



CANADA

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PARTNERSHIP

Spring 2024

*Langham Preaching graduation in Bolivia*

LANGHAM PARTNERSHIP IN LATIN AMERICA

Langham Partnership is a growing part of the story of contemporary Latin America's spiritual life. Since the arrival of the Spanish in the early 1500s and until recently, the Roman Catholic Church has been the dominant spiritual presence. But that is changing dramatically. Protestant churches, first planted about 200 years ago in parts of Latin America, grew slowly and imperceptibly at first, but especially within the past fifty years, the spiritual change in Latin America has been massive. *The Economist* magazine (April 2023) says that today "Evangelical Christianity is the fastest-growing religion in the region," and "is making evangelicalism a potent political force."

Two key Latin American evangelical leaders, both close friends of Langham's founder John Stott, were Ecuadorian Dr René Padilla (1932 - 2021) and Dr Samuel Escobar (born in Peru in 1934). Their public ministry began in the 1960s, at a time when Latin American Catholicism was heavily influenced by Liberation Theology, which defined salvation primarily in political, economic and social terms. For René, the biblical story, and human need, were bigger than this. But he also rejected a narrow theology which defined salvation in purely otherworldly, spiritual terms, ignoring the Latin American cultural context. "A Gospel that leaves untouched our life in the world – in relationship to the world of men as well as in relationship to the world of creation – is not the Christian Gospel, but culture Christianity, adjusted to the mood of the day. This kind of gospel has no teeth." Padilla shared, along with John Stott, a vision of "the whole Gospel for the whole man for the whole world."

When John Stott organized the 1974 Lausanne Congress, he invited René and Dr Samuel Escobar. Samuel has taught in Baptist seminaries in the USA and Spain, and served as General Secretary of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship Canada (1972-1975), president of the United

Bible Societies (1996-2004) and of IFES (1995-2003). (He received an honorary doctorate from McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton in 1997.) Samuel and René both understood that a growing Church must be missional. They organized the Latin American Congress on Evangelization (CLADE), held every ten years since 1969. In 1977, Brazil's Inter-Varsity movement organized Latin America's first missionary conference, when the Brazilian Church first recognized their missionary calling to Portuguese-speaking Angola and Mozambique. Ten years later, the Ibero-American Missionary Congress (COMIBAM) in São Paulo, Brazil, became the first missionary congress organized by and for Latin Americans. Today, Langham Literature supports a Brazil-based publisher founded by an Angolan with a vision for his homeland (see story at page 2).

The Latin American Church is mission-focused. The most recent COMIBAM congress, with its theme "The glory of Christ in the nations," held in Bogotá, Colombia, had over 800 participants from 40 countries. Latin American missionaries now work under many regionally based agencies, and current estimates are that 400 agencies are sending out 9,000 missionaries. The region's cultural diversity gives them great cultural dexterity and openness. But Latin American missions also face challenges: the need to sustain local churches' interest and support over the long-term, and a growing recognition of the need for adequate spiritual and theological preparation for effective ministry long-term.

As the Church has grown, local pastors and Church leaders increasingly saw the importance of strong, Biblical preaching. A movement to train Latin American pastors in expository preaching was founded in 1999 in Colombia by Jorge Atencia, who had worked with student movements in Latin America and was a close friend of Samuel Escobar, René Padilla, and John Stott. Jorge started the ministry of training

biblical expositors through “escuelitas” (small schools) of pastors who met locally to pray, share sermon ideas and encourage each other to become better preachers. In 2007 this ministry was merged into Langham Partnership as Langham Preaching Latin America, under the leadership of Igor Améstegui as Regional Facilitator for Latin America. Igor had previously served 15 years as the General Secretary of Bolivia’s IFES affiliate, and he soon was joined by his friend Jorge Atencia, director of a preaching training movement based in Colombia. (Jorge and his Calgary-born wife Gail met at Regent College, Vancouver, and today live in Ecuador.)

Today, the work is divided into three regions, each with its own Regional Coordinator. Wilfredo Weigandt (based in Argentina), an architect, began as a voluntary facilitator and is currently supervisor of the Southern Cone. Alex Chiang, a sociologist and educator, is based in Peru, and oversees not just the Andes region, but Hispanic preachers who have emigrated but still participate in *escuelitas* in Canada, South Africa and the USA. Dionisio Orjuela, a veterinarian and pastor in Ibagué, Colombia, oversees Central America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries. Today, there are Preaching movements in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Brazil and Nicaragua. During the lockdowns, *escuelitas* continued to operate, and the online program expanded. In the year to June 30, 2023, 73 training seminars were held in 16 countries across South and Central America, equipping 2,800 pastors and lay leaders, and 362 preaching clubs met for ongoing mentoring.

