

# GCCN

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# THE DECLINE AND FALL of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*Thomas Wang*



### **America is too young to die!**

**T**he pilgrims landed in 1620. The Declaration of Independence signed in 1776. America helped to win both World War I and World War II. Today, she remains to be the sole super power of the world! What do we mean by saying “Decline and Fall”?

Well, in the first place, measured by the Scripture, America is consistently abandoning her Christian roots. According to the Bible and the rule of history, decline and fall as such is natural and inevitable. Some Bible students are

asking the question, “Why are the prophetic messages in the Bible strangely silent about America in the end time?” Could it be that America one day will suddenly cease to be a major player in the world?

Then, upon further observation, we might get a glimmer of understanding from the profound insight of Edward Gibbon, the eminent historian of England, from his monumental work “*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*” first published in 1776 and finalized in 1787. According to this masterpiece the decline and fall of Rome was due more on internal decay than external encroachments:



1. Extravagant national lifestyle
2. Immorality and corruption
3. Time and natural consumption
4. External pressures

Does this remind us of America today? Our downward drift in recent years is alarming. Our leaders are forsaking God!

1. Our President openly supports same-sex marriage. He scrapped the Presidential Prayer Breakfast but hosted a celebration in the White House for gays and lesbians.
2. Our Supreme Court has outlawed prayer in public schools (1962), Bible reading in public schools (1963) and the exhibition of Ten Commandments (1980); but the same court has legalized abortion (1973), the teaching of atheism in public schools (1997) and same-sex marriage (2013). **THE SUPREME COURT HAS INDEED BECOME THE SUPREME CURSE!**
3. Ever since 1973, an average of 4,000 babies has been killed in their mothers' womb in America each day, resulting in a total of almost 60 millions up to now. (Equal to the total population of the nation of France!)
4. Our divorce rate is the highest among nations of the world.
5. We spend \$2.8 billion dollars in internet pornography per year which is more than half of world's total.
6. We consume more than half of the world's illegal drugs.
7. 40 percent of all our children are born by unmarried women.

8. Blasphemy of God's name, His Word and His Son has become common place in our media.

9. We are the polluter of the world through immoral movies, television programs and internet pornography.

10. Our prison population has increased from 500,000 in 1980 to over 2.5 million today.

A number of concerned Christians are asking the question, is there any hope for America? Regrettably, the answer is NO. Because we have forsaken God who is the source of blessings and the fountain of life! I think it was Arnold Toynbee's observation that great and powerful nations in history mostly died of suicide!

Our only hope is in Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who died for our sins on the cross. This is the only way. The Bible said, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land." (II Chronicles 7:14)

May I humbly suggest that we all come earnestly to our Lord Jesus Christ, confess our sins and plead for His mercy on the following supplications:

1. That He will grant a spirit of personal and national repentance to America.
2. That America will again be a God-fearing nation, and Americans a God-fearing people.
3. That America will continue to be a channel of blessings to the world.

May God bless you for your prayer and your endeavor for our beloved and beleaguered nation. Amen!



# The Result of the Ten-year Transformational Development of an African City

*by Africa Inland Mission (AIM)*



Lois travels extensively leading workshops, based on her experience, to empower people to begin with what they have - no matter how small - to create a foundation for sustainable self-help programs.

She advises groups in S. Sudan, W. Africa, Tanzania, islands in the Indian Ocean, Uganda, Lesotho, Angola, Mozambique, Madagascar, S.E. Asia, creative access countries of the Middle East, etc. as well as Kenya.

In the fall of 2007 Kenyans, whom Lois trained, took over responsibility for oversight of over 40 programs in Kenya. There are also teams in Madagascar, Lesotho and Central Africa training others. Lois is now based in the Chicago area so she can be more available as a consultant and trainer in other countries of Africa, Asia, Central America and the Middle East as well as in N. America.

Nduanene (not its real name) is a large African provincial capital with a population of over 300,000. In 2002 a loose coalition was started between groups of Christians interested in reducing the effects of HIV/AIDS and preventing further spread. An AIC (Africa Inland Church) team began training people in the theology, principles and practice of holistic transformational development. Below is a bullet point summary of a report written by an AIM missionary who has

**L**ois has worked in Africa since 1969 and in transformational development since 1984. In Kenya she networked with community and church leaders, health professionals, Kenyan missionaries and local churches to begin low-cost holistic community development groups which focused on health, widows, HIV/AIDS home care, orphans, micro finance, etc.

As the Transformational Development Director for Africa Inland Church, Lois developed training materials for a basic workshop on the theology, principles, and practice of holistic development as well as materials for health related issues, HIV/AIDS home care, prevention of blindness, micro finance and reproductive health assistance for use in groups on the grass roots level.

not started any programs, but is a “coach” with a listening ear and heart to see transformed people, churches and communities. She gathered the information below by listening to people involved in a wide variety of programs all over the area. Below are some of the comments they made.

