



CANADA

Langham™ PARTNERSHIP

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The Vital Work of Langham in China and Hong Kong

An Interview With Victor Sun



The streets of Hong Kong. Inset: Victor Sun.

PHOTOS: THE LANGHAM PARTNERSHIP

Victor Sun is the General Secretary of Langham Hong Kong. He shares the vision of Langham in Hong Kong and China – and the impact Canadians can have.

Langham News: *Langham's mission is to see churches equipped for mission and growing to maturity through the ministry of pastors and leaders who believe, teach and live by the word of God. Can you tell us the impact of Langham's work in China and Hong Kong?*

Victor Sun: Langham was set up in Hong Kong just over 10 years ago with our main focus being Mainland China, where resources are scarce and the churches are growing rapidly. There are more than half a million new Christians every year.

We have provided scholarships to more than 10 scholars, some of them have already gone back to teach in the seminaries and universities. We have run preacher training for church leaders since 2008. At least 40 senior pastors

have gone through Level 4 and they are now training their colleagues and other pastors. Local training courses and preaching fellowships have sprung up under the leadership of these trainers in Fujian (more than 100), Shandong (20), Jilin (40), and Inner Mongolia (30-40). Pastors from Tibet, Guizhou, Guangxi, Yunnan, Sichuan, Shaanxi, etc have also received training. Next year, 2nd level courses will be run in Qingdao, Xiamen and Chongqing.

We believe up to 500 preachers have been directly or indirectly gone through Level 1.

John Stott's New Testament commentaries are now all available in China through the church organizations and some can be bought online. Other books by John Stott are selling well. Some of Chris Wright's books are now being published through commercial channels and more of them will be launched in the next few years. We also



Thena Ayres

Strong Langham Roots in Vancouver With Board Members and Renewed Presence

By *Thena Ayres*

In the mid 1950's, a young British preacher arrived at the Vancouver airport, and was greeted by a group of UBC students who wrapped a Varsity scarf around his neck, lifted him high onto their shoulders and carried him out the door. Barely hours later, he was ushered into an expectant auditorium. Many students became Christians

at that earliest of John Stott's Missions – and some years later, one of them began to pray for a young friend, still in high school.

Thus my conversion was indirectly but meaningfully linked to that fruitful mission.

As John Stott's impact grew internationally through both his teaching and writings, a small group of Christians gathered in Vancouver to hear of his passionate concern to equip pastors and Christian leaders in the Majority world with solid Biblical teaching.

This group, later to become Langham Partnership Canada, took the initiative to raise scholarship funds for these promising young leaders to pursue advanced theological degrees so as to serve the church in Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

It has been my privilege to have been a part of this group since the very beginning. I continue on the Langham Canada Board because I have observed over the years the astounding impact of investing, as Jesus did, one-by-one in the lives of these young Christian leaders. Yes, they struggled at first with cultural adjustments and challenging studies, but these people worked hard, deepened spiritually and returned home with a new level of personal and theological thoughtfulness that enabled them to teach the next generation and to speak into the specific complexities of their cultures.

It is these former Langham scholars who are now the key leaders in countless Christian endeavors in the Majority world!

I can think of no more strategic ministry for our Canadian churches to participate in than Langham Partnership! While this ministry is neither flashy nor fast, it consistently produces educated, wise and godly leaders who go on to contribute in ways that truly make a difference. Through preaching workshops, Langham enables preachers and teachers to deepen their understanding of the Biblical text and thus bring a needed maturity to the amazing church growth that characterizes these countries. This growth has created the need for substantial Christian literature written in indigenous languages that can address pressing theological, political, moral and societal issues. Langham Publishing is making a significant contribution to meet this need.

In the coming months, Jeff Greenman, Academic Dean at Regent College, and I hope to expand our local base of support by hosting events when people associated with Langham visit Vancouver or teach at Regent College and by encouraging individuals and churches to participate in this good work that God is doing!

