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MAGAZINE

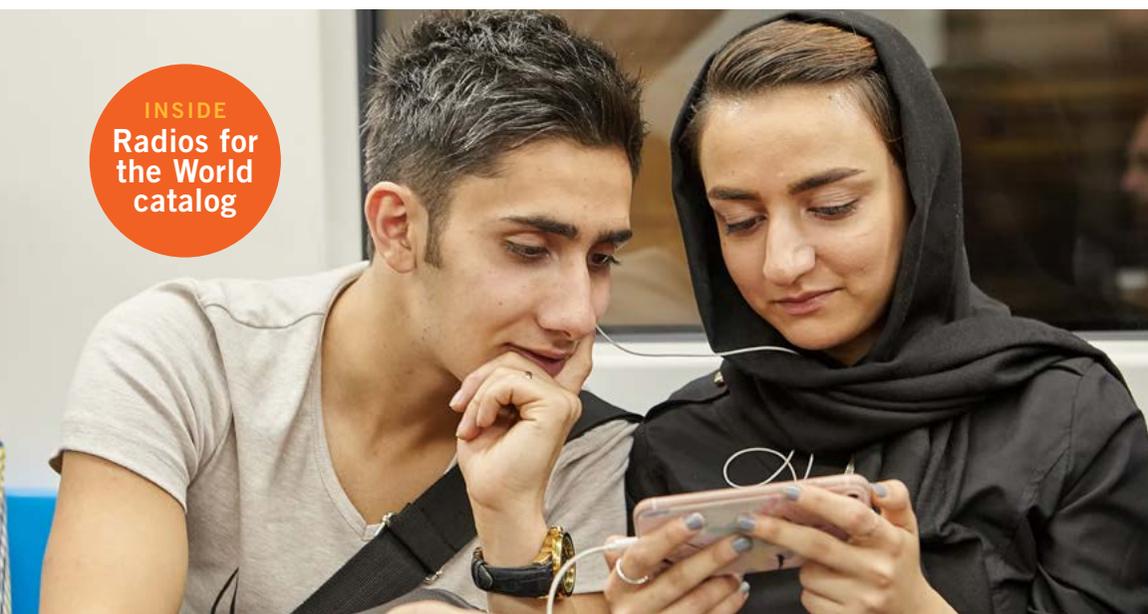
OCT. 2019 - JAN. 2020 • TWR.ORG



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SHINING THE LIGHT WHEN TIMES ARE DARK

BECAUSE you gave

EXTENDING THE REACH OF THE GOOD NEWS

OASIS TRANSMITTER IS ESSENTIAL

Through you, our generous donors, the \$175,000 matching grant given toward our second West Africa transmitter – the Oasis transmitter – was met and exceeded! Our staff has been preparing the site and infrastructure to support the installation, which will give us expanded broadcasts across Nigeria, a huge country and stronghold of radical extremism. Recently, a TWR Africa listener wrote: “I am enjoying your program, even though I am a Muslim. You are really preaching and teaching the truth. Pray for me.” Your prayers and gifts help TWR carry out the Great Commission in West Africa. Thank you!



HOPE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

Because of your partnership in TWR’s programs for the Middle East and North Africa, Christians at risk of persecution can hear God’s Word through the privacy of radio and the internet. A listener in Libya wrote: “Following Jesus would not have been so clear and understood if not for *Talmatha* [a discipleship program]. I’m 26 years old from Tunisia and found Jesus through your broadcast. Thank you for helping me move from the darkness to the light of the Savior!” The \$266,500 you gave toward another year of programs like these is introducing seekers to the Savior, and we are grateful!

SHINE 800 SIGNAL COVERS CUBA

Since TWR’s broadcast power upgrade in 2018, moving from 100,000 to 450,000 watts, we have been able to reach the entire nation of Cuba with the hope of God’s Word. It also gives us expanded coverage of Venezuela, Mexico, Colombia and Brazil. Venezuelans wake up to encouraging programs that help them through turbulent times, Cubans gather around the radio at night with friends and family and, early in the morning, Amazon tribes enjoy hearing Jesus’ words in their own language. Your gifts of \$112,000 earlier this year meant more life-giving spiritual food for listeners like this one, who said: “TWR is stuck in my soul. When the churches were confiscated from us in 1961, you were our church.”

