often in response to circumstances of dire poverty. People who have food and employment will have no need to sell their children to traffickers. While many churches in South Africa are actively involved in poverty alleviation through soup kitchens, feeding schemes, and skills training programmes for the unemployed, *every* church needs to realize the need for action to prevent the root causes.

Corinne Sandenbergh of STOP, a faith-based non-profit organisation (NPO) working to raise awareness, as well as to rescue and rehabilitate victims, commented that "every church must take ownership of its own neighbourhood." Churches must act to combat trafficking in any way possible. When planning

ministry activities, churches need to be asking themselves: “Can this ministry activity in any way also be used to counter human trafficking and how?”

**Rescue and Rehabilitation.** A number of churches and ministries are involved in both rescue and rehabilitation work with victims of trafficking, particularly those caught up in prostitution. This is another counter-trafficking focus area where the Church can be particularly effective. Churches can provide safe houses for rescued victims and those going through rehabilitation programmes. They can provide love, care, counseling, and fellowship to help victims deal with low self-worth, trauma, and the effects of drugs and alcohol. They can help equip rescued victims with new skills so that they can find alternative means of employment.

Although there are already a number of churches and ministries involved in the fight against human trafficking in South Africa, trafficking will never be effectively countered until there is united action. The Church needs to partner with NGOs, other organizations, and governments to combat the scourge of twenty-first-century slavery. There will be many challenges and difficulties, but like William Wilberforce, who devoted fifty years of his life to the abolition of slavery, if the Church shows determination to overcome these challenges, and a willingness to persevere, the battle may be won.

One of the saddest comments I heard repeatedly while interviewing some of those working in faith-based anti-trafficking NPOs was that some pastors in South Africa are not willing to get involved in ministries that they have not initiated. This trend may be related to indifference, ignorance, lack of resources, or even arrogance, but whatever its source, it is a trend that must be challenged.

Not every church may have the resources (human and/or financial) to initiate and maintain ministries aimed at countering human trafficking, but every church can pray into the issue, every church can support others who are working in the field, every church can use its voice and its community platform to raise awareness, and every church can and should reflect biblical attitudes of love, acceptance, forgiveness, concern, and care to those who are trafficked into or caught up in prostitution.

If the Church is to follow the example of Jesus in setting at liberty those who are oppressed, it would do well to heed the warning of eighteenth-century Anglo Irish politician and abolitionist Edmund Burke, who said, “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.”

## Endnotes

1. [www.ijm.org/ourwork/injusticetoday](http://www.ijm.org/ourwork/injusticetoday)
2. Statistic from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, February 2009
3. [NGO Pulse report](#)
4. From an article published in *The Mercury*, 16 July 2009, p. 3
5. From “[Ten Reasons for Not Legalizing Prostitution And a Legal Response to the Demand for Prostitution](#)” by Janice G. Raymond
6. [www.christianaction.org.za/articles/HumanSlaveryProstitutionAnd2010.htm](http://www.christianaction.org.za/articles/HumanSlaveryProstitutionAnd2010.htm)
7. [www.salvationarmy.org.za/humantrafficking/](http://www.salvationarmy.org.za/humantrafficking/) and [www.sacbc.org.za](http://www.sacbc.org.za)

8. See [article](#) by Gunilla Ekberg

Born in Zimbabwe and a resident of Pietermaritzburg, **Gill Dobson** is the communications director of [African Enterprise South Africa](#). Trained as a graphic designer, but with a love for writing, Dobson is passionate about using her gifts to serve God.

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## **Business as Transformation**

By Mats Tunehag

### **Introduction**

Thailand is a great country. Tens of thousands of people have also discovered that. It is the “Land of Smiles” with beautiful beaches, pleasant temperature, good food, and friendly people. It is not difficult to fall in love with Thailand and its people. But like every other country, there is a flipside. Prostitution is illegal, but nevertheless it is a billion dollar industry which operates openly. Seven out of ten men who come to Thailand buy sex. About the same proportions apply for Thai men. There are factors in Thai culture and religion which feed this destructive industry. But there are also Christian business people who offer a way out from the sex industry by providing jobs with dignity.

### **Are We Indifferent?**

On our first evening in Pattaya, a major tourist town on the East coast, people could witness something horrific on the street. It happened openly: slaves were being brought to work. Nobody reacted except my wife. Three young beautiful Russian women with two guards were taken to the brothel for slave work. They were victims of trafficking. With a trained eye, based on years of experience of work among prostitutes and victims of trafficking, my wife understood what was taking place. Young women from former Soviet Union, many from Uzbekistan, are sold as sex slaves in Thailand.

Sometimes we ask ourselves why Germans didn't react when Jews were brutally and by force taken from their homes, marched down the streets to trucks which brought them to concentration camps. We ask: Why were people so indifferent? But the same question applies today, and should be asked of the thousands of people from every country who cannot avoid seeing what is going on in Thailand. Behind the friendly Thai smiles you may find slavery and human misery. Are we indifferent?

### **Dedicated to Prostitution**

The bulk of the prostitutes in Thailand are Thai girls from the northeast provinces. Most have no more than a sixth grade education. The vast majority have two things in common. First, many have been dedicated—even as babies—to gods and spirits, through a religious rite based on a mix of Buddhism and animism. Second, daughters are expected to support their parents, to be their pension scheme as it were. Sons, on the other hand, spend a few months as Buddhist monks and through that they invest in the parents' next life. Thus they are not responsible for the welfare of the parents in this life. So parents and relatives send and sell their daughters to work as prostitutes in cities like Bangkok, Phuket, and Pattaya.

