



WINDOW



ON THE WORLD

SUMMER 2008

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EMPOWERING NATIONAL CHURCHES

FACILITATING MISSION WORKERS

MINISTERING TO THE MARGINALIZED

Missional People. Missional Purpose.

YOU WON'T FIND it in the dictionary but *missional* is the new buzz word around the Evangelical Congregational Church. Bishop Kevin

Leibensperger challenged us at the 2008 National Conference to be *missional people with missional purpose*. What does that actually look like? He explained that missional people are: **Intentional**, actively pursuing their co-mission with God to disciple the lost to faith and the saved to spiritual maturity; **Incarnational**, never forgetting they are sent into the world to interact and influence others for Christ in the daily context of living; **Transformational**, determined to change lives by being deployed in ministry and exercising their spiritual gifts to reproduce disciples of Jesus Christ.

While these characteristics are to permeate the very fiber and fabric of the individual Christian's life, hence the term "*missional people*", they also must become the standard operating procedure for any ministry

group, fellowship or commission in the local congregation and the denomination as a whole, (**missional purpose**). The Global Ministries Commission has intentionally chosen to adopt this *missional people-missional purpose* theme for the 2008

Worldfest Celebrations scheduled

for September and October of this year and I am convinced that as you read this issue of WINDOW ON THE WORLD, you will see that the International EC Church around the globe is committed to intentionally discipling the lost to faith and the saved to spiritual maturity while incarnationally representing Christ in a myriad of daily living contexts using their individual and corporate gifts to transform lives and produce disciples of Jesus Christ. 🌍



The International EC Church around the globe...committed to intentionally discipling the lost to faith and the saved to spiritual maturity





Window On Worldfest '08

**CELEBRATE WHAT
GOD IS DOING
AROUND THE WORLD!**



WORLDFEST is a great opportunity for local congregations to gather and celebrate what God is doing around the world through the collective efforts of the Evangelical Congregational Church and the Global Ministries Commission. This year's WORLDFEST theme, **Missional People-Missional Purpose** echoes the challenge of our National Conference theme set before us by Bishop Kevin Leibensperger. Check out the highlights:

The Illinois gathering held September 13 at Dixon Bethel EC will feature a Launch Liberia update and Bike Tour re-cap by Tom Brey, presentations from the ULEAD Alaska work team, EC Missionary Randy Amberman, working with Native Americans in New Mexico and the new DGM Randy Sizemore. Registration and continental breakfast begin at 8:00AM and the day's activities will conclude at 2:30PM with lunch and nursery provided. There is no registration fee but an offering will be received to offset expenses.

The Allegheny/Buckeye/State Line districts will converge at Wedgewood Park EC in Youngstown, Ohio on September 26 and 27. Friday night begins at 9:30PM with an all night lock-in for the teens. Saturday's general sessions begin at 8:00AM with registration and a continental breakfast. Our program features missionary candidates

BJ & Rachel Whitaker heading to church planting ministry in Spain, a Launch Liberia update from David Dick, Vice President At Large for OMS, a ULEAD Alaska work team presentation, EC Missionary Jim Farr working with Wycliffe in PNG and the new DGM Randy

Sizemore. ***A Mission Minded Kids track for children ages K-6 will be offered during Saturday's program!*** The day's activities will conclude at 2:30PM with lunch and nursery provided. There is no registration fee but an offering will be received to offset expenses.

WORLDFEST in Pennsylvania occurs on Friday and Saturday

October 10-11 at Evangelical Theological Seminary in Myerstown. Once again this year we've reserved the Friday afternoon sessions, 12:00-2:30PM specifically to connect with our Pastors and church leaders while Saturday's general sessions beginning at 8:00AM with registration and continental breakfast are for all global-minded individuals. Presentations on both days include an update on Launch Liberia and a Bike Tour re-cap by Ralph Owens, EC Missionary Dan Dixon serving in Kenya with AIM, Bishop Kevin Leibensperger's challenge on becoming an international denomination and the new DGM Randy Sizemore.

Saturday's activities will conclude by 2:30PM with lunch provided. There is no registration fee but an offering will be taken to offset expenses.

Specific times and details are included on bulletin inserts mailed to each congregation and are available to view or download on the Global Ministries website. ecglobal@eccenter.com

ILLINOIS GATHERING

SATURDAY / September 13
Bethel EC Church, Dixon, Ill.
8:00 AM - 2:30 PM

ALLEGHENY/BUCKEYE/ STATELINE GATHERING

FRIDAY / Youth Lock-In
September 26
SATURDAY / General Session
September 27
Wedgewood Park EC Church,
Youngstown, Ohio
8:00 AM - 2:30 PM

PENNSYLVANIA GATHERING

FRIDAY / Pastors' Gathering
October 10
SATURDAY / General Session
October 11
Evangelical Theological
Seminary, Myerstown, PA
8:00 AM - 2:30 PM



1

Net world population growth **per second**

2.5

Percentage of missionaries working with the **unevangelized**

33

Percentage of world population that are **adherents of Christianity**, basically unchanged since 1900.

