



Mission Report

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Above: Emil Hagamu, HLI Regional Director of English-Speaking Africa, answers questions during a pro-life training in Zambia.

- * **“It Is Our Duty” – HLI Supporters Dedicate Lives to the Pro-Life Movement**
- * **Three Days of Pro-Life Training at St. Dominic’s Major Seminary in *Zambia***
- * **A Healthcare Worker Converts after Hearing HLI’s Dr. Ligaya Acosta’s Witness in the *Philippines***
- * **This Month’s Gift to Donors: *What Jesus Saw from the Cross* by Rev. A.G. Sertillanges**

Dear Friends in Christ,

I am writing to you today from 38,000 feet, traveling westbound at 610 miles per hour toward the subcontinent of India. I am accompanied by Dr. Brian Clowes, HLI’s Director of Education and Research. Our destination, after nearly 26 hours of flight time, is Kerala and HLI’s 22nd Asia-Pacific Congress on Faith, Life, and Family (ASPAC). Upon arrival, we will join Dr. Ligaya Acosta, HLI’s Director for Asia and Oceania, Fr. Francesco Giordano, HLI’s Director in Rome, and nearly 600 participants from 20 countries for our biennial three-day congress.

As a Catholic forum for pro-life and family leaders from across Asia, Oceania, and around the world, ASPAC provides concrete ways to face the ever-increasing challenges in the mission for the promotion and defense of faith, life, and family through education and formation. I look forward to sharing more about the 22nd Congress and its overall impact in upcoming publications. Meanwhile, I would like to express, on behalf of the congress’ organizers and participants, my heartfelt gratitude for your faithful prayers and support, which make programs like HLI’s ASPAC a reality. Together, we are making a difference around the world – saving lives and families.

Prior to our journey to Kerala, Dr. Brian and I had the blessing and joy of visiting some of our long-time friends and benefactors in the San Francisco area. I always look forward to these opportunities because they provide an occasion to share many stories about HLI’s missionary activities and the people we serve, as well as the ability to brag about the dedicated team of pro-lifers I am privileged to serve alongside. I also learn how many of our supporters, people just like you, initially became involved in the pro-life and family movement, and how they continue to heroically serve the *Great Campaign in support of Life*.

There is one story in particular that I’d like to share with you, which I hope will inspire you, as it did me.

Over, please



Fr. Shenan J. Boquet
President





Pictured are some members of the organizing committee and participants who welcomed us to Kerala, India.

During my visit with Frank and Frances [names changed to protect their anonymity], HLI supporters for nearly four decades, they made some remarkable statements concerning why, even though in their eighties, they remain active in the pro-life and family movement. “We have been actively engaged in this battle since the early 70s,” they said, “people tell us we should let the young continue the work and effort. What? Should we play bridge, golf, or some other form of recreation and entertainment while something as serious as the violence of abortion reigns? We can’t! ... As long as life is threatened, even one life, we must remain vigilant and committed, dedicating everything we possibly can to defend life, marriage, and our families. It is our duty.”

If only more were as passionate and self-sacrificing. Yes, we are making inroads, but we cannot diminish or relinquish our contribution, become complacent, or become acceptant of the current situations. There is no more grave and widespread evil in the world today than the violence of abortion, which consumes some 50 million innocent lives around the world every year, and more than a million here in our own country. Frank and Frances’ conviction and witness are the only answers a faithful disciple can give. We cannot lessen our duty to *love, respect, defend, and serve* life as long as life is threatened, for, “Amen, I say to you,” says Jesus, “whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25:40)

Sadly, many fail in their responsibility to God *and neighbor*. Our civilization has normalized and institutionalized the murder of unborn children, it has systematically dismantled the legal protections afforded to the natural family and true marriage, it is rapidly moving towards legalizing the practice of killing our sick and elderly, and it exposes our children to gross immorality in the form of “comprehensive” sex-education, pornography, and violent and sexually explicit movies, to name only a few examples.

Fortunately, there are people like Frank, Frances, you, and HLI’s global team of dedicated missionaries willing *to fight the good fight* and keep Jesus’ words: “Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give.” (Matthew 10:8) “No one who lights a lamp conceals it with a vessel or sets it under a bed; rather, he places it on a lampstand so that those who enter may see the light.” (Luke 8:16)

Again, thank you for your prayers and support, which make this global mission and its life-saving impact possible. Please continue to pray for the fruitfulness of our programs and be assured of my prayers for you.

