



AUSTRALIA

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Equipping a new generation of Bible teachers

SEPTEMBER 2016

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Under Construction: the Arabic Bible Commentary

His name is Joseph Luis. He is a 25 year old from a place called Minya in Upper Egypt and is currently studying for a Master of Divinity in a seminary in Cairo. Here he is in the seminary library with an Arabic translation of John Stott's book, "The Incomparable Christ". Joseph says that he likes books, particularly books that explore the relationship between faith and science, as ideas about atheism are becoming more prevalent in Egypt.

Bahaa Labib, a leader in the Hadayek Qubar Evangelical Church in Cairo says "I can't imagine any growing without books. It's really impossible..."

And yet, as Dr Riad Kassis, the Director of Langham Scholars, himself an Arab Christian says, "If you go into a Christian bookstore in the Middle East, in Egypt or in Lebanon or in Jordan, you'll be amazed because we have very few Christian books written in Arabic by Arabs."

While translated books are of course very important, Riad says "We need books written from our own context. This is what Langham Literature has been

doing. In fact there is a unique project that Langham Literature and Langham Scholars are working on: the Arabic Bible Commentary. It is unique because it is the first time Christian scholars from the whole region are coming together to produce not just another commentary on the Scriptures, but a commentary that is addressing our needs and challenges". He calls it a "landmark in the history of the Christian church in the region".

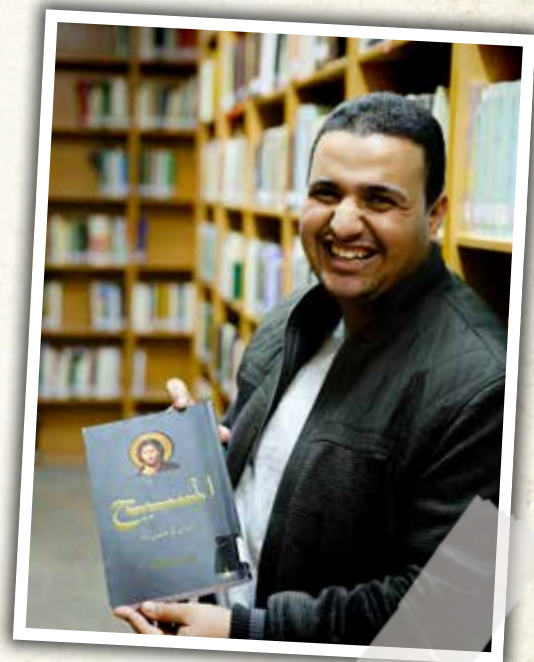
The project started in 2008, involving Christian theologians from five Arab nations and is being produced by Egyptian publishing house 'Dar El Thaqaqa'. But in recent years, there have been a number of challenges to writing and editing due to unrest, revolutions and instability in many of the Arab countries. This has resulted in a revised project plan, with a final publishing deadline of the end of 2017 or early 2018, God willing.

The total project cost for Langham Partnership is anticipated to be over \$582,000.

Participants in the project include Arab Orthodox, Catholic, and Evangelical biblical scholars (who all adhere to the Lausanne Covenant as the framework of their contributions). Riad said this Christian unity is "crucial in a context where violent acts of divisions on religious grounds abound and destroy the social mosaic of the region".

It is expected that the Commentary will have "more visibility and circulation not only within the Christian community, but hopefully among our fellow Muslim citizens", he explained.

Currently, commentary on all books of the Old Testament are running to schedule and no set-backs are expected. Several New Testament books are with the publishing house as final drafts, while other books are at varying stages of



completion. There are also plans for the Commentary to include 131 articles. These will cover various aspects of Christian doctrine and contemporary ethical issues, including Aids, Arab Christians and Citizenship, Secularism and Pluralism.

Langham scholar Rev. Dr Andrea Zaki Stephanos, managing editor for the Commentary, has said that stability in the region would greatly help in bringing the project to completion. He has asked for prayer for all those involved.

Please pray for those who are writing and producing the Arabic Bible Commentary. Please consider what you can give to help this much-needed resource become a reality for Christians in the Arab world.



