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

November 2007

PUBLISHER'S MEMO

HIV/AIDS: Engaging the Church in the Pandemic

By **Lon Allison**

This month we look at what role we, as the Body of Christ, can have in addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Nearly forty million people are infected with HIV; fifteen thousand people die every day from complications of AIDS. That is equivalent to losing the population of an entire city every day. The catastrophe is so great and so non-ending that sometimes, admittedly, I wonder if we don't become weary by the enormity of the issue.

Yet, Christians are working to halt the spread of AIDS. Many of our brothers and sisters—perhaps even you—are working relentlessly in the face of this crisis. In this month's issue we hear from leaders on the frontlines of the HIV/AIDS battle and together we learn from them about what is making a difference. I honor these living, breathing expressions of Christ's love in the midst of difficult circumstances.

There is no good "spin" we can place on this pandemic. It forces us to confront death. In the West, we avoid both aging and death with increasing neurosis. We worship the "cult" of youth. But to try to avoid the acute reality of death, whether by disease, accident, war, genocide or other means, is what we call "smoke and mirrors." Death is a reality, and for many, AIDS is the grim reaper of our era.

May the Spirit of God blast through all our defenses, all our fatigue, until we all cry out, "What can we do, Lord?" We can pray, we can give, we can go, we can touch, we can heal. We can speak of the One who promised a future world without AIDS. We can commend the living Christ to those beyond healing in this world. That is what the Spirit calls us to do. That is how we can reach out to people with HIV/AIDS—in our backyard and with our neighbors around the world. Even those not primarily called to minister to people with AIDS full-time can do something (see Evvy Campbell's [article](#) in this issue).

I recently ran the Chicago Marathon along with five hundred others, as part of Team World Vision. We all raised money to help fight the AIDS pandemic. I finished the race and will continue to wear the shirt we all received as a reminder of the enemy we face. The shirt reads: "I run because I care." May we as the Body of Christ all find ways such as these to face AIDS and work toward its defeat.

I appeal to a surprising source to conclude this memo—the playwright and actor, Woody Allen, who once wrote, "Twenty percent of life is just showing up, the rest is hanging in there." Good counsel for kingdom workers as we engage this enemy.

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NEWS BRIEFS

AROUND THE WORLD: WEA Joins with TOPIC. The [World Evangelical Alliance](#) (WEA) announced TOPIC ([Trainers of Pastors International Coalition](#)) as its new global partner to work closely together for their common commitment to pastoral ministry. Dr. Geoff Tunnicliffe, head of WEA, welcomed TOPIC and explained the meaning this new partnership holds. “The local church is God's instrument of transformation in a community,” said Tunnicliffe. “Obviously, pastors are the key in helping churches fulfill this vision. Training is needed but not often times available. That is why I am thrilled that TOPIC has become a global partner of WEA. Their creative delivery for training is made available to thousands of pastors who would not otherwise receive the equipping they need.” TOPIC is an international coalition of pastoral training organizations accelerating pastoral training where the Church is growing. ([World Evangelical Alliance](#))

AUSTRALIA: Highest Court of Anglican Church Clears Way for Women Bishops. A decision by the highest court of the Anglican Church of Australia clearing the way for women to become bishops has been welcomed by supporters of the measure, but criticized by opponents as being potentially divisive. “The innovation will inevitably create ongoing difficulties around the Church for decades to come,” Sydney's Anglican archbishop, Peter Jensen, said in a statement in which he predicted that some parishes and churches would object to a woman serving as their bishop. But Muriel Porter, who leads the group of Anglicans who raised the question of women bishops, said, “Women can now take their rightful place in leadership in the Church and I look forward with great excitement to the day when the first women are consecrated.” ([Ecumenical News International](#))

CHINA: Survey Shows Fewer Protestant Christians than Previously Thought. According to a recent survey done by [China Partner](#), there are likely less Protestant Christians in China than previously thought—thirty-nine million compared to the often used “100-130 million.” The idea for surveying began when Dr. Werner Burklin, founder of China Partner, former executive with Youth for Christ and former director of several Billy Graham conferences, began to wonder about the guesstimates being used by mainline Christian media. China Partner sent teams to all but one of the thirty-one provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions in China. Over a 13-month period, the teams interviewed 5,430 people ranging in age from 16-92 from a wide variety of occupations. The surveys took place in parks, markets, subways, buses, on the streets and in other locales. Burklin estimates roughly half of the thirty-nine million (three percent margin of error) are in the underground church; the other half are in government-approved churches. Burklin's findings met resistance from some Christian leaders in the United States. Another survey done at about the same time as Burklin's confirms his results. Professor Liu Zhongyu from East China Normal University in Shanghai surveyed 4,500 people in every province in China over a 12-month period during 2006 and 2007. His survey found forty million Protestant Christians and roughly fourteen million Catholics, with about ten million Catholics worshipping in underground churches and the remainder in government-approved churches. ([Assist News Service](#))

DENMARK: Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark Enters Second Life. The Copenhagen diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark has taken the denomination into cyberspace through the web-based virtual world called “[Second Life](#).” On this site, the online church can be found on the island of “Danmark.” Its priest, an “avatar” (online 3D representation) called Pellegrina, is a priest in real life as well, the denomination said on its own website. “The business world discovered the possibilities of Second Life a long time ago, and now government departments, companies, banks and relief organizations have their place here. Now the national Church has caught up with the times,” the church noted. ([Ecumenical News International](#))

GAZA STRIP: Prominent Christian Murdered. Rami Khader Ayyad, director of the Gaza Strip's only all-Christian bookstore, was found stabbed to death 7 October 2007 in what appears to have been an act of Muslim aggression. For months, Ayyad had been receiving death threats from local Muslims who accused him of spreading the gospel. Ayyad ran the Teacher's Bookshop, a ministry of the Palestinian Bible Society (PBS) and

the Gaza Baptist Church. Medical officials in the Hamas-controlled territory said he had been stabbed and shot. Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh condemned the killing and said the Islamist movement “would not allow anyone to sabotage” Muslim-Christian relations. Gaza's 2,500 Christians, who live among 1.5 million Muslims, have increasingly become a target of Muslim aggression since Hamas gained control of Gaza in June 2007. Even prior to the Hamas coup, Ayyad's bookstore and the PBS headquarters were the targets of frequent attacks, including a bombing earlier this year that severely damaged the Bible Society. (Assist News Service)

IRAQ: WCC Warns of Christian Exodus in Iraq. The [World Council of Churches](#) (WCC) has warned of an exodus by the small Christian community of Iraq and said the country's leaders and foreign governments need to install the rule of law and restore a multi-cultural balance in society. "The flight of Christians from Iraq is a sign of the failure of policies that were purported to bring stability and peace to Iraq and even the region," said the WCC, which opposed the US-led military action that brought down Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. ([Ecumenical News International](#))

LATIN AMERICA: LAM Appoints Interim President. Veteran missionary Jack Voelkel has been appointed interim president of [Latin America Mission](#) (LAM). Voelkel began his tenure 1 October 2007. He replaces David R. Befus, who served as president since 1999. Befus and his wife have relocated to Colombia where they will be serving as missionaries with LAM. Voelkel served with LAM from 1965 to 2000 before moving to InterVarsity Christian Fellowship to help with the Urbana Student Mission Conventions. Voelkel will be working to continue various projects of LAM throughout Latin America and representing the mission before churches and agencies in North America. Latin America Mission works in partnership with churches and Christian agencies throughout Latin America and supports missionaries and projects in many Latin countries as well as in Spain. ([Assist News Service](#))

NORTH AMERICA: IFMA Changes Its Name to CrossGlobal Link. The Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association of North America (IFMA) has changed its name to CrossGlobal Link. “This is more than just a cosmetic change to the association,” said Dr. Marvin Newell, CrossGlobal Link executive director. “This is a change in function and direction for the association, intended to keep it in pace with the changing world of missions.” CrossGlobal Link will no longer be exclusively interdenominational as in the past; and it opens the door to churches and mission pastors joining as associate members. It also signals a stronger intent to be involved on the greater global mission scene. The identity slogan of CrossGlobal Link, “Connecting in Mission,” is descriptive of these relationships. IFMA was founded in 1917 with the coming together of seven “faith missions.” Today, there are eighty-six mission corporations in the US and Canada that together field over 15,500 North American missionaries around the globe. (IFMA news release)

NORTH AMERICA: EFMA Changes Its Name to The Mission Exchange. The Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies (EFMA) is has changed its name to The Mission Exchange. “Our new identity is the outgrowth of prayerful thought and strategic reflection,” said Steve Moore, president and CEO of The Mission Exchange. “But the phrase ‘formerly EFMA’ does not suggest that we are turning our back on our heritage but that we are turning a new page, entering a new and exciting season.” EFMA was formed in 1946 out of the National Association of Evangelicals to foster greater collaboration between mission agencies. The Mission Exchange’s goal is to help mission organizations be more effective. To accomplish that goal, the ministry focuses on initiatives designed to add value to leaders and stimulate partnerships in the missions community. “Our motive for adapting the name is for greater relevance and increased effectiveness,” said Moore. “We believe The Mission Exchange is a name that captures the sense of dynamic, interactive relationships between churches and mission organizations and their leaders that is at the heart of our identity and vision. In The Mission Exchange, we are cultivating a community where leaders can exchange ideas, expand their capacity, broaden perspectives, share burdens and form partnerships, just to mention a few of the possibilities.” ([The Mission Exchange](#))

NORTH KOREA: Historical Samaritan's Purse Aid. [Samaritan's Purse](#) recently flew USD\$8 million worth of medicine and other emergency supplies to North Korea, which recently endured the worst floods in decades. Hundreds of people have died and nearly a million people are suffering after the floods destroyed or damaged nearly 240,000 homes. North Korea has no diplomatic relations with the United States or most of the world. This trip is the first time an American-flagged plane has flown directly from the US to Pyongyang (the capital of North Korea) since the Korean War. The airlift carried nearly eighty tons of supplies, including antibiotics, vaccines, other medicines, water filtration equipment, blankets, tools and one thousand rolls of heavy-duty plastic—enough to build emergency shelters for seven thousand families. ([Samaritan's Purse](#))