35

Percentage of global crosscultural mission force **sent from Asia**

1.6 million

Estimated number of North Americans who went overseas on **mission trips** in 2005

130 million

Number of adherents to Christianity **in China**

200 million

Number of Christians in sixty countries at risk of **suffering persecution**

344 million

Number of **unevangelized** people in India

880 million

Number of **unreached people** in the world in 1900

1.85 billion

Number of **unreached people** in the world in 2007

22 billion

Dollars spent annually for foreign missions worldwide

24 billion

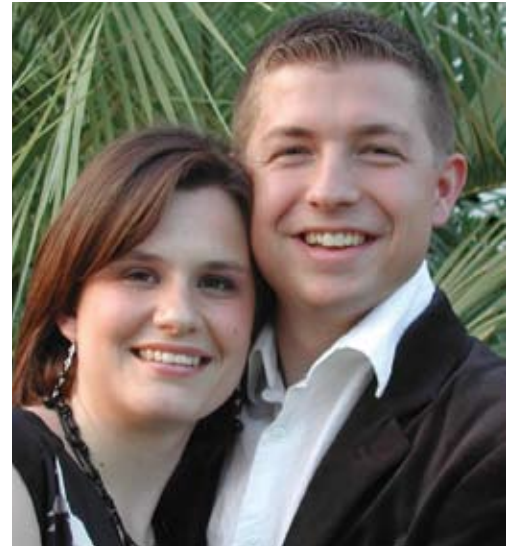
Dollars **embezzled** annually from church funds.

16,400 billion

Dollars of **annual income** of church members worldwide

SPOTLIGHT ON BJ AND RACHEL WHITAKER

B yron (or BJ, as he prefers) and Rachel Whitaker are missionary candidates with European Christian Mission International. They will be serving in Spain, which is home for Rachel. Daughter to Ron and Brenda Anderson, Rachel grew up in the Cordoba region of southern Spain, and her heart is still there. BJ and Rachel met while they were students at Asbury College in Wilmore, KY. After graduation, BJ and Rachel worked in youth ministry for two years before BJ applied to Evangelical Theological Seminary in Myerstown, PA. While at seminary, Rachel worked in the counseling and social work field while BJ went to school full time and served as youth pastor at Mt. Joy Trinity EC Church.



BJ graduated from ETS this past May, and has been extra busy with deputation ever since. They Whitakers hope to leave for field training in Spain by January of 2009, but they need more support. Due to the weak dollar abroad, BJ and Rachel still need \$1788 per month so that they can serve where God has called them. If you can help them to fulfill their call to plant Bible-believing churches in Spain, please contact the GMC office for details on giving. 🌐



SUPPORT NEEDS

T he following missionaries have severe support needs which may affect their ability to stay on the mission field. Please consider helping them through monthly support or one-time gifts. Thank you. 🌐



Rev. Ron and Brenda Anderson **\$1500 per month**

Rev. BJ and Rachel Whitaker **\$1788 per month**

Lori Pfeffer **\$1000 per month**

John and Carolyn Miller **\$350 per month**

SOURCES:

Justin Long, "The Next Generation," www.momentum-mag.org/200601/200601-14-trends.pdf (Jan-Feb, 2006)

Jason Mandryk and Justin Long, "The state of world evangelization," Lausanne Younger Leaders Gathering, Malaysia, September 2006. www.gmi.org/ow/downloads/YLG2006.ppt

Dr. Robert Priest, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, personal communication, June 14, 2006

Yie Xiaowen, top religious official in China in a news item, April 2007

Status of Global Mission, www.gordonconwell.edu/ockenga/globalchristianity/resources.php accessed August 3, 2007



TEACH INTERNATIONAL



There were no strangers here, just brothers and sisters from around the globe, rejoicing in our privilege of being part of the Family of God.

THIS YEAR is host to several international events, and not just the Olympics. The Evangelical Alliance of Churches International was held at both Messiah College and Myerstown, PA. This event, held every five years, brings together the leaders of our international EC churches to network, share and pray with each other and for each other. We had a record 16 leader participants this year – nine from Northeast India, three from Mexico, two from Japan, one each from Liberia and Costa Rica. Although several leaders were denied visas, we were grateful for those who were able to come.