## **PASTORS / CHURCHES**

- Pastors no longer only talk “about the Bible” but make viable applications to real life, including HIV/AIDS.
- Churches are becoming more holistic in their approach – not just dealing with “spiritual” issues but dealing with issues of the vulnerable – i.e. orphans and widows, starting schools, giving food to the needy etc.
- Denominations are working together on community issues.
- Church leaders are involving those with HIV/AIDS and the youth in the churches.
- Pastors from tribes that are traditional enemies built an altar to the Lord as a witness; they’re meeting on their own initiative to work together on development issues.
- Believers are being trained to lead Transformational Development (TD) workshops.

## **COMMUNITY LEADERS**

- School officials are requesting help in counseling youth.
- Community elders respect the youth and include them in decision making.
- Leaders of other development programs are asking for input from those trained in TD.
- Families begin to focus on goals and discipline children as they see that poor family relationships should not be regarded as “normal”; through discussion and asking good questions, healing is happening.
- Communities are coming together to build secondary schools – including responsibility to build pit latrines.
- School teachers are buying school supplies for a few vulnerable children and encouraging those in the community to help the more vulnerable with clothes etc.

## **ORPHANS / VULNERABLE**

- Women from local churches manage a shelter for girls who lived in the city dump.
- 7 of the 12 girls from the shelter are in secondary (high) school and doing well; their hopelessness has shifted to dreaming of what they can do.
- The girls are taking responsibility and a couple have become prefects and monitors in school.
- All of the caregivers of the girls have legitimate businesses; all but one are active in local churches
- Caregivers take responsibility for discipline and the needs of their girls rather than ignoring them.
- IDP’s (Internally displaced people) who used to beg now take pride in earning a living through farming and non-formal businesses; they have come out of dependency.
- Mentally disabled recognize their abilities and help their families; they don’t allow men to misuse them.

## **WIDOWS /SINGLE MOMS**

- Widows and single Moms feel accepted in the church as people of worth; they are saving money to begin businesses and buy land; school officials allow them to work in lieu of paying school fees.
- Widows have begun saving money for various needs, including helping the more vulnerable.

## **WOMEN**

- Women of hostile tribes are embracing each other, asking forgiveness and challenging men to do likewise.
- Men begin to see the capabilities of women and give them opportunity to use their gifts and abilities.

## **YOUTH**

- Many young people have accepted the Lord; their behavior has changed; drug use has reduced; they’ve become more responsible.
- Youth reach out to University students and start sports competitions; 70 students attend one church.

- School drop outs have reduced in communities with TD influence; youth are learning to lead.
- Young men and women have begun non-formal businesses, are teaching others and help support their families.
- Youth are taking a stand for purity and against sexual abuse, quietly informing trusted adults of abuse.
- Young people understand a good leader means you do good even when unsupervised.

## CULTURE / ATTITUDES

- Dependency is reducing as people realize they themselves are a basic resource.
- The HIV/AIDS people are open about their status, seeking advice on living well with HIV/AIDS and teaching others; they feel they now have a voice and are being heard.
- Church leaders established a model for a \$120 wedding after realizing their costly expectations to maintain current practices (\$1,200) drove many youth from the churches.
- Boys and girls become role models and begin projects to help support their families after the boys go through the Christian Rite of Passage and the girls go through counseling.
- Many now understand that farming is a respectable occupation as they have come to realize they are image bearers of God – the first farmer.
- People are discerning that not all things in a culture are good; cultural change can begin with one person.

## SOME CHALLENGES:

- Sustainability of Hope for Life (OVC program) remains elusive. After introducing Farming God's Way two years ago, they are 22% self-supporting. We have challenged them to reach 50% in the next 2 years.
- As NGO's and "Western" churches see the results, they "want in on the action"; giving large grants to do more, better and sending short term teams which can cause harm and rob people of their dignity.
- People looking for personal gain have slowly crept into the management committee of the girls shelter.

- There is tension between wanting outsiders to see what the Lord is doing and yet not stir up expectations in fragile communities when they see outsiders. (Several program leaders ask that as outsiders we meet in town rather than on site to avoid this issue.)
- With rapid growth of a great variety of programs, it is hard to know how to keep contact for encouragement, prayer and mentoring without "interfering".
- Cultural change is fragile and can easily be "derailed".
- Inspiring "partners" to pray for those involved in the transformation of Nduanene, give them the "dignity of choice" and communicate they stand with them even when things don't go as anticipated.

## CONCLUDING NOTE:

We need to acknowledge that mass media, HIV/AIDS campaigns and the work of many other groups in the country play a role in the changes happening. We are particularly excited to see the shift in people's thinking / attitudes and how transformation, beginning with HIV/AIDS issues, is expanding to other issues of community life. We see the above changes like small clumps of grass that are growing bigger; given time, by God's grace, spreading to create a lush grassy field with the potential of transforming of the city of Nduanene and beyond.

