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CATHOLIC RENEWAL & EVANGELIZATION

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

These are difficult days, days in which our faith, hope, and love are being tested. But these are also days of great opportunity. We are being given the opportunity, whether small or great, to bear witness to the truth of our faith. The question is, are we ready to take our stand when opportunities arise?

Our Lord stood before Pilate and said,

"For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth" (In 18:37).

Jesus is called "the faithful witness" (Rv 1:5) sent by the Father to bear witness to the truth no matter what the cost. We're called to do the same.

Opportunities to make this stand are increasing every day, even inside the Church. There are significant, and at times unprecedented, public divisions emerging in the Church, even at the highest levels. These divisions are emboldening dissenters at the local level—in our parishes and schools—to aggressively push for radical change, to make the Church conform to the values of the prevailing culture.

Over the past two years, a growing number of these kinds of attacks have been brought to my attention, and all of them have taken place in a distinctively Catholic context: a talk for parents of confirmation students, a Catholic teacher's retreat that presented St. John Paul II's Theology of the Body, a dioc-

esan priests' convocation with the bishop present, and a Catholic high school faculty meeting in which the "coming out" of a gay male teacher at the school was being discussed.

Each of these situations had one surprising, disturbing thing in common: one person verbally attacked the teaching of the Church or a person defending the faith. And, in each case, no one defended the person speaking in favor of Church teaching.

In one case, the religious education director who brought the speaker in apologized the next day, saying, "Your talk was excellent, and I'm writing to ask your forgiveness for not coming to your defense when you were attacked. When that lady spoke out with such anger, I was frozen in my seat."

In the case of the teachers' retreat, when one teacher aggressively condemned a Theology of the Body presentation, another one responded by defending the Church's teaching, only to find that no one, not even the principal, said a word to affirm her. The faculty sat silent. The entire staff was bullied into silence.

It is sobering to see how easily intimidated we are and how unprepared we are to take a stand openly, even in the household of faith. Yet rising to the moment can be as simple as asking the Holy Spirit for help, calmly standing up, thanking one person for sharing their opinion, and then thanking the other person for teaching the faith.

When the Church defends the lives of preborn children, when she defends marriage by showing the profound harmfulness of divorce, when she protects the conjugal relationship by warning against the dead-end of homosexual relations, when she defends the dignity of the dying by speaking out against euthanasia, when she warns against the dangers of gender ideology and transhumanism, in reality, she makes herself the servant of humanity and the protectress of civilization."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

In fairness, I can see how one might be rattled and surprised by the unexpected outbursts of bullies in a church setting. Times have changed. It's time to be on alert and ready to take a stand where and when it is needed—knowing full well that taking a stand might carry a cost.

DON'T BE SURPRISED

How do we prepare ourselves for moments like this? Scripture provides wisdom to help ready us for battle.

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. (1 Pt 4:12)

Jesus said, "Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also." (Jn 15:20)

I John, your brother, who share with you in Jesus the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance. (Rv 1:9)

Spiritual combat and facing direct opposition to the teaching of Jesus are part of the normal Christian life. Courageous witness in the face of an unbelieving and increasingly hostile world is central to our calling as disciples; it is a precious and great privilege. If we're not ready for battle, we will be caught off guard, and likely will miss the opportunity the Lord is giving us to share with Him, even in these small ways, the rejection He experienced in this world.

YOU HAVE THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!

And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious how or what you are to answer or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say. (Lk 12:11-12) The promise of heavenly help at critical moments, and the power to do whatever is required of you at each moment, have been given to you by the Lord. In the Holy Spirit, you have the power and the capacity to fulfill your calling and rise to all opportunities. You are not alone! Jesus promised you, "I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Mt 28:20).

DON'T MISS THE BLESSING!

Rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. (1 Pt 4:13-14)

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you gain an apostolic mind. We need his help to see the opportunities and great value that the apostles saw in the suffering they endured for the sake of the Gospel. Imagine, the Spirit of glory resting upon you! The apostles understood the great blessings that await us even in this life when we share in the rejection of Jesus.

