



# Mission Report

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Dear Pro-Life Friend in Christ,

As we enter the New Year, the Year of Mercy, we see more clearly than ever how desperate the world is for the light of Our Lord Jesus Christ. God's gifts to us begin with the gift of life. And upon our natural life, He builds our supernatural life. Grace builds on nature.

Our efforts to restore a respect for life around the world begin by re-establishing an understanding of the Church's teaching on contraception. Many see the horrors of killing innocent lives through abortion, but not everyone sees that the breaking of God's laws of life begin with this great evil of contraception. That is why HLI keeps this issue in the forefront of our training on Life and Family issues, and it is why this subject held a place of prominence in our training in Vietnam on the theme, "Building a Culture of Life and Love," conducted by Dr. Ligaya Acosta and Dr. Brian Clowes.

Just as we focus on the central issues of this battle, we must also focus on training the most critical leaders. While all pro-life leaders can do great good, few have as much reach and influence as those in the priesthood. This is why HLI focuses so heavily on the training of priests and seminarians, which you'll read about in two stories of this issue of *Mission Report*. One of these stories is from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where HLI participated in a pro-life congress that included the training of over 135 seminarians. The other is from in Zambia, as reported by Emil Hagamu, where we trained 145 seminarians.



Fr. Shenan J. Boquet  
President

At the end of Emil's report, he shares a letter from the Dean of Students, who asks that we return to his seminary every four years to ensure that all of their future priests receive our training. Our ability to do this comes directly from the support we receive from our donors, like you. May God bless you abundantly for your continued sacrificial support throughout this coming year, as we work together to restore God's order in our world!

Yours in Christ and in Our Lady,

Fr. Shenan J. Boquet  
President, Human Life International

## MISSIONARY TRIP TO VIETNAM

*By Dr. Brian Clowes, HLI Director of Education and Research, October-November 2015*

Dr. Ligaya Acosta and I stepped out of Tân Sơn Nhất International Airport and into the blazing heat of Vietnam. We had just traveled from Bangkok, where we conducted a one-day pro-life conference entitled, “Silent Screams,” co-sponsored by Human Life International and Couples for Christ-Foundation for Family and Life.

Dr. Ligaya is HLI’s Regional Director for Asia and Oceania, and this pro-life missionary journey would not have been possible without her efforts. She had visited Vietnam in 2011, trusting totally in Our Lady. She knew no one in the country, but expertly laid the foundation for future visits as she has in so many other Asian nations.

The pro-life movement is sorely needed in Vietnam. **The nation’s demographic situation can legitimately be called desperate.** Its two-child policy has been in force for nearly half a century, and the country has the highest abortion rate on earth. Despite a population that is less than one-third that of the United States, it suffers nearly twice as many abortions, meaning its abortion rate is six times higher than that of the USA. More than half of all pregnancies are aborted, some 1.4 million per year. Vietnam has suffered 40 million abortions since 1975, or 30 percent of its entire current population.

As recently as 1970, the average Vietnamese woman had 7.4 children. Vietnam’s total fertility rate is currently a catastrophically low 1.5 children per woman, and by 2040 will drop to under one child per woman, a level no nation has ever recovered from. This is an astounding 80 percent decrease in fertility since 1970, the third highest decline on earth, behind only Iran and South Korea.

The current population of Vietnam is about 91 million. The

United Nations projects that it will peak at 95 million in 2031 and then will decline to less than 90 million by 2050. By 2100, the population will plunge more and more rapidly until there are only 44 million Vietnamese remaining, less than half the current number.

These alarming statistics have compelled the Vietnamese government to not only discard its two-child program, but to install measures to cut down on the number of abortions. Unfortunately, due to the influence of the population control cartel, this program includes more widespread contraceptive use, which has not reduced abortions in any other nation on earth.

There are currently 112 boys born for every 100 girls in Vietnam. By 2030, about 3 million young Vietnamese men will be unable to find wives, giving rise to the same problems suffered by China — including increased levels of “hooliganism,” prostitution, and sexual slavery. The Parliament of Vietnam banned both sex-selection diagnosis and sex-selection abortion in attempts to reverse this trend, but abortionists are the same all over the world, whether they are greedy capitalists or Communist Party members, and they largely ignore the laws.

**Despite Vietnam’s ongoing demographic train wreck, almost every major population control is aggressively active there.** There are more than 30 large population control organizations in the nation, blindly attempting to eliminate even more of the next Vietnamese generation while ignoring the looming (and entirely predictable) demographic disaster that will result from their activities.

