

Langham Foundation news

Live

like Jesus (part 2)



This interview with Langham Partnership's Dr Chris Wright by *Christian Today* is posted at its web site on March 26, 2008. The first part of it is printed on the last issue. (For the following, CT and CW stand for *Christian Today* and Chris Wright respectively.)

CT: John Stott spoke in his final address at Keswick of incarnational evangelism. What does that mean in practical terms for the work that Langham is doing?

CW: John Stott's basic point was that the word became flesh. It didn't just come as a message from heaven, it became flesh and lived among us, so the church likewise has to incarnate the message it preaches by living among people, by witnessing, by serving them.

In the long-term it has to be a patient, relational kind of work. Langham Partnership isn't directly involved in evangelism but the work we do in preaching seminars is incarnational in the sense that we don't see our role as only going into countries and running seminars. Anyone can do that and come back out again.

What we see as our purpose is to try to root indigenous movements in biblical preaching which is locally owned and led and, we hope, eventually locally financed, in which people are almost generating their own self-help movement of preachers clubs and day conferences, helping one another in the whole task of biblical preaching. That will continue long after we have come away again. So we always work with a national organisation, whether it is a church or denomination. Langham Preaching will always be in partnership with an

indigenous Christian group and we will as soon as we can have the whole thing run and led by indigenous leaders. And I think by God's grace we have seen the fruit of that.

The other side of the incarnational dimension of Langham's work is in our literature programmes. Originally John Stott founded the Evangelical Literary Trust as a way of getting books into the hands of pastors and using his own royalties. For a long time, that basically meant sending western books to other countries – evangelical books by evangelical authors in Britain and America. And they still do that because these are still valuable books.

But the other half of Langham Literature is Langham Literature Creative and it's growing very rapidly. Its purpose is to stimulate indigenous evangelical authors, writers, editors and publishers in their own languages so that people are getting quality evangelical writing which is much more incarnate, much closer to their own culture, their own language, and written in their own context, addressing the issues that they are facing.

CT: Christian communities are growing despite many difficulties. And in some countries they are perceived as helping Western powers.

CW: Yes, it is the case that Christianity is regarded as a foreign religion in many countries around the world, whether rightly or wrongly. It is a perception that is very convenient for the political leaders in countries that want to be hostile to Christianity, to persist in the myth that all Christians in our country, in India or some parts of the Middle East or Asia, for example, are only Christians because they are

converts by westerners with western money, backed by foreign powers, and it is a very convenient myth to push out, but it is actually very far from the truth.

There have been Christians in India longer than there have been Christians in Britain, right back to the first century. There have been believers in the Middle East since the day of Pentecost. And after all, they were first called Christians in Syria. So there is an authentic voice of indigenous Christianity in these countries which needs to be heard as that – as the voice of indigenous Christianity even though they often do get portrayed as foreign religions.

CT: Langham Partnership raises local Christians to be teachers of the Gospel. Where do you see the greatest need in the worldwide church today?

CW: I think the greatest need is for the church to be what the church is supposed to be, which is to be a community of disciples who actually live like Jesus and follow what he taught and take seriously what he said. When the church lives like that it has a kind of attractiveness that people come to anyway. The message has to be communicated of course but the church has to live the Gospel as well as teach the Gospel.

The church in so many places isn't doing that, especially in those parts of the church that call themselves evangelical. They are often in great need of radical reformation over abuses and unchristlike behaviour and corruption, which is such a bad witness.

I think the parable of the sower is for our times in the sense that we know that there is a great deal of growth around the world. But as Jesus said, seed will grow very fast in shallow soil. The problem is that it doesn't bear any fruit and it just withers away. I think we are seeing great growth of Christianity in many parts of Africa and Latin America for which we can be very thankful to God, but if it is only growth in shallow soil without any real depth then in the long run it doesn't bear fruit and doesn't actually last. It just withers away as fast as it grows. And so you get this phenomenon of churches being planted and dying away, of people being swept into a kind of experience of

Christianity and then abandoning it before very long.

Therefore we at Langham certainly see the greatest need to help the church to grow in depth as well as in numbers, to grow in maturity and discipleship. That's not something of course that you can manufacture. It's a long-term thing. But it is something you can help with resources. That is why we provide resources for better biblical preaching and better training of pastors, better resources of indigenous evangelical literature written by people who know their own culture. These are only small things but they are things we think will help the church to grow in maturity as well as numbers.