“We work with these girls and it is a lot more complex than just dealing with psychological traumas and difficult socioeconomic issues,” says Susan, a well-educated therapist from the USA. “We are dealing with spiritual realities; some may call it demons, but regardless of labels, one cannot assist these girls to full restoration unless you recognize and deal with these spiritual issues.”

### **Transformational Business**

Susan volunteers with a team that has worked in Bangkok for the last four years. Their mission is to restore people—socially, spiritually, economically, emotionally, and physically. To that end they have

started a business called Nightlight. Today, eighty women (either former prostitutes or those at risk) are employed. The company is based on Christian values, and prayer is an integral part of the business.

“We don’t require anyone to convert, but we are not hiding who we are and what we believe,” says Katie, a designer of the jewelry the women manufacture. “But we have seen an increasing number of women be totally transformed as they become followers of Jesus.”

About half the women have started quite a unique church. The leaders and members are mostly former slaves of the sex industry. To them, the Christian faith is a life-transforming power, not just a set of theoretical biblical statements.

When you work with prostitutes and trafficking victims, you must be able to answer the question: Out of prostitution, rescued from the sex slave trade, but into what? You need to be able to offer a job with dignity as a sustainable alternative. Here, Christian business people hold keys in combating today’s slavery. There is a definite need for more Christian entrepreneurs with a vision for this.

### **Need for Cultural Change**

Here also lie important issues of culture and a need for changes of culture. Many in Europe and elsewhere naïvely believe that all cultures are equally good, albeit different, and that all should be neutrally accommodated without any cultural custom being challenged.

Sometimes, and sometimes rightly so, Christian mission has been accused of cultural imperialism and imposition. Mistakes will always be made in a cultural encounter, but there are numerous examples all over the world of how the Christian message has transformed cultural norms and customs which have been destructive. The religious practices which undergird oppression of women, and cultural norms which reinforce the sex industry, cannot be accepted. There is a definite need in Thailand for a constructive critique of religion and culture in this respect. But there is also a need for life-transforming alternatives based on human dignity and rights. Nightlight provides just that through its business.

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### **Ask Their Names**

By Jennifer Roemhildt Tunehag

**It was late when I left that night.** Our refugee feeding program had run long, and I was anxious to get home—partly because of the hour, and partly because of the neighborhood. The area around Omonoia in Athens, Greece, is a nightmare of human misery. Drug addicts purchase and consume their dose; homeless refugees spill over the sidewalks to fill the streets. Women stand on corners and in shadowy doorways offering their bodies to anyone who can pay.

It’s not the kind of place where you want to loiter. But as I walked toward my trolley that night, a woman caught my attention. She was standing in front of a run-down hotel, soliciting customers. Certainly not the first woman I had seen in prostitution in our area, and surely not the only woman working that night.

But as I saw her, something happened. I think it might be a bit like Christ felt when it is recorded in scripture that he saw the crowds, and was *moved with compassion* to do something for them. I felt like seeing this woman was an invitation. But I wasn’t sure to what.

I began to pray.

Over several weeks, I asked God to open the door. Even though I was already a missionary, I had no idea how to approach a woman in prostitution! “Give me a way to speak to her, Lord,” I prayed. God was not slow in answering.

Another late night, and another brisk walk through the neighborhood. This time, there were several people outside the hotel: a few women, and one very big man. In a red skirt. I’m sure he would have been tall even without the heels...but he was wearing high heels, and a long blonde wig. As I approached the group, he stepped out into my path. “You got the time?” he asked. “*I hope he means my watch,*” I thought.

I held out my arm as I walked past. I hadn’t gone more than a few steps when God moved again. “*This is a very sad man,*” he seemed to be saying, and I immediately began to pray as I pushed through the streets toward my home. I don’t think that’s at all unusual for us as Christians. God puts a burden on our hearts, and in response we lift it to him. What was strange was that I couldn’t stop praying! Prayer was pouring out of me over this man and his life. I felt as if the Spirit of God had been waiting for someone to intercede for him. “*I have to go back,*” came the urgent impression.

Just as quickly came another thought. “*That’s the stupidest thing I’ve ever heard! It’s eleven o’clock at night in one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in the city. What do you even think is going to happen?*”

I paced the sidewalk and argued with God. “*If you want me to go back, at least tell me what you want me to do!*”

“*Ask them their names,*” he said.

I think you will recognize that this is not a complete plan. Still, I was encouraged. This was something I could do! There was only one woman standing in front of the hotel when I returned...but she was the same woman I had seen all those weeks earlier. “I was on my way home,” I told her, “but I felt like God wanted me to come back and talk to you.” We talked for a while. “I’ll be praying for you, Elise,” I offered as I left.

She grabbed both of my hands. “Will you pray for me now?” Startled but willing, I began to pray. As I spoke to the Father, Elise kept whispering: “Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord!”

I didn’t know where God was leading. Perhaps that’s a good thing; I’m not sure that I would have been ready at that point to embark on a life dedicated to serving women and men in prostitution and victims of human trafficking. But I knew that he loved me, and that I wanted to go wherever he went.