ETERNAL REWARDS!

Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven.

(Lk 6:22-23)

Jesus calls us to live each day with an eternal perspective that sees the value of suffering for the sake of the Gospel. Jesus promises great, eternal rewards! The devil wants to keep us preoccupied with worldly concerns about our safety, health, comfort, riches, and reputation. We fear losing this world's rewards. The threat of being "canceled" paralyzes far too many disciples today.

We each have one life to live. Our lives are short. We will appear soon before Christ's judgment seat. At that moment, the wealth, health, and reputation we've accumulated in this world will mean nothing. All that will matter is our fidelity to Jesus. Did you love Him first? Did you love your neighbor? Did you love your neighbor enough to speak the truth in love?

The words of St. John Paul II during his canonization homily for St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross are helpful when contemplating these important questions:

"Do not accept anything as the truth if it lacks love. And do not accept anything as love which lacks truth! One without the other becomes a destructive lie."

Remember the martyrs of the Book of Revelation, whose voices are heard in heaven, and whose life story is being celebrated and rewarded: "And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death" (Rv 12:11).

Beware of inordinate self-love, which includes worry about reputation, personal security, and being celebrated and rewarded in this life. It is possible to love oneself in such a way that we lose our life for all eternity. That's the devil's strategy for your life and mine.

Let's pray for one another for courage and for the willingness to sustain a wound in defense of the faith and in defense of what is true, good, and beautiful in God's eyes. Finally, let's pray that by God's grace, we do not miss the opportunities before us, the moments we will be given, no matter how small, in which we can identify with Jesus in an unbelieving world, and sadly, even in an unbelieving Church!

Pot Subick

OVERCOMING INJUSTICE



With Pastor James Ward

The following article is condensed from two episodes of The Choices We Face, Overcoming Injustice: Part One and Part Two. Ralph Martin (RM) and Peter Herbeck (PH) interviewed Pastor James Ward (PJW), author of Zero Victim and pastor and founder of Insight Church near Chicago.



RM» Your book *Zero Victim* is the most hopeful thing I've read, given our country's terrible divisions. Please tell us about yourself.

PJW» I grew up in Alabama in the early '80s, at the end of segregated schools. Tuscaloosa was divided by the Black Warrior River, with white people on the north side and black people on the south side. I don't recall seeing white students before our schools were integrated in third grade. Taking that bus to the white side of town was transformative, but growing up in a household of faith, with a father who was a deacon, traditional praying grandparents, and a mom who was a believer created the right environment for the Lord to prepare my heart for that experience and beyond.

RM» I was impressed with the warmth and love expressed to your family in your book's dedication.

PJW» Family and the restoration of black families in America are dear to my heart. We're not making the right connection between the disintegration of the traditional family in the black community and its adverse effects. With this more victim-minded culture, we're quick to point at other issues as the problem. We're not coming back to the roots of the family. One of the most powerful moments in my life was waking up early to see my dad kneeling next to his bed, praying. That opened my heart to know it was OK to serve God; it was OK to pray. Seeing

my hero pray inspired me to follow in his footsteps.

RM» Tell us what happened when you went across the river to another school.

PJW» The landscape changed. On the black side of town, there were old cars jacked up on cinder blocks and litter in the streets. Across the river, homes had well-manicured lawns. It was a different environment. I began to say in my heart, "I want to be on this side of town. This is where I belong." When I got to the newly built school, all the playground equipment worked, and the school was well-lit with fresh paint. That environment does something to you. This was God's providence.

My third-grade teacher was a black lady who was poised and eloquent. Her hair was never out of place. She was soft-spoken; even her posture made an impression on me. She pioneered this integration, so to have her as my teacher was a blessing. Usually, you get recognition for doing something wrong, but she put our names on the board when we did well. I think she was trying to cultivate me, so she was a little difficult on me—but my name was always on the board for doing well.