CT: So it's about quality not quantity?

CW: Yes, that's right.

CT: You are involved in the preparation work for Lausanne 2010.

CW: Yes, I'm the chairman of the Lausanne Theology working group which is one of about six working groups in the Lausanne movement. There are plans for another Lausanne Congress in Cape Town in October 2010. The intention is to think again about what is meant by the Lausanne slogan which comes from the Lausanne Covenant of 1974 – the whole church taking the whole Gospel to the whole world.

The Lausanne movement will be quite important strategically. Many of us in the leadership of Lausanne feel it is an opportunity, particularly in the worldwide evangelical movement, for us to engage in some self-critical reflection and repentance and to say, well worldwide evangelicals are growing very fast but what kind of people are we and how did it come to be that the word evangelical is held in such contempt in many parts of the world because of the way in which evangelicals behave and the attitudes they display, their connections in some parts of the world with prosperity gospel and in other parts of the world with very wealthy, powerful leaders, and in North America connections with a particular form of political power.

Chris Wright will be visiting Hong Kong.....

In mid-June this year, Dr Chris Wright, the International Director of Langham Partnership International will be passing through Hong Kong after attending the Lausanne biennial leaders meeting in Seoul. He has agreed to be the key-note speaker at a symposium on the Mission of God. If you are interested to attend, please send us an email to langham@hellovoice.com. We will let you have more details about this event in due course.

Chris Wright's video on YouTube

Zondervan is starting a new blog series including video based on Dr Chris Wright's new book "The God I Don't Understand" starting February 4. The book is about suffering and why God permits it. If you want to hear him, please click on <http://zondervan.typepad.com/koinonia/2009/01/gidu-intro.html>.

A Lifeline for China

by Helen Goody

Communications Manager, John Stott Ministries



About 1.4 million people make up the contingent of the Chinese Filipinos in the Philippines, a group that is primarily strong in its Christian faith. Interestingly enough, many of the churches in that community are self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating, getting little help from foreign missions. It is this indigenous strength that's key for the growth of the church in China itself. And it is why building a biblically sound study program for local pastors is a crucial strategy for the Biblical Seminary of the Philippines (BSOP), led by Seminary President Joseph Shao. BSOP's commitment to deeply rooted biblical training has helped grow congregations from hundreds to thousands.

Established in 1967, BSOP has always strived for holistic Christian training to develop students in spiritual growth, biblical knowledge, and ministerial skill. BSOP serves primarily Chinese-Filipino students and is an anchor for training leaders in the church. And with recent growth of Christians in the Chinese-Filipino community, BSOP feels the need more than ever to strengthen the indigenous leaders.

Most important is the outreach that serving those communities has had created for the church in China. BSOP (200) has many Chinese students who return to establish the church in their regions. Acting as a lifeline for the church in mainland China is crucial to the seminary's role in God's kingdom.

"It is only by God's grace that we are able to draw a strong contingent," says Joseph. "We have partners who introduce key students to us. We have some key pastors who endorse our ministry and send important leaders to us. Our alumni are endorsing students. We have focused on the basics in our training ministry, in the proper interpretation of the Word, correct doctrines, Christian education, and caring counseling methods."

"We have learned that churches are growing, due to the faithful teaching of the Word of God. One church grew from 300 members to 1,000 attendees, while another grew from 400 to 1,000 attendees," says Joseph. "One particular alumnus was asked to lead a revival meeting upon his return to his hometown, and 2,000 believers gather to hear him. One couple in the northeast region is in charge of 500 cell groups. Outreach ministries flourish due to the involvement of some of our alumni."



BSOP students on a mission trip in the Philippines



The high standard of biblical education and focus on indigenous church leaders is why up-and-coming professors such as Langham Scholar Samson Uytanlet are key to the future of the impact BSOP has on the Chinese-Filipino church.

"Even in the past, the Chinese Christian community had this desire to reach our kinsmen who live in the mainland. What happened several years ago, with the opening of Chinese department in BSOP, was really a breakthrough," Samson says. "[Now], locals can remain in the Philippines to serve in the Chinese churches there, yet at the same time we are not neglecting mission work to China because the Chinese from the mainland are going to BSOP to be trained so that they can serve there."

Samson is currently completing his doctorate at Asbury Theological Seminary in Orlando, Fla., and will return to teach at BSOP in a few years. He represents the hope that the ministry of BSOP will continue as it strengthens the Chinese and Filipino Christian communities to grow in numbers.

