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SEFTON MARSHALL | GC3 OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

"COME OVER TO MACEDONIA AND HELP US!"

AS I READ ACTS 16, I REALISE THIS CALL IN A VISION TO PAUL WAS VERY CLEAR; SO UNEQUIVOCAL THAT HE INSTANTLY PREPARED TO GO, FIRMLY 'CONCLUDING THAT GOD HAD CALLED US TO PREACH THE GOSPEL' THERE. (V 10)

I find this part of the biblical account of Paul's life fascinating. What a man of God Paul became. A fearless preacher, teacher and evangelist. His knowledge, steeped in the Tora, enabled him to foot it theologically with the best of Jewish leaders and scholars. And that was what drove his practice of heading straight to the local synagogue whenever he headed into a new town. Paul had his methodology down pat. Here was a proven formula, ordained by God Himself it appeared.

If it seemed obvious doing things this way brought God's blessing, why would you not persist with it? To Paul this seemed to be the best method to have the greatest impact for God, so why would he not continue with it? I like no-brainers too! I can relate to Paul and his thinking. I would like to think I would take a similar approach. There's a comfortable level of certainty through control over methods and results. After all, isn't that the sort of thinking we've all adopted in some shape at some

time in our ministries for God? Paul witnessed "the churches strengthened in their faith and growing daily in numbers". (v 5) Wasn't that what it was all about?! Wasn't that the reason for being?

Let's note that the Holy Spirit prevented Paul and his companions from preaching in the province of Asia. The Spirit also blocked them from entering the adjoining town of Bithynia in Mysia. Then came the vision, containing the welcoming 'call' to Macedonia. He immediately made tracks for Philippi at the heart of that province. I love Paul's obedience we see here. Don't you? He didn't hesitate for a moment, it seems.

There can't have been ten Jewish men in Philippi, the requirement for the establishment of a synagogue. Paul couldn't head to the 'local' to establish his connections and to implement his 'winning formula'. There wasn't one! Seeking fellowship and an ability to connect with like-minded people, Paul and his companions instead head outside the city to where they expect people to be praying. And there, by the river, they find women, one of whom is Lydia, 'a worshipper of God'. Instead of meeting with an august group of male theologians, here Paul focusses on one god-fearing lady.

Talk about being thrown a curve ball! What had happened to the way in which things always worked, with the blessing of God? What is going on here? And what can we learn?

Enter Covid-19. Here comes the curve ball for us!

For us at GC3 it has caused us to rejig some of how we do things. The biggest negative impact has been on our 2020 Headspace team. The initial lockdown came just at the time the team was to embark on their work block, earning funds to pay their fees. Sadly, C-19 meant the team had to return to their homes. With international travel suspended, the

usual Block Four in Thailand for cultural immersion was no longer possible. When the team was able to assemble again and resume the programme, they instead completed a NZ Road Trip. This enabled them to connect with groups to be exposed to cross-cultural influences and to provide human resource help to various ministries. It's been a totally different year for the team, but one in which they have still been able to experience God at work around them. They will all be the richer of God as a consequence as well.

And for our mission partners, what a raft of dilemmas they have been faced with! Each has faced unique circumstances around safety in-country; their ability to travel either to NZ or back to their chosen ministry; the needs of family; even the considered instructions from sending church or mission agency. It's been a privilege to journey with partners during these uncertain times.

In March when C-19 struck, 69% of our people on the field chose to remain there. Since then, for a variety of reasons, others have returned home and others are due. Some have had to defer their plans to return indefinitely. On the flip side, three couples have chosen to return, to Fiji, Laos and South Sudan, travelling to their 'Macedonia' despite the challenges and personal risks.

There's a raft of commentary that has been published around the probable changes to mission as a result of the global pandemic. Inevitably there will be many impacts, and already I've seen a powerful example of what I believe God has in mind for us to consider.

Our Government has responded to the needs of refugees, settling many from Asian countries in people-group communities within our cities. A young lady had responded to God's clear call to go 'over there' to a particular people group before C-19 became an issue for us all. Plans were at an advanced stage for her to go. But God had other ideas, providing her with remarkable evidence that she was to work among the growing number of refugees from that same country settling into a new life in a NZ city.

While God's calling and grip on our hearts to engage in His mission never changes, let's all expect and wonder at what God might have us do in order to achieve that! As the well-worn cliché puts it, "We can't put God in a box." He will enable us to achieve great things for Him, no matter what; Covid-19 or not.

