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GC3 360° REVIEW



SEFTON MARSHALL | GC3 OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

MISSION'S NOT DEAD!

YEARS AGO, A FRIEND OF MINE ASKED ME THE QUESTION, "IF YOU SAW TEN MEN CARRYING A HEAVY LOG DOWN THE ROAD AND THERE WERE NINE AT ONE END AND ONLY ONE AT THE OTHER, WHICH END WOULD YOU GO TO IN ORDER TO HELP?" I'VE NEVER FORGOTTEN THE CHALLENGE THAT WAS TO MY HEART AT THE TIME AND IT HAS CONTINUED TO SHAPE MY THINKING EVER SINCE.

I think it is a very good question for us to ponder, especially given the ongoing healthy tension there is with the allocation of our time and our church resources. Where should the emphasis be? Should we concentrate on local evangelism and mission, where there are significant suitable resources deployed already, where there is already a concentration of churches and Christian

endeavour? Or should we be supportive of evangelism and mission in some other context and culture, quite different to our own? Let's face it, we feel much more comfortable with what we know and are used to. In a sense, that is very natural for us.

But these questions need addressing before God with sensitivity and expectancy.

What is God saying to us? What is He saying to me; what is He saying to you? At which end of the log does He want us to put our effort and help?

Clearly, from God's perspective, cross-cultural mission is not dead!

I marvel at what He is doing. I see people from other cultures coming to New Zealand to evangelise Kiwis. How we in New Zealand need the gospel made known! They obviously perceive the heavy end of the log to be here! But then, our people are as lost to God as any. How we in New Zealand need the transforming power of the gospel to sweep through our culture. ▶

And then I see folk from within our network of churches leaving New Zealand to take the gospel, many through highly innovative means, to people in other corners of the world. That's really exciting, and that's what we love to be a part of at GC3. The imperative is to "go to all nations ..." (Matt 28:19) and we stand in awe of what God is doing and how He is achieving those ends, both here and there. There are so many church and ministry opportunities scattered around the globe crying out

for assistance, we in New Zealand could easily provide.

If you sense God is asking you to step out of your comfort-zone to apply your knowledge of Him and your practical expertise in a cross-cultural setting, then we'd love to hear from you. There's nowhere better for any of us to be than just where God wants us to be. He has a 'sweet spot' for each of us for service and maybe we can help you hone what that might look like.

Check out our webpage at www.gc3.org.nz, follow us on Facebook or flick me

a message at operationsdirector@gc3.org.nz if this is you. We'd love to journey with you.

Here at GC3 we champion the opportunities there are to serve in ministries in a cross-cultural context. That is our purpose. That is what we are here for, to support churches sending people into these situations and to support folk working in whatever that context might be. We welcome the opportunity to assist the 'heavy lifters' in cross-cultural mission. ■

KEVIN HONORE | DAY 24, GC3 DAILY PRAYER GUIDE

CULTURAL AWARENESS

DURING A VISIT TO ONE OF BRIGHT HOPE WORLD'S PARTNERS IN BANGALORE, WE WERE INVITED TO COME WITH THEM TO A MEETING. WE ARRIVED EARLY AND MET PEOPLE AS THEY ARRIVED. WE PLAYED SOME GAMES AND SPOKE TO THEM. THEY LISTENED INTENTLY, BUT IT WASN'T EASY TO COMMUNICATE. THERE WAS CERTAINLY A LANGUAGE BARRIER — THEY WERE INDIANS — BUT THAT WASN'T THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE: THEY WERE ALSO TRANSSEXUALS, CROSS-DRESSERS AND MALE PROSTITUTES.

Paulrani and Jesudoss have chosen to love these people and move into their world. They did it at great risk to themselves and their family. They have been let down, threatened and abused. But they stay, they support, they counsel, confront and advocate. And lives are transformed by the persistent love of God delivered with grace and truth. They moved into their culture. In the words of Paul, 'they lived among them for their sake.' (1 Thessalonians 1:5b.)