Yours in Christ and Our Lady,

Fr. Shenan J. Boquet
President, Human Life International

MISSION TO ZAMBIA

By Dr. Brian Clowes, Director of Education and Research, October-November 2019

PRO-LIFE MISSIONARY TRAINING PROGRAM

This past fall, HLI completed her fourth mission in Zambia, visiting St. Dominic's Major Seminary in Lusaka. HLI's Regional Director of English-Speaking Africa, Mr. Emil Hagamu, had visited in 2008, 2012, and in 2015, **and we are now beginning to see the fruits of his work in building a strong foundation for pro-life activism in the country.** Mr. Emil and I brought the Pro-Life Missionary Training Program, which we presented over three full days to 140 major seminarians and professors representing all thirteen dioceses of the Catholic Church in Zambia. Quite a few of the recent graduates from the seminary have become strong and outspoken pro-life priests after their ordinations!

On the first of the three days, we introduced Human Life International to the seminarians, some of whom had not heard about us before. We also spoke about the dignity of the human person, the nature of the battle between the Cultures of Life and Death, and the spirituality of the pro-life movement. We repeatedly emphasized the three great principles upon which our vocations and very lives rest – (1) the only things that can truly make you content and happy are Faith and family, (2) science always supports the teachings of the Catholic Church on all matters regarding sexual morality, and (3) it is always easier to live a true Catholic lifestyle than it is to live in any other manner.

One topic that always comes up is the very understandable reticence of celibate male priests addressing matters of sexual morality. Often the question is asked, "Why listen to them [priests] if they have no experience in this area themselves?" So I use a kind of metaphor to make the point: say you have struggled for years to save up enough money to buy your dream car, in this case a top-of-the-line Mercedes. You



are very proud of this vehicle and you want to take very good care of it. So you faithfully take it to your local Mercedes dealership for a thorough maintenance check every year. The mechanic who works on your expensive car does not have one himself. But who knows more about that car – the person who owns and drives it, or the mechanic who has worked on thousands of cars and has seen and repaired every kind of mechanical problem a Mercedes can possibly have?

Any priest who has been ordained for a few years understands more about marriage than any married person will ever know. He has heard thousands of confessions, has counseled hundreds of couples preparing to get married, has met with hundreds of others having problems with their marriages, and has studied the theology and psychology of marriage extensively. Dismissing his vast expertise because he is not married is simply ignorance and bigotry.



Emil Hagamu during a breakout session at the HLI training in Zambia.

Quite a few of the recent graduates from the seminary have become strong and outspoken pro-life priests after their ordinations!

We also mentioned that in the seminarians' future parish lives, they will realize that priests with faithful parishioners have a comparably easier time than those whose congregations use contraception, suffer divorce, and obtain abortions. We appealed to the future priests to take courage and speak the Church's teaching to their flock, who are a people thirsting for authentic truth. If they do this, we pray, they will spend much more time planning marriages and baptisms than dealing with domestic violence, abandoned and suffering wives and children, and messy divorces.

DAY TWO OF PRO-LIFE TRAINING

Many people considered the second day of training to be the most interesting, because we moved from theory to practice. Mr. Emil and I spoke about the current threats to the African people, chief of which is the population suppression cartel. **Everything the Culture of Death proposes not only breaks the links between members of the family, but it is also designed to reduce the number of children that each woman has.** From sex

education and abortion to delayed marriage and the current transgender fad, all of it is intended to convince women that having children is messy, expensive, and just not worth the trouble. In fact, the 1974 Kissinger Report tells us why the U.S.A. is pushing the Culture of Death so fanatically in Africa – *we want African families to have less children so that we in the “developed” world can get our greedy hands on their natural resources.*

In direct contrast to the population control groups, one of our new initiatives is to give out thumb drives containing detailed dossiers on all of the Culture of Death groups working in a country to the priests and seminarians who live and work there. Despite its sparse population of only 62 people per square mile, we have identified 99 such groups working in Zambia. From now on, any of the religious who see a billboard bearing the cryptic initials “PSI” or “RFSU” will know what they mean, what they stand for, and what exactly they are doing in Zambia.

DAY THREE OF PRO-LIFE TRAINING



HLI offers three days of pro-life training to 140 major seminarians and professors at St. Dominic's Major Seminary in Lusaka, Zambia.

On the third day of the Training Program, we discussed the way forward. We covered the eleven essential tasks for organizing an effective group and spoke at length about the foundation stones of Christian activism, which are Training, Recruiting, Information, and Prayer. **We were pleased to see that fully a third of the seminarians returned for an organizational session conducted by Mr. Emil**, which is remarkable considering the incredibly busy schedule they already have.

