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CHRISTMAS HUGS

SEFTON MARSHALL | GC3 OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

TO BE AN EFFECTIVE PRAY-ER

LAST WEEK, A DEAR FRIEND OF MINE DIED. SHE WAS A LADY OF PRAYER, A LADY WHO ALSO HAD A DEEP INTEREST IN MISSION. SHE WAS 91 YEARS OLD.

For many years I worked in the same office as this lady. She had an outstanding Christian character which I admired. I was humbled to know that not only did she pray for me, but she also prayed for our three boys each day. At her funeral, I discovered that there were many others for whom she prayed each day as well.

What makes a good pray-er? What has made the prayers of my friend so enriching and encouraging? I believe there are some key points.

DEVELOP A DEEP TRUST THAT GOD HEARS AND ANSWERS YOU.

If we are not convinced that God does what He says He'll do, we will not believe prayer is effective and therefore we'll not be regular and disciplined pray-ers. David was convinced. He penned these words, "I call on you, my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer." (Psa 17:6). Then we have God's words delivered to Jeremiah to rely on, 'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable

things you do not know.' (Jer 33:3). Talking to God about situations mission partners are facing and interceding on their behalf, will make a difference. God does answer prayer. This fact must be bedrock to our understanding and faith.

DEVELOP A PASSION FOR THE GOSPEL

Mission partners will have had their hearts gripped by the importance of living out and communicating the Gospel message. And that should be the same for us as pray-ers. Romans 1:16 records 'For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile' and having this core understanding will motivate ▶

us to pray more intentionally for someone working cross-culturally.

ASK LOTS OF QUESTIONS

Adopt a mission partner or two (or more!). By having an enquiring mind to intentionally learn as much as you possibly can about a mission partner, their work and their situation, means you can pray all the more specifically and intelligently for them. By you entering into their lives and

building up rapport, the mission partner will appreciate the support you provide. Recognise birthdays, find the timing of significant ministry events, celebrate other personal or ministry milestones with them. Subscribe to newsletters and our e-Connect for more general prayer information.

LOOK OUT FOR GOD'S ANSWERS

There's nothing so encouraging as to recognise God's answers to your prayers. It's so rewarding and faith-building. Praying specifically enables identifiable

results so don't shy away from prayers of that kind. And be ready and willing to give God thanks for the things you've petitioned Him for and then seen the answer to. He loves a thankful heart.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson wrote, "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of!" I believe that is true, as I know the God to whom we pray. I'm sure that that was the experience of my 91-year-old friend too as she prayed relentlessly for mission partners and others. ■

FELIX MUCHIMBA

THEOLOGICAL TRAINING & SOCIAL CONCERN FUNDING

"AS A CHRISTIAN WORKER I HAVE DISCOVERED THAT MINISTRY PARTNERS AND DONORS ARE MORE LIKELY TO DONATE TO RELIEF AID OR FELT NEEDS SUCH AS FEEDING THE ORPHANS THAN TO THEOLOGICAL TRAINING. IT IS NO WONDER THERE'RE UNPRECEDENTED EMERGENCE OF MINISTRIES THAT MEET THE SOCIAL NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE", ONE OF MY STUDENTS LAMENTED DURING ONE OF MY LECTURES.

I am not sure what you make of this statement, but it was supported by the other students.

Christian organisations and churches have and continue to engage themselves in humanitarian aid projects as well as medical and financial emergencies. Such activities reflect Christ's love to people in need, and also build bridges to share the Gospel as part of the mission's outreach to the community. Believers have a responsibility to care for those who are hungry and thirsty, who are sick or in prison, the outcasts of society as expressed by Jesus in Matthew 25: 34 – 40. They are equally under personal obligation to love their neighbours as they love themselves according to Matthew 22:39.