We inherit our worldview and culture from those around us: from family or tribe. This fundamentally shapes us. It's beyond ethnicity and has many components that affect every aspect of our lives.

Every culture has idols. It's typically easier to see them in other cultures than in our own. That's why communicating the Good News across into other cultures is so fraught with difficulty. It is hard to approach another culture without viewing it from our own cultural framework. It is virtually impossible to view any culture through a purely objective Christian or Kingdom lens.

To grapple with these challenges I want to dig into the Apostle Paul's modus operandi as a cross-cultural missionary.

In this series of articles, I'd like to explore some lessons from 1st Thessalonians, particularly chapters 1 and 2.

My personal context for writing this is this. I find myself, in any given year, having to transition in and out of numerous cultures. I've learned valuable lessons and made many mistakes from one to the another. I've also discovered that culture is very often a 'micro-localised' phenomenon. There is no 'Indian culture'. Instead, there are thousands of 'Indian cultures'. From one village to the next culture can change markedly.

It is no different in New Zealand. Individualism and development of the nuclear family mean that every home may present its own culture. We are a society comprised of a huge number of diverse and tiny jigsaw pieces, and there is little hope of it becoming a cohesive picture. This is reinforced by our tendency to form around us a bubble or echo chamber of people who think more or less as we do. Rarely do we choose to meaningfully engage with people who think differently to us.

So, whether we're intentionally reaching a remote tribe, or simply visiting our neighbours, we need to consider whether there are principles we can apply to



Kevin and Helen have two adult children and three grandchildren. They are originally from Levin but now live on the Whangaparaoa Peninsular. They are part of the leadership team at Orewa Community Church and have been involved in missions since the early 80s. They spent almost nine years in Zambia and now serve with Bright Hope World. Their passion is to see the lost come into a transforming relationship with God and for the poor to have their world views reshaped by the Good News. They spend many months each year finding and developing partnerships in the majority world.

effectively move across cross-cultural boundaries. I believe there are and will seek to unpack some of these in upcoming articles.

Back to Paul in Thessalonians for more context. The Thessalonian church in chapter 1 is described as a "model church" (1:7). What made this church a "model church?" Numerous characteristics are described in chapter 1 which we'll return to in later articles, but a foundational descriptor emerges in chapter 2. I am persuaded that the church in Thessalonica flourished because of the way the ►



WAYNE & VANESSA | DAY 7, GC3 DAILY PRAYER GUIDE

DEATH TO MYSELF

I HAVE NEVER ASKED THE LORD FOR A “WORD” FOR THE YEAR BEFORE, BUT I SEE THAT IT IS A POPULAR THING TO DO, SO I DECIDED TO REVIEW MY JOURNAL ENTRIES FOR THE PAST 2 YEARS AND SEE WHAT GOD HAS BEEN SAYING. IT APPEARS, THAT I DON’T HAVE A WORD — I HAVE A THEME.

My theme is **“DEATH TO MYSELF”**. Over the past two years I have written phrases like;

“I MUST be slain”

“I in my flesh MUST die”

“I am crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me...” Galatians 2:20

It’s no surprise that this was the theme, as God was stirring my husband’s heart and inviting our family to partner with Him in His work in Cambodia. The only

way that I could ever respond positively to an invitation like that, was to die to myself.

God worked gently with me, ever so patient with my nights of crying, my questioning, my fears and my doubts.

I shared my intense struggle with a godly friend. I explained my fears and that I had confessed them to God. He asked me if I had laid them all on the altar. Laid down, offered to God, released to Him. My friend suggested that I



might need to even lay on the altar my ministry aspirations – good things that I believed God had placed in my heart! That was a revelation to me. Even the good things might not be His will for me at this time.

My Heavenly Father reassured me at every step, until it became a simple ►

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team related to the people. This is a major lesson for us as we seek to live in and reach our own communities and the many cultures within them.

Please note these phrases in chapter 2: “As a nursing mother cares for her children.” “We loved you so much.” “We were gentle among you.” “We were delighted to share with you, not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.” “We dealt with each of you as a father deals

with his own children.” “We were torn away from you, (in person not in thought.)” “Out of our intense longing we tried to come to you.” “You are our glory and joy.”

