

PREACHING GOOD NEWS



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Under God's gracious hand, Langham Preaching is nurturing biblical preaching movements in the countries of the majority world.

Excitement Builds in Indonesia

THEY CAME FROM across the churches, the small Pentecostal ones as well as the regional synods with one million members. They came from across this vast country, with Nias in the west, Aceh in the north and Timor in the east all represented. And they came with varied experience in preaching, from the relative novice to those teaching homiletics in seminary.

On the sloping hills south of Jakarta, 84 people gathered in June for the Level One training. With four decades of service in Indonesia, John watched with delight as "a sense of unity, purpose and excitement built up through the week." Miraculously, all three national church bodies – Ecumenical, Evangelical, and Pentecostal – endorsed the Langham Preaching initiative.

The Indonesian church faces many challenges. The liberal and the nominal weigh down the church in the urban areas. The syncretistic and the animist burden the church in rural areas. Preachers in both

contexts lack conviction. Sermons tend to be anecdotal and powerless, satisfied with merely amusing congregations. Then there is that ever-present reality that this is the largest M-majority country in the world.

And yet the testimonies of transformation have been flowing ever since...

Working with Methodist women in Sumatra, Ruttina writes, "I feel refreshed by this training because the source of preaching is the Bible itself." Yusuf, a student worker in Java, reflects his surprise "with the simplicity of the training. In the seminary we were taught that the first step is collecting commentaries, but now I see that it is about going back to the Bible." With his work with Scripture Union in West Kalimantan in mind, Peter notes how the training "boosts me up to infect the others in my province with the same method and spirit."

PRAY for the spiritual battle for the supremacy of God's Word in the churches throughout this land. ■



Level One participants in Indonesia in June

STOP PRESS: The Level Two training has been completed. Facilitator Chris Wright notes how "the programme is almost flying before they started walking" such is the energy being generated. One facilitator reckons that in the first five months there are now about 100 participants, working through the 16 preaching clubs, are spreading the training onto about 1000 people.

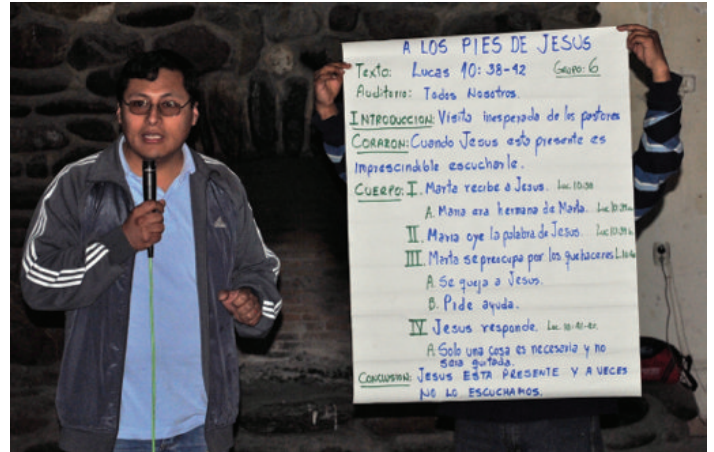
Improving on the Improvisation

ACCORDING TO IGOR Améstegui (LP Latin America Coordinator) one of the persistent challenges across the continent is the “improvising” style of preachers. A spontaneous and unscripted approach to preaching is valued. While this can have its advantages, it is usually linked to the absence of the study required to discern what the text means and preaching it. The text becomes whatever the preacher wants it to become.

This was on Igor’s mind when 48 people gathered in Los Yungas in Bolivia to learn how to preach from the Gospels. It was not an easy setting. Of the six congregations represented, three came from educated and urban La Paz while the other three came from the far less educated rural Los Yungas region. He writes, “Before the seminar I was concerned about these differences ... but praise the Lord that all of them understood and applied the principles they learned. I saw how studying the Word revives people and gives them more enthusiasm to keep going in their ministry.”

“I saw how studying the Word revives people and gives them more enthusiasm to keep going in their ministry”

Igor Amestegui LP Coordinator (Latin America).