SILK ROAD TRANSMITTER IS ON THE AIR

In early June, TWR reached another major milestone in our broadcast history with your help: The Silk Road Transmitter went on the air in Central Asia. The stronger Silk Road signal covers large portions of six countries, among them Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The languages broadcast over the transmitter are spoken by people groups mostly classified as unreached by the gospel. Thank you for giving \$220,000 to help supply the new transmitter with a year of programs in several languages for Central Asia!

anniversary milestones

Join us in thanking the Lord for these TWR colleagues whom we honor during the second half of 2019 for serving 10 or more years with the ministry.

- 35 Marvin and Landrie Heath, Cary, N.C.
Tim and Glenda McElhaney, Virginia
- 30 Paul and Jan Stobbe, Cary, N.C.
Daryl and Carol VanDyken, Cyprus
- 25 Dave and Carol Butler, Cary, N.C.
- 20 Julia Hall, Cary, N.C.
- 15 Larry and Barbara Petersen, Montana



president's column

by Lauren Libby, President/CEO

Just before Jesus ascended to heaven, he gave the Great Commission.

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”

With those words, Jesus instructed his followers to expose men and women to the good news that he has redeemed them and then to teach and disciple them to follow him and ultimately reproduce their new lives in the lives of others.

Since that time, Jesus' followers have encountered barriers to sharing the message of the gospel and discipling believers. These barriers have been relational, economic, geographic, political, personal, spiritual and institutional in nature. However, in spite of these barriers, followers of Christ have found ways to share the good news and to disciple and equip new believers.

Jesus, aware of the barriers his followers would face, makes this bold statement in Revelation 3:8: “Behold, I have set before

you an open door, which no one is able to shut.” In essence, Jesus gives his followers a mandate to overcome barriers and promises to be with them and aid them with his authority.

Lorne Sanny, former international president of The Navigators, used to say, “Jesus has opened doors, but sometimes we have to go under, around, over or through those doors to share the gospel. But there are always open doors if we move forward.”

TWR has faced barriers to the ministry of the gospel since the ministry was launched in Tangier. For a time, in fact, the ministry was forced to leave the air due to political boundaries. But God opened a door via the ministry's move to Monte Carlo, where it had an even more powerful voice in Europe. And since then, using radio, digital media, print, satellite and video, TWR has shared the gospel message and equipped believers as we move through political, economic and spiritual barriers.

Today, the TWR ministry still faces barriers, but Jesus is still providing open doors. Praying and moving forward in faith are the keys to overcoming these barriers to the sharing of the gospel. Jesus continues to be with us, using his authority to diminish barriers as we fulfill TWR's calling, “to reach the world for Christ by mass media so that lasting fruit is produced.”

Come, pray and get involved in this ministry to the world as together we overcome barriers to sharing the gospel.

CONNECT WITH TWR



President/CEO Lauren Libby

Vice President/Chief Development Officer Tim Klingbeil

Director of Marketing & Communications David McCreary

Editor Jon Hill **Contributing Editor** Ann White

Designer Nicole Hughes **Cover photos** iStockPhoto.com

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AN INTERVIEW WITH THE CEO

God operates on a different model

Readers of TWR Magazine are familiar with the words of the ministry's chief executive officer, Lauren Libby. In his "President's Column" each issue, he shares what's on his heart – updates, concerns, upcoming opportunities.

It's been a very long time, however, since we sat down for an open-ended talk with the president. So Brandon Hall, one of the first-rate interns who served with TWR during the summer, did just that, producing an extensive, wide-ranging interview. An abbreviated version runs on these pages, but we urge you to read the full discussion at twr.org/ceo-interview.