Something to Hold on to in Bandung

Even though it was a four-hour walk to and from church in his remote village in Sumatra, Indonesia, Daniel always knew he wanted to grow up to be a pastor (even before he knew Christ). But his high expectations of what life would be like as a pastor came crashing down as his parents divorced and his mum left the family. "Because my parents divorced, I couldn't go to school — my education stopped," he recalls. "I was broken-hearted, I felt hopeless. My life had no meaning."



He moved with his father to a larger city and, at age 18, he felt Christ's unmistakable call on his life and a renewed desire to pastor others. He managed to finish his education, become a pastor—and then he says Christ miraculously restored what was lost: his family. "Since I met Christ my life turned around. I never saw my mother for 19 years because she left us, but after I converted to Christianity and became a pastor I began to look for my mum. God used me to reconcile the family," he says.

Today, God is using Daniel to bring Christ's reconciling hope into to his church family as pastor of St. Peters Church in Bandung.

Growing in numbers and in depth

When Daniel started the church almost 5 years ago — it was a

congregation of 7, and 6 of those were his family members! But, with a focus on small group discipleship, Daniel says the church grew in numbers as the core members, who were growing in maturity, began to invite new people in.

"We talk to them, accompany them, and lead them," Daniel says of how they shepherd new believers. "And, we try to have a simple service, so that they can feel that this is their home... and the preaching needs to be simple, understandable and biblically-based."

That's where Langham Partnership comes in.

Daniel says attending Langham's pastor training seminars has helped him to keep his sermons faithful, clear and focused on God's Word.

"With [Langham's] simple method, it's helped me to find the sermon... Before joining Langham, my image of expository preaching was too complicated. I never liked to do it. But, after Langham... I learn to love it, to love the Bible," he says "Since Langham, I always preach expository preaching. The way I arrange the sermon is not topical anymore, but it's based on the Bible."

In the two years since his training with Langham began, Daniel has preached through several books of the Bible, and



his congregation has noticed a change. "They say it's easier to understand because I focus on one message, and the whole context," Daniel says. "[My] congregation grew in their understanding and knowledge of the Bible.

More than that — Daniel says he's noticed a change in his congregation.

"The problem that my congregation members have is usually economic. Low education, and then poor quality of life," he says. "They are desperately poor, and are longing for the Word of God to strengthen them, to encourage them, and to give them something to hold on to..."

After spending three months preaching through the book of Acts — Daniel saw the Word of God impacting the heart of his church.

"I preach three months only from Acts, and the congregation says that now they know what is the purpose of their lives: to serve God," Daniel shares. "Through the teaching on Acts, they learn to have the new perspective on life, a new vision in God, and how to be responsible... running your life well by learning how Paul in Acts [does] life and ministry."

Langham's pastor training movement is well established in Indonesia, a country with the largest Muslim population in the world. In the past 18 months, there have been 30+ Langham training seminars across the nation, and the majority of them are led by local trainers. We are grateful for how God has grown the movement in Indonesia — and for the prayers and support of partners like you that help make this work possible.



Langham Scholars

“Our vision should be unashamedly to help capture the seminaries of the world for the gospel. And in order to do this, we have to ensure (as far as we can) that the world’s seminaries are staffed by scholar-saints – that is, by men and women who combine in themselves academic excellence and personal godliness.”

John Stott

During his many visits to the Majority World to lead student missions, preach at international gatherings, and to lecture in seminaries and theological colleges, John Stott was often introduced to young evangelical leaders who had a need to study further at a higher level to enable them to be more effective teachers and leaders. However, resources to support evangelical Christian leaders from outside the West to undertake higher level study, especially at doctoral level, were almost non-existent. From its inception, the then Langham

Trust sought to address this need. The first scholar formally supported by the Trust was Vinay Samuel, from India, who studied at Cambridge between 1971 and 1975, and the second was John Ray, from Pakistan, who took a BA in Theology at Oxford in June 1976.

Today, Langham Partnership continues to identify men and women who are academically able and recommended by their churches as committed to godly and evangelical faith and life, and equips them for a lifetime of ministry through a PhD in biblical and theological studies. These scholars then return to their home countries to teach and train future pastors and Christian leaders. Many of them also exercise significant influence through their writing and leadership in the global church.

