

NEWS BRIEFS (www.lausanneworldpulse.com/newbriefs.php/02-2008)

AROUND THE WORLD: Christian Persecution Showing No Sign of Improvement

According to the German yearbook, *Martyrs 2007*, at least one in ten Christians around the world suffers persecution. In Iraq alone, three in four Christians have left their country as a result of fear of harassment, kidnapping or death. There are more than 200 million Christians worldwide who suffer persecution or discrimination; sadly, according to the report, there are no signs of improvement. (**idea**)

AROUND THE WORLD: Kirk Franklin Named CEO of Wycliffe International

Kirk Franklin was recently appointed by the Board of Wycliffe International to become the new executive director (CEO) of Wycliffe Bible Translators International. He replaces Dr. John Watters. Franklin, a citizen of both Australia and the USA, has served with Wycliffe since 1980, most recently as executive director of Wycliffe Australia. (**Wycliffe International**)

AROUND THE WORLD: SVM2's 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting

Student Volunteer Movement 2 (SVM2) is holding *21 Days of Prayer and Fasting* 15 February 2008 through 6 March 2008. The event will challenge the emerging generation of young people to return to Christ as the fountain of life. The prayer and fasting can be done either alone or in a group, in any location. Participants can download a prayer and fasting guide. (**Student Volunteer Movement 2**)

ETHIOPIA: Graduates Aim to Reach the Horn of Africa for Christ

The Awassa District Centre located in Awassa, Ethiopia, was the site of a December graduation ceremony for forty-four students receiving a diploma of ministry or certificate in ministry from the Horn of Africa Creative Leadership Institute. Speaker and Horn of Africa field education coordinator Terry Barker asked the graduates, "Who do you say that Jesus is?" and challenged them to live with the knowledge they acquired in school, pass it on to others and be prepared to answer those who question their faith. (**Nazarene Communications Network News-Africa**)

GERMANY: Churches Preaching "Light" Version of the Gospel

According to German theologian Christoph Stenschke, evangelical Christians in Germany have embraced a postmodern "light" version of the gospel. Stenschke says that in contrast to preachers speaking on repentance, hell and sin, as they did in previous decades, most sermons today are a call to "make friends with Jesus." The outcome has been little life-long, life-changing discipleship and enthusiastic commitment to the faith. Germany's largest evangelical Church, the German Baptist Union, for instance, has not experienced any significant growth in years. (**idea**)

HAITI: Clean Water Transforming Communities

Something as simple as clean, safe water can transform a community. For churches in Haiti—where more than half of the eight million people do not have access to safe drinking water—this means they can become the source of both the literal and spiritual water of life. Through the Haiti Water Project, groups are partnering with local churches to empower them to provide sustainable water resources for the people in their communities. (**Nazarene Caribbean Communications Office**)

INDIA: Verse-by-Verse Teaching Translated into Hindi

Pastor Chuck Smith's (founder of Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California, USA) verse-by-verse Bible teachings have been translated into Hindi through the efforts of K. P. Yohannan, founder of Gospel for Asia, and the GFA team. In a country where nearly 600 million people speak Hindi, GFA hopes to get 100,000 CD copies of Smith's teachings into the hands of Indian pastors and missionaries. "One of the greatest crises we have is when revival breaks out and

millions of people turn to Christ—but then, when there's not enough teaching of God's word, usually they end up in all kinds of extreme cults," said Yohannan. (ASSIST News Service)

IRELAND: Significant Decline in Religious Knowledge

According to a new poll, levels of religious knowledge throughout Ireland are decreasing significantly, and in Northern Ireland (NI) are even lower than in the Republic. According to an *Ekklesia* article, the poll is believed to be the first ever conducted on the subject in NI. The poll found that levels of religious knowledge among Northern and Southern Catholics were roughly the same; however, in general, levels of religious knowledge among Northern Protestants were lower than among Northern Catholics. The poll also found a marked difference between the levels of knowledge found among younger and older age groups. (ASSIST News Service)