NORTH KOREA: Great Persecution and Great Perseverance for Christians. Estimates say that one in five Christians in North Korea is in a prison camp, and that as many as four hundred Christians are executed in a year. Despite, these statistics, God is growing his Church in this land. In 1989 there were an estimated eleven thousand Christians in the country. By 2004 this number had risen to as many as 100,000. By 2006 the estimate was somewhere between 200,000 and 400,000 Christians. For many of these Christians, five principles of faith are daily recited: (1) our persecution and suffering are our joy and honor, (2) we want to accept ridicule, scorn and disadvantages with joy in Jesus' name, (3) as Christians, we want to wipe others' tears away and comfort the suffering, (4) we want to be ready to risk our life because of our love for our neighbor, so that they also become Christians and (5) we want to live our lives according to the standards set in God's Word. ([Barnabas Fund](#))

PERU: IBS-STL Ships Scripture Materials and Blankets to Earthquake Survivors. [IBS-STL](#) has shipped thousands of printed scripture materials and blankets to provide hope and comfort to earthquake survivors in Peru. The 15 August 2007 quake registered 8.0 on the Richter scale. It was prolonged, shaking the ground for about two minutes. Hundreds died, thousands were injured and hundreds of thousands can no longer live in their destroyed or damaged homes. IBS-STL assistant director for South America Enrique Balden said, "The suffering is immense. God gives the Peruvian people hope for a new life. Today, more than ever before, the inhabitants of the zones affected by this tragedy need God's Word." The cargo container from IBS-STL includes 40,668 Spanish scriptures (more than half are for children) and 14,500 blankets. International Bible Society (IBS) and Send The Light (STL) merged as IBS-STL Global on 1 March 2007. The combined organization delivers more Bibles into the hands of more people, in more countries, more efficiently, than either could individually. ([International Bible Society](#))

SIERRA LEONE: Wesleyan Ernest Bai Koroma Elected President. Ernest Bai Koroma, a third generation member of The Wesleyan Church, was elected president of Sierra Leone, West Africa, on 17 September 2007. A former insurance executive and minority leader in parliament, he has been called the "hope of the future" by many in his country. However, his government faces a sea of challenges, says Michael J. Carter in a story released by the [Inter Press Service](#) in Johannesburg, South Africa. Koroma's term is five years. According to Carter, Koroma "faces a mammoth challenge in improving life for the five million citizens of Sierra Leone where jobs are scarce and many social services almost as hard to come by—and where the shadow of a decade long civil war still looms large." ([Assist News Service](#))

SOUTH AFRICA: Sexual Purity Promoted at True Love Waits Summit. True Love Waits International officially launched its initiative to expand its abstinence-until-marriage message throughout Africa during an August summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, attended by representatives from eight African countries. The summit's forty-three participants were guided through a comprehensive True Love Waits International training manual with follow-up lessons. They also heard from leaders in Uganda and Kenya about successes in how the True Love Waits message has been implemented; most of the work True Love Waits has done on the continent has been in these two countries. The common thread that brought the group together was a shared desire to see a movement of God among the youth of their countries through young people committing themselves to God's plan for their sex lives. True Love Waits has been a part of mission strategy for the International Mission Board

of the Southern Baptist Convention for many years. In addition to Uganda and Kenya, True Love Waits is being used in South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Tanzania, Swaziland and Mozambique, with a number of missionaries directly involved in the ministry. ([Baptist Press](#))

UNITED KINGDOM: Clergy Should Remove Clerical Collars When Off-Duty. A British Christian group has warned Catholic and Anglican clergy should remove their clerical collars when off-duty so that they will not be singled-out for attack. National Churchwatch, established in 1998 to advise churches and church workers on security and protection, has said that criminals often target clergymen because they believe they will have money. In 2001, a study by the University of London found that seventy percent of clergy had experienced some form of violence against them over the two-year period between 1997 and 1999, Nick Tolson, head of National Churchwatch, says. ([Christian Today](#))

UNITED STATES: S. Kent Parks Named International Director for MUP. [Mission to Unreached Peoples](#) (MUP), an interdenominational agency with mission personnel around the world, will establish another office in Dallas, Texas, USA, under the direction of S. Kent Parks, a veteran of twenty years of Baptist mission service in Southeast Asia. Parks became international director of MUP on 1 November 2007. He will establish the Dallas office and work in cooperation with MUP's US office in Seattle and Canadian office in Abbotsford, B.C. The 25-year-old MUP agency focuses on spiritual and physical ministries to unreached peoples around the world, and currently has three hundred personnel who raise their own support and serve a number of people groups in twenty-two countries. As MUP's international director, Parks will focus on helping stimulate a global movement to raise up thousands of strategy teams to reach the almost two billion people who are from the least evangelized people groups. ([Mission to Unreached Peoples](#))

UNITED STATES: John Boyd Named President and CEO of MAF. [Mission Aviation Fellowship](#) (MAF), a faith-based, non-profit ministry that serves missions and isolated people around the world with aviation, communications and learning technologies, has named John Boyd as its new president and chief executive officer, succeeding Kevin Swanson. Boyd, a native of Scotland who grew up Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, has served with MAF for fifteen years. His varied experience with the ministry includes the roles of pilot, CEO of MAF South Africa and vice president for ministry advancement. Boyd's fields of service have included Zaire/Congo, Haiti, Lesotho and South Africa. Founded in 1945, MAF stations some two hundred missionary families in the remotest regions of twenty-six countries on five continents. MAF serves more than six hundred Christian and humanitarian organizations. The ministry's pilots fly approximately forty thousand flights a year, transporting missionaries, medical personnel, medicines and relief supplies, as well as conducting thousands of emergency medical evacuations. MAF also provides telecommunications services, such as satellite Internet access, high-frequency radios, electronic mail and other wireless systems, in isolated areas. ([Mission Aviation Fellowship](#))

UNITED STATES: Aglow International Opens Chapters in Iraq and Azerbaijan. "Iran, we're coming for you!" said Jane Hansen, president of the global Christian women's organization [Aglow International](#). Hansen made the remarks recently at Aglow's fortieth anniversary conference in Seattle, Washington, USA, after announcing the organization had just opened chapters in Iraq and Azerbaijan. More than five thousand constituents from 138 nations where Aglow operates attended the conference. Aglow International is an organization of Christian women with more than four thousand local groups in nearly 170 countries. It is one of the largest international women's groups, consisting of more than 1,100 local groups in the US alone. An estimated twenty-one thousand Aglow leaders minister in their communities and countries to an estimated seventeen million people each year. ([Aglow International](#))

ZIMBABWE: Country in Rapid Decline, in Need of Help. Christian aid agency [Tearfund](#) reports that Zimbabwe is in an increasingly desperate situation, with little food due to drought and poor harvests, and the collapse of civil infrastructure meaning basic services are no longer available to the majority of Zimbabweans.

According to Tearfund international director Peter Grant, “People are dying. It's the very young, the very old, and those with AIDS who are the most vulnerable....As the year goes on with the continuing food shortages, we can expect the situation to get worse, and more people to die.” The crisis has engulfed the cities, where food distributions were rarely seen previously. Middle income school teachers told Tearfund they cannot even afford to buy sugar. HIV and AIDS related illnesses have compounded the suffering, leaving many unable to work in fear and isolation. Unemployment is over eighty percent and those who can find casual work often do so for small amounts of food. Pastor Promise Manceda leads a church in Bulawayo and sees the stark reality: “If the middle classes consider themselves poor, then the most marginalized people in society are hit so much harder. We have to help them—and it is only with God's strength that we are still able to.” ([Ekklesia](#))

THEMED ARTICLES: RECONCILIATION AND EVANGELISM

HIV/AIDS and Holistic Evangelism: The Challenge for the Church

By Pamela Gebauer

The Scope of the AIDS Pandemic Worldwide

AIDS killed between 2.5 and 3.5 million people worldwide in 2006, including 400,000 children under the age of fifteen.¹ Malaria used to be the leading cause of death in the [Developing World](#), killing one million people or more each year.² However, the total number of AIDS deaths appear to be outstripping even those from malaria. What is more disturbing is that death rates from AIDS continue to increase in every area of the world, except in North America and Western and Central Europe, each year. Even more alarming is the ongoing rise in the number of people becoming infected with HIV. For example, in 2004, the total estimated number of new HIV infections was 3.9 million worldwide; however, in 2006 estimates were at 4.3 million.

In 2006, almost two-thirds (sixty-three percent) of all persons infected with HIV were living in sub-Saharan Africa. This translates into twenty-five million people. An estimated 2.8 million adults and children from this same area became infected with HIV in 2006, more than in all other regions of the world combined. The 2.1 million AIDS deaths in sub-Saharan Africa represent seventy-two percent of global AIDS deaths. An estimated 8.6 million people were living with HIV in Asia in 2006, including the 960,000 individuals who became newly infected in the past year. Approximately 630,000 died from AIDS-related illnesses in 2006. These two regions, sub-Sahara Africa and Asia, represent the areas of the world with the greatest number of people living with AIDS. The total number of people living with HIV in 2006 in all countries was estimated at 39.5 million.³

Reaching Out to Those with AIDS

No matter where we may live, we will eventually find ourselves in contact with or knowing someone who is living with AIDS. Those living in sub-Sahara Africa may be surrounded by friends or relatives who appear to be very sick. However, in many parts of the world, telling friends, family or even fellow church members that you have AIDS puts you at risk for being ostracized. Because of this, many people with AIDS remain silent. We, as Christians, must ask ourselves two questions: (1) How can Christians and the Church recognize this barrier of fear and break it? and (2) What is the basis of this fear and what are some of the social and cultural barriers to be overcome in helping someone with AIDS?