The international leaders arrived at Messiah College in time to attend our National Conference; many par-

ticipated in the installation of our new bishop, Rev. Kevin Leibensperger. After National Conference, TEACH officially began with a welcome lunch at the Golden Corral (buffets are very popular!) Sessions began with a SWOT analysis done by each country; leaders missionaries and Global Ministries Commission board members partnered together to discuss what issues were affecting our international churches both internally and externally. Each leader presented the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that his particular field faced.

We spent a lot of time in prayer for each other. It was the first time many of the current international leadership met each other face to face. What a

thrill to see William Araya from Costa Rica praying with Henry Dennis from Liberia! Each of our leaders prayed for the others, and later broke into small

groups for specific prayer requests, directed by Rev. Terry Jacobs of our Riverhill EC Church.

There were times of silliness and solemnity, gaiety and gravity. People bonded with each other despite speaking different languages and having different cultures. We truly were one in Christ. As we said our parting good byes the night before most of the leaders flew out, there were no strangers, just brothers and sisters from around the globe, rejoicing in our privilege of being part of the Family of God. 🌍



Time spent in discussion of issues that affect our international churches both internally and externally.



The welcome lunch at the Golden Corral was enjoyed by all.



Partnering for the world



We spent a lot of time in prayer for each other.





LAUNCH LIBERIA BICYCLE TOUR

By Ralph Owens

THE LAUNCH LIBERIA INITIATIVE in concept and reality is a God sized task that will only be accomplished as we work together. The Launch Liberia Bike Tour was just one way the Lord worked in the hearts of His people to accomplish His purpose. The vision of a two week bike tour was given to Ralph Owens while he was traveling to a Metro Ministry meeting in September 2007. Ralph shared it with then Global Ministries Director, Jim Ehrman, who said a few weeks later, "Ralph, let's go for it!" The rest is history – or is it? We know who rode, where they rode, how far they rode, and who supported the riders. But – what we know is only a part of what is yet to be known, if we are willing to step out in faith. Consider the testimony of Nathan Owens, one of the riders on the West Team.

"I didn't know much about the Launch Liberia initiative, and I had never ridden a bike more than 20 miles, so when I first caught wind of the tour concept I thought, 'man, that would be sweet to do if I was into cycling.' Around that same time I had been told by my physical therapist to consider taking up cycling due to the low impact nature of the sport as I recovered from a major ankle injury.

"As I started riding, I found out I really enjoyed riding the bike and getting my heart rate up again. It wasn't long after that when I felt God calling me to step out in faith and sign up for the tour. With no formal training, experience, or even knowing if my ankle would hold up - I stepped out in faith and asked God to use me.



East team, L to R – Rick Rankin, Rusty Jones, Nate Jones, Steve Minnich, Trent Stehr, and Dan Lenko.



West team, L to R – David Rude, Tom Brey, Nathan Owens, Tim Delay, Ralph Owens, and unidentified crew member.

Well I made it all 930 miles; in fact I tacked on another 70 the day after the ride concluded just to hit 1000 miles in 2 weeks. My body was sore and hurting, but overall in the best shape since my ankle injury almost a year prior. However, the real benefit of the experience wasn't physical, but rather one of lasting benefit. I developed and strengthened relationships with family (Dad and Uncle were on the ride) and friends, as well as individuals and families we met along the ride. Most importantly, I really found God during this time and have had a completely different life since.

Christianity is so much more than rules to follow and lost enjoyment now, it is the true

joy in Christ you receive when you take the time to integrate Him into your daily life through prayer and bible study. I have so many things and such a hectic life that it is easy to get lost in the game of life. To forget the reason you have life. This was the first missions type of event I have gone on, and I was so glad that for once, instead of convincing myself I was too busy, I took the time between graduation and starting my career and gave it to God saying 'I want to make a difference in this world, I want to make a difference in Liberia'. As I grew tired and sore on the ride, and as my body screamed at me in pain, I would imagine the pain forced

(continued on page 8)



WINDOW ON OUR INTERNATIONAL CHURCH

> LIBERIA:

The Launch Liberia project is taking hold and lives are being changed! We are partnering with OMS to make this a reality by raising approximately \$137,000 by the fall of 2009. Currently we have raised close to \$90,000. These funds support things like drug depots in rural villages serving the physical needs of many as well as training church planters who are planting village churches that are making headway against severe political and spiritual obstacles. Recently a band of armed men broke into the St. Luke's EC Clinic and stole about \$12,000 worth of medicine and equipment. However, ministries providing safe drinking water, orphaned child care and small agricultural projects are being used to win others to Christ and make the EC Church in Liberia self sustainable! Jesus promised, "I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it" (Matthew 16:18, NLT)! We believe that the church will lead the transformation of Liberia. By working with OMS to plant and multiply healthy, autonomous churches, followers of Christ will be well equipped to answer the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the nation of Liberia. Plans are being made for Randy to visit Liberia in January 2009. Please keep the Launch Liberia initiative in your prayers.