That conversation with Elise became the first of hundreds of conversations in Athens and around the world.

**Today, there are between twelve and twenty-seven million people enslaved in forced labor, bonded labor, and sexual slavery in the world.** That’s more than the entire number shipped across the Atlantic in all the years of the slave trade combined! Nearly eighty percent of those trafficked<sup>1</sup>, like Elise, are used for sexual exploitation. Virtually every country in the world is involved in the web of trafficking activities, either as a country of origin, destination, or transit.

What does it look like as the Church follows Christ into the brokenness of slavery and abuse? *Profoundly hopeful!* It may look like street outreach in Athens, where teams of dedicated women and men continue to build bridges of hope and help to women like Elise.

It may resemble the courage of Evangelical Christians in Spain, who approached the major political parties in their country to ask what they were planning to do about prostitution. “If you will draft a legislation that is good for women in Spain,” the Christians were told, “we will bring it to Parliament!”

It may mean creating businesses that offer a “future and a hope” to women who need a means to support themselves. Businesses which embrace God’s purposes—and the women and men he has created—are a key to prevention, and an essential part of restoration, for those vulnerable to and victimized by human trafficking.

The situation is hopeful because we are invited, compelled (2 Corinthians 5:14) to follow the Son of Man, who came to seek and to save the lost. As we walk with him in these dark places, we can be confident that the darkness has not, and will not, overcome him.

#### **Endnote**

1. According to the United Nations protocol, trafficking can be defined as the recruitment, harboring, or transport (movement) of people by coercion or inappropriate means (control) for exploitation (money).

**Jennifer Roemhildt Tunehag** is the founder of Lost Coin/Nea Zoi, a ministry to women and men in prostitution in Athens, Greece. She currently works as an independent mission consultant, catalyzing ministry among victims of trafficking around the world.

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## **Water, Mission, and Evangelism**

By Jerry Wiles

**The global water crisis is a security issue.** It's an international relations issue. It's a foreign policy issue. It's a global health issue and a significant contributor to world poverty. However, for the Church of Jesus Christ, the global water crisis represents an amazing opportunity to help people with their most basic physical and spiritual needs.

According to recent statistics, 884 million people still lack access to clean, safe drinking water. These are the neediest people on the planet, both physically and spiritually. They live on a dollar or two a day, and in many cases, have also have the least access to the gospel.

If we as the people of God take seriously the mandate to bless all the nations (people groups) of the world, we must realize that no one can truly be blessed without having access to the most basic physical commodity—water. Without an adequate supply of clean, safe drinking water, other efforts to help people physically are not sustainable. Food programs, health care, educational programs, and economic development cannot be successful long term without safe water.

Helping communities acquire access to clean water can open doors and build bridges for the gospel where more conventional means have failed. In some parts of the world, followers of Jesus have been denied access to their community’s water supply. In those same communities, churches have been planted and water wells drilled; when this happens, clean, safe water is made freely available to Hindus and

Muslims—and whoever comes receives not only physical water, but experiences Living Water—the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It's been estimated that hundreds of thousands of people have come to faith in Christ as a result of someone bringing clean water in Jesus' name.

### **Living Water International**

Since its founding in 1990, [Living Water International](#) (LWI), a faith-based water solutions ministry, has completed more than eight thousand water projects, serving millions of people around the world every day. LWI is working in collaboration with churches, orphanages, schools, mission organizations, hospitals, and medical clinics. Water projects are often provided in refugee camps and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. The mission of Living Water International is “to demonstrate the love of God by helping communities acquire desperately needed clean water, and experience ‘living water’—the gospel of Jesus Christ—which alone satisfies the deepest thirst.”

A vital part of LWI's integrated approach includes sanitation services and hygiene training. Hygiene education in communities, schools, and clinics not only ensures a community's physical health—it provides an appropriate and natural way to build trust, begin conversations, and share the gospel.

The poet W. H. Auden once said, "Thousands have lived without love, not one without water."

There is a growing interest in the global water crisis. People of all ages are discovering that if you want to change the world, water is the place to start. It's encouraging to see so many young people of faith catching a vision for addressing the world's water issues. More than eighty percent of the world's diseases and premature deaths are attributed to bad water. Half the hospital beds in the world are occupied by someone with some kind of water-related disease, and a child dies every fifteen seconds from a water-related disease.

### **Water + Gospel = Saved Lives Today and for Eternity**

More important than physical water is the living water Jesus spoke of in John 4 and 7. Water alone can save lives and change destinies, but the living water of Jesus can save lives and change destinies for eternity. One of Living Water International's goals is to ensure that every person getting clean water from its projects has the opportunity to be exposed to a biblically-based and culturally relevant witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Only eternity will reveal the impact that his word is having in these hearts and lives.

Since connecting with the [International Orality Network](#) (ION) in 2007, LWI has adopted oral communication of the gospel among oral learners as its primary outreach strategy. According to ION, four billion people (nearly seventh percent of the world's population) are oral preference learners. In the regions of the world where Living Water International is working, eighty to ninety percent of the people are primary or secondary oral learners.