Sometimes it is helpful to simply name the types of fear associated with AIDS. There are many:

- The fear that by associating with someone with AIDS, you will also become infected.
- The fear of being with someone with a serious illness or who might die.
- The social taboo of what others might think of you if you befriend someone with AIDS.

- The belief that the person who is ill is under God's judgment or is being punished.

Let us look at these fears. The fear of becoming infected with AIDS is a natural one. The reality is, however, that AIDS is only contagious under very limited conditions—infected needles, sexual relations, tainted blood transfusions, mother-to-baby birth transmissions or contaminated objects (such as razors or non-sterilized tattooing equipment) that can cut the skin. Eating, drinking, shaking hands or using the same toilet or sink will not transmit the virus to a non-infected person. People with AIDS who suffer from pneumonia, skin infections or other types of secondary infections pose no threat of transmission to a healthy person. The micro-organisms causing these infections are those found normally in air and in the body, but which multiply excessively in the person with AIDS due to his or her deficient immune system.

For some Christians, illness is often viewed as a sign of God's disfavour or judgment. AIDS crosses the lines of many cultural taboos linked to sexuality, blood and death. As Christians, we have the example of when Jesus faced a similar sickness—leprosy. Leprosy was often regarded as an illness sent as a punishment from God; the sick person was isolated from the rest of the community in the Old Testament (Leviticus 13:45-46). However, Jesus broke this isolation and healed people with leprosy on more than one occasion (Mark 1:40-42; Luke 17:11-15). When Jesus' disciples asked him if the man born blind suffered from blindness as a result of his sin or his parents' sin, Jesus answered that neither had sinned (John 9:1-3). Instead, Jesus chose to reach out to him and heal him. Jesus' compassion for the sick is an example all Christians can choose to imitate.

A Model of Holistic Evangelism: Ministry to the Person with AIDS

The person with AIDS is often in the prime of life and may have a family and children. He or she is having to face enormous change and stress as he or she deals with his or her illness. The person sometimes must come to grips with the fact that death is not far away. The Christian ministering to the person with AIDS must also face his or her own fears about death. Contact with a dying person forces us to think about our own death, the fact that we are mortal beings and we also will die one day. There is also the fear of the unknown, since none of us has ever experienced death firsthand.

Additionally, we also fear the process of dying and the suffering it might entail. As Christians, our view of death is one of hope because of the life, death and resurrection of Christ. According to 1 Corinthians 15:54, death has been swallowed up by the victory of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Our relationship with God gives us a life with him that cannot be touched or changed by death (Romans 8:38-39). Other scriptural passages for further study include: Psalm 23, Psalm 73:23-26, Romans 8:35-39, 1 Corinthians 15, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and Hebrews 2:9, 14-15.

Pastoral Care to the Person with AIDS

The person with AIDS is experiencing much loss: loss of physical strength and appearance, loss of the ability to work, loss of finances and loss of some of his or her social network. One of the first ways Christians can help is by simply visiting the person at home if he or she is unable to work. We can ask the person questions about him or herself and his or her sickness and frustrations. Our ability to listen, to allow the person to express him or herself freely without judging him or her or giving our opinions or comments, is very important. The person may be angry, depressed or trying to make some sense out of the meaning of his or her life. Listening to the individual very carefully is hard work! However, from our listening, we may begin to discern what God is doing in the person's life as we seek to bring him or her to faith in Christ (if the person has not already committed his or her life to Christ).

Here are some questions to ask yourself as you listen:

- What is important, sacred or holy to this person?

- How does this person perceive God's intentions toward him or herself? Does he or she see God as merciful and loving or angry and vindictive?
- Has this person already had a religious experience that has affected him or her? Was it positive or negative?
- What topics keep returning in the person's conversation? What are his or her worries and burdens?

The answers to these questions can help us to pray more effectively and may indicate a spiritual door of entry into his or her life. Here are a few ideas to begin to bring God into the person's world:

- **Tell the person you are praying for him or her.** Invite others to pray with you.
- **Ask the person questions about his or her spiritual reflections.** Share with the person your thoughts about God as a living God and one who gives life. People who are dying will be attracted to thoughts about life.
- **Offer to read the person comforting psalms or passages of scripture.**
- **Lend the person praise music, hymns or classical music** that can lift his or her spirits and draw him or her to thoughts of God.
- **Pray with the person when he or she is afraid or in pain.** Talk and pray with him or her over the telephone.
- When the time is right, share your own experience of God and explain how he or she can also experience an eternal relationship with God that will follow him or her after death.

Practical Help

Below are five suggestions for providing practical and needed help.

1. **Provide practical help** with household chores. Prepare a meal or run errands as the person's illness worsens.
2. **Provide childcare** for parents with young children. This will give the parents time for rest and an opportunity to communicate as a couple.
3. **Provide material help** (food, clothing, money) through the help of your church or a group. As the person's resources are diminished and his or her health worsens, he or she will need this more and more.
4. **Find other people who can help** the person in different ways—housecleaning, writing letters, running errands, etc.
5. **Provide listening and pastoral care** for the person who is ill. On other occasions, provide listening and pastoral care for the spouse or other family members who are the caregivers.

Creating Community Resources as a Church for Holistic Outreach to Those with AIDS

Below are five ways churches can come alongside people with AIDS.

1. **Create a food or clothing bank** through your church.

2. **Elicit the help of local merchants** who can also use their contribution to advertise their business.
3. **Train pastoral teams who can do home visits** to people with AIDS and assess their physical and spiritual needs.
4. **Create a welcome centre** for those with AIDS. Begin a drop-in centre or a community kitchen project to prepare food once a week using the church.
5. **Create micro-enterprises and co-ops** to provide work and income for people with AIDS. These can include photocopy centres, internet services, raising and selling chickens or vegetables, creating handcrafts or painting pictures which can be sold.

Conclusion

The challenge for the Church continues to grow in light of the number of people who continue to be infected with HIV and contract AIDS. The AIDS pandemic is also an opportunity for Christians to communicate Christ's love to people in very tangible ways and indirectly, to those who are only observers. May the compassion of Christ give power and initiate ever-increasing works of love in action through Christians around the world.

Endnotes

1. Global Summary of the AIDS Epidemic, December 2006. United Nations report accessed on 7 August 2005 from http://data.unaids.org/pub/EpiReport/2006/02-Global_Summary_2006_EpiUpdate_eng.pdf.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Malaria", Report for 2005. Accessed 7 August 2007 from <http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/impact/index.htm#statistics>.
3. All AIDS data mentioned here can be found at: http://data.unaids.org/pub/EpiReport/2006/02-Global_Summary_2006_EpiUpdate_eng.pdf.

Pamela Gebauer helps coordinate **Christian Direction, Inc.**'s Urbanus, an urban educational theological network involving Bible schools, pastors and leaders working in large cities of la Francophonie. Since 1990, she has accompanied people with AIDS through a community network program in Montreal, Canada. She has also written an AIDS pastoral intervention manual in French and English and has worked with mission partners in French Africa and Haiti to produce a CD-ROM containing French resources on AIDS prevention, education and pastoral ministry.

Responding to HIV/AIDS "As You Go"

By Evvy Campbell

As a faculty member at Wheaton College (Wheaton, Illinois, USA), I received an email invitation last year from a leader in the Student Global AIDS Campaign inviting me to participate in a panel discussion on HIV/AIDS. "What I am aiming for," he said, "is to convince students that responding to AIDS does not [necessarily] mean giving up a career and going to Africa or India. I want students to walk away from the discussion feeling that AIDS is something they can respond to simply by the way they live their lives and eventually go about their careers."

I have thought a good deal about that aim and focus, both in preparing my panel remarks and subsequently. Given the cascade of responsibilities and activities that fill daily life, not to mention the multiplicity of career directions, how can a critical mass of Christians be stimulated to respond in a significant, biblically holistic way to HIV/AIDS?

Part of the answer to that question may come in parsing out the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20. Historically, there has been an emphasis not on the main verb of “make disciples” but on “go,” which might be better translated “going” or “as you go.” In this greatest of pandemics, while there is a clear need for many to undertake HIV/AIDS as a life calling, it is equally crucial that large numbers engage the pandemic “as they go” in response to many life callings. How can that happen? Perhaps there are several ways forward.

1. Sit Together at the Table

Prior to teaching at Wheaton I had worked nearly five years in West Africa and then another nine years in international health with **MAP International**, a Christian relief and development organization. While part of my work at MAP included facilitating an initial organizational response to HIV/AIDS internationally, I keenly felt the need to be involved locally as well. I joined a community grassroots organization and signed up as a buddy for a client with full-blown AIDS. This was the late 1980s. Over dinner at a Mexican restaurant, my friend described the difficulties of life with AIDS. Only as we prepared to leave the restaurant did I realize that our waiter had stopped serving us, going so far as to have another employee accept our payment. It was a brief moment for me but a repeated encounter with stigma for my friend with AIDS.

During those same years, volunteers in our AIDS service organization regularly drove clients more than two hours for medical care because we could not find local providers. As our case load swelled to 180 clients, we struggled to negotiate filing for Medicaid and establishing appropriate accounting procedures. I had become chair of the board and with a knotted stomach had to meet with members of the United Way and the country health department who observed our vulnerable efforts with concern and sympathy.

In the end, the Lord enabled and blessed our offering of five loaves and two small fish. The organization continues to serve those with HIV/AIDS today. Surely one way forward in the pandemic, as comedian-playwright Woody Allen has famously said, is “just showing up.” That is a step all believers can take. Make an acquaintance with an HIV-positive person. Serve as a friendship partner. Do a five-kilometer AIDS walk. Be present. Show up. Sit together at the table.

2. Contribute from Your Strength

Wheaton College president Duane Litfin established an HIV/AIDS task force at the college four years ago. Students, staff, faculty and alumni all serve and its greatest merit is that members contribute from their strengths. The college chaplain arranged a chapel service in which Kay Warren of Saddleback Church (Lake Forest, California, USA) spoke engagingly and with conviction on AIDS. Theologians led the task force in developing a carefully crafted and scripturally grounded statement on “HIV/AIDS and Wheaton College.” Faculty from Politics and International Relations helped to found a community AIDS Action Network that engages in activist training and political lobbying.