### I’M RICH! SORT OF ...

I never thought I would become a millionaire by working in the pro-life movement, but it finally happened. Of course, my millions consisted of Vietnamese *dong*, with an exchange rate of 22,000 per U.S. dollar.



Jimmy Tran / Shutterstock.com

Due to the alarming projections of its population statistics, the Vietnamese government recently discarded its two-child program and is installing measures to cut down on the number of abortions.

Fr. Peter Nguyen Van Hien, Director of the Saigon Pastoral Center of the Ho Chi Minh City Archdiocese, met Dr. Ligaya and me at the airport with a big smile. He would generously accompany us for every event during the six days we would be here. (Only government workers refer to this city as “Ho Chi Minh City;” everyone else calls it Saigon.)

As we drove to the Pastoral Center, we noticed the huge swarms of little motorcycles, which are absolutely amazing. Among the flowing rivers of motorbikes is the occasional brave bicyclist, often equipped with a tape deck wired to a bullhorn sitting in a basket, repeating the message “Warning: Bicycle” (in Vietnamese) over and over again.

Each morning, we had the privilege of dining with Archbishop Emeritus Jean-Baptiste Cardinal Pham Minh Mân of Saigon and several of his priests. His Eminence said that the Communists are not trying to suppress the Church in Vietnam because it has the same goal that the Church has, at least in part — to advance the development and the interests of the Vietnamese people. In fact, the Communist government has adopted part of Cardinal Pham’s philosophy, which is to love all people regardless of their creed. The Cardinal is 82 years old and, like many Vietnamese citizens of his age, is not particularly fond of Americans. He wagged his finger at me and said “Jesus Christ brought us freedom *from* sin; America brought us freedom *to* sin.”

### **A PROMISING FUTURE FOR THE CHURCH**

There are seven million Catholics in Vietnam, and their numbers are growing more rapidly than any other ethnic or religious group. There are about 3,200 priests serving this population, which represents almost as many priests per thousand Catholics in Vietnam as there are in the United States. But it appears



that the priest shortage in this country will be short-lived because of the many vocations among the Vietnamese. All of the priests I met in Vietnam were not only ardently pro-life, but they knew the life issues as well. They are ably backed up by the more than 1,000 lay catechists intensively trained by the Archdiocese of Saigon over the past three years alone.

The Communist government does not interfere overtly with the Catholic Church in Vietnam. There are seven major seminaries with more than 500 seminarians in the country, and more are planned. The Vocations Director for Saigon, Fr. Joseph Dang Chi Linh, says that he has about 150 young men who have expressed a firm interest in the priesthood. Here, vocations seem to come in clusters; **one of the seven priests we ate with had three brothers who were also priests, and another had a brother who is a priest and a sister who is a nun.** The two-child policy did not seem to be an impediment to vocations.



Dr. Ligaya and Dr. Brian had the privilege of dining daily with the priests who work at the Saigon Archdiocesan Pastoral Center, and with Archbishop Emeritus of Saigon, Jean-Baptiste Cardinal Pham Minh Mân (center), who shared his humor and wisdom.

## REDESSVIDA Congress Training for Priests and Seminarians

October 6 - 12, 2015

In October 2015, HLI participated in a pro-life congress organized by the Family Pastoral of the Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The congress included training for over 135 seminarians from Redemptoris Mater Seminary of the Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro, and included a visit from His Excellency Augusto Antonio Dias Duarte, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese.

Lectures for this congress included topics such as population control (by Mario Rojas), post-abortion syndrome (by Fr. Juan Carlos Chavez and Nancy Tosi), the 12 promises of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Gospel of Life (by Raymond de Souza), and gender ideology and the attacks on the family (by Fr Silvio Roberto).



Top left: From left to right: Bishop Antonio Augusto Dias Duarte, Mario Rojas, Raymond de Souza, Fr. Juan Carlos Chavez and Nancy Tosi. Top right: Raymond de Souza speaking to the audience. Bottom: Some of the congress participants.



The Communist Party has found it easy to meddle with the Buddhists — many monks are loyal Party members — but Catholic beliefs are much more sharply defined, and the 7 million Vietnamese Catholics are better organized and catechized, a force to be reckoned with and hopefully managed, not suppressed, by the government. **If only the Church were this formidable all over the world!**

Although the Church often cooperates on programs for the poor with the Communist Party, the irreconcilable difference is respect for the individual person. Communism sees the person as an expendable asset or tool, while the Church sees the person as an image of God.

