

The Global Council Provides a Global Connection

By

Bruce A. Howell,

General Director of Foreign Missions

Chris Johns, in the *National Geographic* tells of a photo he took while visiting Africa. It was of an incredible bridge built by the persistence of one man, Crispin. In 1971, five people lost their lives while crossing the Zambezi River. Crispin worked on a mission and vowed to stop further deaths by constructing a bridge. He had little resources and no knowledge in bridge building. He started reading books, gathering cable, and enlisting help. In five years a 1,000-foot walking bridge was ready, overcoming an impossible task of connecting two sides of the river.

We have a bridge in place that provides a way for men and women to pass from sin to transformed lives in Jesus Christ. It is the Global Council. It encourages the North American Church to join hands with the six other regions identified by our organizational setup to evangelize our world. Scripture is fulfilled through our efforts. “For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad” (1 Thessalonians 1:8). In this article I will focus on only one aspect of the Global Council—working together to spread the gospel across borders—providing a global connection.

At the recent Global Council, in Bangkok, Thailand, 175 attended, representing 110 nations, and 171 languages. We received solid direction and vision-casting. Our General Superintendent, Rev. Kenneth Haney said the United Pentecostal Church International exists for two fundamental reasons: to preserve doctrine and for evangelism. We do more together than we do separately. He also explained that “the Global Council was created as a vehicle to carry us where we need to go” and “the need of the hour is evangelism of our world with truth and power.”

Missionary Sim Strickland recently commented on the Global Council, “It was a personal blessing to sit down at a meal or to go shopping with a brother from India, China, Venezuela, or Syria to talk about God’s Kingdom. It is truly rejuvenating to know ‘first hand’ the news and to see the love for the gospel and doctrine of faith that we share is everywhere going forward.”

Earlier, in 2000, Rev. H. E. Scism, in his keynote address, “The Heart of the Global Council” explained that the Global Council is a man-made structure designed to serve as an avenue to communicate the gospel. He asked, “Why do we need the Global Council?” The answer, “SOULS.” It is urgent that we unite our worldwide efforts to rescue perishing souls.

The Gospel is spreading like a huge connect-the-dot picture. Bridges are being built through cross-border evangelism, providing a powerful global connection. As I sat in the Global Council—and have read many reports since then—I was amazed with how the gospel is crossing borders, and spreading like wild fire. I will share the story with

you! What you read below, in no way, exhausts what God is doing around the globe. It is meant to give you a glimpse.

Europe/Middle East Regional Director, Rev. Robert K. Rodenbush, reports how the gospel is spreading from Greece to Armenia. Regional missionaries have been approved and are on location. More than 200 constituents now worship in a thriving church in the capital of Yerevan. Their large building houses the church, Bible school, and a residence for the missionary. It is all paid for and in good shape. Several preaching points have been established. Get this. Preachers from the infant church in Armenia are now spreading the gospel into Azerbaijan and have established a church there. Brother Rodenbush is also thrilled with other cross-border evangelism efforts in his growing region. Examples include preachers in Northern Ireland reaching into the Republic of Ireland to spread truth. The preachers in Ukraine are crossing borders into Bulgaria. The church in Greece is working hard to establish the truth in Albania.

Regional Director for *Africa*, Rev. Jerry Richardson is excited about the work of Regional missionary, Peter Mua. This young man and his family, originally part of the church in Cameroon, have been sent to Equatorial Guinea. They have weathered the storms of starting a new work, and now have fifty-five members in the main church, and recently established two preaching points.

The church in Liberia, despite years of civil war, has crossed borders and they are making a truth connection in Guinea. This is interesting since Liberia is an English nation and Guinea, a French one. There are now three active preaching points and a total membership of about 207 people. There is excitement and anticipation of revival in this

predominantly Muslim nation. The church in Ghana, along with the effective witness of preachers from other West African nations, is assisting in establishing the church in the Gambia. Preachers from Madagascar have skipped from this island nation to mainland Africa, and several other islands to spread truth. The church in Brazil, *South America* has provided an awesome regional missionary family in Mozambique. They are doing a great job!

John Hopkins, Regional Director of *Central America/Caribbean* rejoices over several regional missionary families in his region, and with how churches are crossing borders into unreached areas. A regional missionary has been sent by the church in Mexico into Cuba. He reports over 400 constituents worshipping in twenty-one churches, and served by sixteen preachers. They are bent on reaching 11 million souls in Cuba. A regional missionary has been sent from the Leeward Islands to Curacao and is doing an outstanding job. The Jamaican church has been responsible for founding works in the Caribbean such as the Cayman Islands and Guyana.

Regional Director for *Asia*, Lynden Shalm is excited about efforts by the church in Pakistan to spread the gospel into Afghanistan. He reports great things happening in China. We are thankful that the two regions, Asia and Pacific, have joined hands to evangelize 1.3 billion people. The goal is to penetrate China with the gospel from all sides, and this is being done. Some of the stories of conversions taking place are absolutely remarkable. The church in India, through the years, has sent preachers into Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Nepal. Bible school students in Thailand started an outreach in the nation of Laos, and seventeen received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Five youth

from Laos came to a recent youth camp. Four of these were baptized and two received the Holy Ghost.

Richard Denney, Regional Director of the *Pacific Region* thanks God that the church 'down under' in Australia has been instrumental in spreading the gospel to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Indonesia, East Timor, and other nations. The church in Fiji has sent a missions team into Tuvalu. Six were baptized. The mature church in the Philippines has been helpful in providing ministerial personnel in Hong Kong and Singapore. In these nations there are a large number of Filipino domestic workers providing a global connection of truth. As they work, they bring others into the Kingdom of God. The Tabernacle of Joy, under the leadership of Missionary Steve Willoughby has been sending evangelistic teams into China, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Pakistan and the Philippines. The church in Vanuatu has been sending evangelistic personnel into French-speaking New Caledonia. They have sowed the seed. The Ed Kennedy family, now on location, will reap the harvest. Plans are being made jointly with Australia, Brazil, and the Pacific Region for a possible Regional Missionary to soon be on location in Dili, East Timor.

The global church is advancing! How? Men and women of God, backed by the Spirit of God, financed by the church of God, are going in the will of God, building bridges over geographical borders. This Church is mobilized by a deep burden for souls. The Global Council seeks to provide the coordination of the whole gospel to the whole world by the whole church. It provides the global connection!