While it's un-debatable that Christians cannot afford to turn a blind eye to the suffering masses of the world, many are concerned that the felt needs of the world take precedence over training and equipping saints for evangelism and world missions. Many Seminaries and Bible Colleges have had to resort to introducing other disciplines in their curriculum such as computer studies and business studies in order to attract high numbers of students from the market place who are willing to pay economical fees to keep these institutions afloat.

Many donors are more attracted to give toward one type of aid or another other than training. Theological educational institutions are totally underfunded or starved of funds and are slowly collapsing. Humanitarian aid projects appeal more to emotions than theological or missions training do. When images of the suffering and natural disasters appear in the media one cannot help but be moved to donate. Images on students in a seminary in a lecturer theatre struggling to pay for their training can hardly move one into action. This is the reality of life unfortunately. I think there are good causes why we need to financially engage with those in training. Below are just a few reasons:

- Most of the brains for leadership development are incubated and developed there. Good leadership can help avert some of the crises that occur.
- Training affords folk the opportunity to acquire the foundational understanding as they engage with players of other sectors of human life such as politicians, NGOs, in addressing issues that affect the communities. Such informed collaboration may be catalytic to prevention certain disasters.
- It is highly reproachful and dangerous to evangelical spirituality to entrust the preaching and teaching of the scriptures to weak and ignorant people. While the local church through



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the various gifts is best suited 'to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ' (Eph 4:12-13) it has, in most cases, lamentably failed. False teachings can lead to disastrous social impact. For example among some adherents of the faith their followers are not encouraged to seek medical help even in the event of an epidemic. They are simply encouraged to pray for healing.

The Apostle Paul cautioned Timothy to be "a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15), and to "guard what was committed to your trust" (1 Tim. 6:20). A minister of the Word, then, must be thoroughly trained in the exposition and defense of the Word of God. This way the minister would give relevant biblical reflections on the issues that affect humanity. ■



MURRAY | DAY 11 GC3 DAILY PRAYER GUIDE

WHAT DOES A BIBLE TRANSLATION CONSULTANT DO?

BIBLE TRANSLATORS ARE MY HEROES! AND I GET TO WORK WITH THEM! MOST ARE WHOLE-HEARTEDLY DEVOTED TO THEIR CHALLENGING TASK – TOILING DAY AFTER DAY AND YEAR AFTER YEAR – OFTEN WITH HOSTILE OPPOSITION.

Several tell me it's the hardest thing they've ever tried to do – even those who've already accomplished big things as pastors or professionals. Translators need competence in a wide variety of fields. I mainly help them with just one of the many things they need to do well – how to come to a full and correct understanding of the original text. Then, they need to find the most accurate and clear way to express it in their language.

As a translation consultant, I have **three roles**. One is **to check translations of the Bible** to make sure they are reliable and readable – ready for publication. No translation anywhere in the world is supposed to be published without the scrutiny and approval of a qualified consultant.

How do I do this? The translation team sends me several chapters of their

translation along with a written “back translation” in English that explains the words they have used. I check every verse and every word and compare them with the original Hebrew or Greek. I send questions and suggestions to the team and they reply with their answers

or make the suggested changes. We then travel so that we can sit around the table together and go through every word and verse again orally. There are other speakers present who were not part of the translating process. It is vital to get feedback from them about how they understand each part of the text.

By asking them just the right questions, they can help us to find any places that might need to be said more clearly, especially if they could be wrongly understood. Once I know the team well, and their various strengths, I can do further checks at home by connecting with them virtually over the Internet while they all meet physically.

I'm impressed by their patience and perseverance because most translations

They endure hardship and persecution because their main motivation is to bring glory to God!

go through several drafts before they are approved. But this checking is a necessary and urgent task. Pray the Lord of the harvest for more qualified consultants so that the back-log of drafts waiting to be checked can be cleared! That's why my second role is important. I jump at the chance **to help train and mentor new** ▶



FROM PAGE 3...

consultants. This role is often combined with my other two roles so that they get on-the-job training.

My third role is my favourite – leading workshops in far-off places **to upskill translators.** Instead of telling them what they need to change after they've done it, I much prefer to equip them to get it right before they start.