Time will tell, but the early responses indicate that storying and orality methods will greatly accelerate the advancement of the gospel in these areas. LWI has conducted orality workshops this year in Liberia, Rwanda, and Honduras, with outstanding results. Increasing numbers of mission organizations are transitioning to orality, not only for evangelizing, but also for making disciples and training leaders, teachers, and church planters. Another aspect of LWI's evangelism strategy is establishing alliances, partnerships, and collaborative relationships with other Great Commission groups and organizations. While the organization's primary focus is water solutions, there is a commitment to serve and support kingdom efforts in evangelism and missions.

There is a growing awareness among many that the most effective way to reach the last of the unreached peoples of the world is by meeting a physical need. Without a doubt, clean water is the most basic of these.

**Jerry Wiles** is president of **Living Water International (LWI)**, an organization equipping the Church to be the hands and feet of Jesus by providing clean water to the poorest of the poor. LWI is currently at work in twenty-six countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

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## PERSPECTIVES

### Evangelicals and Interfaith Dialogue: A New Paradigm

By Gina A. Bellofatto

**Interfaith dialogue is currently experiencing a significant methodological shift where participants represent not only the liberal side of the faith spectrum, but also include conservatives with commitment to their respective religious traditions.** This gradual shift from “old” to “new” paradigms is a change that is only beginning to take root, but is providing evangelical Christians an opportunity to engage in a field where encountering adherents of other religions is the primary objective. There are significant implications for this shift not only in the area of interfaith dialogue, but for evangelical Christian witness and evangelism among adherents of the world’s religions.

#### The Old Paradigm of Dialogue

The language of “old paradigm” is not meant to imply that what is being described has been completely replaced. To the contrary, it is alive and thriving in dialogue circles. The old paradigm of interfaith dialogue seeks the lowest common denominator between partners—the theological point(s) that partners in dialogue agree upon, even if it means slightly altering one’s beliefs or leaving out other truths to reach a consensus.

An example of this is *soteriology* in Pure Land Buddhism and Christianity, both of which believe in salvation by grace through faith (either through Amida Buddha or Jesus Christ, respectively).<sup>1</sup> The lowest common denominator between these two traditions is salvation by grace through faith, which could provide a starting point for dialogue since almost exactly the same language is used to describe their respective doctrines. Such an approach could be helpful because it gives participants a positive place to begin in their conversation.

It is misleading to leave the conversation at that, however, since “salvation” and “faith” have two completely different connotations to adherents of those religions. On the surface it seems like these two traditions have much in common, but it is an injustice to each of them to ignore the irreconcilable theological differences between them in dialogue. Thus, seeking the lowest common denominator frequently provides only a minimal understanding of a particular tradition.

In the old model, it is argued that in order to truly engage “the other” and obtain a genuine dialogue, particularistic criteria of truth and conviction must be given up in favor of relativistic, universalized faith.<sup>2</sup>

While it is true that modern society is often marked by religiously diverse cultures, this does not automatically suggest that the religiously faithful must be pluralists in conversation. Supporters of this view, however, are adamant on this point “because no single culture, model, ideology, religion, or

whatnot can any longer raise a convincing claim to be the one, unique, or even best system in an absolute sense.”<sup>3</sup>

Exclusivist claims concerning religious faith and absolute truth are viewed with disfavor, believed to be too narrow, naïve, and self-centered. In addition, the old paradigm assumes that the most valuable conversation occurs when all parties are in agreement with one another, as opposed to representing alternative—and even contrasting—perspectives and beliefs.

It is extremely problematic for adherents of the world’s religions to ignore differences and focus only on commonalities. Many of the world’s religions do not have the same ontological goals at stake—for example, reconciliation with a creator God (Christians) versus breaking free from *samsara*, the cycle of life and death (Buddhists). If all members of an interfaith dialogue must agree in order to discuss successfully, then even the most basic of religious beliefs of particular traditions must be put aside, which undermines the goals of dialogue.

As a consequence of these approaches, interfaith dialogue has been over-represented by liberal representations of Christianity.<sup>4</sup> Liberal Christians—who typically thrive in such pluralistic environments—have often whole-heartedly embraced interfaith dialogue as a means of adding to their own theology and have not welcomed exclusivist voices at the dialogue table. From an evangelical perspective, non-Christian partners in dialogue under the old paradigm have been presented with only a partial Christian message, one that does not adequately reflect the entirety of biblical truth.

### **The New Paradigm of Dialogue**

The new, or “emerging,” paradigm of dialogue takes a very different approach than the current one. No longer do partners seek the lowest common denominator between traditions, but rather embrace and encourage differences. This move against the relativistic tendencies of the old paradigm encourages a more robust dialogue in which each party brings to the discussion what they believe to be binding truth, whether or not those truths are universal among traditions. In this kind of model, exclusivist views are valued, not discouraged.

A major theme of the new paradigm is that participants are not required to agree with each other. Since dialogue is about learning about others and exposing stereotypes, it is natural and acceptable that partners in dialogue have differing viewpoints on the nature and practice of religion. This opens the door to participants who were frowned upon in the old paradigm, including exclusivists, conservatives, evangelical Christians, and other proselytizing traditions.

Additionally, dialogue requires commitment. In the old paradigm, individuals are asked to leave their religious convictions behind upon approaching discussion. How can people reciprocally understand and appreciate another faith tradition without seeing authentic commitment to that faith? The new paradigm seeks religious adherents who embody the true nature of their faith; there is therefore a great need for more evangelical Christians to take up the task.