Hall: The new Silk Road Transmitter for Central Asia just recently came online after years of prayer, hard work and fundraising. Tell us a bit about what that was like.

Libby: We've always been looking for a new outlet in Central Asia. Central Asia is a key place, because it's the home of all the "Stans": Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, etc. It's a part of the world that's 90 percent Islamic. So, that's one of the places we're seeking to reach.

The Silk Road Transmitter actually began to take shape about four years ago. There were negotiations between TWR and a country which we don't talk about – where the transmitter is located – as to how we could put a broadcast facility in. Over roughly two years of talks and negotiations, we came to a signed agreement and began to build the transmitter near the start of 2017.

And it's not just a transmitter; it's a whole infrastructure. You have to build the antenna, the transmitter, the programming facilities – you have to build everything when you're in that part of the world. And how do you produce programming in Kazakh? In Uzbek? How do you produce programming in all of these languages? It's a holistic process that has to go on with both the content and the delivery system. ...

When we started, we didn't have a dime in our pocket, so the Lord has provided. He's provided people, he's provided resources, and when that transmitter hit the air, content began to be transmitted and people began to listen. That was really the end of a long – almost a five-year – process.

Hall: What excites you most about what the new transmitter brings to the table?

Libby: Well, let me give you an illustration.

I was in a Scandinavian country last fall and met a young lady who happened to be Uzbek. When she heard I was with TWR, she thanked me because she and her brother became believers. Her parents were not, and they were governmental officials. She said, "We were looking for a way that we could begin to grow in our faith in Jesus," and one of the ways they found was TWR broadcasts. She said, "My parents forbade us to have a radio. They took away our radio and we were not able to listen. And what we would do is sneak out to the garage at night, turn on the auto radio and listen in the darkness to the

Join us on twr.org/ceo-interview to read Lauren Libby's thoughts about the following:

- **What are TWR's goals for the near future?**
- **How can supporters pray for the work?**
- **Is there a theme God wants TWR to focus on?**

TWR broadcasts. That was how we were able to survive spiritually."

So, that gives you an idea on why these projects are so important – that people are listening – because in the Middle East and Central Asia, there often is persecution. People are asking, "What have I done?" but also, "How do I grow in my relationship with Jesus?" And answering that question is really what TWR and the Silk Road Transmitter are all about.

Hall: What are a few of the challenges facing TWR's ministry right now, and how have you seen God working to help overcome them?

Libby: I think the biggest challenge we face is whether or not we will allow God to lead us into opportunities that are faith-based. So many times, we tend to say, "Well, if I don't have a plan and I can't see how this is going to work out in the end, then why should I get involved?" And, frankly, that's a business model – and it's a good business model. But God operates in a bit of a different way. What God does is he gives a vision to usually one person, or a group of people, and then as they begin to move forward in that vision, he motivates other people to be involved with their time, their talents and their money. So, I think the biggest challenge is deciding which opportunity to take, because there are all kinds of opportunities. The question is: Which ones, if any, have TWR's name on them, and do we have a faith that is willing to believe God for some things that normally don't happen? To bring into reality in the physical world what God has begun to think about in the spiritual world?

Bangladesh homes welcome gospel



Photo by Topu Saha/Creative Commons 2.0

When she started a radio home group, Shamsia experienced both the light and dark sides of being a Christian in Bangladesh.

Originally developed by TWR's national partner in neighboring India, radio home groups are small local gatherings at which participants listen to digital recordings of the Scripture-teaching classic *Thru the Bible* in their own languages and have time for discussion and sharing. But Shamsia's* husband didn't like having a group of Christians meeting in his house and reacted by making her life miserable.

The other participants "prayed earnestly for him," Shamsia said.

"Now he's totally changed, and he's no longer persecuting me," she told TWR. "I praise and thank the Lord very much."

TWR's international director for South Asia, Thomas Prasad, said outreach in Bangladesh generally encounters three kinds of people: true seekers; those revealing a little interest; and those overtly hostile to the gospel. The last group comprises about 90% of people belonging to the dominant religion.