I no longer believe in white supremacy, because I don't believe in black inferiority. As I was doing well, the white kids I thought could be my enemies were not against me. They didn't hold me back or hinder me from being successful. Something clicked, which I believe was the Spirit of God in my heart, to disarm the hostilities around me and help me recognize I'm not a victim and the people around me are not against me. I no longer believe in white supremacy, because I don't believe in black inferiority. Something changed in me, and that was the seed for the *Zero Victim* book.

RM» I hear things today that seem condescending to blacks—like they can't get a photo id or show up on time at work. It's a horrible attitude of white superiority.

PJW» It robs you of your dignity. It forces codependency. It controls the thought process and robs an individual of their identity and capability. We're thinking, functioning people created in the image of God, and yet we never hear a voice speak to our purpose, but it always speaks to our pain. You can never be free under those circumstances.

RM» Tell us more about what got planted in you in the third grade.

PJW» That experience changed my life's trajectory. Since then, I've had high-quality relationships with people of all ethnicities. Our church is diverse,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

and I've traveled the nations and have a different perspective. For example, I refer to myself as Black American and not African American. I've been to Africa many times. There are over fifty different countries. Each country has its own culture and language, so African American is a misnomer. It contributes to identity crisis and specificity. I'm an American.

What I mean by Black American is that I take ownership of my nation. I don't feel like an outsider. I don't feel deprived. This is my home.

The title *Zero Victim* comes from when I was working in a multicultural church and we took an attitudinal assessment. I scored zero in the category measuring the degree to which you see yourself as a victim. In twenty-five years, the facilitator had never seen anybody score a zero. He said, "I needed to meet you and find out what's behind this." Now I can say that I have credentials that I'm a "Zero Victim."

RM» You got delivered from an oppressive lie, and you help others get delivered by speaking the Word of God.

PJW» The Zero Victim mentality is the mind of Christ. The only innocent man that ever lived suffered the world's greatest injustice by being brutally crucified for other people's sins. If that's not injustice, I don't know what is. Yet while in the act of being victimized, He prayed, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" (Lk 23:34). Any other injustice is a lesser infraction when measured by that standard. It releases love and forgiveness. As believers, we must rediscover this Zero Victim mindset of Christ and share it. This is a solution to what's happening.

RM» How would you describe critical race theory?

PJW» A philosophy that you can't redeem the system because racism is so ingrained; you must destroy the system and rebuild it. This is dangerous; you're talking about fundamentally redefining the United States of America. Just



"We have a sin problem and not a skin problem. Racism is the fruit; sin is the root, and if you don't kill it at the root, the fruit is going to keep growing back."

because something is damaged or not being managed correctly, you don't destroy it; you fix it. Psalm 11:3 says, "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" We must hold on to our foundations.

White privilege and critical race theory are rooted in victim mentality. We must go to the root, or those things fester. Jeremiah 17 says the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. We have a sin problem and not a skin problem. Racism is the fruit; sin is the root, and if you don't kill it at the root, the fruit is going to keep growing back.

PH» What happened in 2020, when the Lord brought you into a situation that in some ways your whole life was building toward?

PJW» That was the most emotional year in our lifetime, with Covid, the George Floyd incident, and then in August, I got a phone call from church member Julia Jackson saying her son had been shot seven times in Kenosha, Wisconsin. We prayed that her son, Jacob Blake, would live and declare the works of the Lord (Ps 118:17). I had been teaching the Zero Victim mentality in our church. Julia had been a part of that discipleship process, and so we were prepared as a church to enter that situation and not be victimized and not allow that to define us even though it was defining the rest of the country. The Lord placed us there and turned to good something that maybe the enemy meant for evil. I'm proud of Jacob. He's given his heart to the Lord. He has a tremendous story to tell of the Lord's redemptive power.

PH» You were part of a press conference with Jacob's mother and then with the president of the United States. What happened?