Christianity is growing rapidly in China. Figures are hard to come by but both *Christianity Today* (May 2008) and *the Economist* (4th October 2008) reported that there may now be as many as 130 million Christians living in that country. Inevitably with new congregations springing up everywhere, there is a need to ensure that young believers are fed on the Word of God through faithful biblical preaching. This is easier said than done as very few pastors have received seminary training.

Since Langham Foundation was set up 5 years ago, we have been trying to identify a suitable venue to kick-start the preaching movement. In the end, we are grateful that God has led us to narrow our search to the seminaries in Hong Kong which offer degree courses for Putonghua (ie. Mandarin) speakers.

On 29th September 2008, Langham Foundation has launched the first preaching event at Level One for 27 participants in partnership with a seminary which is offering a three-year Master of Ministry degree. One of the required courses is expositional preaching. Dr Rennie Tsang (a professor in the seminary) together with Dr David Cheung (President of the Asian Theological Seminary of the Philippines) were facilitators for the week-long event and they were assisted by three workshop leaders including two Langham scholars, Drs Herrick Liu and Andrew Kwok. The participants of 20 men and 7 women, between 26 and 58 years old, came from all over greater China.

The programme started with the basics of Biblical Preaching, its aim and method. The texts used for group study were taken from Nehemiah 8 and 2 Timothy. Besides the thick course manual, each participant was given three books as basic study material, including John Stott's commentary on 2 Timothy, Alex Luc's book on Hermeneutics and Haddon Robinson's Biblical Preaching. Most pastors from China

New Project Launched for Putonghua Speakers Seminar for Biblical Preaching



have a vague idea of expositional preaching but often do not know how to apply it in their regular preaching. Our first seminar was therefore designed to give participants plenty of practice in the preparation of sermon outlines and how to relate their talks to the historical, cultural and literary contexts. Rennie Tsang also emphasized the importance of educating the congregation over the years by systematically planning the preaching programme to cover the whole Bible. As an illustration, he gave

the participants the record of the sermons preached in his church from 2000 to 2008.

Victor Sun, Langham Foundation's general secretary, joined the seminar from the fourth day and was immediately struck by the zeal and strong motivation among these brothers and sisters. They were eager to learn and asked many questions after each session. On the last day the participants aligned themselves geographically to discuss how they would be able to support and help each other in fostering a preaching movement locally. Rather than calling themselves preachers' clubs, they preferred the term fellowship. Coordinators for each fellowship have indicated that they will be sending regular reports to Langham Foundation so that we can monitor progress made over time.

The week has certainly been a memorable experience for most of the attendees. One of them commented that he was more convinced than ever about the importance of the preaching from the Bible and will study diligently from now on while making expositional preaching his goal. Another said how he had enjoyed the workshops although there was not enough time to practice what he has learned.

This is a small beginning and we would need to pray that God will use it for igniting the love of expositional preaching at the grass-roots level in China.

Welcome

New Langham Scholars

Rebecca Ye

**Ph D candidate New Testament
Divinity School, University of Edinburgh**

Rebecca grew up in a family with committed members of the Communist Party and had accepted Marxism-Maoism as true and authoritative for her life. She earned an undergraduate degree in law and had worked in the district court as an attorney. It was in 1998 that she found the inevitable clash began between the ideals of her Marxist faith and realities of the fallen world. Her research brought her into contact with the Bible and the astounding claims of Christ. Besides reading God's Word, constant prayer and fellowship with mature Christians in the local church, Rebecca finally surrendered her life to Christ.

Rebecca accepted God's call to full-time Christian ministry whilst mid-way through her doctoral studies in Political Science. Relinquishing her full scholarship and Ph D studies, Rebecca set about obtaining a Master in Divinity from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School while also returning regularly to China to teach and preach in local churches. Recently, she and her husband have started a translation ministry on a number of theological books including a new edition of the Living Bible.

Rebecca has been accepted as a Ph D candidate in New Testament studies at the Divinity School of the University of Edinburgh since September 2008. She and her husband intend to return to China and teach theological students as well as continue to do translation work. Her prayer requests are as follows

- Continued work of our translation team.
- Progress in our PhD studies and insight into God's Word
- Provision of our 2009 Tuition.
- Continued good health and spiritual growth.
- Wisdom in teaching and leading Bible Studies.
- That our family may know the Love of Christ.
- Revival of the Churches here in Scotland.