Students raised over \$12,000USD at an elegant evening themed “AIDS Benefit: An Occasion for Hope” to support an AIDS clinic in Uganda and affected women and children in Kenya. An alumnus serving with the Supply Chain Management System was involved in the procurement and distribution of medicines for two million infected persons. Wheaton’s Class of 1965 started an endowment to support AIDS-related efforts on campus which has reached over \$25,000USD. Human resources and the task force have hosted educational workshops for faculty and staff. An HIV-positive student has spoken on “Living with Hope and HIV/AIDS.” A Communication faculty member teaches a course on “The Rhetoric of AIDS.” Another in the field of international development has addressed “Root Causes of AIDS.” Each year one-third of student interns who serve six months in a **Majority World** country through the HNGR program (Human Needs Global Resources) focus on HIV/AIDS.

When the eldest servant of Abraham succeeded in the task of finding a bride for Isaac he said, “The LORD has led me on the journey.” Like Abraham’s servant, we need to take the initiative and undertake the journey of

responding to HIV/AIDS. The pandemic needs economists, journalists, actors, natural and social scientists, healthcare professionals and thousands of helping hands—each making a contribution according to his or her skills and abilities.

3. Be Informed and Open to the Challenge

Alumni of Wheaton College who have led the way in responding to HIV/AIDS have both informed and challenged us. Dr. Art Ammann, a tenured physician at the University of California San Francisco Medical Center, diagnosed the first case of pediatric AIDS from a blood transfusion. Today he travels widely through [Global Strategies for HIV Prevention](#) to distribute anti-retrovirals and HIV testing kits.

Deborah Dortzbach and Dr. W. Meredith Long, who authored *The AIDS Crisis: What We Can Do* (InterVarsity 2006), wrote from their combined forty years of experience walking alongside those both infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Their global overview of the crisis, perceptive discussion of the social complexities that fuel the pandemic, and sensitive suggestions on caring for families with AIDS not only make for excellent reading but helpfully press readers toward a response. The online resources in the concluding chapter of their book are especially valuable. Dale Hanson Bourke has contributed *The Skeptic's Guide to the Global AIDS Crisis*, a straightforward explanation and discussion of the pandemic.

The Task Force developed a database of alumni responding to AIDS and it is inspiring. Graduates serve in [Jubilee Centre](#) leadership in Zambia, with [Prison Fellowship](#) in Ethiopia, at Loyola University's Stritch School of Medicine, with [Campus Crusade's](#) "Crossroads" curriculum, in Episcopal pastoral care and with Lifewind's Community Health Evangelism initiatives. Every region of the world responding to AIDS has its role models who encourage, rebuke and help us to be more engaged. Let us honor and celebrate what they do and demonstrate our gratitude by serving in turn—by asking, seeking and knocking for opportunities to contribute. We can respond by the way we live our lives and go about our careers.

4. Share the Good News!

The pandemic has tested the Church by providing the opportunity for a renewed and deeper understanding of biblical truths. We are indeed our brother's keeper and are to corporately challenge the poverty, human trafficking, social inequities, conflict and both personal and societal sin that fuel the pandemic.

The good news we have to share is not only the joyous certainty of an afterlife in the presence of God, but also of God's work of restoration in the world now, including that done through our hands and feet. Sharing the gospel is not simply imparting truth but delighting in spiritual friendship with new brothers and sisters in Christ—learning from each other and walking together. For some, the good news first reaches them through deeds; for others, through a powerful moving of the Spirit, and still others, through the Word.¹ The proclaimed gospel is "the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). Good news indeed! This is something to be winsomely and boldly shared "as we go." God is working redemptively both in and through the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and he has invited us to be part of that work. May we not fail to respond.

Further Resources

The AIDS Crisis: What We Can Do. Deborah Dortzbach and Meredith Long, 2006.
Insights and personal reflections from two decades of enabling churches to address the AIDS crisis effectively. (www.IVPress.com)

A Guide to Acting on AIDS. eds. Jyl Hall, Laura Barton and James Pedrick, 2006.
Designed to equip Christian college students with a deeper awareness of the global AIDS pandemic. Explores what the Bible says about these issues and what is being done globally to respond.

(www.WorldVisionResources.com)

The aWAKE Project: Uniting Against the African AIDS Crisis. Nelson Mandela, Bono, George W. Bush, Jeff Sachs, Kofi Annan, Philip Yancey, Richard Stearns, et al, 2002.

Encourages readers to respond with urgency and compassion to the AIDS crisis.

(www.WorldVisionResources.com)

Children Affected by HIV/AIDS: Compassionate Care. ed. Phyllis Kilbourn, 2002.

Tackles the very difficult issues surrounding the problems of children who are affected by the loss of parents or crucial caregivers due to AIDS. (www.WorldVisionResources.com)

HIV/AIDS Clinical Case Studies. R. Brown, A. Low, S. Moore and M. Bilonda, 2006.

A teaching tool for doctors, clinical officers and nurses who care for patients infected with HIV.

(www.amref.org)

HIV/AIDS Counseling Case Studies. J. Brown and A. Mburu, 2005.

A book for counselors, social workers and medical personnel in African hospitals, health centers and dispensaries. (www.amref.org)

The Hope Factor: Engaging the Church in the HIV/AIDS Crisis. Charles Colson, William Frist, John Piper and Richard Stearns, et al, 2003.

Outlines the extent of the global crisis, provides case studies detailing noteworthy interventions and offers biblical reflections on HIV/AIDS. (www.WorldVisionResources.com)

Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues. Paul Farmer, 2001.

Explores the relationship of emerging infectious diseases and poverty, challenging many commonly held assumptions and provoking needed reflection on the issue. (www.Amazon.com)

Living Well with HIV and AIDS, 2nd edition. Allen Gifford, Kate Lorig, Diana Laurent and Virginia Gonzáles, 2005.

For people with HIV/AIDS and their caregivers. Full of counsel for managing symptoms, medical treatment, personal issues such as talking with family and friends, exercise and diet. (www.Amazon.com)

Rethinking AIDS Prevention. Edward Green, 2003.

Looks objectively at countries that have succeeded in reducing HIV infection rates...along with a worrisome flipside to the progress. A bellwether in the escalating controversy, offering persuasive evidence in support of the ABC approach and exposing the fallacies and motivations of its opponents. (www.Amazon.com)

Skeptics Guide to Global AIDS. Dale Hanson Bourke, 2004.

Essential information in a simple and straightforward way, explaining medical and political issues in everyday language. An invaluable resource for education and involvement in the global AIDS crisis.

(www.AuthenticBooks.com)

The Truth About AIDS. Patrick Dixon, 2004.

A classic text that provides an overview of HIV/AIDS and then focuses on moral issues, the response of the Church and issues faced by poorer nations. (www.ACET-international.org)

Endnote

1. Steward, John. (1994). *Biblical Holism: Where God, People & Deeds Connect*. Burwood, Victoria: World Vision Australia.

Dr. Evvy Hay Campbell is chair of intercultural studies at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, USA, and was facilitator of the 2004 Forum for World Evangelization **Holistic Mission Issue Group**. She is Lausanne senior associate for holistic mission.

I Choose Life—Africa: Turning the Tide on the HIV/AIDS Pandemic among University Students **By Mike Mutungi**

Background

Young people between fifteen and twenty-four years of age account for more than half of the over five million new HIV infections worldwide each year; an estimated six thousand youth become infected each day across the globe.¹ In Kenya, HIV-prevalence in this age bracket—particularly among females—is extremely high. Kenyan women are at greatest risk of infection between the ages of twenty and twenty-four, with eighteen percent being infected within two years of sexual initiation.

Included within this high-risk group are the majority of university students. By the time Kenyan youth walk into their university hostels for the first time, a large proportion of them have already had sexual intercourse.² The new-found autonomy of university life—away from the watchful eyes of parents, high school teachers and church youth leaders—leads many additional students to experiment with a wide range of risky behaviours. The Kenya National AIDS Strategic Plan (KNASP) 2005–2009/10 has therefore identified university students as a high-risk group of contracting an HIV infection.

Thus, although university students as a whole are viewed as key to the future of the nation, individually they are at enormous risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). It is with this in mind that the Commission for Higher Education, together with I Choose Life—Africa, has made it a priority to implement HIV/AIDS interventions in Kenyan universities.

I Choose Life—Africa

I Choose Life—Africa is the leading behaviour change communication program in institutions of higher learning in Kenya. The program was launched in 2002 by the Ministry of Health and later recommended to all universities by the Commission for Higher Education. To date, we have set up programs at the University of Nairobi, Kenyatta, Daystar, Maseno, Moi and Egerton, as well as the Cooperative College of Kenya. The program is poised to include more universities and colleges in the near future. The vision of I Choose Life—Africa is to have an AIDS-free country. The mission is to create a movement of caring communities among students that make responsible and informed choices with regard to life and HIV/AIDS through prevention, care and support as well as mitigation of social economic impact.

There are at least six objectives I Choose Life—Africa has:

1. To improve the level of knowledge, attitude and practice of information on HIV/AIDS in students.
2. To reduce risky sexual behavior.
3. To increase Voluntary Counseling and Training (VCT) uptake.
4. To strengthen Behaviour Change Communication Groups (BCCGs) and their support structures.
5. To campaign against negative perceptions toward PLWHIV (Persons Living With HIV).

6. To contribute to the development and implementation of HIV/AIDS policies within the institutions.

Training of Peer Educators

I Choose Life—Africa recruits students in the various institutions of higher learning to participate in the 32-hour Peer Education Training. The HIV/AIDS training incorporates interactive teaching methods, including audiovisual learning techniques, case studies, drama, games and small group interaction. Some topics covered in the training include: STIs; sexual responsibility; living with and managing HIV; culture and sexuality; and consistent and correct use of condoms.