Are you in the Vancouver area and wanting to reconnect with Langham? Email Canada@langham.org to connect.

make good Christian books available to the secular universities and seminaries so that the students can make better use of the libraries in their studies and personal growth.

LN: *What do Langham Scholars who come from China and Hong Kong do after they finish their PhDs?*

VS: Most of them are teaching in the seminaries and universities. There is much more we can do. In Hong Kong there are 7 million people with 33 seminaries, but only 23 seminaries exist

in China – all of them run by the registered church authorities. None of them can offer doctorate degrees.

Most of the Christians in China are from the house-churches and they cannot have access to the 23 seminaries. There is an urgent need not only to build up theological education but also to improve the standard of teaching at the existing seminaries.

We are pleased to see that at least 40 Langham scholars from the region (mainly, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore) are involved in teaching mainland students studying abroad, or teaching mainland Christian leaders and pastors by frequent visits to China. Since the authorities in China do not allow foreigners to teach in mainland institutions, the burden has fallen on Hong Kong or overseas Chinese teachers.

LN: *There are many Chinese Canadian Christians. What would you like them to know about the work of Langham? How can we pray for you and your work in China and Hong Kong?*

VS: We need prayer and financial support from overseas Chinese (including those from Canada). China is officially an atheistic country and there are many restrictions placed on religious education. Our initiatives have often been frustrated by changes in the government policies and it is hard to plan ahead. John Stott had often described churches in the Majority World as “growth without depth.” This is true of China.

I remember the Economist a few years ago reported in China about the dearth of pastors to the extent that it is like the two-year old Christian teaching the one-year old. The situation has not improved much. But we are doing whatever is possible with the resources God has given us.

LN: *What are some of the challenges*

Langham is facing at the moment?

VS: For Scholars: There are very few competent scholars who are able to meet the demands of a PhD study programme and are committed to going back to China to serve under a restrictive environment. We are very careful in selecting the most dedicated individuals who have a proven record of serving in the local churches and are adaptable to a new environment. Unlike many Majority World countries

Introducing Edward Ng, a New Board Member for Langham Canada



My name is Edward Ng, and I am a new board member of Langham Canada.

I was born in Hong Kong, into a family with Buddhist influence. At a young age I had the opportunity to attend a church-based kindergarten, and then a prestigious Anglican school. I accepted Christ as my personal savior when I was 17.

I learned about basic Christianity by reading Rev. John Stott's book of the same name. I came to learn that Uncle John is an author with great intelligence and spiritual insights. God moved me to Canada when I was 20 and I went to university shortly afterwards. God allows me to finish my undergraduate degree, as well as my graduate degrees (masters and PhD).

Along the way of spiritual and intellectual formation, books by

Uncle John equipped me to understand the role of the churches in contemporary society and helped me to develop a Christian worldview. This explains why I responded positively when I was invited by Langham partnership to sit on their Canadian board.

I have benefitted much from the ministry of uncle John, and I discovered that Langham's ministry has been instrumental in training prominent Chinese bible scholars, like Dr. Stephen Lee, who now heads the China Graduate School of Theology in Hong Kong.

Langham has the track record and the vision of training many more scholars and preachers in the Majority World.

I highly recommend Langham to not only the Chinese churches, but to all Christ-centered churches across this beloved land of Canada.

where we serve with a colonial background, scholars from China find it exceptionally demanding to use English as a medium of education.

For Literature: Although there are more than 1,300 Christian books published in China, many of these are not available in the bookstores as the distribution network is under-developed. There is an urgent need to make good theological books available to the growing Christian population. The church authorities are only allowed to sell their books inside the churches and not to the general public. Approval can some time take years for a new title to be published (sometimes up to 10 years). We have had some success approaching secular /government owned publishers if the books can be seen to be making profit. The government may try to regulate this sector as well.

