

## eNews December 2014

### Greeting from Gillean Smiley, CEO

Thank you for your warm welcome as I join the Langham Partnership Australia team! It has been an exciting time of learning since officially beginning at the end of November, and I have greatly appreciated Wendy Toulmin's wisdom and experience as she has helped guide me through the transition. We are all grateful for Wendy's dedication and enormous contribution to LPA, and pray for her in her next adventure.

As we say farewell to Ronald, one of our Scholars in Australia, the International team is finalising arrangements for the next round of Scholarships – with all the arrangements and organisation that goes with such a huge undertaking. This eNews, we meet another scholar preparing to return home, and help the church in Zimbabwe tackle the issue of poverty and the prevalence of a "prosperity gospel" in a Biblical way.

Please pray for the Scholars preparing to return home, and the new Scholars preparing to begin their doctoral studies in the New Year. In keeping with Langham Partnership's goal of raising the standards of locally available training, many of these Scholars will be based in tertiary institutions in the Majority World!

Thank you for your support, both prayerfully and financially this year. We praise God for His continued blessing on this ministry. All the team at LPA pray for a safe, peaceful and spiritually refreshing time for you, as you reflect on the wonder of the coming into the world of Jesus Christ: fully God and fully human.



## *Christmas Greetings*

### For your prayers

#### PREACHING:

- **Support:** As another year draws to a close, give thanks with us for the faithful and skilled work of our core administrative staff: **Claire Bennett** and **Ruth Slater** (Carlisle, UK) and **Benji Stephen** (Bangalore, India). Pray for times of refreshment with their families over the Christmas season.
- **Volunteers:** As ever, we are grateful for **hundreds of volunteers** who give so freely of their time to see this ministry progress - especially the 360 names on the newly revised Country Coordinator and Facilitator database. Pray with us as we look to see this number grow even larger, under God's good hand, and for the plans to communicate with them more regularly and to encourage them.
- **Leadership:** Give thanks for those who have given regional leadership week-in, week-out in this worldwide ministry throughout 2014: **Igor Amstegui** (Latin America), **Dionisio Orjuela** (Central America), **Mark Meynell** (Europe), **Emmanuel Oladipo** (Anglophone Africa), **Mike McGowan** (Francophone Africa), **Paul Barker** (Asia), **Victor Sun** (China), **Paul Windsor** (India), and **Wendy Toulmin** (Pacific).

#### LITERATURE:

- **Theology:** Give thanks for the opportunity to represent Langham Partnership and promote our majority world author publications at the Evangelical Theological Society and Society for Biblical Literature in San Diego, USA. Pray that the increased exposure of western theologians and institutions to indigenous majority world theology will lead to greater interaction and engagement so that theological understanding and study around the world may be enriched. We, the global church need our theology to be formed by all parts of Christ's body.
- **Madagascar:** The second shipment of the Malagasy Africa Bible Commentary is en-route to Madagascar. It is the rainy season, so please pray for its safe and timely arrival.
- **Langham Service Centre:** The distribution warehouse in the UK is undergoing storage expansion to hold extra books. Please pray for the re-organisation of stock and the staff responsible **for this**.

#### SCHOLARS:

- Pray for **Ronald Lal Din Suah** as he continues to receive treatment for his hearing loss, and for him, Mary and the children as they prepare to return to Yangon, Myanmar just before Christmas.
- **Please pray for Qaiser Julius**, recently in Pakistan for his studies, and his family as Qaiser continues working on his PhD at the Melbourne School of Theology.

## Using Scripture to tackle poverty in Zimbabwe

The Langham Partnership supports many scholars around the world. Ronald Lal Din Suah (Myanmar) and Qaiser Julius (Pakistan) are our two most recent PhD scholars here in Australia, with Ronald preparing to return home having successfully completing his doctorate. Meanwhile, other scholars are also nearing the end of their studies, and preparing to provide leadership in the local Church, on their return home. Collium Banda from Zimbabwe is another Langham Scholar, nearing the completion of his studies at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa.

As Zimbabwe has enjoyed a recent rapid growth in Christianity, it has experienced a parallel spectacular rise in poverty. Abandoned office blocks and factories in Bulawayo, for example, are fast being occupied by an array of churches preaching the 'health-and-wealth', or 'prosperity', gospel.

Collium set out to study the writings of German theologian Jürgen Moltmann, who argues that the poor are discouraged from dealing with their poverty when there is an excessive focus on the future hope for heaven.

He began his studies with an assumption that the prosperity movement has a low view of future Christian hope and teaches that material prosperity is attained by faith, with no emphasis on practical work. At the same time, he assumed that mainline missionary churches [in the traditional denominations] have been overwhelmingly interested in 'spiritual' salvation only.

However, Collium reports, 'I found that prosperity churches, despite their shortcomings, often acknowledge the necessity of hard work for attaining material prosperity. And, in Zimbabwe, they have been in the frontline of rejecting poverty, with leading entrepreneurs emerging from them!

'And mainline missionary churches have since their arrival in pre-colonial Zimbabwe demonstrated a practical interest in material issues. At various times they produced individuals who spoke out against socioeconomic policies that resulted in poverty. However, poverty-alleviation projects tend to continue with a low expectation of partnership and are often aimed at relief rather than transferring sustainable skills to the poor.'

Collium hopes to use his studies to formulate a framework for training pastors. Part of his quest is how to apply the resources Jesus has provided for and in his church to facilitate the poorest also earning a liveable income.

'My immediate task on return to Zimbabwe is teaching at the Theological College of Zimbabwe and providing leadership in my home-church denomination. With the complex challenges faced by the church in Zimbabwe, and in Southern Africa, I hope also to join the wider discussion on tackling poverty, particularly as faced by Christians.'



Collium's prayer request is for wisdom in juggling his present responsibilities (including a baby due in January). His PhD thesis is entitled 'Eschatological Hope and Material Wellbeing in a Zimbabwean Context of Poverty: a Dialogue with Jürgen Moltmann' and he is on track to submit it by Easter 2015.

**Collium married Vhaidha in December 2013. They expect their first baby in January 2015.**



## Upcoming Langham Preaching events

December 1-6	Bolivia, Liberia, Zimbabwe	January 4-10	Trinidad, South India
December 7-13	Macedonia	January 11-17	Pakistan
December 14-20	Tanzania, Zimbabwe	January 18-24	Myanmar

**As well as praying for the above, please also remember to pray for countries affected by the Ebola virus, where Preaching events have had to be cancelled.**

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