



Operation World

when we pray, God works
january 2005

HAPPY 2005!!

Well, the New Year has been rung good and proper! Last New Year, I celebrated with 6,000 others at a European Youth Missions Conference. This year, I was in Central London with 150,000 others to watch central London lit up by spectacular fireworks. I was with a few friends old and new, but the celebrations were nonetheless muted for all due to the still recent tragedy of the tsunami in Asia. Even as the dazzling fireworks burst over the Thames, my mind hearkened back to just a few months earlier when I myself was in one of the affected countries.

TRULY A GLOBAL FAITH

For two weeks in September and October, I had the privilege to be a part of two conferences in Thailand. The first was the Lausanne Congress Forum. This entailed over 1600 Christian leaders from 128 different countries, gathered together to discuss, plan and pray about different key issues related to world evangelism. It was quite a large scale event, with many strategic topics being raised by iconic figures in global Christianity. But my own highlights were small moments. The Mongolian pastor I met over one lunch, the Thai university students offering their time to help with conference logistics, the time out with a research colleague catching up on what God has been up to in our lives. I met many potential key contacts for Operation World as well. Despite (obviously) the fact that there were many different visions and strategies and attitudes amongst the incredibly diverse delegates, one thing that really got a hold



London Eye ablaze at New Year

of me is that active living Christianity is genuinely a global phenomenon, not limited to any particular cultural or theological expression – what this translates to is that the church is truly alive and well today! For a fuller account of my Lausanne experience, go to my blog site and try the October 2004 entries for more musings...

INTERNATIONAL PRAYERS

Another conference followed on from the Lausanne event, this one being the Leadership Conference of the International Prayer Council. I had some initial misgivings about this event, not knowing anyone and suspecting that they might be a group of weirdos with whacky spiritual ideas or a cadre of self-appointed religious know-it-alls (after all, there are such groups out there). In the end, the IPC was a diverse group, with representatives coming from many different countries and cultures, and with many theological expressions – from traditional conservative Protestant to full-on charismatic. What unified us is a strong belief that committed, informed, impassioned prayer is not just a nice idea but can truly make a difference in the world. I met a lot of really fascinating people with incredible ministries and a few of them I got to know not just as colleagues but as friends. One of these was Jaeson Ma, a Chinese-American with a real passion to see student cell group movements birthed in universities in America and beyond (see www.campuschurch.net).

WRAPPING UP BEFORE CHRISTMAS

One of the jobs that continually reappeared throughout 2004 was the reprint of Operation World 2001. Not a rewrite, this version was simply another print run that was required due to continued demand and no more supply. We did make a number of changes to the text,

however, as countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and others have significantly changed and demanded revision. The book is now with the designer who is making the text press-ready.

CHRISTMAS

Christmas 2004 was a relatively quiet affair, given that I stayed at Bulstrode. I did manage to visit a number old friends and acquaintances, get some non-OW work done, read a number of very good books and watch all three extended edition Lord of the Rings DVDs during "holiday" time!

GETTING IT STARTED

With the beginning of the New Year comes the time for resolutions and such. I made no resolutions, but will certainly need some resolve. These beginning phases require a lot of initiative and self-starting. Once we are in the swing of things, the work will present itself to us relentlessly, but for now, I need to plan and chart how everything needs to fit together. One area that is sorted out is hardware. We have two new computers in the office which allows us to no longer worry about old machines which struggled to run the programmes we needed. The other area in which we have seen real progress in the last couple of weeks is that of databases.



splendidly costumed traditional Thai dancers

TRAINING DAY

The first Saturday of February a small group of 4 of us gathered together at Bulstrode to learn about relational database structure and design. The idea was that the fellow who did the programming for our databases for the last edition was going to put the tools in *our* hands. We would be

designing the whole front end of the Operation World databases. This was a rather daunting prospect, but by the end of the day, I was quite encouraged to see how relatively simple it was. Obviously, there is going to be a lot of trial and error and hard work involved in doing this ourselves, but we will have advice when we need it, and it had delivered us from over-dependence on programmers and technicians.

NO "I" IN TEAM

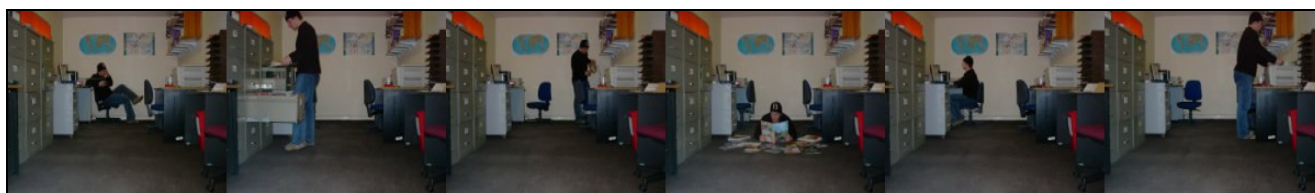
The final word is that even if we have 100 computers and the best-designed database ever, it is all useless without a team to work with! Thankfully, Laura Bedford is already working a day a week until her orientation is finished, at which point she will join full time. Ji Min Yuh will hopefully be joining us from the USA this spring for at least 6 months. So progress is being made(!), but the truth is that we *STILL* need people to commit to this project for next 3-4 years! Will you pray with us for that?

In Christ and for the Harvest,

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trying to wear many hats in the office