"The bottom line is that anyone who wishes to reach out to the majority should be ready to be persecuted even to death," Prasad said.

In fact, he added, a coordinator affiliated with TWR was badly beaten by a mob this year and others who accept Christ may be ostracized or even stoned to death.

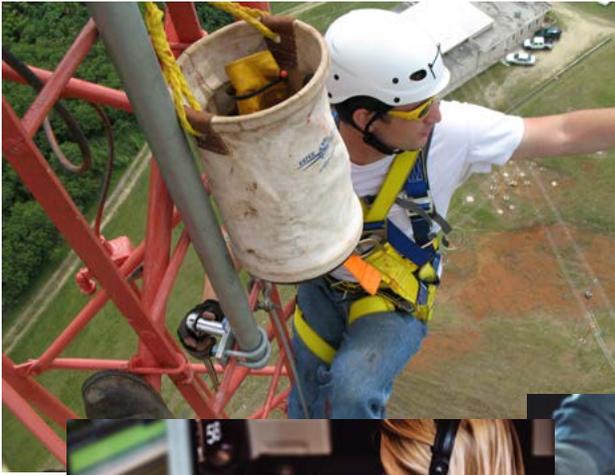
But the growth of radio home groups in Bangladesh points to hope for tomorrow. Hundreds of the groups are already meeting, and Prasad hopes that over a thousand will be up and running by the end of 2019.

And here's a surprising yet fascinating ministry fact: Globally, Bangladesh holds the all-time No. 2 spot for most visits to the TWR360 website offering Christian audio, video and text resources. Internet penetration in the country has more than doubled since 2014, and TWR ministry teams reach out to the people via YouTube and social media.

"An important lesson I have learned is to be faithful in presenting God's Word over media and to wait upon him to grow the fruits of his Word," Prasad said.

This listener, who participates in a radio home group, is an example of that fruit. "I am glad that I could learn the Word of God through the radio programs," he said. "Now I go from door to door with my neighbor to share about the programs."

**Shamsia is not her real name.*



“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

– MATT. 9:37-38



Ordinary Workers Needed for Extraordinary Purpose

TWR is always recruiting. As our president, Lauren Libby, has said, “If you don’t have leaders, you don’t have ministry, and if you don’t have people, you don’t have ministry.” Finding those people can be challenging at times, though.

Working for a gospel-centered organization is a daunting prospect for many: The idea of kingdom work calls to mind a lifetime of vocational ministry in some faraway village.

God’s calling, however, is often much more ordinary. Working in missions could mean serving in Africa for a decade, but it could also mean working remotely from home for a few months. It could mean painting radio towers in the Caribbean but could also mean serving in accounting to keep the ministry’s lights on. Often, all that’s needed is a willing worker to do the ordinary – not an overqualified worker to do the extraordinary.

“We’re not looking for pastors or church planters,” said Rick Weston, TWR’s chief personnel officer. “We’re looking for average Joes. We need people who can mow grass, repair cars, fix plumbing – we’re looking for people with an overwhelming sense of calling. If we can find those, we can place them.”

TWR currently needs to fill a plethora of roles around the world. Our most critical needs are in:

- Broadcast engineering
- Finance
- Human resources
- Maintenance
- Mechanical engineering
- Tower maintenance

If you feel the Lord calling you to serve, don’t let anything stand in your way. No skill set is too unlikely, and no calling is too mundane to be used powerfully by God. For we have a God who said to the apostle Paul, “‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Cor. 12:9).

To see how God is using people of all skill sets and walks of life already, check out these real-life video stories at twr.org/gifted-for-purpose. To get involved with TWR and help fulfill the Great Commission yourself, go to twr.org/serve.

– By Brandon Hall

Drawing on history to reach Muslims

Hakim has long been fascinated by the study of religion, even doing comparative research into various sects of the Islamic faith in which he was raised. People sometimes sought him out for explanations about the predominant faith of his country.

