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“..The Word of God is our Life!” - Langham Preaching Sri Lanka

It's a great privilege to be involved with Langham Preaching in the country of my parents' birth, Sri Lanka. Last July Peter Adam, former Principal of Ridley Melbourne, and Sam Morton now serving as Youth Pastor of St Luke's Anglican Church Miranda (Sydney), and I led Strand Two of the second round of Langham Preaching in Sri Lanka.

Participants included pastors from both Sinhalese and Tamil communities. In a country recovering from thirty years of civil war, the church of Jesus unites those who in so many other contexts are divided. It was a joy to see. Participants came from Anglican, Baptist, Reformed, Independent and Pentecostal churches and para-church ministries. Peter, Sam and I were translated into two languages simultaneously! As participants gave sample sermons for review and feedback, they preached in their native language and were translated into English for us.

One of the training sessions, 'Making an Impact', asks the program participants to work in small groups to identify the major 'issues' in personal, church and national life. These issues are, of course, the particular background in which they exercise their ministry of preaching God's word. It was a most illuminating session. Among the top issues identified in the

personal sphere, the participants listed the breakdown of family relationships due to the influence of technology and an accompanying neglect of God's Word. In the area of 'church issues' the participants identified the pressures on pastors, the difficulty of raising up the next generation of leaders and providing them with godly models, and the temptation of misusing financial resources. At the national level, the top issues included discrimination against minorities (including Christians), violence against women, limited access to education and self-interested government leaders.

There was a deep sense that the nation and church faced many challenges and that it was a privilege and a great responsibility to preach the Kingship of Jesus into this context. It was deeply moving to share in the session and the following time of prayer for the progress of the gospel in Sri Lanka.

I said to one of the participants, "Since Sri Lanka faces so many social challenges, do you think that this training in preaching is useful to you?" He broke into a broad grin, and I felt somewhat rebuked by his unhesitating response, "It makes all the difference in the world, because the Word of God is our life!"

The week I spent with Sri Lankan brothers and sisters in Christ was humbling and inspiring. I was surprised by, and unaware of, the extent of harassment of Christians in the regional areas. But one denominational leader said to us, 'We have more important things to worry about than those who oppose us.' It was a joy to meet faithful young pastors, leading modest Christian fellowships; marginal in many ways, but full of trust and hope in Christ and eager to serve the least in their communities and preach 'the pure word of God'. It was deeply encouraging.

*Rev Kanishka Raffel
(Anglican Dean of Sydney)*



The growing need for Langham's ministry - can you help?

Today, more than 150,000 people in the Majority World will become Christians.

This week, 1000 new churches will open their doors for the first time.

61% of the world's believers live in the non-Western World.

As these new believers desire to grow in their relationship with Christ, very few have access to the resources that we in the "West" take for granted.

8 in 10 of their pastors don't have the training or resources necessary to understand and faithfully teach the Bible. It is likely that there are no biblical books written in their language or from their context. There are few, if any, theologically

trained leaders in their country to equip pastors and students.

This is why Langham exists: to help the global church grow in maturity and mission. It was the vision of Langham's founder, John Stott, that every pastor in every church in every country will be equipped to preach God's Word.

We can't individually reach 1.5 billion believers across the Majority World but we can equip the equippers to reach them.

Langham is committed to equipping God's people to learn, teach and live by God's Word. Without it, believers are vulnerable to false teaching and can easily be led astray. With this equipping and by God's grace the result is transformation:

multiplying disciples and creating lasting, sustainable impact on communities and nations.

The massive growth of the Church in the Majority World means that Langham's ministry is needed now more than ever. Our Strategic Plan details how we want to expand all three Programs: Literature, Preaching and Scholars... but we need more financial support to make this happen!

Please help us by sharing Langham's ministry with your Church, Bible Study group and other Christian contacts. Pray that God will provide the resources so that our brothers and sisters in the Majority World can become mature disciples.

Langham publication wins an independent publishers award

We are very pleased to share that John Steward's book 'From Genocide to Generosity' won the 2015 INDIEFAB Gold Award for the grief/grieving category. The book was published by Langham Partnership's publishing ministry in the Langham Global Library imprint. Langham publications are either written by Majority World authors, or specifically for Majority World contexts to equip readers for life and ministry. Thousands of independent publications are entered into Foreword Reviews' INDIEFAB awards each year, and a panel of more than 100 volunteer librarians and booksellers determine the winners in 63 categories.

John Steward is an Australian who served in Rwanda with World Vision in 1997, where he was engaged in reconciliation programs in the aftermath of the genocide of 1994. This book shares insights and lessons learnt from his experiences, giving a voice to local staff and friends in the ministry of reconciliation. They impacted hundreds of members of a tattered society, male and female, Hutu and Tutsi, young and old. He highlights programs that encourage transformation and healing between the people groups, such as workshops on healing the wounds of ethnic conflict, healing of memories and community restorative justice.