After completing any training program, we always distribute evaluation forms to the participants to ask their impressions of the topics we covered. We use these comments to improve and adjust the Pro-Life Missionary Training Program. In this case, the seminarians' comments were universally favorable. For example, seminarian Titus Manda Zulu said, "It [the training] has made me realize the goodness of knowing the teaching of the Church, which gives a basic and foundational background of life." Seminarian Mukuka Katongo wrote, "Through the wonderful delivery of work by the presenters, I have come to know a lot of things pertaining to the importance of life, and above all I have come to appreciate the importance of family and our faith." One of the seminarians was so enthusiastic that he suggested we extend the training to two weeks! Perhaps someday we will be able to conduct a more extensive training, God willing.

After the formal training was concluded, Mr. Emil helped the seminarians found Deacons for Life and Seminarians for Life chapters.



Seminarians gather for an organizational session conducted by Emil Hagamu.

The new Deacons for Life Chapter now has 22 transitional deacons who have resolved to continue with the pro-life mission after their priestly ordinations. The Seminarians for Life group resolved to remain actively engaged with the pro-life mission in the seminary and in their respective dioceses as part of their pastoral work when they are on holidays. The specific activities the two groups will focus on include promoting the Gospel of Life through print and electronic media, engaging school, college, and university groups in pro-life education with the aim of building their consciences, and setting up pro-life groups whenever applicable.

Additionally, one of our contacts, Fr. Lackson Emmanuel Lungu, offered to organize a future pro-life training session for priests who had previously received a basic pro-life training. This training would serve as a solid foundation for a dedicated Human Life International chapter in Zambia.

After our visit to the seminary, Mr. Emil, Fr. Lungu, and I made a series of visits and contacts that will help us build future relationships and plans for further training in Zambia. We visited Fr. Christopher Muroz, a Polish parish priest at Makeni, whom Mr. Emil has known for years. He suggested that we conduct a one-day seminar for Catholic professionals, including doctors, nurses, lawyers, and teachers. Fr. Lungu and Fr. Muroz both also expressed a desire for us to conduct a full-day pro-life training session in their respective parishes.

All in all, it was a very fruitful mission for Human Life International. Mr. Emil and I had a nice dinner at the seminary with the professors on our last day, and we look forward to a follow-up mission to continue spreading the Gospel of Life. We thank our generous donors, who collaborate with us in this life-giving mission, for their prayers and support that make our work possible!

THE CONVERSION OF A VILLAGE HEALTH WORKER

By Dr. Ligaya Acosta, Regional Director of Asia and Oceania

She approached me with tears in her eyes, after I had just delivered a lecture on “*Contraception: Why Not?*”, a theological and scientific discussion on why we should say NO to contraception. She introduced herself as Pacita Bedeo, a Village Health Worker from one of the villages in Lipa City, Philippines. She brought with her two other workers from the roughly 500 who heard my talks that day, and this was Pacita’s first time hearing me speak. **She told me she wanted to meet for she had heard a lot about me – for I, too, was a former pusher of population control and contraceptives.**

Pacita is a Catholic and a mother of five children, aged 12-24. She has been a Village Health Worker for more than six years and an avid promoter of contraceptives, which she practically forces on women in her coverage area, convinced that not having any more children is a way out of poverty – the familiar flawed logic perpetuated by international death peddlers. Having been trained by the Department of Health on “Family

Planning,” she was thoroughly convinced that massive distribution and use of contraceptives are a necessity – especially, she said, among promiscuous adolescents as young as 12 or 13 to avoid teen pregnancies, and among poor young mothers who already have “many” children. A secret I’ve heard many times, **Pacita confessed to me she had formerly used such pills but quit after only two months, because of the many side-effects she suffered**, among them constant dizziness and headaches, lethargy, irritability, and loss of libido.



We had a long heart-to-heart talk. Since I could share with her from a faith-based and scientific basis, comparing my own life story with hers, she opened her heart to conversion on the spot. Pacita said I had made her realize she was actually leading people into sin, and at the same time, causing many to experience illnesses when instead they could be healthy by embracing authentic Christian values.

I posed a couple of simple questions to her, “Would forcing contraception on the poor add food to their table? Would forcing contraception on young girls stop their promiscuity?” As we at HLI always say, contraception will only succeed in making poor large families into poor small families. Giving contraception to young people will never stop their promiscuity, but encourage them to be more so, because it only covers up the unresolved root issue. Add to that the failure rate of contraceptives and the result is more teen pregnancies, and with a contraceptive mentality of not wanting children, abortion is inevitably promoted. Pacita was startled at the simplicity of the logic – deep in her heart she knew contraceptives were no solution and her realization brought on strong emotions as she understood the truth.



Pacita Bedeo (left), a Village Health Worker from one of the villages in Lipa City, Philippines, with Dr. Ligaya Acosta, Regional Director of Asia and Oceania.

Seeing my own conversion, she said she, too, would like to live her Catholic faith authentically.

