



Gospel growth through challenging contexts

SEPTEMBER 2023



AUSTRALIA

Langham
PARTNERSHIP

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A message from Langham Partnership Australia CEO

It is a privilege and an exciting opportunity to share in the work that God is doing around the world, especially when He uses our contributions in ways we couldn't have imagined.

We were very pleased with the Langham Publishing book that was released a few years ago, titled *Tackling Trauma: Global, Biblical, and Pastoral Perspectives*, written by a team of Majority World authors and edited by Australian Bishop Paul Barker (a member of the Langham Partnership Australia Board).

It was with even greater delight, though, that through the generosity of donors, we were recently able to contribute to funding a translation of this important work into Ukrainian, and now to have seen that translation reprinted multiple times. Being able to provide a resource such as this in the terrible conflict currently being endured in Ukraine reminds us that God knows what we need and is able to provide the answer even before we are aware of the need ourselves.

Thank you for your generous response to the call for funds to translate *Tackling Trauma*, and thank God for the biblical and theological resources being provided through Langham Literature, to those who most desperately need them.



Gillean Smiley
Langham Partnership Australia CEO



*Tackling Trauma:
Ukrainian Edition*

Langham International Council visits Australia

May was an exciting though very busy time for Langham Partnership Australia as we hosted the entire Langham Leadership team and International Council for nearly two weeks of intensive meetings, in Manly, Sydney.



International Chair Jill McGilvray



Chris Wright with friends, Philip and Carolyn

The first ever time that these meetings have occurred in Australia was planned initially for 2019, but was continually delayed through unavoidable impediments (such as Covid). So it was with great excitement that we were finally able to welcome a total of 43 visitors from 16 countries to Manly.

The Leadership Team, comprised of staff from all members and programs, focused on management with a particular emphasis on positioning the organisation well for the future, while the International Council provided the highest level of governance and oversight for Langham Partnership in its annual face-to-face meeting.



The Leadership Team and International Council

The logistics of organising such an event were considerable, and in addition, we took advantage of the presence of so many distinguished leaders and speakers to hold 10 additional events, spread across Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. As a result, many new contacts were able to hear from and about Langham, from a range of international guests.



Chris Wright speaks at Ridley College



Riad Kassis with Rev Dr David Wright

A highlight of the entire event was the Celebration of Langham evening that was held on 20th May, at St Matthew's Anglican Church in Manly. Here we were able to hear from not only the Directors of each program but from people who had directly benefitted from the programs in their own lives.



Tayo Arikawe at celebration event

In addition, we had the opportunity to meet the International Director for Langham Partnership, Tayo Arikawe, along with our International Ambassador Chris Wright.

We pray that having the privilege of hosting these events may translate into a greater awareness of and support for Langham Partnership.

Engaging young people and churches

The Langham Australia Youth Engagement officers Simon and Edgar have been starting new and exciting initiatives, and hosting various events to engage more people (and especially young people) with the work of Langham Partnership.



SIMON NUGENT'S REPORT

Over the last six months, Young Langham Brisbane has seen rapid growth. Instituting a new book club in which our young people engage with works of Langham Literature, we're all working together to puzzle over some of the challenging concepts covered in *No More Cheeks to Turn* by Sunday Bobai Agang. We've had the opportunity to listen to numerous Majority World voices and work together to see how we can attribute their wisdom to our own church communities.

Continue to pray for us as over the next six months we hope to grow in number as well as maturity. We're looking at new ways that we can work together to support the work of Langham and be the supporting ligaments that hold this body together as we all grow in love, truth and in the character and wisdom of our Lord Jesus.



EDGAR SOLIS' REPORT

During these six months, I had the privilege of organising three main events: The Rico Villanueva event on Depression and the Lament Psalms; the Chris Wright event on Integral Mission; and a dinner party celebrating the cultural diversity of the church to raise support for Langham scholar Crystal.

These events were crucial in raising awareness among young adults about Langham ministries. Altogether, these events brought together a wonderful total of 100+ participants, both in person and online, fostering meaningful connections and sharing the work of Langham ministries.