PJW» Julia asked me to open the press conference, and I spoke out of this Zero Victim message. After those few moments of speaking God's perspective about the matter across the nation, we heard from thousands of people saying, "Your tone is different. You're not crying about whether black lives do or don't matter. You're not angry. There's a peace about your voice that's different." I heard from atheists and agnostics saying, "I'm not religious but what you're saying makes sense. I want to hear more." I eventually got a call from President Trump. Every King David needs a Nathan the prophet who speaks honestly. We had a great conversation. He asked on several occasions for advice about how to handle the situation, which led to a great relationship. Some folks celebrated that, and we also got some death threats. That's where our nation was.

In Joshua 5, Joshua asks an angel, "Are you for us, or our adversaries?" The angel responds, "I've come as commander of the Lord's armies." That's our posture. I'm not Democrat or Republican. We're kingdom citizens. Our nation has become so concerned about right versus left instead of right versus wrong. We're here to call people from all sides up into the kingdom of God.

PH» Early on, the Lord helped you understand that your identity is in him. You lived it and taught it, and then a moment of radical confusion came, and the Lord put you in the center, saying, "You've been faithful in little things, now I want you to say what I've taught you and help people think differently."

PJW» No one is more interested in justice than God. But we're going about it our way instead of God's way. The Lord is calling the church to be his agent of true biblical justice. There's a calling on Black American believers to lead in that in that area, so I am calling for this Zero Victim movement as an alterna-

tive to what we're seeing in society—something Spirit-led and redemptive. That's my challenge with critical race theory; it's not built on the love of God, and it's not redemptive.

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PH» What is at the core of the Zero Victim movement and how are people dominated by a victim mentality?

PJW» The first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. In America, sentiments about race and politics have become idols—and there are consequences from God for idolatry. Satan knows if he can get us to feel a certain way and live from those feelings, it will override our reason, our understanding, and our capacity to obey God's command. Zero Victim mentality disarms being led by our feelings. Victor Frankl, an Austrian neurologist and Holocaust survivor, said between every stimulus and every response there's a space. Zero Victim mentality allows you to get into that space with the grace of God to respond instead of reacting.

PH» The enemy can lead us where he wants us to go by keeping us preoccupied with our feelings. When we feel bad, we think somebody must be the cause of that. There's no being rooted in the security of knowing who we are as children of God.

PJW» We're seeing a nation of people bankrupt morally and spiritually because of their departure from the Lord. Three laws govern every society: spiritual, moral, and civil. Civil law is the weakest, but that's all we talk about. Spiritual law comes from God. Moral law is governing myself based upon spiritual law. You cannot make people better by only focusing on civil law. If we don't get our nation back to focusing on spiritual and moral law, it's just a matter of time before we implode. I'm afraid we're in the beginning stages, and that's why we're calling for this Zero Victim movement as the right way to approach current challenges.

PH» How is this message resonating with other black leaders? There's so much pressure to only look at things as systemic racism, instead of seeing more deeply into the human heart.

PJW» I believe we've hit rock bottom, so there's an openness and a desire for a fresh way of thinking, and it's growing as more people understand it.

We're beginning to see a faltering of even the American political system. People are losing faith in that and now is the time to introduce the kingdom of God, which is a different way of thinking.

PH» There's so much deception and saying we'll be in trouble if we don't say a circle's a square. There's only one answer, and that's reality—and God Himself is the ground of all reality.

PJW» Paul writes, "Now the Spirit expressly says that in the last days many will depart the faith by giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Tm 4:1). In Matthew 24:11, Jesus warns us, "many false prophets will arise and lead many astray." Satan never makes a complete lie; it's always a partial truth that's been perverted and manipulated. We're seeing doctrines of demons who are educators taking over our college campuses. It's getting into our schools' curriculum and redefining marriage, family, and human sexuality.

PH» It's fundamentally a spiritual battle. You can see the pressure building and the enemy getting hold of people who are not standing on the rock or discerning what's happening. They're living in fear. Corporations are saying, "Just tell me what to say and do so it doesn't affect the bottom line." It's revealing idolatry: we'll do whatever it takes to keep the gold growing.

This is a unique moment for black leaders. Many white folks are paralyzed: they don't know what to say or do. How do we move forward in a cancel culture, in the grip of a political system that's trying to silence everybody?