Why do I travel so widely? People want more than just the last quarter of God's book. They want what Paul called "all Scripture" so that they can use it "for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training

in righteousness" (2 Tim 3:16). So, they call in "the Old Testament guy" to train them. Somehow, I've even become known as "the Hebrew poetry guy". How on earth did that happen to someone who didn't even like poetry at school? Well, one third of the Old Testament (including the Psalms, Proverbs, and most of the Prophets) was written in beautiful poetry. Why? To express their messages with greater persuasive power and emotional impact. Appreciating poetry requires knowing the language very well. It helps that after studying Hebrew for five years in Dunedin, God designed for us to spend eight years in Israel, where Hebrew is spoken.

Let me take you on one of my recent trips to south-east Asia...

Imagine you are being driven in a four-by-four to a tiny remote village. It's hot and humid. You keep bumping your head on the window and ceiling as you rock and roll over deep furrows in the road made by vehicles when the heavy rains turn the red dirt into mud. You're thankful that the roads for yesterday's nine-hour trip were half-decent after all. As you approach the village you can spot a few wooden shacks among the lush, green vegetation. Each one is high up on stilts with steep wooden steps going up to the open doorways. Underneath are children



playing in the dirt among the pigs, cows, chickens and dogs. You arrive at the church where the workshop is to be held. It looks just like their houses complete with pigs and chickens – just another hut on sticks!

You notice 30 pairs of jandals at the foot of the steep wooden steps. So, you slip out of your sandals and climb up.

When your eyes adjust to the dark, you can count 30 people sitting, ready and eagerly waiting. Most of them are 'hill-tribe' translators, who speak seven separate languages. And each of the seven translation teams also has an expat facilitator, who has come to live with them and help them.

As you teach, you are constantly interrupted in a variety of amusing ways:

- 1) The power goes off. No pictures are on the screen to help describe the meaning. No fan is alleviating the heat and high humidity.
- 2) It rains so loudly on the roof that no one can hear themselves think. Fortunately, it does not last long – most of the time.
- 3) A loud dog fight erupts right under the church and we can even watch it unfold through the wide gaps in the floor boards.
- 4) The baby of one translator starts crying loudly for a long time.
- 5) Your interpreter needs to hear it again due to all the competing noises – pigs, roosters, chainsaws, and motorcycles.
- 6) Your laptop over-heats and stops working. You have to borrow someone else's for the rest of the workshop.
- 7) You have tried to be careful about what you eat and drink, but you get diarrhoea anyway. Imagine dashing



for the basic 'toilet', but first you must scramble down the ladder-like steps and find your sandals among 30 other pairs!

Somehow, with God's help, these determined learners manage to gain new skills for translating Psalms and Proverbs for their people-groups.

Why do they do it? Wherever I lead workshops (in 33 countries so far) I get them to take turns sharing their

testimonies each morning. I can tell you that they're not in it for the money. With their intelligence and training, they'd all earn much more elsewhere. Many responded in love and obedience to Jesus' command to make disciples, knowing that the single most important resource for disciple-making is the Bible! And this command is for all 'nations' (people groups) because He wants all language-groups with Him in heaven (Rev 5:9).

They endure hardship and persecution because their main motivation is to bring glory to God! By bearing "fruit that will last"! They do not always see this fruit now. But the translators we worked with for nineteen years to complete a whole Bible for a national language (with 75 million speakers) keep hearing amazing stories out of their closed country, where church growth is the fastest in the world.

When this planet disappears, only two things will endure: God's Word and the souls of those who have responded to it. My heroes hold on to God's promise that His powerful Word will accomplish the transforming purposes He has for it (Isaiah 55:11). ■





INTERVIEW BY MELANIE CROSBIE | GC3 YOUTH DIRECTOR ASSISTANT

HOW DID I GET HERE?

