



# Operation World

when we pray, God works  
december 2008

## **CATCHING UP**

Greetings all from a chilly England! I asked you last time to pray about several sets of meetings that I was attending. The first two were gatherings of prayer network leaders from around the globe. There were a lot of interesting discussions and some fascinating people. The greatest value of this time was definitely meeting old friends and colleagues and making new ones, all of whom were closely connected with prayer movements in countries or regions or people groups. I learned a lot about how God is at work around the world in those 5 short days. I also learned a lot more about some of the large scale exciting plans afoot to help accelerate the completion of the Great Commission – just do a search for 4kworldmap and you'll see what I mean!

## **IHOP – BUT NOT PANCAKES**

One of the highlights of this time was meeting Mike Bickle, leader of the International House of Prayer (IHOP). Despite being a well known international figure, he is a very approachable, humble and funny guy. It was also quite a mixed sensation when he told me that he had never heard of Operation World before. Initially disappointed, I brought him a copy of the book and CD the next morning just before the main session started. Five minutes later he was waving at me down the row trying to get my attention. When I peered over he was giving the thumbs up to me and mouthing the words “this is AWESOME!”. Always encouraging words to hear; especially from one of his stature!

## **PUBLISHING**

Next on the itinerary was a couple of days with our publishers, both of the paper version and the digital version. We needed to discuss a host of issues; from the content to the design to the other products to, most importantly, the release date. We've agreed to go for a completion date of the end of November 2009. This will allow the printers and distributors time to get it out for Spring Harvest, which is the big Easter conference event here in the UK as well as the annual WEC Open Day in early May. On an even larger scale, the Global Day of Prayer and the Lausanne III Congress – both centred in Capetown, South Africa – will occur in 2010.

This deadline fills me with dread, fear and trembling. Effectively, we will have to accomplish as much in the next 12 months as we have in the last 30. When I break it down, I don't know how we're going to manage it. I really don't. Please pray for discipline and work rate, for great contacts, and for creative ways of making the process faster without compromising quality or good research principles. You can tell how serious things are once you know that in the last

month or two, I've passed on the opportunity to speak at/travel to conferences in North Wales, Singapore, Texas, Southern California and Hawai'i! I'm expecting God to somehow reward me for such single-minded dedication to the job once it's finished ;)

## **TEAM MATES**

But we do have a team that is growing, both in size and in experience. In addition to our existing team, we're also looking forward to welcoming:

Julia Lee – Canada – January – 3 weeks  
Molly Wall - USA – January – long term  
Nkosana Phiri – UK – January – up to 1 year  
John & Margaret Bardsley – Australia – February – 6 months  
Kannan Rajendran – India – March – 3 months  
Michael & Dawna Jaffarian – USA – August – 2 years

As you can see, it makes for quite a numerous and diverse team in term of nationality, background and age! Please pray for Daniel and Arnelle, who had to return to and stay back home in the USA due to health problems with both Daniel (anticipated) and Arnelle (not anticipated and not resolved!). We are not certain when she will be well enough to return and put in a shift again. Pray also for Fiona, Lisa and Jen who continue to hold the fort faithfully and with increasing confidence and indispensability!

## **ONE NIGHT IN BANGKOK**

Well, according to the song, it makes a proud man humble and the tough guys tumble. But I was around for a lot more than one night. I had the rare opportunity to attend a conference which was a veritable goldmine of information. The World Evangelical Alliance held a gathering in Thailand from 25 October until 4 November. It was a coming together of hundreds of people, representing the Evangelical Alliances of their countries, as well as many people involved in global mission. It offered the opportunity to share briefly, to interact with delegates and even to have an Operation World table where attenders could come and collect our current OW information for their country and offer feedback. It was very busy and cost a lot of time and money to be there, but this kind of gathering happens only once every few years. Thankfully, I made lots of excellent contacts; people who were very knowledgeable about their country or special interest area (like AIDS, children at risk, etc.). Now, the real challenge will be to make the leap from a friendly conversation and the exchange of business cards to a longer term correspondence which involves a real





exchange of real information. Trust me, this a lot harder than you'd think! So pray with us for that exact issue.

It was also another great chance to hear and learn about how God is at work in many different countries and ways. Likewise, the time in Thailand allowed me to renew fellowship with a lot of friends, colleagues and acquaintances and strengthen links with key people who have long offered information or input into Operation World.

Of course, it wasn't ALL business and no pleasure. Although I didn't do anything touristy, we did get to enjoy a copious amount of delicious Thai food. Also one evening involved an excursion to a Thai cultural show resplendent with music, dancing and some quite astounding costumes!

### ***THE TRIALS OF LIFE***

Upon return to the UK, I came crashing back down to earth. Not in the literal sense; the flights were non-eventful. But once I arrived from tropical climate to chilly, clammy England, I had the bonus of discovering that in my absence, the boiler for the whole building had gone kaBOOM and in addition to creating a mini-deluge, had rendered us without heating or hot water. Just as winter was settling in, how convenient! Since the explosion was the result of a faulty installation process, insurance will cover the replacement and damages albeit not the severe EMOTIONAL damages of not having a hot shower in the morning! However, the haggling and due process has meant that we are still without hot water (although the heating now works) and I won't get that hot shower until the New Year. Thank God for that gym membership – the longer we go without hot water at Bulstrode, the better shape I'll be in!

### ***THE TASK AT HAND***

Despite all of these light afflictions, naturally, the show must go on. We still have a LOT of countries to write the first draft, not to mention the revision, editing, checking, typesetting and all of the material that goes into the book but is not directly a country.

Some of the countries we've recently completed are Japan, Hungary, Equatorial Guinea, Puerto Rico, Malawi, Guam and Sweden. Quite a range of geography, ethnicity, religion and social issues just in that handful of nations! Whatever else I might

complain about, my work is certainly very educational and informative!

### ***CHRISTMAS BREAK***

These next two weeks will kind of be the calm before the storm. Mind you, a 12 month long storm! But I have the opportunity for a wonderful holiday which I'd never be able to afford were I to have to pay for it. Friends who run a tourism company in South Africa have allowed me to tag along for free on a week-long excursion which will include safari/game parks, hiking to UNESCO world heritage sites and adventure sports like abseiling/rappelling down cliffs and bungee jumping (although I'll be passing on the bungee!). It promises to be a very cool 7 days. Additionally, I'll have two days in Germany en route where I'll be able to stay with old friends who used to live here at Bulstrode. We'll visit the famous outdoor Christmas night market and I've been assured that I'll be generously provisioned with local sustenance for the brief sojourn. All the travel, fortunately, is covered by my accumulated airmiles so it will be the trip of a life time for nothing other than the taxes for the flights and the cost of food and drink. I'm looking forward to the hot sun and wildlife and won't miss the cold showers and frigid weather at all!

### ***THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT***

Due to the informational nature of my work, I've had to follow the global financial crisis fairly closely. One thing is clear in my mind – I would never want to be a hedge fund manager! Quite apart from that though, it is reassuring to know that my current and future well-being is ultimately in God's hands rather than dependent on the vagaries of economics and the stock market. However, I am particularly thankful at times like this for the people and churches who have been faithful supporters over the years. Those who have upheld me in prayer and those who have given generously – you know who you are and I am grateful to you all! You are the ones who enable such ministries as Operation World to function.

Plenty to pray for here, thanks for reading and have a wonderful Christmas and New Year!

In Christ and for the Harvest,  
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I'm lovin' it ☺