“One day, I chanced upon a Bible in the road,” Hakim* said. “I took it and read it. Certain things like the crucifixion mentioned in the Bible were not found in Islam.”

The scriptures of Islam and of Christianity share a number of historical figures, such as the patriarch Abraham, Elijah and other Old Testament prophets. Jesus also appears in both, although Muslims identify him as a prophet rather than the Son of God and don’t believe he was crucified and resurrected to give men and women new life.

After studying the religion he knew best, Hakim eventually turned to atheism. But his deep dive into the unfamiliar teachings of Christianity, including watching online debates, finally persuaded him that the evidence in favor of the Bible’s portrayal of the Jesus of Nazareth was too compelling to ignore. Today, Hakim helps TWR bring *The Way of Righteousness* radio program to listeners who are walking the same path he once traveled.

Historical Points of Contact

The Way of Righteousness has become a primary resource for TWR as the ministry seeks to serve regions of the world where Muslims make up the majority of the population. Starting with the historical figures recognized by both Islam and Christianity, it introduces God's unfolding plan of salvation as it first points in the Old Testament to the promised Messiah and then culminates in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

The program was created in the early 1990s by Paul Bramsen, then a missionary to Senegal, Africa. Frustrated by the religious and cultural barriers preventing him from sharing the gospel with Senegalese people, he decided, "What we need to do is to prepare a series of chronological lessons that clearly present the stories and message of God's prophets and broadcast them on the national radio station. Then people all over the country can hear God's message of salvation and make an intelligent choice whether to accept it or reject it."

Bramsen describes the resulting series of 100 lessons, each 15 minutes long, as a journey through Scripture "to view God's unchangeable purpose for mankind and to hear God's thrilling answer to Job's 4,000-year-old question, 'How can a man be righteous before God?'"

TWR leaders find *The Way of Righteousness* to be highly effective at communicating Christian beliefs to Muslims.

"The program is very good at reaching out to the Muslim people in a nonthreatening way, using terms and language that are also familiar to them," said TWR's international director for Southeast Asia, whose name is withheld here for security purposes. "The approach of the program is very systematic and organized in a way that can be easily understood and followed by its intended audience."

The program is being broadcast in the national language over 24 stations across Indonesia, which happens to be home to the world's largest Muslim population. The TWR director for Southeast Asia expects the program to grow significantly in the region, with the addition of new languages for Indonesia, including the Acehnese translation now in production, and languages in the Philippines and other countries.

HEAR THE PROGRAM

Listen to an English episode – or several – of *The Way of Righteousness* radio series at twr.org/the-way. It's available on the TWR360 web portal in multiple languages.

World Turned Upside Down

In TWR's Central Asia, Middle East and North Africa region, the program is already broadcast in four languages, with plans in the works to translate and record it into about a half-dozen more languages.

"I'm very enthusiastic about *The Way of Righteousness* series," said Bernard Oosterhoff, TWR's international director for the region. "The concept of the program is simple yet very strong."

Particularly effective, in Oosterhoff's view, is the way the program takes listeners on a journey, building on familiar historical figures to introduce unfamiliar concepts. Most important, it reveals the concept that Jesus Christ is the only way to true righteousness. The Bible's portrayal of the all-powerful creator of the universe as a loving father is another concept that can turn a listener's world upside down, Oosterhoff said.

Like this listener in Saudi Arabia who wrote, "How can we be children of God? We are slaves of God! Your episodes are messing up my brains. Can I ask you to convince me of what you say? I know I have been a Muslim all my life, but there are many things [in my faith] that I am not convinced of, so I am willing to understand now what Christianity is all about. I'm eagerly awaiting your answer."

Another listener who was intrigued by the program and wanting to know even more wrote from Egypt. "I am seeking the truth about worshipping God. My inherited religion proved to be inadequate to the ways of our modern world, so I have heard a few things that interest me in Christianity. Would you bear with me the many questions I will be sending?"