THIS ARTICLE IS BASED ON AN INTERVIEW WITH KATIE, A SOCIAL WORKER WITH A PASSION FOR JUSTICE.

Katie grew up in Te Awakairangi (Lower Hutt) with her parents, three younger sisters and their Yorkshire Terrier. In 2011 she was a gapper with Headspace and went on from there to study social work, where she was privileged with the experience of a four-month placement in Thailand. Now a registered social worker with experience in mental health, Katie is excited to have been given the opportunity to move back to Thailand to work with Partners, the organisation she spent her placement with.

Where did you get your passion for cross-cultural missions?

My passion for cross-cultural missions is something that has developed over the years.

I remember during my intermediate school years my parents wanted to take us overseas, but they felt it was important to do more than just 'touristy' things, so we ended up going to visit two of our sponsored children in Tanzania. Since then my passion for justice, my willingness to empower others and my enjoyment of travel have come together,

resulting in my decision to do cross-cultural missions. Another part of my life that I see as being great for developing my long-term missions goal was my time with Headspace in 2011.

Headspace provided a practical stepping stone for moving out of home. It taught me how to treat culture with respect and it exposed me to people of different faith communities. My time in the program also gave me a small taste of what serving on the mission field might look like.

What made you decide to study social work?

Following high school, I knew that I wanted to do missions, but I also felt that I should get training in something that would make me more useful in the mission field. I wanted my training to be in an area I was passionate about, that would upskill me for working cross-culturally with people and that would be as versatile as skills like teaching or nursing. In the end the decision was between counselling and social work. With input from a few people, I landed

on social work, thinking that it's holistic nature would provide great practical skills for working with people. There is one person in particular that I can remember contributing to that decision. He was a social worker, originally from my church, who at the time was working in Thailand and I got to meet with him during the Headspace trip. Meeting with him clearly showed me the capacity of social work to be used in a missional way.

Can you tell us a bit about how your passion and skills developed over your time of study?

Over the course of my study there were a few things that helped me to feed my passion. I enjoyed hearing other people's stories, keeping in contact with people who were in the mission field and doing my fourth-year placement in Thailand with an organisation called Partners. Partners is a Relief and Development Agency who work with displaced people from Burma; either displaced within Burma (internally displaced peoples) or those who have fled to Thailand or Bangladesh. Their vision is "Free, full lives for children affected by conflict and oppression". Partners is in a unique position within the conflict in Burma

where they are able to reach those whom a lot of organisations cannot get to (for more information on Partners visit <https://www.partners.ngo>). I was able to spend four months there and I found it hugely valuable. I got to spend time in Chiang Mai working at a migrant community development centre where we were developing material for children around self-esteem and doing some basic teaching around social work models. From here we were able to take the self-esteem teaching we had developed into Burma to teach some school children. I was able to teach community development to people in internally displaced peoples camps. My time there reignited my passion to do mission. It provided a 'testing ground' for what it could look like in a more long-term context and it gave me a small taste of the challenge of transferring things I have learnt in a Western cultural context to a different cultural space. It also provided a small view of the needs in that area which helped me make informed decisions about where I should work in New Zealand to gain the skills I saw were needed. An area that I noticed a need to learn more about was mental health, so I did a post-graduate paper in mental health and addictions along with gaining work experience in the field. I was able to build on practical skills and theories simply through having the opportunity to apply them in practice.

Can you tell me about support and advice you have received that has been useful as well as advice you would give people wanting to support others with long-term missions aspirations?

I've found that my family has been a great all-round support for me. I have a great appreciation for my grandparents

who also have a passion for mission and have continually prayed for and encouraged me. Their experience in the mission's field has been a source of stories and wisdom that I have been able to learn from. The church has also been a really great support for me in the way they have been a source of community that have supported my personal growth in God. Something I would say has been essential for me has been having a small group of supportive friends who have walked the journey with me and encouraged me along the way. I would say to anyone looking to go into missions to be intentional about getting a small group of people who are dedicated to praying for you regularly and that you can ring at three in the morning for prayer if you need to! My other big piece of advice would be to be intentional about building strength in your relationship, heart knowledge and trust in God.