Marcel sharing his outline on Luke 10

The Christian Congregation in the heart of La Paz, pastored by Mario, has been committed to expository preaching for two years and is beginning to see significant progress as they preach through the Bible. Marcel has been a Christian for two years and attended the training with his wife, Jackie, and their baby. He works for a TV channel in La Paz and is seen in the photo sharing his sermon from Luke 10 with the wider group. John, a missionary working in the villages of Los Yungas for 26 years, commented how “I wish I had done this training thirty years ago before entering mission work.” ■

Engaging the Difficulties

BURUNDI IS A landlocked country a little larger in area than Wales, with a capital city (Bujumbura) a little more populous than Cardiff - but with a total population three times that of Wales. While 27% of the population claims to be Christian, Burundi shares with its northern neighbour (Rwanda) a history of conflict and it remains one of the world’s poorest nations.

In recent months the Country Coordinator, Emmanuel Bagumaku, has been travelling tirelessly and systematically through the country supporting the preaching clubs spreading through every region, except in the east.

He travelled to Gitega and Karusi in the central region. The difficulty here is

that pastors are not able to be full-time. The financial resource is not there to do so. This creates stress for those preachers who want to prepare well. And yet Emmanuel discovered 15 people who are not just meeting together regularly, they are active in transferring the training onto other pastors in these two cities.

He visited Ngozi in the north. The difficulty here is the distance people have to travel with limited means of transportation. And yet they make the most of the three meetings each year which they do manage to organise, practising what they have learned and critiquing each other’s sermons.

Over in the west is the capital, Bujumbura, where Emmanuel found many

people who had progressed through the Langham training. The difficulty here is that peoples’ lives in the big city are too busy. There is just one active club. And yet they are finding ways to use the internet to provoke discussion and share sermon plans.

In the south there are the provinces of Bururi and Makamba. The difficulty here, as elsewhere in the country, is the lack of more formal training options. And yet there is a one-year pastoral course associated with the Anglicans, and plans are underway to incorporate the Langham training into the curriculum. ■

Sometimes It is Tough

IT IS HARD TO imagine. A country so prominent in the New Testament story and writings, with a population today similar to the United Kingdom, might only be able to muster 3000 believers. In the last hundred years the percentage of believers has dropped from 25% to .1%. It is a struggle to name more than three churches in the entire country with full-time pastors. In that eastern city made famous by Acts 13 by having the first church to send people, a little church of 20 people gathers with windows shut so that no one can hear them.

On his sixth and most recent visit to Turkey, the LP Europe Coordinator did not work with dozens of people over a full week as is the case in so many countries. Four people came one evening. Five people came on the second evening. Most leaders and preachers are bi-vocational, or tentmakers, and do not have the time to give to training. It is difficult to build the momentum and commitment required to establish a preaching movement – but another effort is to be made in 2012, in partnership with other agencies. ■



Study Without a Siesta

AN INTEGRAL PART of the rhythm of the day in Latin America is the afternoon siesta. But this was not the case in August in Jujuy in Argentina. Twenty three people met to wrestle with preaching from the Old Testament. Among them were young professionals working with students and the preaching team of 'Jesus Christ Today', a new Methodist church.

The pastor of the church, Luis Quero, himself both a doctor and a university lecturer, reflected on how "we return home more confident in our ability to preach a series of sermons from the Old Testament". This is no small achievement, given that most preaching in Argentina is topical and, if it takes the Bible seriously, it will be a New Testament passage that is the focus. If ever the Old Testament is mentioned, it will be 'manipulated' to fit in with what else is being said.

The group worked with narrative and law and prophecy and returned home to their small groups determined to tackle poetry and wisdom over the coming months. "I take away the conviction that studying the Word requires a commitment and discipline which will benefit my personal life, my family and my church", writes Salomé, a member of Pastor Luis' preaching team. Another member of the team, Liliana, reflects on how she "discovered a new curiosity and passion for analysing the Old Testament and an amazement at the clear and surprising connections between Old and New Testaments."

But it came at a cost. With 'no place to lay the head', they studied together right through each day. ■



Pastor Luis, the bearded man in the middle of the back row, and the group at Jujuy

Spiritual Feeding Frenzy in Limpopo

Limpopo is the most northern province in South Africa – and the least evangelised. It struggles with high rates of unemployment, HIV, and poverty. In its midst is the Anglican Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist which is only 25 years old. As Bishop Martin Breytenbach expresses it, "this is a diocese in mission with predominantly rural congregations and a strong commitment to make disciples, grow leaders and plant churches."

Bishop Martin has embraced a 'Growing the Word' strategy and invited Langham Preaching to work with the diocese to see a preaching movement established. Facilitators have come from around the world to assist with the training. In 2010 it was a Colombian (Jorge Atienza) and a Kenyan (Sam Njenga). Earlier in 2011 it was a Nigerian (Emmanuel Oladipo, LP Anglophone Africa Coordinator) and a Northern Irishman (Chris Wright, Langham's International Director) who came to help.