Deep, life-transforming gospel-sharing is enhanced and multiplied in impact when done in the context of genuine life-sharing. And, life-sharing opens the door through any cultural barrier to gospel-sharing. The people Paul was writing to were a diverse mix of Jews, Greeks and quite a few prominent women (Acts

17:4). Many were pagan idolaters (1 Thess 1:9). Yet, the team loved them so intensely that many were unable to resist the drawing power of the message. They turned away from idols to serve the living and true God.

Two challenges: in what ways are we loving our diverse, pagan communities with this kind of intensity? How well equipped and intentional are we to share the message of life and truth? ■

question: Do you trust me? I had been raised to trust Him and know Him. I had studied His Word for years and knew that I couldn't choose my own will, if I really believed what I said I believed. There was no other answer but "Yes Lord, I trust you."

In some ways, I lulled myself into a false truth, that in taking the step to move to Cambodia, I had somehow attained the level of dying that God desired of me. How naïve! I knew nothing of daily dying to my Lord!

We arrived in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in March 2019. The heat was almost unbearable, there were daily power cuts and water shortages. This impacted every aspect of our day – washing, cooking, schooling, sleeping.

Death to my (so-called) ability to control.

My capacity was much less than my highly productive self was used to.

Death to my efficiency and productivity.

Everything was different and foreign to us all. Shopping at the local markets for our food, navigating a new language, culture and currency was challenging. Communication with people (in English), is a strength for me, but here that's irrelevant.

Death to my ability to effectively communicate.

So, as challenging as it is, I choose to embrace the dying. Life, real life, is only found as we surrender ourselves to Jesus.

One day, as I was cleaning my house (in 40-degree heat), struggling to work out how to use the mop, very hot and tired, my flesh rose up in resistance to God. I knew I needed to realign my attitude. Worship music always helps me with this!

The first song on shuffle play was "Grateful" by Elevation Worship.

"This is the day, that You have made, whatever comes, I won't complain, for all my hope, is in Your name, and now Your joy, awaits my praise..."

Death to my fleshly responses – I choose hope in you Lord.

We moved to the Province to begin serving in the ministry we had come to share in, only to find that the opportunity no longer existed.

Death to our purpose for being here.

We were grief-stricken and confused. I had moments where anger welled up within me. How do we lead our children through this season, when we ourselves are struggling?

We waited on the Lord as a family. We played our worship music and waited for Him to speak. Jordan our 12-year-old

brought us a word from Psalm 66:12-19. In the Passion translation it reads like this: "We've passed through fire and flood, yet in the end you always bring us out better than we were before, saturated with your goodness. I come before your presence with my sacrifice. I'll give you all that I've promised, everything I have. When I was overcome in my anguish, I promised to give you my sacrifice. Here it is! All that I said I would offer you is yours. The best I have to bring. I'll throw it all onto the fire as the fragrance of my sacrifice ascends unto you. All you lovers of God, who want to please Him, come and listen, and I'll tell you what He did for me."

Jordan said that he felt as if this Psalm was about all that we have been through to come to Cambodia. That we had sacrificed a lot and given God everything and although we cannot see it now, in the end we will be able to tell people what God has done.

We moved back to Phnom Penh. The adjustments were massive. I became a teacher – home-schooling our three children and wrestling with God over my new reality. "I've come to minister Lord!" I would protest. "Do what I have placed ▶





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before you" He would whisper to me.

Death to my ministry aspirations

I can't help but think of Abraham. Trudging up the mountain, preparing to sacrifice his son Isaac. None of it makes sense, but as Abraham walks in humble obedience to His Father – dying to his own will; Abraham experiences the provision of God.

And I too have experienced that provision. I have seen God everywhere. As I tackle the markets, God provides a translator, as I grieve the loss of my women's study group in New Zealand, God provides like-minded women here to study His Word with. As I entrust the future of my children to Him, I see them flourish in this new life, growing in ways that they never would have. As I release my 19-year old to God's care in Auckland, I see His provision. Cam has amazing Christian friends, a stable home, beautiful church family, ministry and work. God reminds me of a scripture

He gave me before we left.