I think to people wanting to support people looking to do long-term mission, I would say pray with them and be honest about what you feel God might be saying to them. Other ways people have supported me that are helpful are often small practical things like offering to help me sell my car, printing off my pamphlets for free and just having people I can talk to about my journey with God. I've found it to be a really humbling experience to see other people offering to run fundraisers for me and obviously financial support has always been very appreciated! And last but not least, simply give them much needed encouragement on their journey! ■

Stay tuned to hear about Katie's move to Thailand in the next issue!



HANDS UP GIFTS GIVE HUGS THIS CHRISTMAS

Give it a go... spread the blessings!



MARY (DAY 5)

18HUG01

Books for the library \$20

This HUG will buy a picture book in English to add to the library at Good Kids Preschool, or to give to an individual child from the community.



MARY (DAY 5)

18HUG02

Supply a school uniform \$25

Help kids get into preschool with this HUG. It will purchase a complete school uniform to give kids a helping hand into their education.

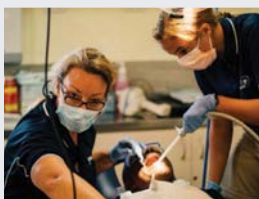


HEADSPACE (DAY 11)

18HUG03

Sponsor a gapper \$30

Headspace is a full year gap programme for school leavers designed to fuel their faith, deepen their relationship with God and equip them to step into the plans he has for their future. This HUG will contribute towards the cost for a gapper to attend Headspace.



BRETT & KAREN (DAY 2)

18HUG04

Relieving Chronic Tooth Pain \$43

This HUG will remove an abscessed or badly decayed tooth from someone who has never seen a dentist in their life and give them relief from living with constant pain.



SUE (DAY 6)

18HUG05

Lunch for a slum living kid \$45

This HUG will provide a nutritious lunch for an urban poor kid in one of Flames activity centres in Phnom Penh, Cambodia for two whole months.



COLLEEN (DAY 8)

18HUG06

Health screening package \$50

This HUG will provide a comprehensive health screening package including blood tests, xray & ECG to help elevate health awareness so people can take the necessary steps to stay healthy.



SUE (DAY 6)

18HUG07

Soccer boots & uniform for a slum living kid \$55

Be the catalyst for a slum living kid to be involved in not only healthy exercise but a team that gives them a sense of belonging and value. HUG a kid.



FRANCISCO & JOANNA (DAY 20)

18HUG08

Supply air conditioning \$60

This HUG will go towards the purchase of air-conditioning units for the Educational Centre, to facilitate learning even in extreme summer temperatures. The Centre is used for literacy classes and clubs, reaching children and young people in the community for Christ.



COLLEEN (DAY 8)

18HUG09

Build a home for the aged \$80

This HUG will buy bricks to help with the building of The Bethany Home for the Aged.



BRETT & KAREN (DAY 2)

18HUG10

Restore sight \$175

Restore sight with a 30-minute operation on a missionary medical ship in PNG. Your HUG will open blind eyes and absolutely change a life. Tell them God has not forgotten them.



FRANCISCO & JOANNA (DAY 20)

18HUG11

Workers timeout \$216

This HUG will give pastors and cross-cultural workers (and their families) a week at the Oasis Centre. This is for those who are carrying high-stress workloads in spiritually dark places and need "timeout" for rest and renewal.



HANDS UP GIFTS ORDER FORM

NAME:	<input type="text"/>
POSTAL ADDRESS:	<input type="text"/>
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POSTCODE:	<input type="text"/>
PHONE:	<input type="text"/>

Online transactions can be paid to Global Connections in Mission Account: 06 0729 0336879 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 Global Connections in Mission and sent to: PO Box 744, Palmerston North, 4440

CODE REF	QTY	AMOUNT	TOTAL	OFFICE USE
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