Along with the 70 people from Limpopo, participants travelled from Lesotho and Swaziland in the hope that they might be the spark for a movement developing one day in their homeland. As one person noted, "it was like a retreat and a spiritual feeding frenzy rolled up in one, together with great food, fellowship and fun together." ■

Travelling Mercy

“WE ARE ABOUT sharing lives, not just sermon outlines”, writes Mercy Ireri (LP Kenya Coordinator). This is the attitude which shapes the Refresher programmes which Mercy runs twice a year with her team of local facilitators. Each person will have the opportunity to preach a sermon and be critiqued, to bring updates on both their preaching clubs and their family life, and then to prepare together for upcoming training events in which they will be involved.

They come from all around the country. From the Eastern region there is Ignatius of Kitengela, Elisha and Josephine of Embu, and Luke and Tabitha of Machakos. From the Central region comes James of Kianyaga and Joseph of Keroguya. From the West comes Wesley of Kakamega and Mary of Mumias. And then there is Patrick of Nairobi.

The Kenya Preaching Network is developing around these local leaders. Life has its challenges, with issues related to employment and health often surfacing – as well as fears of further ethnic conflict as another national election approaches.

The preaching clubs can stutter and falter. But by mixing a pastoral heart with administrative skill, Mercy maintains contact with each one of them – both by mobile phone and with personal visits to them and their clubs. ■



“We are about sharing lives, not just sermon outlines.”

Mercy Ireri LP Country Coordinator
(Kenya)

Scenes from daily life in Kenya

Balkans and beyond



Coordinators of Langham Preaching's work in Europe gather in Budapest

WHILE EUROPE IS not included in the majority world, it is a region where biblical preaching has been in recession for many years. However, the opportunities for Langham Preaching to be involved continue to increase. Work is currently either commencing, consolidating, or re-launching in Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia, Romania and Serbia, and also in Austria, Spain and Sweden.

From his base on the staff of All Souls Church (London), Mark Meynell gives a few weeks each year to coordinating the work in Europe. There is considerable growth in several country programmes, including a wide denominational mix of pastors and preachers involved in LP Romania, and strong local ownership and sustained activity in LP Albania. But in countries where the evangelical church is very small there is also a need to build and broaden the teams, and to consider alternative strategies to the week-long training events (Level One to Three) used elsewhere around the world. ■

On Tables and Platforms

THE HEART OF the Hindi-speaking world lies in the state of Uttar Pradesh (UP). If it was a country, UP would be the fifth most populous nation in the world (between Indonesia and Brazil). With many training ministries already effectively at work, Langham Preaching was urged *not* to be another one, but to 'convene a table' around which all the other ones could gather. This takes place through a series of Consultations in New Delhi at which resources are shared, networks are built, gaps and overlaps are identified, issues are engaged, and prayers are offered.

With each successive Consultation the table becomes bigger. Sixteen organisations attended the third Consultation in September. For example, the School of Biblical Teaching (SBT) ripples out from a local church to six states (and Nepal) and has progressed 400 people through to becoming trainers of others. Kachhwa Transformational Ministries (KTM) ripples out from a hospital to a single area of UP with various holistic ministries, including the development of village-based Bible teachers. The UP Mission partners with the Doon Bible College to offer basic training to hundreds of workers among rural and semi-literate people who have seen 8500 churches planted in 30,000 villages.

Formal approaches to training cannot keep up with the pace of church growth in North India. And so one of those seated at

the 'table' is Akash Choudhary, the new Director of the Ministry Training Network (MTN). MTN works with many of those at the Consultation to ensure the integrity and momentum of the current church planting movements in North India, by enhancing the quality of non-formal training for church planters and leaders.

Devender Verma, Coordinator of SBT and the facilitator of the Consultation, was pleased with the progress: "Being with like-minded people at work in other parts of India is so encouraging. We are creating a platform by working together like this." ■



Devender, Raju, Robin and Paul in New Delhi

More Than Training

LANGHAM PREACHING TRAINS pastors not only to study and to preach from the Bible but also to encourage their congregations to read the Bible for themselves. However, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the question is often asked, "What's the point of training us, if those pastors we go on to train don't have access to the Scriptures?"

An effort is being made in DRC to distribute Bibles alongside the training.