Recent work on evaluating the Scholars Program has quantified some of its outcomes:

- Worldwide, nearly 400 scholars have received their PhD and are leading and training others in theological education in their home countries or regions.
- Sixty-nine percent of Langham Scholars have added new degrees or courses to their seminary.

- Forty-four percent of Langham Scholars have written the first book in their language and context for theological use.

Anwar Berhe

is a Langham Scholar from Ethiopia currently studying in Australia, at Melbourne School of Theology. He and his wife and daughter are living in suburban Melbourne and are attending the Crossway Baptist Church. Anwar’s studies are progressing well and he has begun to write his thesis. He will travel back to Ethiopia in the first part of 2017 for his research. He asks for prayer for his health, that he will experience complete recovery from a chronic health problem (for which he is getting good treatment in Australia). He also asks for prayer for Ethiopia, where there is currently unrest in various places.



Tackling a centuries-old famine of the Word

In January 2012, a small group of church leaders met and dreamed of a national preaching movement in **Spain**. They soon realised that for a truly national movement to be born they would have to partner with other evangelicals (particularly with the large Pentecostal Assemblies of God denomination). This would inevitably raise awkward theological disagreements and test their primary commitment to the essentials of the Christian faith.

A national team was formed under leadership of Francisco Mira (GBU/IFES Spain General Secretary) and it represented all the key regions of Spain and all the key Protestant church networks.

Because the word ‘Langham’ means little in Spain, they called their movement Taller de Predicación (TdP).

The plan from the beginning was to invite 50 established preachers to experience all three levels of Langham Preaching Seminars. They would then be sent out to train others across the regions.

In February 2016, 40 delegates met

together near Barcelona for the fourth Spanish Langham Preaching event. It was a time to celebrate.

- Of the original 50 delegates, just over 40 have kept at it.
- It was clear that one of TdP’s eight ‘regions’ was unrealistically large. So it was subdivided. And on the final morning of the event, the delegates were commissioned to go to nine Preaching regions in Spain!
- The next strategy is to train 50 preachers in each of these regions over the coming three years.
- The goal is a national gathering, somewhere in Spain, in December 2020, for all who have attended a Langham Preaching Training Seminar. They hope for 500 delegates! And estimate that by that time around 200-250 churches around Spain and its islands will have at least one member and/or leader committed to an expository preaching ministry.

But why is this such a big deal? Mark Meynell (Assoc. Director LP) explains:

“Take a long term perspective. Spain never had a Reformation. Indeed, anything that remotely smacked of Reformist theology was brutally suppressed.

“But how did most of the rest of sixteenth-century Europe have a Reformation?”

“Faithful preachers in churches small and big, right across the continent, opened up God’s word and made “it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read” (Neh 8:8). Despite huge political and social turmoil.

“Spain is facing some of its worst challenges today. For example, youth unemployment is the second highest in the EU: 48%. That’s a devastating statistic for school- or university-leavers in Spain. It smacks of the economic conditions of the 1930s...

“But imagine! Could this just possibly be God’s time for Spain’s centuries-old famine of the Word to come to an end?”

You can follow the story (in Spanish) at www.tallerdepredicacion.es

Meet the Langham Preaching Coordinator for the South Pacific

This is Stephen Williams, who is now supporting Langham Preaching in the nations of Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and working to establish a program in Fiji. Stephen is a retired Anglican minister, most recently working in the New England (NSW) area. He writes:

“Standing in the pre-dawn cool on my first trip to Vanuatu, I waited for a lift to a remarkable meeting. Starting time was 6:00 am and it was to run for two hours. Those attending were pastors and lay-preachers. They had been meeting at this time every Saturday morning since 2008 — since the first Langham training courses had been run in Port Vila.

There was no messing about. One of the number (a high ranking civil servant) preached on a passage from Mark’s Gospel, which they were working through systematically. It was simple, direct and profound. The preacher allowed the text

to speak for itself. So what we heard was God’s Word. It was (by the preacher’s own confession), the result of his Langham training.

This year that same preaching club has conducted Level 1 courses on both Efate and a neighbouring island in which several hundred people have taken part. Those who attended are now being encouraged into similar preaching clubs. Meanwhile, [this month] I am taking a minor part in a Level 2 course the same group is now running.