After all, consider how Paul changed his method in a situation beyond his control. And maybe, just maybe, our 'Macedonia' is right on our back door step! ■

KEVIN HONORE | DAY 25, GC3 DAILY PRAYER GUIDE

LIES AND DEATH

AT BRIGHT HOPE WORLD WE ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO BECOME RELIANT ON GOD AND TO STRIVE TO BE ECONOMICALLY SELF-SUSTAINING. HOWEVER, WE CONSTANTLY RUN INTO WORLDVIEWS THAT TRAP PEOPLE IN POVERTY.

Despite the fact that people might be sitting on fertile land, with plenty of water and an abundance of time, they can't see what they can do. The lies they have learned from their culture trap them in poverty and they don't have enough to eat! The way out for them requires confrontation of the lies and learning to think in new ways. They need a fresh perspective.

In 1 Thessalonians 1:9 and 10 we come across some striking words about just this type of radical world-view transformation.

"For they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve

the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath."

One is prompted to wonder why Paul uses the adjectives "living and true" to describe God's character, and what waiting "for his Son from heaven" looks like?

Paul could have deployed many adjectives to describe God to these people. But "living and true" were the most pertinent, especially as his letter was written into a predominantly pagan culture and received by a diverse church demographic. Their world churned with ideas and diversity. You can read more about it in Acts 17. ▶



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.

Idolatry underpinned the majority culture of the day. Paul asserts that God is “living and true” because the ubiquitous idols are ‘dead and lying’. A great contrast is cast here between God and all other gods. Embedded in this is the need for a radical decision and transformation.

As new believers, they had to grapple with the many lies embedded in their society and the culture of death and defeat that grew out of that. They had been saved from this. The rampant lies and lifestyles were being confronted by the character of this ‘new God’ they were discovering and the radically different world-view they were embracing.

This new and diverse community was learning all of this in a vacuum created by at least three factors: Paul’s team was only there for a few weeks before they were forced to flee; they were being forced to endure constant persecution, and; they were “waiting for Jesus” who would rescue them. False teaching invaded this “waiting”

and there are frequent references to this in both First and Second Thessalonians.

Challenging diversity, pagan beliefs, persecution and a vacuum of truth hardly seem like a great environment in which to survive, let alone flourish. But flourish they did, becoming a church that others sought to emulate.

It’s hard to escape comparisons with our time and culture. Fake news, multiple personal ‘truths’, the enacting of death-producing laws, blatant false teaching in many churches and pressure from our pagan culture have created for us a similar kind of pluralistic cauldron. How do we thrive in this environment? How do we maintain a Christian world-view? What does joy look like as we live under the pressure?

The answer from these verses comes in two parts. The first is the awareness that our primary context is not our human culture or society, whatever that might be. We’re waiting for the Son from heaven, the rescuer from wrath. Our primary culture is that of a completely different world with revealed values that are confronting and radical.

The second is found in the radical nature of the turn described. We turn away from lies and death and we turn to the living and true God. This means we perceive the lies within our society and reject them. We cut the ties that drag us into believing the lies and from being drawn into death. At the same time, we see and understand the reality of God’s nature and throw ourselves into his character. He becomes our source, our food, our drink, our life. And we wait, secure in him, no matter what rages around us, for however long it takes. We don’t just turn away from idols, we turn towards the living and true God.

This is, of course, entirely radical. It is a different way of viewing the world that swirls around us. That’s why encouragement is so important in this book, even in the face of death.

What are the lies embedded in our culture right now? How are you building resilience and faith into your people in the face of these lies? What are you doing to instil courage into your people? ■

MATT LISTER | GC3 YOUTH DIRECTOR

DO YOU REMEMBER THE START OF 2020? HOW LONG AGO THAT FEELS!

WE ALL HAD OUR PRECONCEPTIONS OF WHAT LAY AHEAD OF US. FOR HEADSPACE, IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF A NEW YEAR WITH A NEW TEAM AND WE WERE READY TO GO WITH NEW PLANS AND STRATEGIES. THE STAGE WAS SET FOR A GREAT YEAR AHEAD.



As a Leadership Team, weeks of meeting together and praying were spent creating grand ideas. We planned, brainstormed, assessed and evaluated the Headspace program from all angles.

Launch day came and the new students were bright-eyed and understandably nervous to meet each other, and we were so excited to bring these young people together and simply couldn’t wait to see all the work that God would do in their hearts and who they would become through God’s guiding hands.

Block One began, and it was absolutely sensational. After a great time of teambuilding, the team completed the new Kairos course which solidified their biblical foundations with a mission perspective. They truly applied themselves, producing a high standard of work – we were very impressed to say the least, thinking to ourselves, ‘if this is the starting point for the year, imagine where they are going to end up!’ Our ►



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plans were working, and things were really beginning to take shape, until, of course... *it* happened.

COVID-19, who could have guessed?