PJW» I encourage exactly what we're doing-black and white friends coming together in a context of love, good faith, and deep care for each other to speak the truth in love. We're allowing society to lead the conversation that the church should be leading. Whoever controls the narrative controls the culture, so we must start by having these conversations. Believers should talk about Scripture, love, and forgiveness. Get into a place of humility and repent. Say, "Search me, God, know my heart, know my thoughts, and see if there's any wicked way in me." We're trying to fix each other instead of guarding our own hearts. The conversation starts with deep humility.



Watch the *Overcoming Injustice* episodes! Scan the QR codes to the right or visit:

Part 1: www.renewalministries.net/OvercomingInjustice1
Part 2: www.renewalministries.net/OvercomingInjustice2

PART 1 PART 2



In April 2022, Renewal Ministries resumed its annual high school mission trip to serve the poor who live and work in the garbage dump in Mexico City. It had been nearly three years since we last served there with a group of high schoolers, since the 2020 mission was canceled due to Covid. Renewal Ministries' Editor Heather Schultz (RM) recently spoke about the trip with Be Love Revolution Director Debbie Herbeck (DH), who assisted Country Coordinator Jim Murphy.

RM: How did this look different from prior Mexico mission trips?

DH: Jim Murphy and I considered how to enrich the trip, live more closely with the poor, and limit possible Covid exposure—and these things created a closer mission community. Instead of going to restaurants, we ate simple catered meals in the closed hotel restaurant. There were fewer distractions, we were more relaxed, and we had some great conversations. One evening, we had Eucharistic Adoration and encountered the Lord together.

These changes also enabled us to better connect with the hotel staff. We met in the employee locker room to sort our supplies and have daily Mass, and at times the employees came in while we prayed. We got to know the waiters who served us each day, and at the end of the week, we gave them the mission T-shirts we made. The manager said, "I want you to know how much your presence in the hotel has impacted our staff." It was the witness of these young people who had given up their vacation time to come all the way to Mexico to serve.

The Lord worked through our team just by us being there and being present to the people we served. I see ripple effects in the lives of our young team; they learned to trust the Lord more deeply, to see others and their own lives with different eyes, and to live each moment with gratitude.

MOTHER INES January 2017

RM: The team also visited the specialneeds orphanage run by Mother Ines. Jim's report said, "her health is declining (and) she now is bedridden." Please tell us about Mother Ines.

DH: They call her the Mother Teresa of Mexico. For the past fifty-three years, she has created a place called Divine Providence, where each child is lovingly cared for and treated with dignity and respect. She is a living icon of God's unconditional love. People from all walks of life are inexplicably drawn to visit her: Christian Harley riders, Orthodox Jews, politicians, missionaries, families, social workers, and even St. John Paul II. This is what saints do, they draw everybody to the Lord through the witness of their lives.

RM: When you returned from the mission trip, you shared the stories of two amazing priests from Mexico with our staff. Can you also share those stories with our readers?

DH: Several years ago, a newly ordained American priest in Mexico reached out to us after hearing about our work in the dump. He now brings a team of university students from Mexico City there to do catechesis twice a month. Next fall, a hundred youth in the dump will receive First Communion and Confirmation. We didn't interact with these university students, but they saw us and asked

why American teens had come to the dump. When Father told them that we come every year during our vacation to be with the poor, they responded,

"We were flagging in zeal, but seeing those young Americans come into the dump made us want to serve harder."

We offered a witness by sacrificing what they perceive to be our prosperous lives in America just to be with the poor. Our students were inspired by their team coming into the dump to catechize people, and our example encouraged them as well.

The second priest we mentioned is Fr. Manuel, a holy parish priest who says seventeen Masses throughout his diocese every weekend. We attended a weekday Mass at his parish. Afterwards, he spoke with our team, encouraging us to live heroically for Christ no matter what. Just minutes before, a woman had told him that her motorcycle—her only means of transportation—had been stolen during the Mass. She said, "I'm still going to praise Jesus. I'm still going to serve Him. I'm still going to love Him." Fr. Manuel wanted our young people to know that it's worth it; people are making heroic efforts even today to love Jesus no matter what their circumstances. The enemy can't steal that joy from us unless we allow it.