In embracing the new paradigm of dialogue there arises an opportunity for evangelical Christians to refine their views toward other religious traditions while still retaining traditional, exclusivist beliefs. The majority of evangelical Christians have historically been tentative to the notion of God working through other religions out of fear of reducing the revelation and authority of Jesus Christ.

This is not just a logical, but also a biblical and spiritual concern. At the dialogue table, however, it is not evangelical theology that has received the most criticism, but evangelical attitudes.<sup>5</sup>

Harold Netland argues that if evangelicals “have a view of the relation among religions that is epistemologically sound and accurately portrays the values and beliefs of the respective religions, something like traditional Christian exclusivism is unavoidable.”<sup>6</sup>

The new paradigm of dialogue does not advocate leaving exclusivist claims behind, but rather shifts dialogue into a much more exclusivist-friendly environment.

Having more respect for other religions opens up venues for interfaith dialogue to occur and for relationships to be formed based upon trust, love, and compassion. To appropriately and correctly engage in dialogue, it is helpful for evangelicals to have a deep understanding of their own religious identity and theological stances on a variety of issues.

### **The Importance of Interfaith Dialogue**

While interfaith dialogue in this survey has largely referred to formal, appointed settings, there is much to be said for evangelical engagement in the informal, “continual dialogue with their neighbors of other faiths,”<sup>7</sup> which surely, in such a diverse American society, is opportunistic for many evangelical Christians.

Many evangelicals see dialogue as merely the first step in the evangelization process; in any other setting “dialogue” is something of a “dirty word.”<sup>8</sup> Perhaps rightly so. Criticism abounds that “the broad evangelical community is gradually losing its conviction about the ‘lostness’ of humanity and...this was one reason for mainline denominations losing their motivation for world mission.”<sup>9</sup>

When used effectively, interfaith dialogue can serve as a “specific missionary activity”<sup>10</sup>—although notably the Body of Christ is diverse in its gifts. Not all will be equipped nor called to learn about the world’s religions and engage in formal interfaith dialogue. Nevertheless, more evangelicals could prayerfully reflect upon their attitudes toward other religions and seriously consider seeking whether or not God is calling them to serve as evangelical voices in a field where there are so few to be found.

### **Endnotes**

1. Tennent, Timothy C. 2007. *Theology in the Context of World Christianity*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 135–161.
2. Lochhead, David. 1988. *The Dialogical Imperative: A Christian Reflection on Interfaith Encounter*, Faith Meets Faith Series. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 52.
3. Panikkar, Raimon. 1999. *The Intrareligious Dialogue*. New York: Paulist Press, 23.
4. See scholars such as Paul F. Knitter. 2002. *Introducing Theologies of Religions*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books; Clark H. Pinnock. 1992. *A Wideness in God's Mercy: The Finality Of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan; and John Hick. 1982. *God Has Many Names*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.
5. Covell, Ralph. 1991. “The Christian Gospel and World Religions.” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 15(1); 12-17. Some phrases Covell uses to describe evangelical attitudes include *triumphalism, cocksure attitude, aggressiveness, cold, analytic logic, no sensitivity to people, and a continued colonial mentality*. However, Covell does claim, “during the last two decades, we have turned the corner on some of these attitudes.” He states that it is only some of these attitudes that have been set aside, not all.
6. *Ibid.*, 16. Also see Harold Netland. 1988. “Towards Contextualized Apologetics.” *Missiology* 16(3): 289–304.

7. Lamb, Christopher. 1984. "Nineveh Revisited: Theory and Practice of Interfaith Relations." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 8(4):156-158.

8. Covell, 13.

9. Ibid.

10. Zago, Marcello. 1998. "Mission and Interreligious Dialogue." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 22(3):98-101.

**Gina A. Bellofatto** graduated from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary with an MA in religion, where her studies focused on Christian mission and its intersections with the world's religions, in particular evangelicals and interfaith dialogue. She worked at the [Center for the Study of Global Christianity](#) under the direction of Todd M. Johnson. She specialized in Jewish demography, contributing to the World Christian Database and the World Religion Database. Bellofatto also served as senior editorial assistant on the forthcoming *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh University Press).

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## Great Commission Prioritization of Countries: Helping to Make Completing the Great Commission More Meaningful for All Believers

By John Pitterle

**In areas where there are no hospitals or schools, most people would agree that it should be a priority to provide medical help or education to the people who live there.** In a similar way, where very few people have heard the gospel, most Christians would agree that we should prioritize bringing the truth about Jesus. As Paul said,

It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. Rather, as it is written, "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand." (Romans 15:20-21)

David Bryant said, "Today, five out of six non-Christians in our world have no hope unless missionaries come to them and plant the church among them." If this is true, perhaps we should do something about it.

Where are the people who have not heard about Jesus? This is a critical question that will be addressed in this article since there is a great need to prioritize and strategize. Because many Christians and churches cannot locate unreached people groups on a map or target them with their mission giving, this article focuses on a country-by-country approach.

Thus we will look at the status of the Great Commission in the nations of the world to answer the question, "Where do people have the least opportunity to hear the gospel?" The nations will then be prioritized using available data. Such findings can be helpful for praying, for churches regarding their mission programs, for individual giving toward the Great Commission, etc. Possible next steps are offered. It is hoped that a country prioritization approach will provide a more concrete, understandable way for Christians to emphasize the least reached in their Great Commission involvement.