Recently we spent 3 days in the city talking with many of those involved in community programs; from our observations, what is written above is consistent with what we saw and heard. This is a powerful example of how the Lord has done exceeding more than we could have ever dreamt about; all the glory, honor and praise belong to Him as we see how He has worked through a great variety of people.

*(Lois J. Ooms, not her real name, has been an Africa Inland Mission missionary since 1969. She is now stationed in Chicago serving as a consultant and senior training personnel for mission work in Africa, Asia, Middle East and North America.)*



**South Korea:** Mission movement has grown rapidly since the late 1970s. Today, there are 20,000 Korean missionaries sent by 60 denominations to fields of 177 countries. This growth has slowed since 2007 as only mature missionaries are sent out, partly due to the tragic incident in Afghanistan. 23 Korean missionaries were kidnapped by the Taliban terrorists. Two were killed before the others were released.

<Christianity Today, [christianitytoday.com](http://christianitytoday.com), October 13>

**USA:** Hispanic Americans have long been leaving Catholicism. Today, 7 in 10 were raised Catholics, but only 1 in 2 stayed. Of those leaving 31% went to Evangelical churches, 22% to Mainline churches, 13% to other faiths, and 34% unaffiliated. Of the Arab Americans almost 70% are Christians.

<Christianity Today, [christianitytoday.com](http://christianitytoday.com), December 13>

**Mother-tongue Bible:** A few years ago, a group of translation agencies committed to see a Bible translation work in progress for every language in the world needing it by year 2025. Today there are still 1,919 of those. But the combined effort of these agencies has lessened the time. Also helping greatly are advances in technology like satellite communication, computer programs, etc. 30 years ago, it took 20 years to complete a New Testament book on the average. Today, it is down to 8 years.

<Wycliffe Associates, [www.wycliffe.org](http://www.wycliffe.org), 11/26/13>

**Playing Card Bible:** Decks of playing cards depicting Bible stories produced by a gospel worker using pictures drawn by his teenage girls are used by many to spread the gospel effectively, especially in rural East Asia where word of mouth and story telling are most common. There are two different decks, one each for Old and New Testament. Cards are available at [123gosshare.com](http://123gosshare.com), \$10 per set. Sale proceeds go into a mission fund and for each set ordered, a set is sent to a worker in the field.

<International Mission Board, [imb.org](http://imb.org), 11/27/13>

**Kazakhstan:** A sports ministry soccer team of 4 expat workers, 2 national believers and 5 non-believer friends play a team of prisoners. After the game, a referee shared his testimony and several prisoners took interest in the gospel. It has become a monthly event and gospel has been shared freely to people on both sides.

<e3 Partners, [www.e3partners.org](http://www.e3partners.org), 11/20/13>

**India:** Historically, in this nation of very diverse language and people group, the church has stayed in their own state, own language and groups, not reaching out to others. Now, the Christians of higher concentration in the south are training and sending out internal missionaries outside of their cultural boundaries, especially to some of the Muslim areas of the

north, where it is sensitive for Westerners to go.

<The Mission Society, [www.themissionsociety.org](http://www.themissionsociety.org), 11/19/13>

**Lebanon:** Amidst the internal conflict between the Christians and Islamic extremists with the added stress of Syrian refugees from their civil war, Christians are inspired by the Spirit to grasp the opportunity to exhibit the love of God. They are helping refugees to get housing, food, children into school, and jobs where possible. It opens a way to share Christ.

<Sat-7, [www.sat7usa.org](http://www.sat7usa.org), 11/22/13>

**Mission Internship:** A senior elementary education student gets college credits as she intern with a Christian agency in orphanage in Guatemala. Not just helping kids for a few hours on arts and crafts, for weeks she gets to dress them in the morning, helps at meal times, and reading stories to them before bedtime. She is able to show Christ's love and build up relationship with orphans, the nannies and other workers. She has learned much in practical application of theories. Besides Guatemala, the agency has ministry in Uganda and Dominican Republic.

<Orphan's Heart, [www.orphanheart.org](http://www.orphanheart.org), 12/13/13>

**Ukraine:** The protest movement of thousands against official anti-Europe policy has persisted for weeks. The church leaders that set up a prayer tent in the midst of it, sense a spiritual openness among the people and perhaps the beginning of a revival. Everyone is requesting a Bible or a New Testament. People are scared but determine to carry on. There is a story of a young man witnessing the riot police tearing down the barricades and advancing very close to the stage when the bells of St Michael's church started ringing as if crying for help. Some thing happened in the sky, and the police moved back. At that point he believed in God.