Cheung Man Chung

**Ph D candidate, Systematic Theology
Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology**

Man Chung became a Christian through the influence of his student friends and was actively involved in student fellowship while attending university. He then joined the staff of the Fellowship of Evangelical Students in Hong Kong to minister to the growing young people, leading Bible study groups while pursuing a teaching qualification.

After obtaining his Master of Divinity from the China Graduate School of Theology in 2003, Man Chung served as a minister in the Fairview Park Alliance Church. Since January 2008, he has enrolled in the doctorate programme of Wycliffe College to study Theology from doctrinal and practical angle, unifying different theological traditions and disciplines such as ecclesiology and anthropology, specifically Karl Barth's theology of faith community and eschatology.

Upon return, Man Chung would like to teach in a seminary or university either in Hong Kong or China. He wishes to make a strong impact on the younger generation of Christians growing up in the consumer culture.

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED INCLUDING LANGHAM PARTNERSHIP IN YOUR WILL?

Like many mission organizations, we can benefit greatly when friends make a final gift that continues to bless the ministries they have generously supported in life. Once you have made proper and primary provision for family and friends, this can be a very effective way to go on making a difference to the church on earth when you have joined the church in glory! If you would like to consider this option in your will please let us know and we will send you a helpful legacy leaflet. Contact Victor Sun, General Secretary of Langham Foundation at email: LF@langhampartnership.org or leave a message at the voicemail /fax no. (852) 3005 4498.

Steve Hardy appointed International Director of Langham Scholars for LPI



Langham Partnership International (LPI) announces that Steve Hardy has been appointed to International Director of Langham Scholars in May 19, 2008

Steve is from the United States, but he has lived many, many years in the Majority World, almost entirely involved in theological education at all kinds of levels.

Steve received his masters of divinity from Bethel Theological Seminary (St. Paul, Minn.) and his doctorate in missiology from Trinity International University (Deerfield, Illinois.). He is ordained and licensed for Christian ministry by the Baptist General Conference, with current membership in the Evangelical Free Church.

After some years with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) ministry in the 1970s, Steve worked in Brazil, teaching, church-planting and developing curricula for church-based theological training. Then he moved to Africa, and lived variously in Mozambique and South Africa, involved in leadership training programs, theological evangelical education, and consultancy for theological education developments around the whole region.

Later, Steve worked for Overseas Council International (OCI), and his field of interest widened to include many partner seminaries around the world. He was involved in strategic planning, troubleshooting, project development and project monitoring at key leadership training institutions, primarily in Africa, but also in Latin America and Eastern Europe.

Steve is now a mission partner with Serving in Mission (SIM), as the advocate for theological education – serving other SIM personnel involved in that field around the world. He has worked with SIM since 1985 as theological education advisor, missionary, and leadership training facilitator.

Steve lives at present in Johannesburg, South Africa with his wife Leanne. He has two married children living in the U.S., and a home in Wisconsin. He is the author of *Excellence in Theological Education: Effective Training for Church Leaders*, and he joins LPI with a wealth of experience and wisdom to bring to the LPI Scholar program.

Who can apply for a Langham Scholarship?

The Langham Scholars programme provides financial support to evangelical doctoral students from the Majority World*. We welcome your recommendations to identify church or seminary leaders who are potential Langham scholars. Scholarship applicants should meet the following criteria:

1. By applying to a Ph.D in one of the following subjects: Old Testament, New Testament, theology (historical or systematic), ethics, church history, or inter-cultural studies based on a biblical text.
2. Have obtained a master's degree and are younger than forty years of age when beginning Ph.D studies.
3. A Majority World* national serving in a Majority World* country and receiving a strong nomination from a Majority World* seminary or leadership training institution, testifying to his / her evangelical convictions and the leadership contribution he /she could make as a result of advanced studies.
4. Committed to return to his / her home country immediately after completing the Ph.D to teach in a seminary or provide theological leadership and training.
5. Raise a portion of their support from other sources (family, church, friends, and other groups).

For additional information, please contact Victor Sun, the General Secretary of Langham Foundation in Hong Kong at v.sun@langhampartnership.org. We encourage scholars to pursue their doctorate in a Majority World institution if viable.

* Majority World countries in the context of East Asia would include mainland China (excluding Hong Kong and Taiwan), Philippines, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, Mongolia and Cambodia.

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 langham foundation
GROWING A NEW GENERATION OF PREACHERS AND TEACHERS

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