The mission was a mix of joy and sorrow. We saw the depth of suffering that people are going through, particularly since Covid, and we couldn't alleviate most of it on an earthly level, but we could bring them the Lord's love in some small measure.

RM: In his mission report, Jim shared that visiting the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe is "always an important part of the mission." Why is that?

DH: It puts the whole conversion of this nation in context: God had a plan for Mexico, a nation that was under the dominion of darkness. Millions were sacrificed in the Aztec culture of death. when the Lord sent his Mother to a simple peasant. Understanding how quickly the country converted through the witness of Juan Diego's obedience gives us hope, even as we see what is happening in our country today with abortion and people's hearts turning away from the Lord. The Lord works through his mother and through the simple and the poor to convey this message that the faith is alive. It is beautiful to walk up the hill in Juan Diego's footsteps, to the place where Mary first appeared. At the top of Tepeyac Hill, we point out where Juan Diego had to run to talk to the bishop. It's far! Juan Diego needed to respond, and the response had a cost. We put that into the context of their lives as disciples.



RM: What do you see change in the young people during the trip?

DH: Gratitude is a big thing. These seniors in high school can view their futures in light of the parable of the talents: "What am I going to do with the talents God has given me? Am I going to bury them or am I going to invest them for the kingdom of God?" Being with the poor in a mission context brings you into the Lord's presence in a unique and formative way. Being without the distraction of phones, electronics, and technology also is an important part of learning to be present to others and most importantly to God's voice. It is beautiful to watch these young people come more fully alive in their faith and be more firmly rooted as disciples. Since 2005, hundreds of young people have participated in this mission, and some have returned with us several times. I believe God used their time with the poor in Mexico to plant a seed of faith, hope, and love that continues to bear fruit.

See our Mexico mission team in action by scanning the QR code below or going here:

https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v= IHiatToy2E





Detroit, MI **Courses for Priests at Sacred Heart** Major Seminary* July 28 - August 12 Ralph Martin

Providence, RI Men of St. Joseph International Annual **Men's Conference**

August 6 Peter Herbeck

Details: mosji.org/pdfs/Aug-6-flyer.pdf

Jackson, MI Pine Hills Girls Camp*

August 7-13 Debbie Herbeck & Team

Fort Worth, TX **Evening on Evangelization**

August 10 Pete Burak Details: gscc.net

Fort Worth, TX Legatus*

August 11 Pete Burak

Thompsonville, MI Legatus Father/Son Weekend*

August 12-14 Peter Herbeck & Pete Burak

Slovakia Men's Conference*

August 16-23 Peter Herbeck & Pete Burak

Cleveland, OH Legatus*

August 17 Ralph Martin

Milwaukee, WI **Archdiocesan Catechetical Conference***

August 25 Dr. Mary Healy

Lexington, KY **CWBS Leader Retreat***

August 26-27 Lavinia Spirito

* Not open to the public.

MISSIONS



Tanzania

July 12 - August 3 Tom & Jean Marie Edwards & Team

Uganda

July 27 - August 12 Lloyd & Nancy Greenhaw & Team

Gambia

July 29 - August 20 Emmanuel Tamakloe & Team

Zimbabwe

August 17-28 Lloyd & Nancy Greenhaw & Team

Guinea Bissau

August 22-30 Emmanuel Tamakloe & Team



PLEASE PRAY

- For those struggling with addiction in any form, that they may find healing and freedom in Christ.
- That the Lord would provide in abundance for all who turn to Him in times of need. And that we may live each day in Christ's peace, trusting that our good Father cares deeply for his children.
- For the prayer intentions of all our supporters, their family members, and their parish families.

Renewal Ministries is a Catholic ministry committed to renewal and evangelization in the Church. It seeks to proclaim Jesus Christ through its TV, radio, and social media outreaches, as well as through books, conferences, retreats, and other international evangelistic events.

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NEWSLETTER

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