<Russian Ministries, [russian-ministries.org](http://russian-ministries.org), 12/16/13>

<Evangelical Free Church of America, [www.efca.org](http://www.efca.org), 12/13/13>

**Guatemala:** In decades of civil war (1962 to 1996), 200,000 were killed and many lost properties and plantations. In 2010, 60 families banded together finally were rewarded by the officials in the mountainous region a plantation. They had nothing, no electricity, no running water, and live in shacks built with stick and plastic roofs. An agency led by God, stumbled on them and started providing medical services and meeting other physical needs. A showing of the Jesus film and sharing of the gospel led many to Christ. The agency will continue to send short-term teams to work in building homes, water supply, a church, a school, etc.

<Paradise Bound Ministries, [www.paradisebound.org](http://www.paradisebound.org), 12/10/13>



# Mission to the Roma People in Europe



Most people have a stereotype image of the wandering Roma people (Gypsies). However, most of them today have settled down in different places. It is estimated that there are about 1,000,000-1,200,000 Roma in Europe alone.

Roma people were originally from a people of low caste in northern India. They left their homeland about 1,000 years ago moving westward, through Central Asia and the Near East to Europe and North Africa. Because of their ethnic difference from the Europeans, people thought they might be from Egypt, hence the name "Gypsy."

Today, we can find Roma people not only in Europe, but also in north and south Americas and even in Oceania. Although most of the Roma people have been living in their adopted countries for hundreds of years, they are still a unique people and have kept their own culture. They are known for their talents in music. But unfortunately, they still believe in fatalism (a residue of the teaching of reincarnation) and do not have the drive to improve their status. As a result, most of them are less educated, married young (at 14 or 15), and live in extreme poverty. Due to lack

of proper training, they are limited to do manual work and occasional odd jobs. It is not uncommon to see their unemployment rate as high as 60%-70%. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand why pilfering and petty-crimes are rampant among them.

About half a year ago, we came across several articles on Roma people and Roma churches in Eastern Europe. The titles of the articles are: "God Works Among the Roma" (Christianity Today, May 2013 issue) "Loving Our 'Unwanted' Neighbors" (Mission Frontiers, May-June 2013 issue) and "Separated Peoples: The Roma as Prophetic Pilgrims in Eastern Europe" (International Bulletin of Missionary Research, vol.37, No.3, July 2013 issue). We are touched by the fact that the Roma is the most responsive people to the gospel in Europe as described by Melody



Wachsmuth, the author of these three articles. So, our staff began to pray for this most neglected unreached people group.

GCCI Hong Kong Board called a Prayer meeting in Hong Kong for the Roma People on September 17, 2013, the first of its kind in Hong Kong. During this prayer meeting, participants were touched by God and agreed to continue to pray for the Roma people and bring this vision back to their churches. Thus, GCCI felt God's leading in launching a fact-finding trip to Eastern Europe in November.

A 6-member fact-finding trip was organized to visit Serbia and Hungary on November 5-15, 2013. Through the arrangement of Rev. Viktor Sabo of Serbia, we had the opportunity to visit Roma communities in Subotica, Apatin, Belgrade, Jagodina and Leskovac. Rev. Sabo is a Hungarian decent Serbian. Although he is not Roma, he has a heart for Roma. Not only he accepts Roma into his church, he mentors several Roma pastors. Therefore, we had the opportunity to visit a number of Roma churches, Roma Communities and Roma Christians working in open markets. Roma people are friendly. When these Christians knew that we have the burden for mission to the Roma, they were greatly thankful. They even refused our pay for the fruits in their stalls.

Through the introduction of Rev. Sabo, we also came to know Rev. Albert Durko of the National Gypsy Mission of Hungarian Pentecostal Church. Their main purpose is "to help the

disadvantaged people to find their identities and to become a valuable and constructive member of the society." They establish elementary and secondary schools, and provide social services to the youth and elderly in addition to their church ministry. We had the opportunity to visit their headquarters, the elementary school, and met with their national leaders. Mrs. Durko is a Roma while Rev. Durko is not, but their child is studying in the same school with the Roma children. It is their hope to help change the mentality of the next generation of Roma through education and counseling. We were informed also that they have established 16 churches in different parts of Hungary. We had the privilege to visit 2 of them on our trip.



In view of the vast need of the Roma people, GCCI will work with several church leaders in Eastern Europe to organize a Mission Conference in 2014 for and to the Roma people. The conference will be held in Subotica, Serbia on

September 22-26, 2014. It is our hope to gather 100 Roma church leaders, 80 European church leaders who are working with or have the burden for evangelizing Roma people and 50 International mission leaders. The main purpose of Conference is to work alongside with Roma churches to bring the gospel to their kinsmen. More detailed information about this will be posted on our website in the spring of 2014. Your prayer for this significant event is much appreciated.