JAPAN: Increased Poverty among Young Adults

Japanese Christian groups are noticing increasing poverty among young adults. This in a country that once had an image that its companies provide lifetime employment and that it has a strong middle class base. "If one applies the commandment, 'You shall not kill,' this should mean allowing poor young adults in Japan who have insecure lives as part-time and contract workers to live properly," says the Rev. Iwao Hayashi of the United Church of Christ in Japan. (Ecumenical News International)

SRI LANKA: Church Groups Call for Solution to Ethnic Conflict

Church groups in Sri Lanka have made a united call for a political solution to the ethnic conflict that has divided the island for two years and claimed more than six thousand lives. In recent months, Sri Lanka has slid back into civil war between security forces and Tamil rebels seeking autonomy from the mainly Buddhist Sinhalese majority. Although a 2002 ceasefire put in place by Norwegian mediators ended two decades of conflict, fighting flared again after the election of President Mahinda Rajapakse in November 2005. (Ecumenical News International)

UNITED STATES: Jewish and Muslim Interfaith Dialogue Project

Two major religious organizations, one Jewish and one Muslim, have unveiled an interfaith dialogue project intended to reach hundreds of thousands of their members across the United States and Canada. At its biennial convention in San Diego on 15 December 2007, the Union for Reform Judaism announced it had begun discussions with the Islamic Society of North America. (Ecumenical News International)

ZAMBIA: First Lady Says Country a "Christian Nation"

Maureen Mwanawasa, the First Lady of Zambia, has stated in an interview concerning HIV/AIDS in Zambia, that her country has become a "Christian nation." According to Mwanawasa, "The Church is one of the biggest helpers of [Zambia's] government in the fight against HIV/AIDS....Actually, our country was declared a Christian nation, so you can see how dependent we are on God for an answer to the challenge." Her husband, President Levy Mwanawasa, caused a sensation in 2005 when he gave his life to Christ and, as President of Zambia, was baptized at a local Baptist church. (ASSIST News Service)

PUBLISHER'S MEMO

Being the Church in Different Cultures by Doug Birdsall, co-publisher, LWP. Although the gospel message is timeless, the world today, expressions of the Christian faith and how we come together in community have become more complex, Birdsall writes. From house churches and mega-churches to Internet churches and churches in the great urban cities of the world the challenges are formidable. And yet, there exists the potential for the Church to be the incarnational Body of Christ. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/leadershipmemo/882/02-2008

THEMED ARTICLES: BEING THE CHURCH IN DIFFERENT CULTURES

What Does It Mean to Be the Church in Different Cultures? by Michael Cassidy, founder of African Enterprise. The Church lives according to certain biblical universals which are worked out and applied within a diverse set of cultural particulars and variables according to any given context, Cassidy believes. All Christians have a dual nationality and a double address. They are on the one hand *in Christ* and on the other hand *in a specific locale*. It is the

interplay, interface and interaction between these two identities which creates the challenges relating to what it means to be the Church in specific cultures. And although the Church has universal obligations, it does not dangle in thin air; its message and witness therefore must be culturally rooted and contextually applied.

www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/896/02-2008

The Dilemma of State Church Structures in Europe by Knud Jørgensen, director of the Aeropagos Foundation in Norway/Denmark. European levels of church attendance are deteriorating. The Evangelical Church in Germany, for example, which includes most Protestants, has lost over half its membership in the past fifty years. A primary reason for this great decline in European church attendance, according to Jørgensen, is the Constantinian structures of churches in Europe, or the formal state churches. The alternative for many in Europe is a *missional Church*, which expresses the fact that the Church is not primarily an institution with services, activities and a mission in the periphery. Instead, Christians are challenged to be people of flesh and blood carrying the reality of the gospel within themselves, communicating it through missional being and action. This focus on *church as mission* also means that our ability to be magnets attracting people to Christ becomes important, Jørgensen believes.

www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/889/02-2008

Fresh Expressions of Church in England by Steven Croft, team leader of Fresh Expressions. To reach the non-churchgoing population in the United Kingdom, the Church of England is on its way to becoming what the Archbishop of Canterbury has called a mixed economy church: traditional parishes alongside fresh expressions of church. A “fresh expression” is a form of church established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church. The key elements to these “fresh expressions” include: (1) mission as the main motivational (2) incarnational mission in terms of the way things are established; and (3) a sense of journey, growth and development.