Excellent missions-related information is available today. For example, the [Joshua Project](#) (JP) has large amounts of data available freely to churches, organizations, and individuals who can apply it to their specific applications as was done in this paper. Similarly, information from *World Christian Trends AD 30 – AD 2200* (WCT)<sup>1</sup> was also used in this country prioritization.

There are numerous parameters that could be used to evaluate the state of the Great Commission in the nations of the world. The weighting of the final ten criteria used here to evaluate countries and produce an overall score out of one hundred possible points is shown in [Figure A1](#).

For 15,893 people groups, the Joshua Project has scores for progress, ministry tools, and location (identified as “Country Indices” in [Table A1](#)). The JP article, [MFPrioritizationArticle.doc](#), provides a description of these three criteria. Using a simple computer program, these three scores were separately multiplied by the respective populations of all the people groups in a given country and then added together. These country totals were then divided by the total population of the people groups in each country to provide an average score for these three categories in each nation.

The JP website also provides information about each country regarding the percentage of people living in a least-reached people group, the population in least-reached people groups, the number of least-reached people groups, and the total population. David Barrett and Todd Johnson provide data regarding the number of disciple offers per person per year, the number of Christian workers per million population, and the cost (to lead to the baptism) of each new convert.

[Table 1](#) shows the resulting total scores for 222 countries in common between the JP and WCT using the previously mentioned weighting. The highest scores indicate the poorest Great Commission status and the highest priority, starting with rank/priority #1. Great Commission prioritization scores for the countries are shown by color on a world map in [Figure 1](#), with red representing the highest priority.

These scores are not intended to show minute differences that can distinguish between consecutive countries in the list. Rather, one could possibly say that countries within twenty places or ten points may have a similar priority.

This study is based upon statistics. While it is certainly very important to be led by the Holy Spirit, the data here most likely reflect on the truth of the status of the Great Commission. Thus, such information can be used to help make prayerful and objective decisions regarding world evangelization efforts.

There are many possible applications for data like these. For example, the overall prioritization of the U.S. is 123 and of Afghanistan is 1. [Table 2](#) emphasizes the severe lack of Christian resources in Afghanistan, India, and China and the excessive amount in America. 27.8% of the world’s full-time Christian workers and 34.1% of all Christian personal or church income are in the U.S., while 0.0013% and 0.00002% of these resources, respectively, are in Afghanistan.

[Figure 2](#) shows the nations’ relative shares of the world’s Christian workers on a per capita basis. Considering the overabundance of Christian resources in the United States, perhaps we should consider minimizing our Great Commission investment in this country, where most people have many opportunities to hear the truth about Jesus while there are so many people around the world who have heard little or nothing. For the sake of highlighting the current allocation, consider that of the 1,533,000 Christian workers in the U.S., 1.28 million or 83.4% of these Christian workers would need to become missionaries in another country in order to achieve global equity.<sup>2</sup>

People living in the countries with the highest scores typically have little or no exposure to the gospel or opportunity to hear about Jesus. For this reason, the people in these countries really need prayer, especially since there are few Christians there to pray for all the lost people. It could also be strategic to send new missionaries and focus more outreach on the higher priority nations because many of the people groups in these nations have little or no evangelical activity.

There is a great need to prioritize the Great Commission and strategize. There are many ways this information can be practically applied to prioritize participation in the Great Commission based upon need. For example, we can all maximize our investment in high priority nations:

- Churches and individuals can evaluate the missionaries/organizations they support and consider focusing more on countries near the top 1/3 of the priority list.
- Churches can especially think about adding more new missionaries in high priority nations.
- Churches can establish goals to increase the percentage of their support in the top nations.
- Scripture/gospel literature support could be earmarked for high priority countries.
- Greater emphasis can be placed on international student ministry, in particular seeking to reach people from high priority nations. It can be very easy and strategic to befriend and reach out to future international leaders who are studying in universities away from home.

As agreed upon by more than 2,300 evangelicals from more than 150 nations in the [Lausanne Covenant of 1974](#),

We are convinced that this is the time for churches and para-church agencies to pray earnestly for the salvation of the unreached and to launch new efforts to achieve world evangelization. A reduction of foreign missionaries and money in an evangelized country may sometimes be necessary to facilitate the national church's growth in self-reliance and to release resources for unevangelized areas....The goal should be, by all available means and at the earliest possible time, that every person will have the opportunity to hear, understand, and receive the good news...

In conclusion, in order to more quickly complete the task Jesus left the Church to do, there is a great need to prioritize reaching people who have little or no access to the gospel. Country prioritization like that done in this article can be used to help churches, ministries, and individuals prioritize their participation in the Great Commission. Many follow-up actions like more focused prayer and new missionaries or gospel resources targeted for countries with many least-reached people can be pursued.

#### **Endnotes**

1. Barrett, David, and Todd Johnson. 2001. *World Christian Trends AD 30 – AD 2200*. Pasadena, California, USA: William Carey Library, 416-425.

2. "[Great Commission Priorities](#)."

**John Pitterle** and his family have lived in South Africa and Namibia for several months and in Madagascar for four years, helping with the gospel for children and the first Malagasy study Bible. The author has been to Ukraine, India, and Zambia on short-term trips.

