



Microfinance: 2006 Nobel Peace Prize Award to a Bengali, a microfinance pioneer, highlighted its huge effectiveness of breaking the poverty cycle for the poor in developing nations. Many Christian agencies have joined in as well getting very good results. Borrowers of the small loan (about US\$100, mostly women) form a group and guarantee each other's loans to start a business. Agents counseled them weekly on banking, finances, management and Christian living. One agency's number of loans had grown 28% per year in 5 years to 810,000 in 2005. 98% of them are repaid. Now families can send children to schools, and enjoy better housing, health care, self-esteem, leadership ability, etc. They give more and have become very creative in outreach and missions.

<Christianity Today, November/06>

Youth: Recognizing MySpace.com as one of the most visited websites for teens and 20-somethings, more youth ministers in USA are using it to connect and minister students in their youth groups. Most students check their blogs many times a day and are very candid in sharing their feelings. This is a faster way to reach them and meet their immediate needs.

<Christianity Today, February/07>

China: Heilong Jiang is the northernmost province in China with a population of more than 38 millions. Incomplete survey shows some 800,000 Christians in 1,200 plus officially registered churches, 400,000 of them in Harbin, the capital, with 430 plus churches among city's 9.8 million residents.

<China Graduate School of Theology Bulletin, 11-12/06>

Services: Many countries are not friendly to Christians. Mission Aviation Fellowship has invitation to some of these nations in Northern Africa and Central Asia because they can provide valuable services. That also opens the way for others to go in. But they need more technical people: pilots, computer specialists, auto mechanics, etc. Interested party can call 800-359-7623.

<Mission Network News, www.mnn.gospelcom.net, 1/16/07>

Persecution: An estimated 250 million Christians worldwide will face persecution in 2007. A watchdog agency ranks the 10 worst persecutors as: North Korea, Iraq, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Iran, Eritrea, China, Vietnam and Pakistan. Abuses suffered by Christians include kidnapping, forced conversion, imprisonment, church destruction, torture, rape and execution. Many Islamic, Hindu, Communist and Buddhist nations enact laws restricting freedom of belief.

<Mission Network News/ www.joelnews.org, 1/4,5/07>

USA: Some YMCAs seek to reclaim Christian roots. Founded in 1844 in London as a prayer group for factory workers, many of them in US began to serve almost solely as health clubs during the fitness craze of the 80s. In 1987, Jesus was taken out of the national YMCA

mission statement. Now 13% of some 2,600 YMCAs begin to promote Christianity by displaying pictures of Jesus and Ten Commandments, posting Bible verse on websites, playing Christian rock in workout rooms, staffing chaplains for pastoral care, offering spiritual private/group counseling, etc. With 20 million members nationwide it is a fertile field for evangelism.

<Dallas Morning News, 10/15/06>

Japan: It has long been a hard soil for the gospel. But of 22,000 students from 144 nations at Urbana'06, around 100 were Japanese. Many of them were inspired and felt the burden to bring the gospel back home.

<Mission Network News/ www.joelnews.org, 1/2/07>

India: Every 50 years a famine occurs in northeast of India: a common type of wild bamboo begins to blossom. Rats love the blossom and will rampage through the rice fields going quickly into a feeding frenzy. The Chief Minister of one of the hardest states hit is a Christian. He ordered all the rats killed averting the disaster while that of the neighboring state could not as he is a Hindu. Rats are deified in the Hindu faith. The elephant God of prosperity is often portrayed as riding on a giant rat. One Christian agency is distributing rice along with Bibles to the sufferers.

<Mission Network News, www.mnn.gospelcom.net, 1/14/07>

Afghanistan: Paying bribes to get things done is common. A Christian agency refuses to do it. These forces many Afghans to ask questions providing opportunity for touching on spiritual issues and setting incredible witness to the people and the national staff. That reputation and integrity even prompted the national government to ask them start some service and hand it off to a Afghan company later.

<Mission Network News, www.mnn.gospelcom.net, 1/19/07>

Cameroon: A partner of a Christian agency has started a bus ministry to share Christ with the people. He plays gospel program CD on city buses that each typically carries over 200 passengers in each of its 4 daily rounds. So far 5 buses are taking part in the program.

<Mission Network News, www.mnn.gospelcom.net, 12/7/06>

China: According to official statistics, each urban Chinese residents earned US\$1,300 yearly in 2005, while those in the rural areas only \$410. The root cause is said to be lower educational level of workers in the latter group. Only 13% of them are high school graduates and 37% of elementary school. For vast majority of poor peasants who lacks computer savvy and finance to afford internet connection, radio is their major source of amusement and sole channel to the outside world including hearing the gospel and equipping the believers.

<Far East Broadcasting, www.liangyou.net, 9-10/06>