

Students Go(at) for the Gusto

Arizona school uses *Harvest of Hope* catalog to change Africa

Glimmering green and gold, the custom-made goat trophy is highly valued among students at Surrey Garden Christian School in Gilbert, Arizona.

Each Monday this spring the trophy traveled to the classroom that brought in the most money toward the school's quarterly "Change for Change" campaign, along with a huge batch of homemade Rice Krispies treats.

"Goats for Ghana" was the theme of the school's spring project. The money raised in this school-wide competition provides goats for poor families in Africa

through *Harvest of Hope*. The gift of goats helps families start a goat-rearing business to support themselves. Early on, the project coordinator brought some of her family's goats to school to help the children visualize what they were saving for.

One boy saved up \$30, and when he told his parents he was going to give it toward a goat, they matched it. A mom shared how her kindergarten daughter was always looking in her daddy's pockets and asking the neighbors for change, hoping to help her class to victory.

By the end of the first quarter, students had raised over \$2,000. The winning class alone gave enough to provide seven goats! Watch for an update on the impact of *Harvest of Hope* goats in the next issue.

Are you involved with a school or church that might like to do a project like this? Contact Megan Huggins at (800) 966-5515 or meganh@partnersintl.org for catalogs, ideas, materials, even a Vacation Bible School program. You will be amazed at what God will do through you! ©



PARTNERS
International

Partners International is a global ministry that works to create and grow communities of Christian witness in partnership with God's people in the least Christian regions of the world.

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NEWS FROM PARTNERS INTERNATIONAL

Isaiah 52:10b

"...and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God."

Jesus' Way is My Way

While the Western world is accustomed to learning by reading, 70 percent of the world's population live in oral cultures.

70 percent! In contrast to written language, storytelling, drama and music are how these 4.5 billion people communicate their history, religion, commerce, philosophy and values.

As a result, many traditional evangelistic methods don't speak as powerfully to oral communicators and make long-term discipleship a challenge. Even in areas where literacy rates are higher, church planters from traditional oral cultures are seeking ways to share Christ that are more relevant and appealing to the people they are trying to reach.

We are working with Scriptures in Use (SIU) in a powerful partnership, connecting their Communication Bridges to Oral Cultures training course with our

partner church planters on the frontlines. After five years of partnership with SIU, nearly 50 of our ministry partners in 20 countries, plus all those they train, have been equipped in this method. And it is bearing fruit and multiplying beyond what we could have imagined!

Church planters are thrilled to find they can share their faith in ways natural to their cultural heritage and learning styles including storytelling, dramatic presentations of the parables, cultural adaptations of Scripture to song, memorization, and chronological and systematic presentation of Bible stories. "We were never taught to look at the Bible as a storybook," said one trainee. "We were never taught that Jesus was a storyteller. This is the first time we have heard that storytelling is as powerful a communication tool as preaching."

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Inside This Issue

With the economic downturn forefront in many of our minds, we are all looking for ways to do more with less. In this issue we wanted to share with you how we are using limited resources to impact God's Kingdom in a great way.

One of our commitments is to provide training resources that are highly effective and have the expressed goal of multiplication. We also commit to equipping church planters who can greatly expand their impact by providing Bibles, media resources, motorbikes and more.

As you will see, investing in indigenous church planters has powerful results, now and for eternity.

Pastor Abraham comes from the Yenadi people of India. After accepting Christ he felt God calling him into ministry and went to a theological school for short-term training. “The teachings they gave there made no sense to my ministry,” Abraham said, “and I was afraid to ask questions to the teachers because I felt so low in education in comparison to them.” His struggle is quite common among grassroots church planters we work with on the field.

But a change of method is all it took to reinvigorate Pastor Abraham in his ministry. He was invited to a storytelling training by our partner Church Growth Association of India, and this time he had a much different experience. “The teaching at Church Growth was very practical and it addressed many of my questions,” he said. “The resource team was very friendly and I never had a feeling of inferiority during the training. We Yenadi people are an oral culture, but I was using book culture methods. I am convinced this method of storytelling in small groups will be effective. When I heard these teachings I wondered why on earth I used other complicated ways when this simple strategy is available.”