After this training, peer educators are taken through a course on life skills to increase their effectiveness as peer educators. The life skills training includes communication, counseling, facilitation and negotiation and leadership skills.

Behaviour Change Communications Groups (BCCGs)

After training, peer educators who have now acquired various skills, form groups with other peers with whom they have similar interests (e.g. sports, performing arts, gender, etc.). These groups are known as Behaviour Change Communications Groups (BCCGs); the peer educators use these interests as avenues to pass HIV/AIDS information to the wider community.

Voluntary Counseling and Training (VCT)

I Choose Life has been on the frontline in mobilizing students to know their HIV status. Mobile VCT sites are set up during the training period in each of the campuses. Peer educators are sensitized on the importance of VCT, and are encouraged to motivate their peers to go for testing.

Students who have gone for VCT are encouraged to form Post Test Clubs. Some of the clubs' objectives are to encourage fellow students to know their status, reduce stigma and carry out advocacy campaigns.

Greater Involvement of People Living with AIDS (GIPA)

Peer educators interact with People Living with HIV (PLHIV) regularly. During the training sessions, PLHIV are invited to share their experiences as well as how to live with and manage HIV/AIDS. In addition, peer educators take part in home-based care visits with PLHIV and their families. The visits target PLHIV living in less privileged areas such as slums.

Care and Support

Psycho-social services, counseling, post test clubs, nutrition programs for PLHIV, referrals and other treatment services are among the care and support activities I Choose Life—Africa also conducts.

In nearly five years of operation, I Choose Life—Africa has trained forty-five staff and 4,011 peer educators. The peer educators have reached over forty thousand students and formed over forty-two BCCGs. Over seventy thousand pieces of information, education and communication (IEC) materials have been distributed.

Esther's Story

The following is a true story on the impact of AIDS and the need for program such as I Choose Life—Africa:

I am twenty-three years old and I go to one of the public universities. I discovered my HIV status when I was completing my first year. I thought life had come to an end. I would not have tested for HIV if it were not for the mobile VCT service that was brought to campus by I Choose Life—Africa (ICL), and the convincing of a friend who was a peer educator with ICL. My friend used a blitz card, which had the VCT information, to convince me of the importance of knowing my status. Because I wanted my friend to stop bothering me, I eventually went. I never thought I would be HIV positive. I was.

Not knowing what to do, I stayed in my room for some days after testing. I then decided it was all a big mistake and pretended it had not happened. I pushed it to the back of my mind.

Three months later, I developed a bad skin rash and began to lose weight. I went to the university student clinic. When the doctor saw the rash, she asked if I had tested for HIV. I told her I had tested, but that I doubted the results. She asked if I minded taking a second test. The worst was confirmed.

She asked to introduce me to a counselor at ICL. She explained they had support groups which included other students. Out of curiosity and confusion, I agreed. Doubting whether anybody would be willing to spend their time on a student like me—who had not taken care of herself to prevent HIV—I did not go immediately.

After I finished the treatment the doctor had given me, I developed other ailments, which I later learned were opportunistic infections that affect people with low body immunity. I was weak and did not have consistent meals due to financial constraints. I finally went to ICL where I talked to the counselor.

The receptionist was so welcoming that I felt like some of my problems had been lifted. The woman talked to me and introduced me to the nurse, who helped me do my CD4 (cluster of differentiation 4, a glycoprotein) test. At several appointments, I was counseled on positive living and received a medical check up. The nurse explained my symptoms clearly. I was also introduced to a support group which had students like me. I now take a nutrition supplement twice a day and am able to concentrate on my studies.

When I told the people at ICL I did not want to go to the university health clinic for fear that someone would discover I was HIV positive, they referred me to a care clinic. At this center, I receive medical management and antiretroviral therapy (ARV). I've been on ARVs for seven months, and today I don't think much about it. I have had tuberculosis and other infections. The ICL counselor and nurse have kept a close watch on me; they are my treatment buddies and I feel life is worth living now.

Although living with HIV is difficult, especially the road to a stable immune system, I thank God I have received overwhelming support. There were days when finances were not there and I had no food and I would take the porridge I got from ICL for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The people at ICL have ensured I get a constant supply of food for the whole semester and money to pay for my room. I would not have managed without this extra support.

I had lost twenty-five kilograms when I started care and my CD4 count was less than twenty. I have now added eight kilograms and although I have not done another CD4 count, I am sure it is higher. The opportunistic infections have reduced and I am now attending classes full time. I am forever grateful to the care and support program at ICL. I wish all HIV positive students would know the depth of help available there. My prayer is that people would not condemn those of us who are positive, and that we would be free to live in society without fear of being stigmatized.

Spiritual Journey of the Students

I came to know the Lord through **The Navigators** while I attended the University of Nairobi. I graduated with an engineering degree and started working for the government doing road design and construction. Then the Lord called me to full-time ministry with The Navigators.

It was while discipling university students that it became clear to me that the gospel was about more than just meeting spiritual needs. I did a survey to find out what issues were important to students. Three came up: HIV/AIDS, music and finances. At that time, the infection rate among the youth was about seventeen percent. We decided that if the gospel was relevant to the whole of life, then it needed to address the issues above. We began "I Choose Life."

Spiritual growth is a key element in I Choose Life's program. On the one hand, we endeavour to be a professional HIV prevention, care and support organization that seeks to increase knowledge and change attitudes and practices with a view toward risk reduction. However, we also let students know that there is a spiritual component to risk elimination. We therefore have some Navigator trained students in the small groups who are available to discuss spiritual matters to those who are interested. If they would like to explore more about their spiritual journey, the students are invited to a weekly forum called "The Journey" that meets every Friday. Here, over eight hundred students meet for worship and Bible study.

Partnership Opportunities

It costs approximately \$200USD to train one peer educator through one academic year. For more information, visit www.ichooselife.or.ke or email info@ichooselife.or.ke.

Endnotes

1. [The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS](#) (UNAIDS). 2004
2. Ibid.

Mike Mutungi is CEO of [I Choose Life—Africa](#).

The Prophetic Role of the Church in Egypt Toward HIV/AIDS

By Andrea Z. Stephanous

One of the major problems we face when dealing with HIV/AIDS is the deficient or incomplete knowledge, especially concerning how this disease is transmitted from one person to another. To what extent can a person deal with people who have HIV/AIDS?

HIV/AIDS is a very weak virus that cannot be transmitted through shaking hands, hugging, kissing, using the bathroom and all other normal daily contacts. HIV/AIDS is transmitted only through unsafe sex, blood, mother-to-baby transmission and lactation.

Although there has been a decline in infection rates in some countries and positive trends in young people's sexual behaviors, the global AIDS epidemic continues to grow. There is even compelling evidence that some countries are experiencing a resurgence in new HIV infection rates which were previously stable or declining.

According to the latest figures published in the [UNAIDS/WHO 2006 AIDS Epidemic Update](#), an estimated 39.5 million people are living with HIV. There were 4.3 million new infections in 2006, with 2.8 million (sixty-five percent) of these occurring in sub-Saharan Africa. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, statistics showed that infection rates have risen by more than fifty percent since 2004.

In 2006, 2.9 million people died of AIDS-related illnesses.

Middle East and North Africa

AIDS epidemics in the Middle East and North Africa region are diverse. An estimated sixty-eight thousand people contracted HIV in 2006, making the total number of people infected 460,000 persons. Most reported HIV infections have been in men; however, the proportion of infected women is increasing (UNAIDS, 2006).

The impact of HIV/AIDS is far-reaching. They affect not only those who are infected but indirectly affect families, friends, employers and others. HIV/AIDS reduces possibilities for poverty eradication; they may even

contribute to increased poverty rates. HIV/AIDS affects health services, education systems, economic growth, emotional well-being and family and community stability. Consequently, governments, development organizations, churches and communities strive to address the increasing impact of HIV/AIDS.

Christian Response to HIV/AIDS

To save future generations, we must understand that HIV/AIDS is not just a biological issue; it is a general issue that needs to be confronted by governments, health ministries, justice ministries, media and religious leaders.

HIV/AIDS is a complex and multifaceted pandemic with a wide variety of interacting causes, sustaining factors and impacts. Therefore, this pandemic demands a holistic mission response from churches. We must make our contribution to fight this disaster by drawing a Christian worldview that seamlessly unites the material, psychological, social, cultural, political and spiritual aspects of life—a worldview that unites evangelism, discipleship, social action and pursuit of justice.

Many African churches have taken the lead in this regard. A few Asian churches are doing the same. Churches in other parts of the world have been slower in response. What is missing is global commitment on the part of all evangelicals to provide what God has given them to fight against this scourge.

One of the biggest barriers to churches working with people with HIV/AIDS is the incorrect belief that HIV is a punishment from God for their wicked practices. Churches must accept the fact that HIV/AIDS is present among church members. That is why our attitude toward HIV/AIDS should not be “Whose fault?” but rather “God’s opportunity to do what?”

It is time for churches to talk openly with people and rebuild their wrong thoughts about sex and HIV/AIDS. This initiative requires a new understanding of how to live a good and healthy sexual life without being infected with diseases such as HIV/AIDS. The Church plays a role in caring for family matters in order to improve successful marriages and strong and loving relationships.

Discrimination against women in education and employment opportunities can be one factor of HIV/AIDS dissemination. For example, a woman might become a commercial sex worker as she has no other source of income from which to live. Therefore, improving the status of women could be effective in hindering the transmission of HIV/AIDS.

What infected people need is not just compassion—they need to be treated as normal human beings and accepted by the whole of society. The Church must advocate for the rights of people carrying HIV/AIDS to have a job, be a church member, serve God, etc.

When we know people who carry HIV/AIDS because of sinful practices such as adultery, it can be tempting to withhold love from them. If those people infect their faithful partners with HIV/AIDS, the society blames and punishes them by treating them badly. However, Jesus came to save sinners like us. As the Church, we must show grace, love and compassion to all people with the hope that they will become open to being transformed by Jesus. If we do not succeed in changing infected people's behavior, we can at least educate them so that they do not transmit their infection to others.