John Steward shares his love for the work of Langham. He writes:

"Two leading figures of the Langham Partnership are among the influential men in my experience of Christian ministry. In the 1960s John Stott captured my imagination for Christian life by his exposition of II Corinthians 3 and 4.



To this day I hear his fervent, enunciating phrases "... this all-surpassing power of God...hard pressed but not crushed...this treasure in earthen vessels..."

Thirty years later I was in Nairobi and attended the launch of A Rocha Kenya (a Christian conservation organisation). John Stott gave the dedication message and afterwards I thanked him for his impact on my life. I mentioned my father was a prolific sharer of his writings to young and old.

In the middle of that 30-year time span I was grappling to find a biblical understanding of holistic mission. I handed in my missionary visa for Indonesia and joined World Vision there, amidst a number of protests from colleagues who feared I was sliding into social work. Christopher Wright's Living as the People of God answered my need. Chris gave me permission to use his diagrams and I developed the material in new directions.

I used this among rural communities who related well to the OT foundation; it has helped Christian development workers from 50 countries of the Majority World, and many missions, aid and church workers elsewhere.

Imagine, then, my pleasure when Langham Partnership wanted to publish the manuscript of my book. They saw it as first-hand material from Rwanda, a country that did not then feature in Langham publications.

Written for a general audience, the content shows it is very hard to face our grief, but healing begins when we tell our painful experience. Healing can open the door to truth-telling, leading to confession and apology by a perpetrator or empathy and forgiveness by a survivor/victim. Every healing journey is personal

and takes time, but brings hope for justice and reconciliation. These make peace possible. The Christian advantage is that we know The Prince of Peace."

Pieter Kwant, Director of Literature at Langham Partnership said "It has been a privilege to publish John Steward and to enable these amazing stories of recovery and restoration from Rwanda to be read by people around the world. Dealing with grief is never straight-forward but even more so when a country's entire population is individually impacted by these issues as in the case of Rwanda after the genocide. The road to generosity and the transformation of people's hearts and relationships through the process of reconciliation is something we give thanks for."

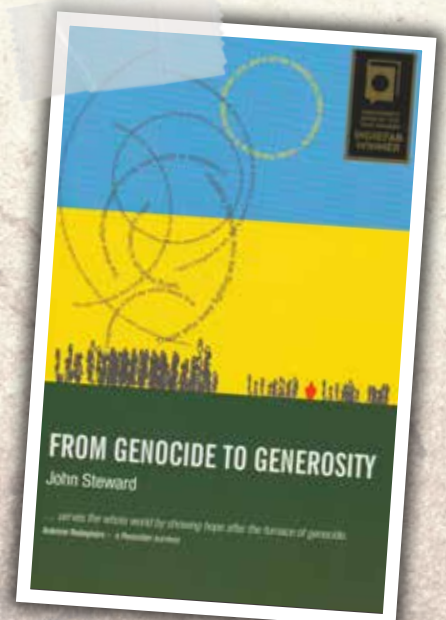
John is developing an on-line study guide to enable small groups to examine the stories in the book and find guidance for personal change. You can follow this development on www.2live4give.org

You can purchase a copy of the book through Amazon or the Book Depository, but we would love it if you ordered directly through www.langhamcatalogue.org

If you pay the full price (7.99 pounds UK which includes postage) directly to Langham Global they will also donate a copy of the book to a recipient in the Majority World.



John and Sandi Steward



Langham Scholars

Equipping Gospel Bridge Builders in Romania

"I believe in local things. I believe that this is a road from soul to soul. If you want to do something, you have to start building from the ground."

For Langham Scholar István Pásztori-Kupán, seeing the impact of God's Word travel from "soul to soul" happens not just inside the walls of seminaries and churches, but also in local pubs, parks, and offices. And in Romania, where the vast majority profess Christianity yet faith is primarily nominal with little impact on people's daily lives, this kind of holistic and relational approach to the Gospel is an important avenue for helping people connect God's Word to their daily lives. And it's one he is hoping to pass on to his students.

"The average young European is born Christian in name, but basically God is unknown to him or her," István explains.

As a teacher of theology and philosophy at the Protestant Theological Institute of Cluj-Napoca, where this year 159 students are being equipped to serve as bridge builders between the Gospel and God's people in Romania, István is committed to the task of identifying, preparing and mentoring the country's next generation of pastors and leaders. With his students, he models what it looks like to be in community by doing life alongside of them. István lives on campus and integrates daily in the lives of his students, including a weekly game of soccer.