The Vatican's Secretary of State, Pietro Cardinal Parolin, will visit Vietnam in April 2016, and he will not only ordain 100 priests, but will break the ground for a Catholic University of Vietnam. This University was

the initiative of Cardinal Pham, who has done so much to grow the Church in this beautiful land. He obtained permission from the Communist government not by making a demand, but by stating a need and showing how it would benefit the people of Vietnam.

Still, the situation is unique in various ways. For instance, the Church is not a legal entity in Vietnam and therefore cannot own property. This means that pastors personally own their parishes and properties, and their successors “inherit” them when they leave.

Thursday evening, after the sun went down and things cooled off a bit, Dr. Ligaya and I walked a couple of miles to the Ben Thanh Night Market. On our way back to the Pastoral Center at 9 PM, we saw dozens of young people praying and burning candles before the statue of Our Lady in front of the Saigon Cathedral. This is one of the city squares where teenagers congregate and hang out, alternating between praying and flirting. Not two activities you generally think of as compatible.

The brilliant full moon hovering over gleaming skyscrapers is not what I expected of Vietnam. I came here trying to have no preconceptions, but I suppose that is impossible.

## TRAINING BEGINS

We conducted the first day of our three-day training program on Friday evening. The theme was “Building a Culture of Life and Love,” and we intended to provide the foundation of information and materials required to do just that.

The Vietnamese pro-life movement currently has a different emphasis than we do. Pro-lifers there focus on retrieving the bodies of aborted babies from hospitals and abortion mills and giving them a decent burial. They do not directly interfere with the killing process, which might bring government reprisals. **Dr. Ligaya and I worked on trying to make them more focused towards saving lives,** believing it is always better to hold babies than to bury them.

I spoke on the anti-life agenda and Dr. Ligaya spoke about the problems of contraception. Speaking in English here is a rather dicey job, because we had to have translators. Only about a dozen of the 80 or so people spoke any English, and the translation of a lot of our terms into Vietnamese was very difficult, with three



The Sacred Heart Church in Saigon, where Fr. Peter Nguyen Van Hien served for 11 years before becoming Director of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center.



During her talk, Dr. Acosta shows the lengthy patient information pamphlet, which describes the side effects of a brand of birth control pill.

translators working on it simultaneously and various members of the audience occasionally shouting out suggestions. Several people sat in the translators' chairs and switched frequently. Everyone seemed to be having a good time, though, and seem to be learning quite a bit. Of course, I showed one or two of my short funny movies before and after each talk, and these are ideal because there is no dialogue. Humor is the same in any language.

The two full days of training on Saturday and Sunday were both intensive and comprehensive. Dr. Ligaya and I covered a wide range of topics, since we had much more time than we were given in Bangkok.

In my talks, I like to put the life issues in context by talking about the global anti-life agenda. Why is there such a vigorous push worldwide to legalize and support abortion, homosexuality, and euthanasia? Who benefits from these efforts, and who loses? It is all just a giant shell

game. While the Culture of Death, embodied by the United Nations and rich Western nations, distracts the people of developing nations with squabbling over various and sundry "rights," they rob these same nations blind by pillaging their natural resources. This is all outlined in Henry Kissinger's *National Security Study Memorandum 200*, which nobody seems to have heard of.

Dr. Ligaya focused on anti-life practices and the damage they cause. She spoke on sex education, marriage, abortion, and homosexuality. Through the three days of training, we had ample open forums for everyone to ask questions.

On our last night in Vietnam, Fr. Peter and Fr. Joseph took Dr. Ligaya and me out to a buffet dinner in town. The great thing about this restaurant is that it is always just *packed* with kids. Fr. Joseph explained that most children in Vietnam are from small families due to government policies, and they have tiny apartments and no gardens or playgrounds where the kids have room to run. This sounds horrible for the children. One young mom with a baby girl possessing the plumpest cheeks I have ever seen strolled by and she was happy to let me take photos of the little one. Everyone here is very happy to hear you praise the beauty of their children, even if they don't understand exactly what you are saying.

Up before 3 on Sunday morning to go to the airport with Fr. Peter, out onto the street ... and no motorbikes! Everything was quiet in Saigon. As we slowly drove through the deserted streets, I wondered how many American servicemen had traveled through these same quiet streets half a century ago.