Psalm 115:14 KJV "The Lord shall increase you more and more; you and your children."

It was difficult for me to believe this in faith, but I'm seeing this verse come to fruition, as I relinquish my will.

And as I choose to remain walking in obedience, when my flesh sometimes screams "Go home!" I see the provision of God in His presence, His faithfulness, His Holy Spirit whispers, His comfort, His love, His peace – and the list goes on!

I am drawn to know Him more, when I die to myself.

And God reminds me, that it is possible for me to know Him more, because of His Son Jesus, who chose death for me. Jesus who said:

"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." John 12:24 NIV

Sharon Garlough Brown in her book *Sensible Shoes* writes it like this:

"If God is bringing things to death, then it will all be fruitful someday, even if I can't see how right now. I've got to trust that somehow invisible seeds are being scattered – seeds that will spring up into new life at the right time." – Sharon Garlough Brown

So, as challenging as it is, I choose to embrace the dying. Life, real life, is only found as we surrender ourselves to Jesus. As we step out of our own limited vision, and with unreserved abandon give to Him our all, He breathes HIS life into us. He breathes HIS purpose into us. He reveals to us HIS vision and changes our perspective. He gives us eyes to see ourselves and the people around us the way that HE sees them.

And then – everything changes!

"And he (Jesus) said to all "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. Luke 9:23 (ESV) ■



JOHN BARRIS | GC3 BOARD MEMBER

AN ANSWER TO PRAYER

MANY FAMILIES HAVE STORIES THAT ARE SPECIAL TO THEM. AS KIDS MY BROTHER AND I USED TO ENJOY MANY STORIES THAT DAD WOULD TELL US, EITHER ABOUT HIS CHILDHOOD, USUALLY INVOLVING A MISCHIEVOUS COUSIN OF HIS, OR ABOUT HOW GOD HAD ANSWERED PRAYER. THESE PRAYER STORIES NORMALLY HIGHLIGHTED HOW GOD STEPPED INTO SEEMLY IMPOSSIBLE SITUATIONS TO DEMONSTRATE HIS FAITHFULNESS TO HIS SERVANTS. THIS IS ONE OF THOSE STORIES THAT OUR DAD, DON, TOLD US. IT IS ONE THAT HAS RECENTLY BEEN RETOLD BY OTHERS THAT HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED BY THE LORD'S FAITHFULNESS AND HIS WORK THROUGH HIS SERVANTS.

Even though Don was called by God to go to Uruguay, South America when he was 18, it wasn't until he was 29 that the door opened for him to go. In 1955 he was travelling round New Zealand letting the various assemblies know about his intent to finally go to Uruguay. His journey up until this moment was one of faith, and this was about to be tested and confirmed once again. Between 1944-1952 Don worked in the retail sector, and later with various fulltime workers receiving his training on three

Bible coaches in Hawkes Bay-Wairarapa, Auckland, and Nelson. He also spent some time in the King Country working with another full-time worker there. All these experiences helped to equip him with practical evangelism skills, and now it was time to go overseas.

Don was at Eden Hall in Auckland; someone was praying for him. This prayer was the start of an experience of faith and of God's presence and confirmation of his obedience to God's call to the mission field. The prayer was

that Don would "have the joy of leading a soul to Christ before he left the country." He started his journey south, and a few days later while in Taranaki, he came down with a nasty flu. Against medical advice he continued to New Plymouth and then to Wellington and then on the steamer to Lyttleton. Expecting to be in Christchurch longer, circumstances or a Higher Hand determined that he had to take the train to Dunedin a little sooner. From there he went to Balclutha. The next day 1500 kilometres away from where that prayer was made, the answer was about to unfold. Don boarded the train from Balclutha to Owaka. There were only three passengers on board. Don sat beside Peter, a 14-year-old teenager. He was the youngest of a large southern family. Don decided to talk to Peter and discovered that he was the only one in his family not saved, and so he asked him if he would like to be. As the train went through a tunnel Peter accepted the Saviour. He wasn't totally sure whether he was saved to ►



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start with. This prompted Don to share Romans 10:9, 10 "if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" with him and that gave him the assurance he needed.