In Butembo 33 Bibles were distributed to three preaching clubs who are meeting weekly to study and to prepare sermons together. In Bunia it was 36 Bibles going to those being trained from Baptist and Anglican churches, many of whom are graduates of the local Anglican Theological Institute. In Aru it was possible to distribute 30 Bibles in Swahili and Bangala to participants in the Langham training.

However it is estimated that there are over 40 preachers clubs in DRC, and so the need for Bibles in a range of local languages remains - especially in the eastern provinces. ■



Scriptures distributed in Butembo, Bunia, and Aru

POSTSCRIPT: Rev Stéphane Makata attended a Level One seminar in Kinshasa in 2009 before returning home to Lubumbashi far away in the south-east. He started immediately to teach Level One seminars in his diocese. Now he travels throughout the southern province of Katanga, an area significantly larger than California and with a population of nine million, taking training events. He is just one of many leaders desperate to find Bibles for churches in all parts of the province, in Swahili, Kituba and French. ■

"What's the point of training us, if those pastors we go on to train don't have access to the Scriptures?"



Bikes & Bibles

We are launching a small project to help pastors in the preachers clubs to 'reach and teach' by providing some bikes and as many Bibles as we can manage. If you would like to contribute, please contact Jonathan Lamb for information (jonathan.lamb@langhampartnership.org). Thank you! ■

Combating Prosperity and Voodoo

WHEN ASKED ABOUT whether prosperity teaching is present in the churches of Benin, a senior leader responded, “Nothing else is heard from the pulpits.” Furthermore, in a country which is 40% Christian, there are more members of ‘Celestial Christianity’, a syncretistic cult-like group which acknowledges Benin as the birthplace of voodoo, than there are Protestants. The need is there – but so also is the opportunity. While still poor, the country is politically stable and it is slowly progressing up the Development Index ladder, with a freedom to share the gospel.

Country Coordinator Emile Houedanou, together with the organising committee, is taking initiatives and setting strategies to advance the cause of faithful, clear and relevant biblical preaching in their country.

In September, 24 people completed the Level Two training (including five from neighbouring Togo) and another 45 finished Level Three. They came mainly from southern Benin, where there are multiple preaching clubs in the cities of Cotonou and Port-Novo. Clubs have also formed in Parakou in the north and in Lomé in Togo.

At a time when trained workers are so few, an investment in clubs and regional training becomes essential. The committee has identified 15 participants to lead the clubs and then attend the Training of Local Facilitators (TLF) in 2012. The plan is that they will then offer Level One training in their regions in the following year.

“c’est une methodé scientifique qui retient au coeur l’Esprit”



Emile is assisted by Mme Honorine Tossa in distributing books

There is evidence of increasing numbers of pastors giving themselves to sequential exposition. People are seeing the benefits for preacher and congregation alike. Commenting on the training given on ‘moving from text to sermon’, which is at the heart of the Langham approach, one participant explained, “c’est une methodé scientifique qui retient au coeur l’Esprit” (“this is a logical method which keeps the Spirit at its heart.”). ■

A Re-boot Near the Equator

A FRESH APPROACH with Ecuador is needed. While the full three year cycle of the training (Level One - Three) has happened, there is little evidence of any developing preaching movement. And so Igor Améstegui (LP Latin America Co-ordinator) travelled with his colleague, Jorge Atencia, to Quito and Guayaquil in order to explore the possibilities of a ‘re-boot’ for the work.

They retained the same focus in each city. Igor facilitated a session on ‘praying the Word’. Jorge drew on the parable of the Good Samaritan to teach principles of exegesis as well as offering training on working in small groups. Together they

explored the state of preaching in each city before introducing the ethos and strategies of Langham Preaching.

Such was the high level of enthusiasm and motivation in peoples’ response that a re-boot is expected to happen. A larger and stronger organising committee was formed and people set aside (9 in Quito; 16 in Guayaquil) to be trained as leaders of smaller groups. A fresh start with Level One training is now timed for November 2011 in Quito and February 2012 in Guayaquil. Igor expressed his hopes that “this stronger emphasis on training group leaders in advance will bear fruit in the coming years.” ■

ps...

A Preaching Good News (PGN) newsletter played a useful role in malaria prevention for facilitator Ed Moll (England) while in Benin. It is a high-risk area. Nets and screens are used to keep mosquitoes out – but on this occasion there were none. And some glass was missing in one window. Normal A4 paper was just not large enough but the unfolded three page PGN newsletter filled the gap perfectly!