People infected with HIV/AIDS may be depressed to the extent that they commit suicide. The Church must encourage and convince these people that:

- there is hope,
- there is always time for repentance,
- they are accepted by people,

- this is not the end,
- they can continue to live,
- they can be transformed to become new persons and
- they can be useful and share their experience with others.

Breaking the Silence in Egypt

The Evangelical (Presbyterian) Church believes in its prophetic role to talk about the issues of sex education and HIV/AIDS that the general society is often silent about. In the past, the Church successfully did the same thing with women's education issues; it is now time for churches to talk with society and rebuild wrong thoughts about sex and HIV/AIDS.

The Council of the Services and Development (CSD), Synod of the Nile of Egypt, has vast experience in health education and awareness campaign programs. These include:

1. Reproductive Health Awareness, STDs & AIDS Program. This is an awareness project developed and implemented by the CSD three years ago. The project covers twenty governorates benefiting around eleven thousand young men and women. Reproductive education is deficient, incomplete or disfigured in most **Third World** countries. The project's approach to youth reproductive health is comprehensive and covers the roots of sexual health.

2. Sex and HIV/AIDS Education Program in Schools. This includes four parts.

- Five training-of-trainers (TOTs) training courses for school teachers were implemented; three of them focused on the scientific subject that would be introduced to the students, (i.e. HIV/AIDS and reproductive health awareness). The other two training courses addressed communication skills and educational tools needed to convey this knowledge to students in a culturally appropriate way. There were eighty-four trained teachers from eleven schools.
- A training module developed for educators illustrated scientific medical facts as well as methods of communicating these facts to students in a culturally appropriate way. The module included an educational curriculum for HIV/AIDS and sex education to be taught to students. The educational materials used are: CDs, video tapes, awareness leaflets and others.
- Three public seminars targeting parents were held to raise awareness of the issues of sex education and how to deal properly with adolescent children. The total number of participating parents was 180 (ninety families), from seven schools.
- Three open activity days were held for school students. These open days offered educational seminars along with the practice of social, sports and physical activities. Over 17 students from seven schools participated.

3. Christian Network Against AIDS (CNAA). The CSD has a number of projects to organize a church-based network advocating against AIDS. Through this network, the church will share the love and passion of Jesus with people through an awareness and education campaign. The central component of the project is to equip network members with funds, training and materials to implement the field activities of the project. Through this endeavour; the church will gain more experience in fulfilling the social gospel; additionally, network members will gain experience in field activities and Christian love will be expressed through community activities.

Conclusion

The Church's role is to break the silence and talk openly with people to rebuild wrong thoughts about sex and

HIV/AIDS. Caring for family matters in order to have a successful marriage and promote strong and loving relationships is worthwhile in facing the spread of HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, it is necessary for the Church to advocate the rights of the infected people by showing them love, grace and compassion. The Church must treat them as human beings who are accepted by society and give them hope of being transformed by Jesus.

By taking these steps and realizing its prophetic role to the fullest extent, the Evangelical Church could change Egyptian society—and societies around the world—to a more understanding and healthy society with more potential for ministry and development.

Rev. Andrea Z. Stephanous is vice president of the Protestant Community of Egypt and director of Dar El Thaqafa Communications House, Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services. He received his doctorate in religions and theology from the University of Manchester in Manchester, UK, in 2003.

PERSPECTIVES

Believers Face High Price for Their Faith: A Look at the Persecuted Church on the IDOP

By Carl Moeller

Ostracized in India

Six Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) and their families in the village of Nutangram in West Bengal, India, are being pressured to relinquish their Christian faith. The Muslim mosque committee called for thousands of villagers from nearby areas to rally against the Christian families on 4 September 2007, as they wanted the families to recommit themselves to Islam. The believers, who came to faith little more than a year ago, are terrified.

A few days prior to 4 September, the mosque issued a ban against anyone communicating with MBBs. As a result, the MBBs were not sold vegetables, workers did not come to do jobs in their fields and customers did not come to their shops. They were told they would be killed and their homes burned if they did not give up their faith in Jesus Christ.

The extremists stirred up some women to attack one of the Christian women. They physically tortured her, examining her body as they searched for “Christian signs” on her.

Recently, Pastor Bashir and the Khoda-e-Jamat ministry, which reaches out to Christians in the area, was threatened by Muslim extremists. The situation is tense. Pastor Bashir believes that the Lord’s grace will sustain every MBB in Nutangram in these difficult days. He requests prayer that not a single family will give in to the pressure to recant their faith.

Throughout the Muslim World, brothers and sisters who previously followed Islam, but now follow Jesus (MBBs), are paying a high price for their faith. Every day, they wake up to the possibility of:

- Isolation and being disowned by their families, friends and community
- Interrogation
- Arrest and torture
- Kidnapping

- Constant surveillance and threats
- Death

Seized by Vigilantes in Egypt

An Egyptian convert now living abroad and tracking reports of overt persecution against Christians in her homeland told Compass News Direct, “The Christians from Muslim background can’t change their identities, so they are always pushed by the authorities to return back to Islam—or else.”

In an incident in April documented by Compass, a Christian convert couple living in a Cairo district far from their relatives was targeted after aggressive Islamists noticed the husband did not attend mosque prayers. Mounting a deliberate watch, the Islamist vigilantes followed the husband until they finally saw him go into a church. Soon afterward, a group of ten men stormed the couple’s home without warning, accusing them of committing “apostasy.” They made a neighborhood spectacle by searching their house and dragging them off to the police station.

There, the wife was raped twice and her husband savagely beaten. When the Islamist vigilantes finally released them a day later, they threatened the couple with prison if they told anyone what had happened.

The husband was subsequently fired from his well-paying job, and local shopkeepers refused to sell them food or other goods. They were eventually forced to move to a remote village, where the husband found work as a day laborer.

A Worldwide Call for Action

We must act on behalf of these suffering brothers and sisters who desperately need our help—whether it is in India, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Nigeria or Pakistan.

Please pray for them and with them. Just knowing that fellow believers around the world care about their struggles brings immeasurable comfort and encouragement to them. Your prayers give them the incredible strength they need to stand strong amidst increasing danger and hostility. Pray specifically that they will keep their Christian faith and not go back to Islam. Pray they will have both boldness and discretion.

Also, pray for their persecutors. Pray they will be open to talking to MBBs. Pray the persecutors will experience the love of Jesus Christ.

MBBs do not ask us to pray God would remove them from the hardships of being a Christian in the Muslim World; instead, they ask us to pray that God would provide opportunities for them to share that gospel. Despite the rise of radical Islam in some countries, there are more reports of Christian converts from Islam than ever before.

The **International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church** (IDOP) is Sunday, 11 November 2007 (18 November 2007 in some countries). Millions of believers around the world will focus their prayers on persecuted believers, including MBBs.

For information about how your church, small group or Sunday school class can be a part of IDOP, go to www.persecutedchurch.org. Another excellent resource is a new book by Brother Andrew and Al Janssen called *Secret Believers* (Revell, 2007). For more information on the book and MBBs, go to www.secretbelievers.org.

Dr. Carl Moeller is president/CEO of **Open Doors USA**. Open Doors is an international ministry which has supported and strengthened persecuted Christians for fifty years. Moeller formerly ministered with **Campus Crusade for Christ** and Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, USA.

Persevering Prayer

By John Godson

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'" And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:1-8)

Perseverance is holding on and never giving up, even in the face of opposition and apparent failure.

Perseverance is a mark of faith.

The above scripture says that Jesus told his disciples a parable to the effect that people should pray always and not give up. He told them the story of a widow who asked a judge for justice and the judge refused. The woman did not give up; instead, she continually repeated her plea until the judge answered. Jesus wants us to be likewise in our prayers. He wants us to be persistent.

What are some of the attributes of perseverance? Perseverance is:

- **Focused.** It is concentrated on the object of prayer.
- **Incessant.** It continually repeats and is not rebuffed by opposition or failure.
- **Systematic.** It is methodical.
- **Unyielding.** It is never gives up.
- **Patient.** It waits for the answer.

The Bible is full of stories of men and women who persevered in prayer and saw God respond.

Jacob: Genesis 32:24-28

So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." (Genesis 32:24-28)

This story shows us some qualities Jacob had as a result of being persistent.

1. Jacob did not accept “no” for an answer—even though it came from an angel. He fought and he prevailed.
2. Even when wounded, Jacob never gave up.
3. Jacob was stubborn in his prayer. Perseverance in prayer changed Jacob’s name and destiny.

Bartimaeus: Mark 10:46-52

Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the Son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside, begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see." "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately, he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road. (Mark 10:46-52)

Bartimaeus was the only blind man mentioned by name in the healings of Jesus. Jesus was leaving Jericho; when Bartimaeus heard it, he started calling out to Jesus for help. Sadly, the people around him began to charge him to keep quiet. However, the Bible says Bartimaeus cried out even louder. He did not give up even when those around him told him to keep quiet. Have you been in situations where friends, family and fellow Christians tried to explain away your failure and disappointment so you would keep quiet?

Have you been in situations where people tried to make you accustomed to your blindness instead of encouraging you to call out to Jesus with a louder voice for help? Bartimaeus could not be hushed. He cried out with a louder voice, “Son of David, have mercy on me,” and Jesus heard him. This is perseverance.

The Woman of Canaan: Matthew 15:22-28

A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession." Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." "Yes, Lord," she said, "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour. (Matthew 15:22-28)

This woman came to Jesus to ask him a favor. And although he kept silent, she never stopped pleading. His disciples interceded on her behalf so they could have peace; however, Jesus refused, explaining he was sent to the lost sheep of Israel. The woman again cried out for help and Jesus said it was not good for the food of the children to be given to dogs. Although she accepted that fact, she added that crumbs from the table were meant for dogs. The test was over. Look at what Jesus said: "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." We can learn at least two things from this woman:

1. Sometimes our prayers are met with silence; nonetheless, we should persevere.
2. Even when we have a reason to be offended, let us not lose sight of the object of our prayers.