The last week of March brought with it breaking news all across New Zealand – that we were in the midst of a global pandemic. It is probably safe to say that there has not been an event that has affected the entire world at the same time since World War 2. With just 48-hours in hand to return to our

respective homes and begin isolating, we frantically arranged for parents to pick up their young person. Block One brought wonderful momentum and we were so keen to see how the team was going to grow as they entered into Block 2 but the rest of the year hung in limbo as we watched the news and awaited government announcements from our individual homes.

Each year Headspace can be quite a beast, but it suffices to say none of us could have predicted a pandemic to be one of the obstacles we'd encounter. In

response, we decided to innovate and take Headspace online, continuing with all content we could through a screen and worked to find ways for the team to keep building the Headspace culture. Everyone pushed through the screen fatigue and took the opportunity to develop their spiritual disciplines, becoming good stewards of leisure and free time during lockdown. We didn't know exactly when we'd be able to resume the program and return to Hoatu Kaimua for Block 3 in preparation for Block 4 and international travel was confirmed by ▶



the government to no longer be possible, which meant we were not going overseas for the climactic cross-cultural exposure experience that Headspace is so well known for in Thailand.

However, eventually alert levels dropped. We came back together and with very little time to plan, decided to take the team on an in-country, New Zealand Road Trip. We reached out to the various contacts we had and started cold calling ministries – we faced numerous dead ends as other programs and churches' plans were flung into chaos too. It was as if we were on a moving train, laying down the tracks in front of us, praying as we went. The lodge where the team is housed for three blocks of the year is called "Hoatu Kaimua," which essentially means, "first fruits." It was at this part of the year that we truly had to give God what plans we had and trust Him to multiply opportunities. And of course, He did. Every step of the way. Accommodation options came just in time, places to serve, ministries in need, and opportunities for the team to grow in faith and confidence in our God.

The Road Trip was certainly as much a spiritual journey for us all as it was physical travel. God provided situations for the team to learn, in real life and in real time, what it means to lean and depend on Christ. The result has privileged us as a leadership to see these incredible young people of God step up to the challenge of increasing their capacity of servanthood. Despite lockdown, despite the undulating alert levels, despite the risks of regional travel and interactions with gatherings, and despite the massive upheaval of our precious plans – God had us. He always did and always will. He is so often far more interested not in what we do but in who we are, and how we do things. That is the Headspace culture.

I'm writing this update at Hoatu Kaimua, in front of a crackling fire as the night settles in, while the Headspace students quietly work hard on their reflections of the year in preparation of their final Celebration Day in a few weeks where they will be awarded certificates of completion of Headspace and of the Kairos course – mere symbols of their achievement. The intangibles they have gained are arguably immeasurable.

Lifelong Christian friendship, biblical understanding, missional worldview, cross-cultural exposure experiences, physical labour and service, leadership of youth groups and church services, visiting universities, writing music, running holiday camps – growing in wisdom and in faith, resilience, steadfastness, perseverance, kindness, patience, self-control, authenticity and trust, and more – these are the treasures they take home in their kete. These young men and women of God are our next generation of servant-hearted leaders. We are humbled and blessed as a Leadership Team and full of hope from seeing what God has done in their lives this year. Join us in thanks for the work the Lord has done! ■

HEADSPACE IS GC3'S GAP YEAR PROGRAM. A DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING COURSE PREPARING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR LIFE AND MISSION. THE COURSE SUPPORTS YOUNG CHRISTIANS AT A PIVOTAL POINT IN THEIR LIVES TO DEVELOP A MISSIONAL WORLDVIEW OF THEIR IDENTITY IN GOD, OWNERSHIP OF SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES AND EQUIPS THEM TO EFFECTIVELY NAVIGATE THE RIGOURS, CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES OF TRANSITIONING INTO THE ADULT WORLD.

AN OPPORTUNITY: GC3 ADMINISTRATOR ROLE

GC3 PROVIDES A UNIQUE SERVICE TO OUR CHURCHES AND TO THE PEOPLE THEY SEND TO CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRIES AROUND THE WORLD. WE ALSO INVEST IN CROSS-CULTURAL MISSIONS' AWARENESS IN YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH A GAP-YEAR PROGRAM AND THE PROMOTION OF FUNDING FOR INSTITUTIONS AND DISASTER RELIEF.

Right now, we are in a phase of transition. We're looking for someone called by God to become involved in this dynamic role, using the opportunity to serve God within a well-established Christian charity dedicated to bringing the Gospel message to people of diverse ethnicities in holistic ways. You will be part of a team of like-minded people passionate about serving God and His people in this way, eagerly using the gifts, skills and training God has given you. You will get to experience

the infectious encouragement from people whose hearts are firmly set on being Jesus to others, bringing His life-changing message of love, hope, peace, and joy. Humility and a servant attitude are therefore important.