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#### **Duplicated Effort vs. Partnership**

By Ken Lane

**“Why not just stop the duplication of effort and combine our efforts?”**

It was not the originality of the phrase that arrested my attention as much as it was the self-realization that the large U.S. ministry I represented had in fact just identified that very issue as one of our chief struggles within our own walls, let alone on the field! Why is it, then, that duplication of effort exists? Or, when identified, is allowed to persist?

As a strategy consultant to non-profit organizations and in my broader exposure to ministries over the years, I have observed this pattern surfacing both inside and outside of organizations for almost precisely the same reasons: ignorance, pride, and/or confusion.

Duplication of effort arises *within* an organization because of:

- **Ignorance.** Different business units are unaware of similar efforts by other business units.
- **Pride.** Different business units believe their approach to meeting needs is the only correct way.
- **Confusion.** Different business units are unclear about who should be doing what in relation to each other (no integrated plan).

Duplication of effort arises *outside* of organizations because of:

- **Ignorance.** Organizations are unaware of similar efforts by other organizations.
- **Pride.** Organizations believe their approach to meeting needs is the only correct way.
- **Confusion.** Organizations are unclear about who (which organization) should be doing what in relation to each other (no partnership plan).

If you are reminded of your own organization or others that you know, you will be encouraged that there is a 3-step process to overcoming this limiting practice. However, there are a couple of significant caveats before undertaking any such remedy:

First, *leadership must want the organization to move beyond its current impact level.* What I mean is that some organizations are entirely content with mediocre performance. I do not mean this disparagingly, but only to indicate that patterns of duplication cannot, by their very nature, leverage the economies of production from partnership.

Second, *leadership must be committed to incorporate and model this solution both down and across the organization.* Albert Schweitzer once said, “Example is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the only thing.” The following practices must become part and parcel of the organizational culture, if they are to have any chance at success.

### **Steps toward Awareness**

Scripture implores us over and over to “pay attention” (Hebrew, *qashab*; Greek, *prosechó*)—to hear, be attentive, heed, incline (one’s ears), attend, hearken, or listen. The 3-step process is rooted in biblical awareness principles.

**Step 1: Overcoming Ignorance.** You must be aware that “you’re not alone” and others are also at work. A key adaptive capability for any organization involves pausing to evaluate who else is engaging in the same practice or place as you. Many ministries are afraid to perform “competitive analysis”; however,

this practice can uncover very real, un-Christian voices vying for the attention of your audience, as well as potential partners.

**Example:** In January 2009, a partnership discovery summit was held in Sydney involving several major ministries, including [Compassion Australia](#) and [Focus on the Family Australia](#). These two groups were unaware of each other's activities, but subsequent to the meeting, they discovered an opportunity to collaborate in the area of reaching indigenous peoples both within Australia and in Papua New Guinea, where Compassion has conducted significant research and saw a match for Focus on the Family resources. Shy of looking, neither would have discovered the opportunity.

**Step 2: Overcoming Pride.** You must be aware that the Body of Christ consists of many parts and you represent just one member. Furthermore, as one member, you can only do so much. The current economic crisis provides an interesting opportunity to lay down this prideful attitude. As Proverbs 16:18 warns, "Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall." If your organization is facing diminishing income streams, you likely have no place to be proud, which ironically could open some new doors for you! Combining efforts with another organization may become your only viable option.

**Example:** In June and September 2009 a number of U.S., Australian, and Indian organizations and individuals convened in Colorado Springs (Colorado, USA) and then Hyderabad, India, to first that they did not possess the sole capability to reach India's unreached people groups (I know, big surprise, but you would be amazed at the hubris of some large, single-solution ministries). This opening salvo opened the doors for the formation of a jointly-owned entity under which all the organizations could conduct their work in a broad, holistic gospel outreach. The big ministries put aside their need to "brand" the effort with their name and enjoyed the opportunity to partner with brothers and sisters in a much larger effort.

**Step 3: Overcoming Confusion.** You must be aware that God intends to work through many organizations, which are comprised of individual believers. Just as the Body of Christ must coordinate ourselves to build up the Church, so too organizations must pursue coordinating our separate efforts to work toward that same end as para-church entities.

**Example:** A Christian micro-finance organization that desires people to come to Christ was restricted by the government of the country they were entering from engaging in any form of proselytism. The board of this organization struggled with this limitation, but in consultation with a new partner they had begun working with, they realized that they could "plow the ground" by introducing economic and social transformation, and then hand off to their partner to "sow and harvest" in spiritual transformation. Identifying and planning specific transitional opportunity engagements made the two organizational visions one shared vision.

Most organizations are primarily focused on aligning their own organization's efforts, much less on even considering how they can jointly plan with another organization. However, if you adopt this multi-organization mission perspective, you're ready to look at the planning process. However, partnership planning doesn't just happen. Phil Butler, founder of [visionSynergy](#) and Lausanne Senior Associate for Strategic Evangelism Partnerships, has much to say regarding the opportunity, power, and practice of partnership.

### **Beyond Duplication of Effort**

There is a world of opportunity waiting to be explored. We will likely need to change many of our preconceived practices and mindsets in order to overcome the debilitating forces that infect our efforts with a duplication of effort. The path beyond via partnership seems a ready vehicle.