Henry Dennis, Treasurer of Liberia EC Church



> JAPAN:

The three EC congregations in Japan average about 100 individuals in total. Japan is one of the least reached nations in the world with less than one percent of the population being Christian. However in the midst of this difficult field the Gospel of Jesus Christ is taking hold through strategic ministry initiatives like conversational English classes and child care classes for mothers. Tomoyuki Abe, the son of our Japanese pastor Nobuo Abe will finish up his Master's degree at Evangelical Theological Seminary in the spring of 2009 and then he and his wife Jessica will return to Japan to help in the work there.



Director, Rev. Dr. John Masuda

> INDIA:

Lalrosiem Songate, the General Director of the Evangelical Congregational Church of India says, "The remarkable progress made by our missionaries in the mission fields is a real excitement for all of us here". Currently ECCI has 174 frontline missionaries working in 30 mission stations in different parts of India and surrounding areas including Nepal, Myanmar, Tripura, Assam,



Director, Rev. Lalrosiem Songate

Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal and Manipur. New believers are added to the church every month and demands for more missionaries are pouring in! In October three missionaries will be ordained as pastors in the EC Church of Nepal. The fall classes at Evangelical College of Theology will begin with 67 new students bringing their total to more than 170 students! India's current challenges include the famine that occurs in the wake of the bamboo flowering. This takes place every 50 years, and causes an explosion in the



Rev. Dr. Khaizakham, Principal of Evangelical College of Theology

rodent population which then eats all the standing crops. We also need to start an orphanage in Nepal to support the many helpless children who have no one to care for them.

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**GLOBAL MINISTRIES
COMMISSION** of the
Evangelical Congregational Church

100 West Park Ave, Myerstown PA 17067
717-866-7584 • ecglobal@eccenter.com

www.ecglobal.org

THE GLOBAL MINISTRIES COMMISSION is the international ministry arm of the Evangelical Congregational Church. With 56 workers in twenty nations, 460 churches in six fields, and several strategic initiatives, it is dedicated to mobilizing the worldwide Church into acts of love, service, and gospel proclamation.

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(WINDOW ON OUR INTERNATIONAL CHURCH from page 7)

> MEXICO:

The EC Church of Mexico currently has 12 congregations under the direction of Rev. Apolinar Alpizar. Each congregation averages roughly 50 in the morning worship services.

Under the direction of Rev. Elias Martinez the EC Bible Institute of Mexico is now a reality! Rev. Elias reported at TEACH that approximately 18 students will graduate in November and they have 22 students enrolled. The institute is formed for the pastors and leaders of the local EC Churches. Their three-fold vision is to:

1. Prepare a new generation of people committed to serving God.
2. Equip teams of lay people for interim ministry when a pastor is not available.
3. Unify the EC churches of Mexico in doctrine, liturgy and vision.

Rev. Elias Martinez



Director, Rev. Apolinar Alpizar

> COSTA RICA:

The Costa Rica EC Church has dealt with some severe flooding and other challenges but reports health and growth! Rev. Dr. William Araya shares that they have rejoiced in 12 conversions and 4 baptisms in the latest quarter. The EC Church of Costa Rica now has 5 congregations averaging about 260 members. William's vision is to have EC churches planted in each of the seven regions of Costa Rica. 🌍

Director, Rev. Dr. William Araya



(LAUNCH LIBERIA BICYCLE TOUR from page 6)

upon the Liberian people and gain the motivation to press on in hopes of relieving some of the pain they live with daily.

One last note- The body of Christ is an amazing thing. I am part of a praise band and just got back yesterday [August 10] from doing a worship concert at Lakeside EC, one of the churches we stayed with, and worshipped with along our journey. I have stayed in close contact with the host family from that weekend, and it is great to share in the joys and trials we face in our Christian life with other believers. My prayer is that God will bless our efforts and continue to build up the body of Christ in Liberia, as He continues to do so between the EC churches as we rise up together as a denomination to answer His call."

We still have more than a year to reach the financial goal of \$130,000. How does Jesus want you to get involved? Come to Worldfest in October to receive a more comprehensive report on the bike team's effort not only to raise money - but learn how we can willingly participate with a movement of God that will transform lives well into the future - indeed, for all eternity! 🌍



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