The Two Friends: Luke 11:5-8

Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set

before him.' 'Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs. (Luke 11:5-8)

This is another example of perseverance. A man went to his friend for help; however, his friend refused to help because he was already in bed. The man continued to knock. Jesus said that if his friend would not answer him because of their friendship, he would answer him because of his perseverance.

E. M. Bounds once said, “He prays not at all, who does not press his plea. Cold prayers have no claim on heaven, and no hearing in the courts above. Fire is the life of prayer, and heaven is reached by flaming importunity rising in an ascending scale.”

Never give up. Ask, seek, knock and, if necessary, storm heaven. Your miracle is on the way. Hang on and never let go. You will be glad you did.

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URBAN COMMUNITIES

An Overview of War-ravaged Angola

African history is one of indigenous cultures colliding with colonial repression. Angola is no different. Members of the hunter-gather Khoisan group are thought to have been the first inhabitants of the area that is present-day Angola. In the thirteenth century, Bantu-speaking peoples of West Africa arrived in the area, establishing a powerful kingdom and partly displacing the Khoisan population.

In the fifteenth century, however, the Portuguese first explored the coast of Angola and the region was forever changed. The Portuguese never found the gems they originally sought; they unfortunately discovered an all too lucrative trade—the slave trade. For the next four hundred years Angola remained a Portuguese colony, losing millions of her children to slavery. Not only did Angola suffer until 1975 when Portugal granted it independence, the lasting effects of years of suppression greatly hindered the people of Angola in improving their own country. During Portuguese rule, Africans had suffered repression in all walks of life. Their infrastructure economically, socially and educationally was in shambles.

Like many other African nations, the native Angolans had risen in national revolt in 1961. The groups born out of the following years have shaped the face of modern day Angola. The two main factions came to be known as the Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) and the Independência Total de Angola (UNITA). Founded in 1956 in Zambia, the Marxist-influenced MPLA was represented strongly by the well-educated Angolan Africans. UNITA was founded by Jonas Savimbi in 1966.

Since Portugal withdrew in 1975, these two factions have dominated Angola history. Angola became one of the many battlefields for the Cold War, with the MPLA receiving support from the Soviet Union and UNITA receiving Western aid. By 1991, a multiparty ceasefire was reached; however, the peace was short-lived and in November 1992, fighting broke out again, destroying much of the country's remaining infrastructure. The two groups came to terms again in 1994, but fighting was renewed in 1998. The United Nations pulled out its

peacekeepers in 1999. In April 2002, the MPLA and UNITA signed a cease-fire agreement and attempted negotiations on a lasting peace.

In the wake of the past thirty years of war lay over one million dead Angolans, millions more displaced and a country left in shambles. The millions of Angolans forced from their homes were forced to live in camps, not knowing when they could return home. These people lack some of the most basic necessities of life, including the lack of education for their children. However, the years of warfare have not taken away the pride of the Angolan people, and today there is hope that a brighter future lies ahead.

(Taken from the [RISE International website](#). RISE International partners with Angolan churches, community leaders and government officials to build primary schools in rural Angola.)

The Musseques of Luanda, Angola

By José da Silva

Luanda, the capital of Angola, was founded by the Portuguese in 1575. In the beginning, Luanda was principally a port serving Portuguese navigators in their commercial activities for West Africa. It was also a point of departure on the long road to India. At that time, the city was referred to as “*La route des épices*” (“The road of spices”). Luanda was also a factory centre for Portuguese enterprises. Located on the West coast of the Atlantic Ocean, today Luanda is the largest city of Angola and also the principal port of the country.

Since the peace accord was signed between UNITA (Independência Total de Angola) and MPLA (Popular de Libertação de Angola) in April 2002, Angola has been in constant transformation and rebuilding. Thousands of Angolans refugees in neighboring countries are returning home and villages are returning to normal, despite the presence of land mines.

A Big Challenge—The Cities of Angola

One of the biggest challenges for Angola is its cities, particularly the capital. Like the majority of countries in the Southern Hemisphere, Angola is very urban. Best estimates show that Luanda has a population of more than five million inhabitants, representing forty percent of the total population of a country of fourteen million people. If we add this to the population of other major Angolan cities (Lobito, Benguela, Huambo, Lubango or Namibe), we see that more than seventy percent of Angola lives in these cities.

After nearly thirty years of civil war (1975-2002), practically all urban infrastructure was destroyed. Angola’s government is making an incredible effort to rebuild the country; because of this, Luanda has become a large construction site. However, one cannot remove the consequences of war—including exorbitant prices of accommodation and essential goods—in a short period of time. Today, Luanda one is of the most expensive cities in Africa. Criminality is also creating an increasingly insecure atmosphere in the city.

A Bigger Challenge—The Shantytowns of Luanda

The biggest challenge in these cities are the shantytowns, known here as *musseques*. Insalubrity, promiscuity and injustice are daily concerns in these areas. Add to this the enormous health concerns of *musseques* dwellers, sometimes brought on by a very high level of unemployment. Even if the government reports that cholera and the AIDS epidemic are under control, the reality is that numerous deaths are registered each day.

In Luanda, one-quarter of the households have per capita consumptions of less than seventy-five US cents per day. Child mortality in Luanda is 320 per one thousand; compare this to Canada, where it is five per one thousand! The poor in the *musseques* are abandoned; the state only spends one percent of its budget on public

education and welfare. Many people in these communities spend up to fifteen percent of their revenue just to purchase water.

The Church's Role in the *Musseques*

Contrasts are visible in Luanda. It is frequent to see great luxury and ostentation alongside extreme poverty. Big churches, many of them built during the colonial period, are often located in these slum and disadvantaged neighborhoods. Are these structures contextualized for the present situation? Do the parishioners really understand the needs and suffering of the people? Are they prepared or trained to face the issues their parishioners have?

The answer to these questions, unfortunately, is no. They are not prepared and trained to face these issues, and for most of them, providing "good training" or a "good biblical approach" means either (1) perpetuating a classic way to be the Church with heavy liturgies or (2) having a charismatic celebration with an emphasis in prosperity. Contextualisation is unknown to most of them. The majority of the leaders of these churches are not living in *musseques* or in the neighbourhoods of the parish.

In the context of this article, then, the question we need to ask ourselves is: What are the churches doing to help the people of Luanda and in particular, the shantytowns? Before answering this question, it is important to mention two important historical issues the Angolan Church and population must face which make it difficult for a change of mentality and approach. The first is political; the second is religious or missiological.

During the civil war and in a Marxist political context, some churches were closed and others were limited to Sunday services only. Shantytowns were left to themselves and some rare churches celebrated on Sundays without any access to resources. Although the missiological legacy is different, it is also important. In the past, missionary activities were concentrated on the interior of the country, particularly in rural areas. Today, with a majority of the population living in cities and in the context of the consequences of war, the impact of this mission legacy on the quality of life of Angolans is limited. Some mission societies are still open, concentrating their activities in health care.

The Future of the People and the Church in the *Musseques*

Returning to our question, the portrait is bleak. With the new liberties and free expression Angola is experiencing, classical churches have become even more traditional in an effort to try and protect themselves against an invasion of new sects and spiritualities. Angola lives on a wave of syncretism, where new sects obtain fast profit and growth. The most visible is a sect coming from Brazil, which has a very strong emphasis on a theology of prosperity. This sect is omnipresent in the shantytowns of Luanda. Twenty-four-hour church services proclaiming instant prosperity from God and delivery from poverty are the norm. Classical churches preach a gospel of resignation; therefore, it is not difficult to understand why these new sects have grown so quickly.

And yet we cannot say the churches in the shantytowns of Luanda have done nothing. However, their actions are like drops in the ocean of needs and dilemmas these people are facing. Still, the reality is, the Church can do so much more. Here are three steps the Church can take:

1. Overcome the classicism of ancient programs and mentalities
2. Offer church leaders contextualized training in urban ministries
3. Help church leaders develop their own solutions instead of waiting for outside help

Angola, and in this particular case, Luanda’s shantytowns, need our prayers and aid. The best way to help the Angolan people is to provide biblical contextualized training to church leaders and a new hermeneutics of reading the Bible. Angola has several Bible schools with good programs in Bible classic studies; however, often these do not include practical application for church dilemmas or urban ministry approaches.

Indeed, shantytowns in Luanda are enormous fields and opportunities for the global Church. However, the Church in Angola needs help and prayer to shift from the classic paradigm to one that is more contextualized and closer to the people.

José da Silva was born in Lisbon, Portugal, but grew up in Luanda, Angola. He fled the country in the 1970s during the Marxist revolution. Da Silva recently completed his doctorate in ministry at Bakke Graduate University and returns to Luanda each year to minister and teach at Bible schools. He is married to Johanne and they have two daughters.

RESEARCH

Perfect Strangers: Christians Living Among Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims

By Natalie Crowson

Canadian missionary pastor Oswald J. Smith once said, “We talk of the Second Coming; half the world has never heard of the first one.” After reading an October 2007 article in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, Smith’s words do not seem an exaggeration. Todd Johnson and Charles Tieszen’s article entitled “Personal Contact: The *sine qua non* of Twenty-First Century Christian Mission” reiterates the importance of Christian contact with non-Christians while evaluating the present condition of Christian witness in the world. The research Johnson and Tieszen present reflects a serious need to refocus efforts of world evangelization.¹

Determining Level of Contact between Christians and Non-Christians

Johnson and Tieszen used two variables from a study of evangelization to determine the level of contact between Christians and non-Christians. The first, “discipling/personal work,” shows how much contact local church members have with non-Christians. The second, “outside Christians,” looks at the presence of Christians living near non-Christians. Using these variables, Johnson and Tieszen were able to produce a table showing the major religious groups by continent and their contact with Christians. The major religious groups in the study included Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Nonreligious and Ethnoreligionists. The study also included data from each continent: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, Northern America and Oceania. The excerpt from Table 1 shows the percentage of non-Christians who personally know a Christian, by continental area, mid-2007.