For Preaching: Most of the pastors we are training come from the house churches. This is where the need is most acute. For example, in a recent seminar organized in a Southwestern city, only seven out of 75 full-time pastors have attended courses in a nearby Bible school. Yet they have to preach four to six times a month. There is an urgency to equip and support them so that the congregations can be fed with God's Word.

We focus on God's Word. Everything we do is for the purpose of raising the standards of biblical teaching and preaching around the world, equipping God's people with God's Word to grow in Christ-likeness and to fulfill God's mission in the world.

This is especially relevant in Mainland China where, officially, no foreigners or missionaries are allowed to work with the local churches. By training the pastors and church leaders through our three programmes of scholarship, preaching and literature, they will be equipped to evangelize the non-believers around them while growing and nurturing the church members to maturity.

Isobel Stevenson, Canadian Langham Editor, reports the South Asia Bible Commentary is Coming to Life

By Isobel Stevenson

The advertising brochure that will be sent out to announce the imminent arrival of the *South Asia Bible Commentary* will include photos of the team of theological editors.

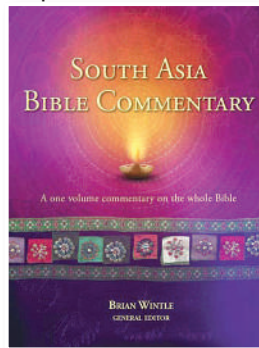
It was jokingly suggested that there should be two sets of photos – one before the project and one after! None of them knew how much work lay ahead when in 2008 they committed themselves to producing a one-volume Bible commentary. Had they known, they might never have dared to sign up for the project!

But at last the end is in sight. The final sections are being edited and all that remains is typesetting, proofreading and the tying up of a few loose ends before the 1800-page book is sent to the printers.

Then on to Delhi for a grand launch at the Cathedral Church of the Redemption in New Delhi on 4 October 2015. This church lies in the heart of the capital, next to the parliament buildings and the presidential palace.

National leaders and representatives of all India's Christian communities will be invited to celebrate the arrival of the first one-volume Bible commentary written for South Asians by South Asians.

But – the end is not yet! There is much to be done in the months between now and next October. Not least fundraising to cover the costs of printing and shipping page 4 ►►



Jennifer Cuthbertson, Coordinator for Trainer Development, Langham Preaching, Moves From Pioneering to Strengthening

By Jennifer Cuthbertson

It is difficult to believe my work with Langham began almost three years ago (Feb, 2012). Much has transpired during this time. Jonathan Lamb stepped down as director of Langham Preaching and Paul Windsor stepped up.

As Paul describes the transition, "We've moved from a pioneering stage (Jonathan's strength) to one of establishing and strengthening the ministry around the world."

I'm delighted to be participating in the building up of over 60 Langham Preaching programs around the world in a constantly developing and deepening role. Langham Preaching, now in its teens, is maturing nicely.

In the past year, we've begun holding teaching workshops in the different regions of the world. Our local facilitators are all volunteers and many have not previously taught. The workshops help equip them with some basic teaching skills and give them the confidence to lead their own preaching seminars.

Almost two years ago, I initiated a monthly resource entitled HELPS for our facilitators and preaching club leaders. In December, #20 will be sent out in English, French, Spanish, and Russian! We're excited about the reception HELPS gets each month from a growing number of people.

The Langham staff and volunteers I meet and get to work with as I travel around the world are the crème de la crème. What a privilege it is to be a part of this organization.

20,000 books – enough to fill a 40-foot shipping container. This alone will cost more than \$70,000.

There is also still hard work ahead for the proofreading team. They are doing their utmost to catch every error that slipped past the editors and to ensure that this book is as handsome and successful as its predecessor. That book, the *Africa Bible Commentary*, is now available in five languages spoken in Africa, with two more translations almost completed.

The South Asia Bible Commentary has already begun to compete, as a Hindi translation is already underway, with more to follow.

Please continue to pray for the skill for the proofreaders and for the necessary funds to sustain this project. Bible colleges, students and pastors across South Asia are eagerly awaiting its arrival.



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