Pacita realized she wasn't being true to herself. She recalled her own traumatic experience with the pills, and she felt she had been lying to her constituents, and thus, sinning more. More importantly, **she said listening to the Church's teaching in my talks made her suddenly aware of the preciousness of each and every human life, and the wisdom of God's plan for everyone.** I myself am the ninth of eleven children coming from a poor family, and she said this witness was powerful! I am always grateful to God and to my parents, that despite their poverty, they never thought of aborting me, or I would not be here. Of course my parents sacrificed a lot for us, but their sacrifices bore fruit, and God blessed them and their children.

Pacita decided she would immediately quit working as a Village Health Worker, because remaining would



Pacita Bedeo (center) brought two other Village Health Workers to hear Dr. Ligaya speak.

March 2020 Events

Please Pray for HLI's Mission Work in March:

- February 8-March 14: Nancy Tosi, VHI Advisor for Latin American Missions, will be on mission in 12 dioceses throughout Venezuela. She will offer conferences in each of the dioceses and will work with graduates of HLI's Hispanic Pro-Life Online Course. She will also be working with Project Rachel.
- February 19-March 6: Fr. Boquet, HLI President, and Dr. Brian Clowes will participate in various mission activities in the Philippines, joined by Dr. Ligaya Acosta and Dr. Rene Bullecer, HLI's country director in the Philippines.
- March 7-21: Emil Hagamu, HLI Regional Director of English-Speaking Africa, will be in the United States speaking to HLI supporters about our mission in Africa. This is a wonderful opportunity for our supporters to get first-hand accounts of the critical work being done in Emil's mission territory.
- March 20-22: Dr. Rafael Cabrera and Luis Fernando Calvo, collaborators of HLI, will be on mission in Costa Rica for trainings of priests, seminarians, and laity.
- March 21-April 1: Fr. Boquet, Mario Rojas, HLI Regional Director of Latin America, and Nancy Tosi will be on mission in the Archdiocese of Durango, Mexico for a pro-life festival "Vida Fest," as well as mission activities in the Diocese of Torreón and the Mission of El Salto.

Watch for details of these events in future issues of HLI's *Mission Report*.

continuously put her under the command of government workers forcing massive population control. Seeing my own conversion, she said she, too, wished to live her Catholic faith authentically, to learn more about pro-life and family issues and Natural Family Planning (NFP), and to encourage others to do the same. Pacita and I went to Fr. Diego, the rector of the community hosting the event, and together we set the pro-life training for the first quarter of 2020, with a focus on teaching NFP.

Through the prayers and sacrifices of our donors, HLI touches many “Pacitas” – she was not the only one to approach me that day. See how God will use her to convert more hearts? With your help, there will be countless more individuals like Pacita, who encounter the freeing truth and authentic love of the pro-life and family message.

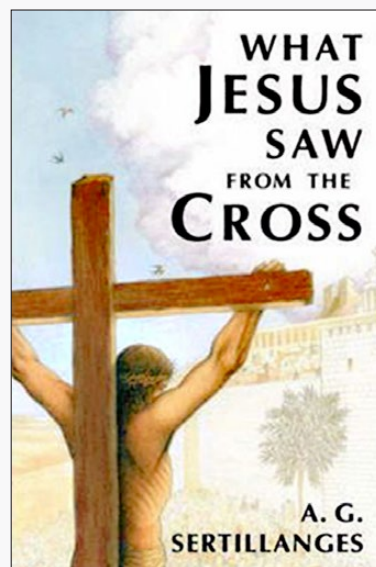
DONATE \$53 OR MORE TO HLI THIS MONTH AND GET OUR LATEST PRO-LIFE RESOURCE!

This month, when you donate \$53 or more to support HLI’s life-saving mission, we’ll send you the book *What Jesus Saw from the Cross* by Rev. A.G. Sertillanges.

Written in the early 1900s by a priest who lived in Jerusalem, this acclaimed devotional classic gives you vivid and dramatic details surrounding the passion and death of Our Lord – with Jesus, you’ll be jostled by crowds as you enter Jerusalem, you’ll cough through the dust of the narrow streets, you’ll experience the exotic oriental smells of the city at festival time, you’ll share the Last Supper with the disciples, you’ll stare into the face of Jesus’ accusers, and you’ll be there as He dies on the Cross.

Do you remember when Jesus begged His disciples to “watch one hour” with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane? With this book, you can watch not just one but many hours with Jesus.

Read it slowly and prayerfully. The vivid details and the gripping narrative will soon take over: you’ll find yourself engaged in a personal retreat, an interior pilgrimage, and a profound meditation on the love and sufferings of Jesus on the Cross.



What Jesus Saw from the Cross by A.G. Sertillanges is our gift to you this month when you donate \$53 or more.

Please send your gift of \$53 or more to HLI, and we’ll ship this book out to you today!