"Football brings out people's character... you can learn a lot about people when you play football together. It helps me to not only build relationship with my students, but also identify leaders."

This gets at the heart of why Langham

invests in the training of theological leaders like István, leaders who go on to multiply other leaders by investing their lives into their students. For Romania, where the effects of communism still linger—there is a need for equipped leaders who understand how to point people toward Christ by first understanding the struggles they face.

István shares, "Romanians have been told what to do, how to do it, and how to live for so very long. I think Romanians crave to be listened to. And with young people as well, you have to start building a bridge."

We need to speak to them from their context... I think that it is very important to meet young people, not by waiting for them to come to church. It is going to their gatherings. Trying to talk to them. We should start listening. See what the real problems are."

One important way to prepare future pastors and leaders to help their congregations and community members make the connection between God's Word and the issues they face is with biblical books and resources to help them. In many seminary and Bible college libraries throughout the Majority World, these resources are scarce. That's why through our library grant program, Langham recently began sending books to the Protestant Theological Institute to expand their library. Though the



partnership is new, since 2014, 40 volumes have been sent—including books on preaching, biblical commentaries, and practical theological handbooks.

"It's very important to have good books," István says. "When there's a lack of good theological books, that means first, you don't have a good tool to work with. You have to have good tools. When you're talking about theological books, you need the good ones in order to have a proper house built otherwise, you would build something that will last for a while but will eventually perish."

John Stott once said that "God intends us to penetrate the world. Christian salt has no business to remain snugly in elegant little ecclesiastical salt cellars, our place is to be rubbed into the secular community..." That's why Langham exists, and why for more than 45 years, we have supported the theological training of more than 350 scholars, like István, who go on to prepare other leaders to serve as salt and light within their communities. Thank you for your faithful prayers and partnership with Langham—your generosity is multiplying leaders of leaders around the world.

Kira Krieger

Gillean Smiley

Langham Australia Executive Officer writes:

The name "John Stott" carries such a legacy all over the world, and it is rare to meet a Christian in Australia over the age of 35 who has not been impacted in some way by his teaching or writing. However as time passes, the new generation of young Christians may not have the same familiarity with his work, and I am constantly surprised by how many people of all ages are unaware of the extraordinary work that has been done and continues to grow through the ministries begun and sponsored by "Uncle John." For Langham Partnership to continue equipping Bible teachers, through Stott's vision for growing maturity in the worldwide Church, we must build awareness and support for the work of these ministries. Thank you for your partnership with us in Australia. We pray that God will continue to bless the work, as his Church grows in depth as well as size!



Sierra Leone: Ebola still affecting Langham Preaching

The issue of Ebola may be out of the news, and it may have been declared no longer an emergency in March last year – but the devastating effects of the disease are still being felt, particularly in the country of Sierra Leone.

Several preaching clubs started by Langham Preaching had been running across the country before the epidemic in 2014-2015. Most of the clubs had to come to a standstill during the crisis. Last year, there was a concerted effort to revive these groups and restart the Langham Preaching work in Sierra Leone.

Joy to reconnect

Chris Jonah directs a ministry there called 'Truth Mission', and is also the Country Coordinator for Langham Preaching. In his 2016 end of year report, Chris wrote about the challenge of Ebola; the struggles faced by ordinary Sierra Leoneses; but also the joy as he has reconnected with pastors.

"We have had a number of refresher courses and hope to do so in every major town that participants have come from. A few of the dormant ones are planning to start meeting in 2017. It has been a joy going around the country and encouraging others to continue in the skills they had learnt. We're happy to report that most of those we met still think the training was very good and say it is useful for their roles".

Chris shared one story that particularly encouraged him: "A brother we had not seen for a while came to the 'last' Preachers Club meeting in Freetown. He mentioned that he always received

reminders to attend, but got occupied with other things and was unable to come. He went on to lament about the wave of new teachings (e.g. those who wear perfume or have a haircut will go to hell by the new 'Holiness Movement') that are around and how Langham Preaching has helped him a lot to pay attention to the text." Chris explained that hearing from this preacher was hugely uplifting, because he is "very unassuming" and would "hardly say anything" in previous meetings. "God is, and was, at work!"

National crisis

Chris said that for eighteen months, life came to a standstill in Sierra Leone because of Ebola, but their response helped them to further develop relationship with Christians in towns and villages. We could not sit down and fail to act in times of national crisis."

And the problems continue across the country: "There are still serious challenges here as the economy continues to suffer as a result of the epidemic and global economic trends. Life for the average Sierra Leonean has become very difficult... The Leone continues to slide against major currencies. Food is expensive, transport prices have almost doubled and this is also affecting the church and our ability to witness and care for others."