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## **LEADERSHIP PROFILES**

### **Leadership Profile: Mark Kolo, Missions Supporters League, Africa**

*(Editors' note: This month begins this new section, entitled "Leadership Profiles." Our prayer in introducing you to people who are serving in leadership roles around the world is two-fold: (1) familiarize you with these global leaders and (2) inspire you as you partake in kingdom work in your corner of the world.)*

#### **Q. Tell us about your family.**

**A.** I am married to Amina Kolo and we are expecting our first baby in May 2010.

#### **Q. Give us a brief overview of your work and ministry.**

**A.** I serve on the leadership team of **Missions Supporters League** (MSL) and direct the affairs of the movement across English-speaking African countries. I'm involved in mobilizing human and material resources for ministry among unreached people groups. I am also a member of the Lausanne Communications Working Group and Lausanne Younger Leaders West Africa.

#### **Q. What is your favorite quote?**

**A.** "All men die. Why not for good cause?"- El Cid

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

**A.** There have been two. The first is Victor Tukura, my immediate boss and international director in MSL. I have closely watched his life over the last ten years and have been blessed to be led by him. Second, Sam Kputu, national director of CAPRO Missions South Africa. He has mentored me informally and shaped my outlook to ministry in recent years. His teachings on mission mobilization, especially in Africa, have greatly affected my life and mission practice.

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

**A.** Practice more faithful giving. In other words, be generous with your life.

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

**A.** Our inability to match our words with our actions. Non-Christians will easily be reached if they see authentic Christian witness in lifestyle. We seem to be saying much about Christ, but living less like him. Non-Christians accept his words, but get confused when we fail to live up to our claim. We need to move into incarnational evangelism.

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

A. *The Pursuit of God* by A.W. Tozer. It captures the longing of the human heart which can find no rest except in the knowledge of its creator. The Church of the twenty-first century desperately needs to shift its gaze from pursuing frivolities, materialism, and entertainment, and seriously return to a passionate pursuit of God, stopping at nothing until we apprehend him.

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

A. I'd like to be mobilizing, envisioning, and mentoring a fresh generation of African Christians committed to passionately living for Jesus and seeking to bear witness of him where he is not known.

**Q. How can people be praying for you?**

A. That I may know him more, stay true to my calling, and finish well.

### **Evangelism. On Point.**

**Q. 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 traveling in a public bus between Bauchi and Jos, Nigeria, in 1999, I met a young man who was smoking cigarettes, cursing and harassing a young lady. I felt a strong urge to share my faith with him, even though he didn't look like a "nice guy" who could easily be approached. By the time we got to Jos one hour later, God had melted his heart and we held hands right in the middle of the busiest street in the city as he prayed the sinner's prayer and accepted Jesus into his heart.

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## **LAUSANNE REPORTS**

### **The Countdown Is On!**

By Naomi Frizzell

**While we were in Cape Town a couple of months ago, the local host committee unveiled a large Cape Town 2010 Countdown Clock.** This huge clock will count down the days until the beginning of The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization. As I write this blog today, Cape Town 2010 is 311 days away.

311 days away. Whew.

311 DAYS AWAY. YIKES!

Part of me grows short of breath and weak in the knees (figuratively and sometimes literally!) when I think about how few days there are between now and then. We've been planning for Cape Town 2010 (CT2010) for almost five years and it has sometimes seemed as though the day would never come. Now it's just around the corner.

To serve the 4000-plus people onsite is no small task. Papers need to be written by speakers, multiplex sessions organized, volunteers identified, media registered, meals planned, website pages developed,

equipment and furniture ordered, videos edited, Internet technology expanded, registrations completed, hotels booked, airplane tickets purchased, music and drama rehearsed, and on it goes.

Every day I receive emails from people who are just learning about Cape Town 2010 and want to attend onsite. Understandably, many express disappointment when I tell them that the application period for onsite participants ended several months ago.

Yet many also express surprise and delight that being onsite in Cape Town is not the only way they can participate.

God willing, as never before Cape Town 2010 will bring leaders together from around the world—both onsite and through technology—in a truly global conversation around the issues facing the evangelical Church in sharing Christ in word and deed. No matter where you are, you have the opportunity to participate in Cape Town 2010 through:

**Praying.** We're convinced that prayer is the most important element in the preparation and planning for the Congress. Would you commit to praying regularly for Lausanne leaders as they plan for CT2010, for all participants, and for the finances and resources needed to support the Congress?

**Joining the Lausanne Global Conversation (LGC)**, an online dialogue about mission and evangelization issues facing the global Church. The LGC continues through Cape Town 2010 and beyond as you interact with leaders from around the world who, like you, are sharing their expertise on the issues.

**Being at a Cape Town GlobaLink site**, remote Congress sites that will receive learning materials and specially edited sessions from the Congress. Our goal is to have more than two hundred GlobaLink sites around the world. Please consider hosting a GlobaLink site in your area or joining a site already planned. Each registered GlobaLink site will be able to personalize their own programme and schedule using resources provided by The Lausanne Movement.

**Studying Ephesians.** Everyone involved in CT2010 is being asked to spend the next few months leading up to the Congress studying the book of Ephesians. This study of Ephesians will help prepare our hearts as together we seek to hear God's voice and discern his will for our own lives personally as well as the body of Christ corporately.

**Becoming a Volunteer.** Skilled volunteers are needed for everything from communications to accounting. No matter where we are on the globe, as brothers and sisters in Christ we are linked together through the love of God, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, and by our desire to share Christ so that all the world may know him.

The countdown is on to October 2010. Won't you consider how you can be involved?

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