The prayer prayed by someone in Auckland was answered without fanfare somewhere between Balclutha and Owaka. Peter and Don never forgot that day. Don took a pastoral interest in Peter from then on and the event became one of those true stories that was told to us many years later.

As one gets older the wonder of these stories doesn't diminish. It is however accompanied by reflection on what the stories teach us. As kids we learnt that being called to the mission field and going out by faith was not just about where the money came from. It was a visible evidence that the work belongs to the Lord. He answers prayer, not just ours but those of others on our behalf. Paul encouraged others to pray for him and his team, "Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak of his mysterious plan concerning Christ." (Colossians 4:3)

This is a challenge for all of us who belong to God's family and should be totally interested in His work. Do we support those called to serve the Lord in mission? Do we make it a matter of faith to support them financially? Do we also make it a matter of faith to pray for them not just generally but also specifically, that they will be successful?

Dad has other stories of people praying for him. Like a couple in San Francisco that even though they hadn't met Dad they took an interest in this single man in Uruguay. They decided to pray that he would find someone to marry. A few years later Dad met them and was able to let them know that their prayer had been answered!

Another lesson is the importance of telling stories of how the Lord has worked in our lives and others. This is encouraged several times in the Bible ("...stories we have heard and known, stories our ancestors handed down to us. We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the Lord, about his power and his mighty wonders ...so the next generation might know them- even the children not yet born- and they in turn will teach their own children. So each generation should set his hope anew on God, not forgetting His glorious

miracles and obeying his commands." Psalm 78:3-7)

This story came alive to me when I met Peter. The bond that had been formed many years before was obvious. Peter called me some time ago asking about Dad, who is now in a rest home. A lifetime appreciation was evident in the way he spoke. Peter is now in heaven rejoicing with His Saviour, all because God in His grace answered a prayer of faith.

May we all be encouraged to pray with expectation for the Lord's work, expect Him to work, be willing to be His instruments and to tell of His wondrous works to others, to encourage them to do the same! ■



THE FACE OF
CROSS-CULTURAL MISSION
IS CHANGING RAPIDLY AND WHILE
WE BELIEVE WE ARE RESPONDING
POSITIVELY TO THOSE CHANGES, WE
ARE CONDUCTING A 360° REVIEW OF
WHAT WE DO AND HOW WE DO IT
TO GET AN UNDERSTANDING OF
WHAT WE MIGHT BE
MISSING.

GC3 360° REVIEW

AT GC3 WE CONTINUALLY STRIVE
TO BE RELEVANT TO OUR MISSION
PARTNERS AND THE CHURCH
NETWORK WE SERVE.

We are fortunate to have John and Rebecca de Jong conducting this review for us. They have experience and know what it is like from both sides of the fence, having been involved in missions in a local church setting as well as having lived in Myanmar, serving the people and churches there for twelve years. Added to that, they bring theological depth and governance skills from their years of experience.

The project will be undertaken in two phases. At first surveys will be circulated to selected mission partners,

churches and folk who have been a part of Headspace. The second part will be connecting with and interviewing a selection of those who respond to the surveys. Naturally they would like to speak with everyone who completes the survey but that would be logistically impossible so representatives of larger groups will be contacted.

The specific findings raised through this project will not be published but we will provide an overview of the findings in due course through another GC3 Connect article.

We are excited to be undertaking this project because it will help us better serve those in cross-cultural ministries, for God's glory. To be effective, we need input from all GC3's stakeholders (sending churches, mission partners, Headspace participants, etc). If you you'd like to contribute your view, contact John and Rebecca at review@gc3.org.nz by 31 March 2020.

"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed" (Proverbs 15:22 NIV). Please pray for us and the project as it goes ahead. ■



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