Sharing Christ to all, from the ground up with Ronald

9 years have passed since Ronald studied in Australia; what is he doing now?

Ronald grew up in a Christian family in South East Asia, with his parents, five brothers and two sisters. When he was 15, there was a gospel rally in his area and that was when he first understood the gospel, and what it meant for his salvation.

He says, “There was no strange interaction with God but a very profound and clear understanding that without Jesus, life was not worth living.”

ENCOUNTERING LANGHAM

Ronald first heard about Langham Partnership when he studied for his Masters. “I heard about Langham Partnership and the Langham Scholars program as some of my friends applied for scholarships,” he shares.

In 2007, Ronald was introduced to Langham once again, by Paul Barker who told him about Langham Australia. Through this introduction, Ronald was able to begin his partnership with Langham in Australia, and went on to do his theological PhD studies in Melbourne.

“I wear several hats here in South East Asia and being a Langham Scholar has opened quite a wide door for me, in terms of ministry and

scholarships, theological education, also internationally, whenever I go out representing my college," he says.

VARIED AND RICH CURRENT MINISTRY

Ronald is currently involved in a number of ministries including his role as the Dean of Academics at a theological college in South East Asia, pastoring a mission church and 'theological education by extension' which is church-based training for people who want to learn to run Bible studies.

Through all these ministries, Ronald looks back at Langham and sees how it is a unique ministry. "Langham has had a huge impact on me and what I do now in terms of ministry; I'm very proud to be one of Langham's Scholars," he says.

One of Ronald's biggest challenges and goals is to help raise the standard of theological education in his home country. "I have a strong conviction that our Church really needs God's Word to grow. The Church is growing but it is not rooted in the Word of God."

Ronald says that a lot of the Christians in his home country are cultural Christians and so part of the challenge is to build the believers up in the study of the Bible. He says, "I pray for the Church growing in Jesus Christ by studying God's word, and also theological seminary students, growing their knowledge of the word of God."

Ronald sees a gap between the people with higher education and those without, especially when it comes to theological education and understanding. He believes that a lot of the curriculum that is taught at the seminary would benefit those in churches and help to narrow the gap. "Our learning and teaching should be serving the Church," he says. His work in academic study is having an impact on the Church at a foundational level, and his various paid and volunteer roles are complementary to each other.

Ronald says that if what he is doing for the intellectual community by writing academic papers and conducting further theological study doesn't also serve the church, then it's not worthwhile doing.



Please pray for Ronald as he continues to teach both in higher theological education and at a ground level in churches. Pray for the gospel to continue to transform lives in South East Asia, just like it has for Ronald himself.



The Word of God transforms through war and tragedy

“The crisis doesn’t cancel God’s calling and the war doesn’t cancel God’s calling. We are called to teach people God’s Word and to be present with them...We can leave the country at any moment, but we want to be here because God is present here, and we want the church to be present.”

Anna Gnatyshyna is a dedicated Christian, living and ministering in Ukraine. She works as a Ministry & Operations Coordinator for OneHope Eurasia which produces resources for children and youth. She is also a part of her local church ministry team as a Bible teacher. She has been equipped for her ministry, in part, through Langham Preaching training. Her story of trust and faith in God, to do his ministry in the midst of war, is an encouragement and challenge to Christians everywhere.

LEARNING FROM LANGHAM

Anna originally heard about the Langham Preaching seminars from her sister, Marina, who was already involved. The first seminar Anna attended was on the Gospel of Mark. From there she attended more training sessions and even started to utilise the materials from the seminars in her own ministry.

One particular instrumental opportunity Anna got through Langham, was when she was invited to a Langham Partnership meeting for women. She says, “For me it was really powerful to see no men there, but only women. They were teaching and it was a really great experience and relational atmosphere. It was something that I experienced for the first time in my life.”

Langham's training in Ukraine is of utmost importance for the Church according to Anna. She says, "[Langham teaching] is important because they teach how to handle the Scriptures instead of just preaching it."

WAR IN UKRAINE AND THE FAITH OF ORDINARY CHRISTIANS

To say the war in Ukraine has changed life for many people is a significant understatement. In addition to the millions of refugees throughout Europe, there are also millions of Ukrainians who are internal refugees within their own country.