I began this work almost a year ago and have met all our country co-ordinators ‘in situ’ from (east to west) Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Is, PNG. Everywhere it’s the same. There is a keenness to learn to read and preach the Bible faithfully and thoughtfully. Many have had little training and feel the lack deeply. Others fight the corroding effects of theological liberalism and want help and encouragement.



Would you please pray for this work in the South Pacific? Besides the courses in Vanuatu there is one planned for Port Moresby in January and we are making the initial moves to get things going in Fiji next year.”

If you are willing to pray more specifically, Stephen does email a (roughly) monthly short briefing and prayer letter. You can request it by dropping him a line: stephen.williams@langham.org

Gillean Smiley Langham Australia Executive Officer writes:



The legacy of John Stott is still impacting the world, with the Church continuing to benefit not only from his books and recorded teaching, but from the work of those who seek to put into practice his vision for well trained and resourced leaders to teach the Word of God and nurture the growing maturity of the Majority World Church. Many recall his particular gift for truly engaging with people, remembering them, and for making them feel special and listened to.

Of course, John was well known for his insistence on “double listening”, which he outlined in his 1992 classic *The Contemporary Christian: An Urgent Plea for Double Listening*. He later elaborated that

By double listening, I mean listening, of course, to God and to the Word of God, but listening to the voices of the modern world as well... We listen to Him in order to believe and obey what He says. We listen to the modern world... in order to understand its cries of pain, the sighs of the oppressed. And it seems to me that relevant communication grows out of this process of double listening.

One of the reasons that John Stott was so highly regarded and warmly welcomed in the Majority World was his desire to listen closely to the voice of the Majority World Church. Unusually for his era, he was convinced that it was not a case of the West knowing what was best and graciously sharing its wisdom and insight; as he travelled the world, he constantly asked churches and their leaders about their perspectives, their experience and what they needed.

As Langham Partnership has responded over the years to the ongoing call for better training and resourcing for the people who are leading, preaching and teaching, we have seen not only outstanding preachers and theologians emerging from all corners of the world, but also an increasing focus on an indigenous literature: Christian resources written and developed by local Christians in the context of the world in which they live.

Where does that leave the Church today? Obviously the work is nowhere near completion, and the demand is in fact growing for help and support from our Majority World brothers and sisters. We in the comparatively wealthy and

well-resourced Australian Church have a responsibility to share what we have been given so that we all may grow in maturity and depth.

However we also have the responsibility to continue to listen closely: a double listening to the Word of God, and to what is increasingly a global community. We need to hear the wisdom and perspective of our Christian brothers and sisters in contexts that are unfamiliar to ours, and who have learned and grown in God through experiences we can barely imagine. We need to acknowledge that we have at least as much to learn from the Majority World Church as they do from us.

In recognition of all this, Langham Partnership Australia is delighted to announce the commencement of the **John Stott Memorial Lecture**. In what is hoped to become a biennial event, we look forward to hearing directly from the voices of the Majority World, through visiting speakers and scholars of the highest calibre.

To launch the series, and in recognition of the immeasurable contribution of John Stott, we look forward to the inaugural lecture **John Stott’s Legacy and the Mission of the Global Church**, to be delivered by Rev. Dr Christopher Wright, (International Ministries Director for Langham Partnership) in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, this month.

Please check out our website langham.org for details on the events and to register for the lectures.

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Our vision is to see churches in the Majority World equipped for mission and growing to maturity in Christ through the ministry of pastors and leaders who believe, teach and live by the word of God.

As an evangelical organisation, the Langham Partnership is above all committed to exalt the name and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, to promote the gospel of His grace and to foster the mission of His church.

We do this through our three programmes:

Langham Scholars offers doctoral scholarships for theological leaders who will lead churches and train the next generation of Bible teachers in their home countries.

Langham Literature provides preachers and Bible colleges with evangelical literature and mentors indigenous writers, editors and publishers.

Langham Preaching establishes national movements for continuous training in expository biblical preaching.



Langham Preaching seminars are all about getting into God's Word. Please pray for Langham Preaching events across the world — see the enclosed prayer slip for Preaching events to be held over the next six months.

For a weekly emailed update, contact us at australia@langham.org to request the Preaching Prayershot.



Have you considered including Langham Partnership in your will?

Like many mission organisations, 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 contact the Langham Australia office on 02 4751 9036.