A growing church means a need for pastors, and today many Langham Scholars teach in regional seminaries. Among them, Milton Acosta

(Langham Scholar, Trinity Evangelical, Illinois), a member of Langham’s International Council, teaches in Medellín, Colombia, and served as Old Testament editor for Langham’s *Latin America Bible Commentary*, released in 2019. This commentary was the fruit of twelve years’ work by over 100 Latin American theologians, with René Padilla as General Editor. Langham Scholars continue to help develop theological education in the region. Central American Theological Seminary (SETECA) in Guatemala is developing a PhD program, working among others with Dr Donald Guthrie (Trinity Evangelical). SETECA’s Dr Pablo Branch says: “I am so thankful for Langham’s investment in Evangelical doctoral education in Latin America and for your decision to partner strategically with SETECA in the development of a new program that will serve theological institutions and the Church across the Spanish speaking world.”

There is reason to rejoice in Latin America. *The Economist* reported that in the past decade, a new church has opened in Brazil almost every hour, of which 80% were evangelical. Honduras’s Protestant population is now reported at 44%, Guatemala 38%, El Salvador 35%, Nicaragua 30%, Brazil 26%. However, these figures include Prosperity Gospel churches, a large and growing challenge. The “growth” in the number of churches is also often linked to church splits over conflicts between pastors over money or power. Some Evangelicals have become overtly identified with national politicians, undermining their credibility.

Langham Partnership is excited to see what God continues to do in this region. Preaching events reach thousands of keen pastors. Langham Scholars provide theological education in evangelical seminaries, and Literature is publishing books which are edifying Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking believers in the region, Europe and Africa.

LANGHAM LITERATURE GROWS IN BRAZIL AND AROUND THE WORLD

Langham Literature is committed to providing excellent biblical and theological resources, written by and for Majority World Church leaders. Increasingly, that involves helping to strengthen Indigenous publishers. Langham knows from decades of experience that these publishers are more aware of local needs and questions than publishers controlled from the outside, and they tend to outlast publishers controlled by churches or missions run by people from other countries. Langham Literature currently works with locally-owned Christian publishers in around 25 countries, including countries as varied as Thailand, Cambodia, Benin, Ethiopia, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Serbia, Poland, Albania, Peru, Greece, Russia and Mongolia.

In 2023, Langham Canada began to support Editora Quitanda, a small publisher based in São Paulo, Brazil, and a picture of God’s multinational Church in action. The founder, Tomás Camba, is an Angolan, married to a Brazilian. He believes the spiritual growth of Angolan Christians is being held back by a lack of books and resources,

because relatively few Christian books are available in Portuguese, Angola’s official language, but also because publishing costs in Angola are extremely high. As Tomás explains, the result is “around 70% of Angola’s population are said to be Christian, yet more than 90% of the materials the Church uses are from Brazil, and to make matters worse, most of these are translations from American authors, often failing to address Brazilian realities, much less Angolan realities!”

As the largest Portuguese-speaking country in the world, Brazil is a natural place to base a publisher for the Angolan Church, and eventually also for the wider Portuguese-speaking world. More than 260 million people speak Portuguese worldwide, less than 6% of them in Portugal itself. It is the official main language in 8 countries, including Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé & Príncipe, and East Timor. Tomás is slowly building connections to reach all these audiences.



Editora Quitanda staff with Tomás Camba (second from right) and Colin Macpherson (left)

Quitanda currently has a staff of six, plus seven freelancers from all over Brazil. Tomás plans to move to Angola eventually, to set up a business which will publish Quitanda books in Africa, and import from Brazil. Quitanda has already published 36 books, with 12 more in process, and a long list of ideas for the coming years. Recent titles include *Apologetica Mwangolê*, dealing with apologetics issues in the Angolan context, including the challenge of syncretism. Quitanda is also publishing a Portuguese translation of Langham's book *Expository Preaching in Africa*, and *Teologia Pastoral*, a collection about effective ministry by Brazilian pastors.