In his mercy and faithfulness, God works through the worst circumstances. Anna says, "Many people are traumatised as they have lost many things. For most people, the tragedy breaks them but then brings them closer to Christ to ask new questions."

Despite the horror and tragedy of the war, Anna is still seeing God working. She says, "I see God transforming lives. I see how during my Bible studies when we were studying different passages and people experienced it for the first time, and they were reading it, understanding it, I just saw that light in their eyes when they got it. That they are able to read the Bible themselves."

Anna is also thankful to be alive and says, "It's a miracle I would say, still working every day." There has been a lot of change in ministry and church in Ukraine due to the war. Many ministers have evacuated from Ukraine because they have families and small children, but those who are still around have made the decision to stay.

The staff team at the church Anna works in have been one that has made that choice. She says, "The crisis doesn't cancel God's calling and the war doesn't cancel God's calling. We are called to teach people God's Word and to be present with them. So that's foundational now for my church team and my pastor. So we are still there. Not because we cannot leave the country. We can leave the country at any moment, but we want to be here because God is present here, and we want the Church to be present. God transforms hearts and lives through his children on the ground. Ministry has an even deeper meaning because we choose to do it."



**Please be praying for Anna, for her church and ministry,
and for the whole of Ukraine.**



A Lifelong Journey of Faith and Indigenous Ministry

Marcelo Vargas, a dedicated servant of God and a passionate advocate for his people in Bolivia, has a remarkable story of faith and ministry. From his initial encounter with John Stott in Brazil to his call to ministry and his contributions to the church of Latin America as a writer, Marcelo's journey reflects a deep commitment to the Kingdom of God and the indigenous communities he serves.

CALLED TO MISSION AND MINISTRY

Marcelo's connection with Langham traces back to its early days, even before it was officially named Langham Partnership. He met Langham founder John Stott in Brazil in 1980 during a national conference of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, where Stott's preaching on the book of Acts deeply impacted him.

He says, "And in this big meeting with a lot of students, I received the call to dedicate my life to mission, beginning with mission among university students in Bolivia. I went to Brazil to study to be an engineer, but God changed my plans."

After this encounter with John Stott, and once he had finished his degree in electrical engineering, Marcelo took the path to ministry. Another significant figure in his journey was Christopher Wright, who visited Bolivia multiple times. Marcelo extended invitations to Chris, and his visits played a crucial role in the growth of Langham's

work in Bolivia and throughout Latin America. God's hand was evident as these connections deepened, paving the way for Marcelo's remarkable ministry.

TRAINING, TEACHING AND LOCAL MISSION

In 1996 Marcelo was part of starting the Training Centre for Mission. This institute stems from Marcelo's desire to equip young people through student ministry, and aims to train lay people, leaders, pastors and students for ministry.

Of their training methodology Marcelo says, "The theology we teach is holistic theology or holistic mission theology. At this time in Latin America, we are using the theology of the Kingdom of God."

In addition to being a teacher, Marcelo is also a writer. His first book, based on his thesis, is called *Faith that Indigenizes*. Marcelo says, "This book is for students of mythology, history, indigenous studies, and urban mission because it explores the encounters between indigenous culture and urban life."

In Bolivia, two-thirds of the population is part of an indigenous group, so this is an important work to help Bolivian Christians and beyond.

Another notable work as a writer is his involvement in the *Latin America Bible Commentary*. When speaking to Langham for this article Marcelo shared, "Just today I was using the Latin America Bible Commentary when I was leading Bible Study in church. And I'll be leading another group later and will use the Commentary."

Marcelo wrote two articles for the Commentary, one focusing on indigenous theology and on First Nations peoples. He shares, "This [Commentary] is special. because more than a hundred Latin American writers contributed to its making. It's also recognised that the platform that made it possible was Langham."