Cross-cultural mission is constantly changing. And while the principles of the service we offer and provide are bedrocks, we are committed to the regular review of the support we provide to those at the pit-face of God's work. How is it best to leverage what we do to enhance the modern focus of social and general justice issues? What advice do we give now to church leaders and prospective mission partners considering Covid-19 impacts and restrictions? With general diaspora, what new opportunities are presenting for cross-cultural mission within NZ? These are some of the questions we are currently addressing to retain our effectiveness in 'thought leadership' for those people we love to serve.

As the administrator you get to work alongside a small team of enthusiastic

Christian people, people who are totally dedicated to God's call, people appreciating the power of the Gospel to transform lives and to bring spiritual freedom, people wanting to be a part in effectively bringing about God's kingdom here on earth. Governance is provided by a Board of people equally passionate about mission.

While our immediate need is for an administrator, if you have a heart for and experience in mission leadership and care, there could be a place for you in our team so we'd welcome your enquiry as well.

If you feel God's tug on your heart for getting involved in something like we have here at GC3, ask Him to confirm it to you. Why not talk to your church leaders and other trusted Christian people around you? And be sure to ask me questions about the role too! ■

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Give it a go... Spread the Blessings!

HANDS UP GIFT CATALOGUE for Christmas 2020

Here is another opportunity for you to get a gift for that 'hard-to-buy-for' special person, a gift with a twist as it's not for them but for someone around the globe who needs a Hand Up. We'll send you a card to give to your special person explaining that they have 'blessed' someone much less fortunate than them through your gift.

There is no value assigned to each of our HUG options. That means you have the flexibility to choose the value of the gift you make on behalf of your friend or family member, for any of the HUG options we have listed.

The minimum amount for any one HUG card is \$25, but the sky is the limit. All we need you to do is indicate on your response form how much you are giving and how many cards you need. We have a wide range of ministries you can contribute to and you aren't constrained in the amount you allocate to each. Simply choose the best fit from the range of activities and allocate the value of your gift.

THANKS FOR SUPPORTING THESE ACTIVITIES. WHAT VALUE DO YOU PUT ON A HANDS UP GIFT TO PEOPLE IN THESE DESPERATE SITUATIONS?



Deaf Children – FDM

20HUG04

Folk in deaf communities are often marginalised. This is so for deaf children in Fiji. Be a vital part of transforming the lives and futures for the 60 deaf children in the hostel and specialised school there.



Water – Impact Katoka

20HUG05

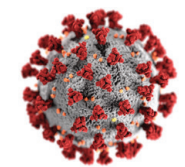
Water is life-giving! None of us can survive without it. Support in the provision of quality water to rural communities DRC, enabling more robust education and medical services as well. Lives will be impacted through your support.



Sight – YWAM Ships

20HUG06

Restore sight with a 30-minute operation on a Christian medical ship in PNG. Open blind eyes and dramatically change a life. Remind them God has not forgotten them.



COVID-19

20HUG07

The impact of C-19 is devastating world-wide! Indentured workers are trapped in foreign countries, unemployed and helpless to provide necessary funding for their dependents. Lack of hygiene and social distancing mean many in close communities are dying. Provide life's essentials. Provide love through practical support. Provide hope.



Women's Health – CDLA

20HUG08

Surgical intervention is critical for women with debilitating fistula conditions. Continue to spread the joy in DRC for these women through life-changing medical intervention and counselling.



Housing – YWAM San Diego

20HUG09

Lift a family out of the poverty trap in Tijuana, Mexico this Christmas. These homes provide security, dignity, and hope for the future through the expression of God's love.



Refugees – Manara

20HUG01

Syrian refugees are traumatised because of the experiences they've endured. Whole families will receive food and shelter and be given life-changing hope through your support.



Schooling – Limapela

20HUG02

Children in rural Zambia are prevented from receiving a reasonable education. Make a difference. Provide them with the opportunity they deserve to be taught well in a nurturing Christian environment with dedicated teachers who care.



Leprosy Village – CMCT

20HUG03

Even today, many people suffering from leprosy are cast aside by society. Bring meaning and hope to them; provide them with dignity through the loving support of those at CMCT in India.

HANDS UP GIFTS ORDER FORM



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Online transactions can be paid to GC Aid Account: 06 0729 0522196 00. Please email admin@gc3.org.nz with your transactions details, postal address and the code references/quantities.

Website transactions www.gc3.org.nz/donate

Cheques can be made out to GC Aid and sent to: PO Box 744, Palmerston North, 4440

CODE REF	# OF CARDS	PAYMENT Min \$25	OFFICE USE
20HUG01			
20HUG02			
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