With Partners International’s support, church planters and pastors in West Africa, Ethiopia, India, and Indonesia who have already taken the beginner course will be trained in the intermediate and advanced levels this year. Your gifts will also help us expand this training to ministry



West African women use their God-given gifts in music and storytelling to share their faith in their communities.



In the coming year, Partners has scheduled 52 training events that will equip more than 1,500 grassroots church planters in the storytelling method.

leaders in North Africa, Bangladesh, and Sudan. Women take part in a customized storytelling course just for them called “Women in God’s Story.”

Susama is a pastor’s wife from Orissa, India, working among the Dom and Puraja people groups with her husband. “I was just a typical pastor’s wife, attending the worship services, going along with my husband for house visitation and attending prayer meetings,” she said. “Four months ago I took the Bridges course. This training transformed my involvement in the ministry. Now I tell stories using the seven steps of the storytelling method and many women are coming to the Bible study groups which I started after the training. I thank God for this training which sharpened my mind and gave me a new vision. I have decided to memorize many Bible stories and tell them to the village women helping them to come to Christ. I take this as a challenge and pray that I will become an oral Bible.”

The goal of this program is multiplication, and because stories are so easy to transmit from one person to another we are seeing new interest in Christianity spreading quickly in many areas. In fact, over the last two years, our partners who have been most impacted by the training have created their own storytelling training hubs with the goal of

spurring church-planting movements.

With small investments in training, many times just \$50 per participant, we are seeing church planters reinvigorated for ministry and new churches springing up around the world. ©

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Also, unique foundations like the I Do Foundation allow you to “celebrate generously” by incorporating a charitable focus into special occasions like weddings. Visit their website at: www.idofoundation.org.

Small Investments Reap Big Rewards

By Jon Lewis, President / CEO

It was a scene right out of the Gospel of Luke, chapter 22 — sort of!

Jesus is praying in the Garden of Gethsemane with His disciples under a nearby tree. Then, suddenly He rises into the air and ascends to heaven, while His mantle of glory falls on none other than Judas Iscariot who is promptly captured by Roman soldiers and crucified in His place.

Believe it or not, that is how a film ends that was recently produced by a Middle Eastern country in an attempt to discredit Christians and their faith. Called *Jesus, son of Mary*, the film received official blessing by authorities and was widely shown across the country.

Meanwhile, a young leader from our partner ministry traveling by bus offered the driver his DVD copy of *Jesus of Nazareth*, the authentic version of the film from the Gospel of Luke to play on the bus's video screens. Glad to have a new film to show, the driver happily complied.

The young man then got the idea of making 2,000 copies of his DVD to pass out to all the bus drivers in the country. However, no one would handle the job due to the quantity needed and the fact



Despite ongoing persecution, Middle Eastern families are more open to Christ than ever before. Our church planters have suffered arrest, false accusations, harassment, and physical violence, yet they continue to share Christ and baptize new believers. Please keep them in your prayers.

it was not the government authorized film. Finally, he decided to try the official government printing press expecting another rejection. Mistaking his *Jesus of Nazareth* to be *Jesus, son of Mary*, the press not only agreed but offered him a 20% discount for his 2,000 copies. Today, our young friend is seeing to it that those who ride on public buses all over his country have a chance to learn the real story of Jesus!

Your support is making it possible for Middle Eastern church planters to take advantage of amazing opportunities like this one as God opens the doors. For one of our church planters, just providing travel expenses has expanded his ministry exponentially. He is able to travel from

city to city, evangelizing and discipling. Through his ministry and the testimony of other believers, 27 people have become Christians and three new house churches have been started. Tony, our partner leader, shared, "During 2008 it was a joy to baptize 17 new believers. It is most exciting to see Christians in an Islamic state, despite the challenges they face, publicly committing themselves to live for the Lord."

Once again, I'm amazed how our God can use us to take advantage of one small opportunity, to meet one felt need, and see God expand it into a powerful way of advancing His Kingdom on earth. ©



The recently revised Persian Bible is in high demand by our partners to distribute to both believers and seekers. You can give one today for just \$10.