TO THE ROOTS OF FAITH

For Bolivia and for the whole of Latin America, Marcelo hopes to see the ideas of his book, 'Faith that Indigenizes' come to life in the people of God. He shares, "What I expect is that indigenous understanding of faith becomes a part of the spirituality of the church, and also the way that people do mission. I think the contribution of the indigenous understanding is very important in terms of spiritual mission holistically."



Prayer Points

SEPTEMBER

The Scholars team is meeting together in Egypt for a week this month. The Scholars program is facing some challenges at present, as a flow-on effect of the pandemic. Pray for resolution of these challenges and for the team to have good times of discussion and fellowship during this time together.

OCTOBER

Pray for Rev Dr Hani Hanna, the Director of the Literature program who commenced in July. Pray that he'll have wisdom as he leads the Literature team to help meet the needs of the Majority World Church for biblical resources.

NOVEMBER

Pray for Edgar Solis and Simon Nugent, Langham Australia's part-time staff in Melbourne and Brisbane who are focused on engaging with younger adults. Pray that God will help them in this important work of building up support for Langham amongst the younger generation.

DECEMBER

Please pray for the Langham-supported Christian publishing houses in parts of the world where Christians are under immense pressure.

JANUARY

Resources are an important part of the Langham Preaching ministry. The Preaching team are always looking at ways to increase what they're able to offer, including online resources, eBooks and training materials. One of their strategies is to have a range of translators that can assist them to produce these. Please pray for their leaders as they work with local contacts and build up personnel resources in this area.

FEBRUARY

Pray for the Langham Scholars being supported by Australian donors: Joseph as he continues to study in Uganda and Crystal from East Asia, as she completes her PhD studies in Australia and seeks God's guidance for her next steps.

Preaching Training Calendar

Please pray for these preaching training events. Where countries are considered sensitive, regions are given instead of the country name.

3-9 SEP: UGANDA (2), ARGENTINA, KENYA, GUYANA

10-16 SEP: SOUTH ASIA, COLOMBIA

17-23 SEP: SPAIN (2), BOLIVIA

24-30 SEP: ZIMBABWE

1-7 OCT: GABON, GUYANA, SPAIN (2)

8-14 OCT: AFRICA MEETING, ETHIOPIA, EAST TIMOR, THAILAND

15-21 OCT: SRI LANKA

22-28 OCT: SOUTH PACIFIC FACILITATORS WORKSHOP

29 OCT - 4 NOV: SOUTH ASIA, COLOMBIA

5-11 NOV: SOUTH ASIA

12-18 NOV: COLOMBIA, SOUTH ASIA

19-25 NOV: SOUTH ASIA, EURASIA

26 NOV- 2 DEC: KENYA (2)

3-9 DEC: CHILE

10-16 DEC: SOUTH ASIA

14-20 JAN: SPAIN

29 JAN- 4 FEB: SPAIN

12-18 FEB: COLOMBIA, SPAIN

19-25 FEB: CAMBODIA

These are the Preaching events we know are scheduled at the time of printing. Many more will be added! To get regular prayer updates, subscribe to the weekly *Preaching Prayershot*. Contact Jenny at australia@langham.org to be added to the list.

Can you support the Scholars program?

A number of factors, including illness for some scholars and COVID limiting access to libraries in recent years, has meant that some scholars have taken longer to complete their doctoral studies than originally estimated. As a result, there are more scholars currently in the program than anticipated, forcing us to reduce the number of scholarships that can be offered. Increases in the cost of living have made the situation worse.

Can you help us fund the Scholars program so we can provide sustainable scholarships to outstanding Christian leaders from the Majority World?

Your support will also enable us to provide ongoing professional development, writing workshops and conference participation opportunities once they have returned to their home countries.

Donate now



Give to support the work of Langham Partnership

Join us as an ongoing or seasonal financial partner

Your donation to Langham Partnership helps the church in the Majority World to grow as mature disciples of Jesus.

GIVE VIA DIRECT DEPOSIT (PREFERRED)

Please include your surname in the description of your gift.

BSB: 032 837 ACCOUNT NO: 144 002

GIVE VIA CHEQUE

Make your cheque out to *Langham Partnership Australia* and post it to:

PO BOX 530 SPRINGWOOD NSW 2777

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