Hopefully, Cardinal Pham's earnest prediction that the love of Jesus Christ will conquer this nation will soon become a reality.



Dr. Ligaya Acosta presents her talk "Contraception: Why Not?" during the first of three days of pro-life training conducted at the Saigon Archdiocesan Pastoral Center.

## MISSIONARY TRIP TO ZAMBIA

*By Emil Hagamu, HLI Regional Director for English-Speaking Africa, October 2015*

After a two-week successful pro-life mission visit to Uganda, I made another visit to Zambia from October 12 through 15. It was my third visit to St. Dominic's Major Seminary. Situated in a well-to-do Woodlands suburb, there are 144 seminarians here studying systematic and pastoral theology. After three years of theological training, one year of pastoral training, and one year for the diaconate, they are ready for priestly ordination, which normally takes place in their respective dioceses. The total number of seminarians that attended my first pro-life training in October 2009 was 136. This time the number had slightly increased to 145, an indication that there is an increase in vocations to the priesthood. To provide for the increasing number of seminarians, new seminarian dormitories and a house for priests are being built.

### THE TRAINING

I received a warm welcome at the airport from the Dean of Students, Fr. Brian Chibuluma. The schedule he gave me included three sessions each day from October 12 through October 14. The sessions began at 8.30 AM and ended at 2.00 PM. On the first day, apart from the introduction, my presentation was focused on the Culture of Life, beginning with the mission of

the pro-life movement, the beginning of human life, fetal development, and the sacredness of human life. Topics on marriage and family were presented on the following day, together with a presentation on the threats to life, marriage, and family: contraception, abortion, euthanasia and reproductive technologies. On the third day, I made presentations on abortion, contraception, and reproductive technologies. I ended my talks on the subject of Billings Ovulation Method for Natural Family Planning.



### PRO-LIFE CLUB IS FORMED

As I completed the training sessions, some seminarians resolved to start a pro-life club at the seminary. About 36 seminarians formed this club. According to the initiators of this idea, the objectives of the club are:

- To devote themselves to the pro-life movement in a special way in order to promote pro-life activism and become proactive in matters of Life, Faith, and Family
- To contribute to diocesan newsletters and maga-



The newly formed Seminarians Pro-Life Chapter at St. Dominic's Major Seminary in Lusaka, Zambia.



Emil Hagamu, HLI Director of English-Speaking Africa, trains seminarians at St. Dominic's Major Seminary.

zines by providing pro-life information

- To include pro-life education in their pastoral ministry, especially after ordination
- To conduct pro-life training in their respective dioceses
- To dedicate a Mass once per semester to pro-life activism
- To keep in contact with an HLI Regional Director in order to keep updated on pro-life information
- To participate at Seminarians for Life chapter meetings in HLI's Anglophone region

## DEPARTURE

On the morning of October 15, as I was leaving for the airport, I said farewell to students and staff and thanked them for their warm welcome and hospitality. I also thanked them for their active participation during the presentations. A few days after my departure, Fr. Brian Chibuluma wrote a note of appreciation for

the good work I had done at the seminary. Here is what he wrote:

*Dear Emil,*

*It was a great pleasure having you impart that important information to our students. We did an evaluation, and it was very positive. The students were happy to have received your training, and they proposed that it should be given to every priest and seminarian. We have to work out a system that will ensure we have it every four years so everyone who goes through St. Dominic's receives it.*

*Thanks, too, for finding time to come. Your passion for this program is really an inspiration, and the students clearly saw that.*

*Wishing you the best again and God bless you abundantly. — Fr. Brian Chibuluma*

## DONATE \$53 OR MORE TO HLI THIS MONTH AND GET OUR LATEST PRO-LIFE RESOURCE!

This month, when you donate \$53 or more to support HLI's life-saving mission, you'll receive our latest pro-life educational resource: ***Marriage: Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way!*** This is the fourth part of a 4-part series on marriage.

“The family is experiencing a profound cultural crisis, as are all communities and social bonds. In the case of the family, the weakening of these bonds is particularly serious because the family is the fundamental cell of society, where we learn to live with others despite our differences and to belong to one another; it is also the place where parents pass on the faith to their children. Marriage now tends to be viewed as a form of mere emotional satisfaction that can be constructed in any way or modified at will. But the indispensable contribution of marriage to society transcends the feelings and momentary needs of the couple.” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 66)

**Please send your gift of \$53 or more to HLI today,** and we'll ship you this new pro-life resource!



***Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way!* is this month's pro-life educational resource.**