By supporting Langham's Publisher Development program, and the ministry of its director Colin Macpherson, Langham Canada is making a significant difference in the provision of high quality theological resources around the world. Anglophone Canadian Christians enjoy and often take for granted the enormous range of books available to pastors, church leaders and lay people in their mother tongue, and written with their context and worldview in mind. But many Christians throughout the Majority World lack such access to relevant resources. Through this program, and by investing in entrepreneurs like Tomás, Langham Literature is working to redress this imbalance, and help equip our brothers and sisters around the world. Thank you for your role in that partnership!

REMEMBER,

Canadians can order Langham Literature titles as well. It's now easier than ever on the Langham Canada site ca.langham.org or Langhamliterature.org



Sarah Kim is a Toronto-based lawyer and Langham supporter.

"It is a privilege and joy to support Langham Partnership. The ministry's emphasis on preparing Majority World pastors to teach and preach the Scriptures faithfully, holding to the fundamental truths, and funding scholarships for Majority World seminary students who will in turn prepare future pastors, is significantly important and necessary. May the Holy Spirit continue to move through the ministry in spreading the gospel and transforming hearts and minds."

– Sarah Kim

LETTER FROM HAITI

Dr. Guenson Charlot is National Coordinator for Langham Preaching in Haiti, and President of Emmaus University, one of the only higher education institutions in Haiti with governmental recognition and international accreditation. Emmaus University exists to equip Christ-like redemptive leaders for the transformation of Haiti, the Caribbean, and beyond. Dr Charlot is also an alumnus of New Brunswick's Kingswood University. He shares an update about Haiti.

I know you have heard what is happening in Haiti right now, and I don't need to tell you how bad things have become. All the major news outlets in the world paint a fairly accurate picture of our dire situation.

First, I want to let you know that we are all physically fine at Emmaus, in the northern city of Cap-Haitien, about 130 km by air from the capital Port-au-Prince, the focus of the political chaos. Cap-Haitien remains calm. We are grateful to God that we are able to continue our mission at Emmaus University.

However, we are traumatized and emotionally drained. Our resources are stretched thin. There is such great uncertainty, and living in such uncertainty for an unpredictable amount of time is incredibly stressful. Presently, we are completely isolated from the rest of the world. Our airports remain closed. We are using the last drops of fuel in our tanks.

One of my biggest concerns, however, is the proposed solution I have heard from the world. I often wonder to what extent people who are offering us help, truly understand what is going on in Haiti? Their best efforts appear to me like trying to patch a hole in a tire. But are they thinking about the nail that punctured the tire? Or the road the tire had travelled?

I have seen too many resources wasted in the past trying to patch that hole. I have seen too much donated money wasted trying to appease insatiable appetites, thrown into a bottomless hole. People do not seem to learn from their mistakes. I have heard leaders apologize for their mistaken approaches to help Haiti, yet today they are taking these same approaches and are using the same old techniques.

I acknowledge we need urgent help today, since we are plunging into an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. But there is no quick fix to our situation. Cutting some branches will only bring short-lived relief. The tree needs to be treated from root-level. We are dealing with strongholds of rebellion, self-destruction, self-deception, self-hatred, manipulation, and centuries of oppression by evil national spirits. To ignore these important realities of our context is to support the status quo, thereby giving the Evil One more power to advance his destructive agenda in Haiti.

This is where Emmaus University's work comes in. We understand the root cause of our problem in Haiti, and we are called to address it. In preparing Christlike leaders for the redemption of Haiti, our task is to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant (cf. Jeremiah 1:10). All of this we do within the context of our classrooms with one batch of students at a time.

We acknowledge this approach to help the country takes time. It calls for faith, perseverance, and patience. I am glad as a community of faith we understand this process and are committed to persevere until Haiti breathes new and fresh air. The redemption of Haiti begins with the training and preparation of its Christian leadership – future pastors, and seminary and Bible college teachers.

To learn more about Emmaus's ministry please go to emmaus.edu.ht

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WILL YOU JOIN US ON MISSION? LANGHAM'S WORK RESONATES WITH GLOBALLY-MINDED CANADIAN CHRISTIANS WHO LOVE AND VALUE THE CHURCH OF THE MAJORITY WORLD. JOIN US.

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Remember to email us at canada@langham.org to request a zoom meeting with Steven Van Dyck, executive director of Langham Canada and the outreach and mission team at your church.