www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/897/02-2008

Global Christianity, Contextual Religious Identity and Local Theologies: *Īsā Imandars* and *Khrist Bhaktas* in South Asia by Jonas Adelin Jørgensen, a Danish systematic theologian. How does Christianity interact with other major religious traditions and how does this interaction affect Christian identity? Jørgensen presents two case studies of theology and religious identities among believers in Christ from Muslim and Hindu backgrounds: one on *Īsā Imandars* in Dhaka, Bangladesh, the other on *Khrist Bhaktas* in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.

www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/895/02-2008

PERSPECTIVES

Churches in Homes: New Efforts in Reaching Today’s Globalizing/Diversifying World by David G. Wyman, editor and publisher of *Home Church Online*. Those who boldly proclaim that one church model or another serves as the footprint for Christ’s Church in the twenty-first century miss the point of the examples that God left across his word for those who live today, Wyman says. In fact, God seems to be preparing the world for a vast new wave of churches that will be simple in organization, effective in teaching and evangelism and flexible enough to meet the needs of millions of people for whom other church models are not practical or possible. This new wave is defined by house churches. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles.php/891/02-2008

URBAN COMMUNITIES

Transforming Lives in Cairo’s Garbage Villages by Glenn Smith, Lausanne senior associate for urban mission. Every ten months, Egypt’s population grows by one million; every day, Cairo sees an influx of one thousand new residents. Fifteen percent of the city’s population does not have access to portable water, 4.2 million residents live without access to a sewage system and Cairo boasts to having one of the highest air pollution levels in the world. In this milieu are Ramez and Rebecca Atallah. Ramez heads up the Bible Society of Egypt. Rebecca is a key worker at the St. Simon Coptic Orthodox Church in the Mokattam garbage village. Over the last twenty-five years Rebecca has helped with church planting and providing Christian education among Egypt’s untouchables. In this article, Smith gives an overview of what Rebecca and other servants of Christ are doing in the garbage villages of Cairo.

www.lausanneworldpulse.com/urban.php/903/02-2008

Loving the Urban Poor in Cairo by *Rebecca Atallah, a worker in the garbage villages of Cairo.* For more than twenty-five years, Atallah has worked in the Mokattam garbage village in Cairo. She offers readers a glimpse into the lives of several residents of the village and reflects on lessons learned in ministering to those in poverty and in need. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/urban.php/904/02-2008

RESEARCH

House Churches in the United Kingdom by *Peter Brierley, Lausanne senior associate for church research.* The New Church (or House Church) movement accounts for six percent of total UK church attendance. Brierley takes the reader through the beginnings of the movement in the 1970s through the present day. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/research.php/887/02-2008

LAUSANNE REPORTS

Lausanne South Pacific Region by *Daniel Willis, CEO of Bible Society NSW.* The South Pacific region, like many of the Lausanne regions, is diverse. There are highly developed and economically rich economies, and there are remote, rural and subsistence communities. Overall, Christianity is on the decline while other major religions, such as Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism, have continued to increase, partly through immigration. However, according to Willis, an increasing number of churches are becoming “missional” and not just “attractional.” They are reaching out by serving communities in their neighborhoods and cities. One example of this is the prime time media campaign, *Jesus. All about Life* (JAAL). www.lausanneworldpulse.com/lausannereports/898/02-2008

Chinese Missions in Africa: Consultation and Action 2008. For more than three decades, through conferences and publications, the Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism (CCCOWE) has been a catalyst in mobilizing worldwide Chinese churches for world mission. In the past decade, the development of Chinese gospel work in Africa has been going through many changes. In order to address the needs in the new missional realities of Africa, CCCOWE will convene the second mission conference in Nairobi, Kenya, 3-8 April 2008. www.lausanneworldpulse.com/perspectives.php/885/02-2008

March 2008 Theme: Addressing the Westernization of the Gospel

Questions or comments about Lausanne World Pulse may be sent to: editor@lausanneworldpulse.com.