TWR is broadcasting *The Way of Righteousness* in 20 languages. Because of its impact, plans in various stages of implementation call for additional broadcasts in more than 30 languages across Africa, Asia and Europe over the next three years.

**Hakim is a pseudonym used for security purposes.*



Puppets teach values at school and prison

Why would you take a children's puppet show to one of the most violent prisons in a country known for its violent prisons?

Amid the ongoing economic and political crisis besetting Venezuela, a team from TWR's national partner has been on the road much of the summer to stage live puppet shows based on its popular children's broadcast, *Pedrito el Pulpo* (*Little Peter the Octopus*). In July the team accepted an invitation to Tocoron prison, which apparently doubles as the headquarters of a criminal gang whose members are said to have ambushed and killed four soldiers and two policemen this year.

So, what's the purpose of putting on a Christian puppet show in a notorious prison? Many of the inmates have children, and the kids visit their incarcerated fathers on weekends. In fact, more than 500 kids, prisoners and other visitors attended the show by RTM Venezuela. (RTM is the Spanish translation of TWR.)

"The visit to Tocoron prison was a blessing and a wonderful opportunity to share about God's kingdom values with those kids,"

RTM director Gabriel Fernandez said. "In Venezuela, we celebrate Children's Day on July 21, and this was also celebrated in the prison."

The RTM team were allowed to play their Christian songs through a sound system belonging to the prisoners, and they promoted gospel programs broadcast over TWR's Shine 800 AM station on the nearby island of Bonaire. *Pedrito* airs on more than 250 local stations across Latin America and the Caribbean as well as on Shine 800, which broadcasts programming for all ages to a potential audience of 100 million.

Investment for the future

For Fernandez and his staff, all the hard work involved in the *Pedrito* rallies is an essential investment in this troubled nation's children. They're the ones especially hard hit by food and health-care shortages.

And while that investment is mostly spiritual, physical and emotional, finances do come into play. With the help of TWR's national

partner in Germany, ERF Medien, and other contributors, the Pedrito team have sought to increase the treats included in the gift bags they distribute to the rally attendees. With inflation reaching atmospheric levels, many of the youngsters don't get enough to eat and can't afford, or even find, some school supplies.

"The prices are going up so fast," Fernandez said. "We give the kids a little school bag. It has a pencil, eraser, pencil sharpener, a notebook, a sweet cookie. This year we spent a lot of money buying these things. We give a glass of oatmeal to the kids, too. This year the oatmeal price went sky-high."

So far this summer, the team have staged Pedrito rallies at 16 locations, performing for over 2,000 children. At a school for special-needs children, the team members were deeply moved when a young boy with autism emotionally expressed his gratitude at the end of the show. Another rally took place in an area considered to be a hotbed of drug activity, and some of the audience members had siblings caught up in the delinquent lifestyle.

Fun and Memorable Lessons

The radio program and puppet shows are aimed at making a difference in these young lives by introducing them to Jesus Christ and biblical values in a fun and memorable way.

"The children love to listen to Pedrito," Fernandez said. "In his own funny and shy way, he explains to the children that God wants to be their Father in heaven. When they are scared, they can pray. With God's help they can choose between good and evil."



Want to hear Pedrito?

You can sample this Spanish program on TWR360, our multilingual website of Christian media resources; go to twr.org/hear-pedrito.

And if God is leading you to support this effective ministry for Venezuelan children, let us know at twr.org/help-pedrito.

The team members have been taking Pedrito's messages about the importance of prayer to heart this summer as they support their fellow performer and program producer, Silder Briceño. In this country where food and medicine are frequently in short supply and expensive, Briceño has been undergoing chemotherapy for a liver tumor.

Briceño needs lots of prayer, said Fernandez. And the ministry director also seeks prayer for the Pedrito outreach – that the team will be kept safe as it travels and that many children will attend the rallies and accept Christ as their Savior.

– By Mariette Oosterhoff



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