Excerpt Table 1. Percentage of Non-Christians who personally know a Christian, by continental area, mid-2007.

Continent	Africa	Asia	Europe	Latin America	Northern America	Oceania	World Total
% of all Buddhists who know a Christian	48.1	13.7	31.8	66.7	35.6	28.1	14.1
% of all Hindus who know a Christian	23.4	13.9	57.6	28.0	22.7	22.4	14.1
% of all Muslims who know a Christian	19.1	10.4	18.5	48.7	67.8	23.5	13.3
% of all nonreligious who know a Christian	64.4	14.7	96.8	99.2	97.9	99.0	31.6
% of all ethnoreligionists who know a Christian	46.0	15.8	57.2	82.8	81.5	85.4	30.3
% of non-Christians who know a Christian	26.2	13.3	75.3	89.9	78.8	77.6	18.9

Source: Condensed from Johnson and Tieszen, EMQ, October 2007.

The table is a striking visual example of the disparity between Christian contact throughout the world. The results are staggering:

- Only 10.4% of Muslims in Asia personally know a Christian, whereas 67.8% of Muslims in North America know a Christian.
- Only 13.3% of all Muslims worldwide personally know a Christian.
- Among Hindus and Buddhists worldwide, only 14.1% know a Christian.
- Asia is the most isolated continent with only 13.3% of the more than 3.6 billion people claiming to know a Christian.
- Eighty-six percent of all Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists do not know a Christian.

While Johnson and Tieszen’s research led to eight primary findings, I will address only three.

1. Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims have relatively little contact with Christians.
2. The nonreligious are closer in touch with Christians than other religionists except in Asia.
3. Globally, over eighty percent of all non-Christians do not personally know a Christian.

The fact that Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims have little contact is perhaps not too surprising; however, this finding, coupled with Islam’s rapid growth rate over the last decade, is deeply alarming.²

Getting Christians in Contact with Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims

How should Christians respond to this issue? Johnson and Tieszen encourage Christians to be deliberate about encountering Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims. This could take the form of living in a predominantly Muslim area, learning more about Buddhism in order to dialogue with confidence, learning another language to communicate clearly and being hospitable and kind to immigrants. At the core of each of these examples is the need to be *intentional*. Without intentionally seeking out opportunities to befriend and contact non-Christians, we lose the privilege to help advance the cause of Christ.

According to Johnson and Tieszen, most nonreligious people who know a Christian are former Christians or atheists from the West reacting against Christianity. How should Christians respond to them? Christians should live in such a way that Christ is exalted and love abounds. If Christians live in obedience to the commands of Christ, surely fewer would leave the fold over disharmony. No doubt those having already left Christianity could also benefit from seeing Christians live out the commands of Christ in community. Again, being intentional about contacting and developing personal relationships is at the heart of reaching nonreligious people.

The third finding is perhaps the most troubling to me. If eighty percent of non-Christians do not know a Christian, what chance do they have to learn about true Christianity? God can and does use other means besides Christians to make himself known, yet by and large the message of Christ has been communicated personally through Christians for the past two millennia. As Johnson and Tieszen emphasize, God himself is our model where personal contact is concerned. He, himself, was present among the Hebrew children. Christ is, of course, the ultimate presence of God among us. Clearly, Christians should model his example and live among people who are in most desperate need of truth. More than this, Christians as a whole must reevaluate the focus of their resources. Johnson and Tieszen state that “ninety percent of Christian resources for mission are directed at Christians.” Surely, now is the time to regroup and refocus Christian efforts toward the eight percent who have little chance to know God.

Measured—and Found Wanting

Each of these findings indicates that the global Christian community has been measured and found wanting. The research implores us to consider our own methods of evangelism both on individual and group levels. Let us not

forget that any method used to reach non-Christians should result in meaningful relationships rooted in love and compassion for the sake of Christ.

There will no doubt be areas to improve and God will continue to grow his kingdom around the world, using Christians obedient to his commands. Our hearts and minds should align with the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 10:14: “But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?”

Endnotes

1. For full article, including research methodology, see *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, October 2007, 494-502.
2. World Christian Database (www.worldchristiandatabase.org)

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LAUSANNE REPORTS

[Eighth Annual Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism Conference](#)

By Tuvya Zaretsky

The Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE) met 19-24 August 2007 for its eighth international conference by Lake Balaton, Hungary. The worldwide network brought together over 160 participants from eighteen countries, representing sixteen agencies and congregations involved in Jewish evangelism. The LCJE began in 1980 and is among the longest standing specialized people group networks in the Lausanne Movement.

The theme of this quadrennial conference was “Jewish Evangelism—Telling the Story.” The week of meetings provided a platform for the unique network of organizations and individuals to gather information, coordinate strategies, consider trends and stimulate theological thinking and missiological research in the cause of advancing Jewish evangelism.

Notable at the meeting was the participation of Doug Birdsall, executive chair of the [Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization](#) (LCWE), the sponsoring body of the 1980 Pattaya Consultation on World Evangelization, from which LCJE was launched. Birdsall affirmed a special place for Jewish evangelism on the Church’s agenda: “The story of Jesus Christ is a message to be shared with the whole world, but especially with the Jewish people, as it is the fullest expression of God’s love relationship with his people.”

His statement was particularly fitting in light of the location and timing of this quadrennial conference. Eighty years earlier, the International Missionary Council launched a similar network for Jewish evangelism that met in Budapest, Hungary, with a similar mandate. The 1927 conferees described a unique opportunity to share the gospel in the Europe of their day.

Eighty years later, LCJE face some of the same issues reported by their predecessors. The 1927 conference *Budapest Report* spoke about Jesus’ love for his own people and their desire to communicate that good news to Jewish people of their day. They described and discussed various outreach efforts. They also catalogued trends in Europe affecting European Jewry of their day.

With appreciation for the previous work of the Budapest conference, LCJE network participants told the current story of Jewish evangelism. They affirmed the gospel of Jesus Christ remains the only hope of salvation for the Jewish people. Today's LCJE leaders share the same commitment to communicate the whole gospel with Jewish people worldwide.

In 1927, the *Budapest Report* described various trends observed in European Jewry at the time. They could not have known the horrific events that would break out in the subsequent decade, resulting in the Holocaust. The *Report* noted a growing interest among Jewish people regarding their destiny and a possible homeland. Today, on the eve of the State of Israel's sixtieth anniversary, LCJE conferees rejoiced in the stories of unprecedented openness and new opportunities as the gospel is penetrating Israeli society. They also received reports of important Christian ministry to Arabs and meaningful efforts undertaken toward reconciliation between Arabs and Jews in Christ.

Telling the Story—Many Places, Through Many Means

The daily program in Keszthely, on the shore of Lake Balaton, began with prayer and devotions. Each day, a theme was set through dramatic presentations of Bible parables staged by Avi Snyder and Rob Styler. Jarmula Band from Krakow, Poland, blessed the gathering with East European klemzer music dedicated to the Lord Jesus. An Israeli based trio of David and Lisa Loden and Ann Hilsden led worship music daily.

Each day was dedicated to exploring issues related to telling the gospel of Jesus in many places and by various modern means. Two days were set aside specifically to report what the Lord is doing among Jewish people in Eastern Europe and in Israel. Missiological progress reports were given from those regions.

Another day was devoted to exploring issues, like Diaspora, intermarriage and post-modernism, impacting Jewish evangelism. Specifically noted was the trend of rising anti-Semitism in Europe. Ironically, and without any connection, on the day immediately after the LCJE conference, an anti-Semitic nationalist group in Budapest, known as Magyar Garda, held a political rally and an induction ceremony for fifty-six new members. Some LCJE conference participants were eyewitnesses to the event.

Each of the regional LCJE networks (Europe, Finland, Israel, Latin America, North America, Australasia and Japan) met independently within the conference.

LCJE Background

LCJE is the only global organization in existence today that brings together professionals in the field of Jewish evangelism.

The LCJE has several purposes:

- Arranging consultations that are useful for practitioners in the ministry of Jewish evangelism
- Sharing information and resources
- Studying current trends
- Stimulating thinking on theological and missiological issues
- Strategizing on a global level so that more Jewish people will hear and consider the good news of Jesus

The LCJE is an affiliate network of the LCWE. LCJE membership is open to agencies and congregations engaged in Jewish evangelism, scholars and writers in the field, individual agency workers and congregational

leaders. Membership in the network begins with a recommendation by two current members. Applicants for membership must embrace the [Lausanne Covenant](#) as a basis for fellowship and agree to pay annual dues.

Lake Balaton Conference Statement

LCJE published the Lake Balaton Conference Statement out of the eighth international meeting in Hungary. It is available on the LCJE website. It is also below:

"Therefore, the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism calls on the whole Church to join in presenting the whole gospel of Messiah Jesus to the Jewish people worldwide.

- **We affirm** the good news of Jesus is the only hope for the salvation of the Jewish people. If Jesus is not the Messiah for the Jewish people, then neither is he Christ for the nations. Either Jesus is the Messiah for all, or he is not the Messiah at all.
- **We rejoice** over the reports that Jewish people are coming to faith in Jesus and that the number of Messianic congregations is growing.
- **We assert** that the worst possible Christian injustice to the Jewish people would be to deny them a hearing of the gospel, which is their only hope of salvation.
- **We encourage** evangelism to all the children of Abraham according to the flesh and pray for efforts toward reconciliation between Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews in Christ.
- **We denounce** contemporary expressions of anti-Semitism and prejudice against the State of Israel and urge the whole Church to join us in speaking against such sentiments, recognizing that they hinder Jewish people from hearing the gospel of Christ's love.
- **We commend** the LCWE publication "Jewish Evangelism—A Call to the Church" ([Lausanne Occasional Paper 60](#)) to increase understanding regarding Jewish evangelism.
- **We challenge** ourselves to minister with an openness to God's call and a willingness to collaborate in new approaches for communicating Jesus' message in a postmodern world.
- **We call** on the whole Church to support and actively partner in creative, thoughtful ways to share the whole gospel with the Jewish people."

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