Challenges

Christmas was a time of great activity, "but the challenges are written all over the faces of people", Chris said. However, he is thankful to God for many improvements in Sierra Leone, such as work on some of the major roads, clean drinking water in some towns, and freedom to preach the Gospel even in predominantly Muslim areas.

Please pray for Chris as he seeks to ensure the revival of preaching clubs across the country, and push back against false teaching that is so prevalent.

Written by Chris Jonah, Langham Preaching Country Coordinator for Sierra Leone, adapted by Vic Marsay, Digital Content Producer for LPUKI.



Preaching Program participants in Sierra Leone.

Langham Australia Committee

Langham Partnership Australia is led by a committee of the following people:

Trevor Cork (Chair) is a solicitor and partner of McPhee Kelshaw solicitors in Springwood, in the NSW Blue Mountains. He served as the Chair of Langham International from September 2008 to October 2014.

Graham Collins (Treasurer) is a retired Chief Financial Officer of a NSW government agency.

Grant Robinson (Secretary and Public Officer) is a retired NSW public servant, works as a volunteer project officer with Langham Australia and International.

Jill McGilvray is a retired Bible College lecturer.

Rev David Tsai has just retired as the senior pastor of the Chinese Presbyterian Church in Surry Hills (inner Sydney).

Last October we farewelled **Joel Atwood**, who previously worked with AFES but has this year moved to Vanuatu with his wife Tiffany and baby son as missionaries with the Church Missionary Society. We thank Joel for his years of service on the Committee and pray God's blessing on their new ministry.

We are delighted to welcome **Rev Dr Paul Barker** to the Langham Committee. Paul is the Anglican Assistant Bishop for

the Diocese of Melbourne. Paul knows Langham very well, having served as Langham Preaching Regional Coordinator and Scholar Care Coordinator in Asia.



Paul Barker

Please pray for the Langham Committee and staff, that they will be wise in their decision making to best serve our brothers and sisters in the Majority World.

Preaching Calendar

Please pray for these Langham Preaching events:

March 19-25	Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa, Liberia
March 26- April 1	Zambia, Uganda, Chile, Benin, Indonesia, Serbia, Spain
April 2-8	South Asia, Indonesia, Liberia, South Africa, Uganda
April 9 - 15	Liberia
April 16- 22	Bolivia, Uganda, Liberia, Indonesia
April 23-29	Mongolia, Ethiopia, Indonesia (2), Sierra Leone, Fiji, Spain, Chile, Liberia
April 30- May 6	Indonesia, East Asia, Spain, Benin, Liberia
May 7 -13	Indonesia, Uganda, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Liberia
May 14-20	Indonesia, Bolivia, Liberia
May 21-27	Indonesia (2), South Africa, Honduras, Liberia
May 28- June 3	Indonesia, Sierra Leone
June 4-10	Indonesia, Liberia
June 11-17	Burkina Faso, Uganda
June 18-24	Liberia
June 25- July 1	Bolivia, South Asia
July 2-8	Uganda, Sri Lanka, DR Congo, Thailand
July 16-22	Ghana
July 30- Aug 5	Benin, Trinidad & Tobago
August 6-19	DR Congo (2)
August 20-26	Middle East
August 27- Sep 2	Sierra Leone, Bolivia
September 3-9	Benin, Coordinators workshop (venue tbc)
September 10-16	Argentina, Croatia

* Where countries are considered sensitive, the region is mentioned rather than the country

Prayer Points

- Preaching Clubs are an invaluable tool for participants who have been to Langham Preaching training to gain support, encouragement and opportunities to practise what they have learnt. Pray that as many participants as possible will get involved in Preaching Clubs.
- Pray for Christian writers and publishers in the Majority World, that Langham will know how to best support them so that more books written from local perspectives will be made available to Majority World believers.
- Pray for the team involved in producing the first ever Study Bible in Burmese, that all will go smoothly in its production and distribution this year.
- Pray for all the Langham Preaching Country Coordinators and facilitators, most of whom are volunteers. Pray that God will help them find the time they need to do these jobs in the midst of their other responsibilities.
- Pray that the Lord will provide more support for Langham's work, so that the ministry may expand to help meet the growing needs of the Majority World church.
- Pray for Ethiopian Scholar Anwar Berhe as he continues his PhD studies.

The dates over the page are correct at time of printing but may change! For a weekly emailed update, contact us at australia@langham.org to request the Preaching Prayershot.

Response Form

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You may wish to arrange with your bank to set up periodical payments from your account directly to the Langham Partnership bank account or to transfer monies directly via internet banking. The details you will need are:

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