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RUSSELL THORP | MISSIONS DIRECTOR, GC3

GROWING PEOPLE THROUGH MISSION

RECENTLY I ENCOUNTERED A NEW PAKISTANI CHRISTIAN IN MALAYSIA WHO CAME TO CHRIST THROUGH A DISCIPLING PROCESS THAT INTENTIONALLY SHARED THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS. HE HAD LEFT PAKISTAN AND HIS RELIGIOUS ROOTS TO PURSUE WOMEN AND BEER IN BANGKOK BUT HAD FOUND CHRIST IN KUALA LUMPUR THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS DEVELOPED IN THIS SMALL CHURCH.

This young man is committing himself to a life of mission and desires to go back to his country of birth to plant churches. I found this so encouraging and wondered what could be learned from the Malaysian context that might help us in our missions.

What I noticed was that our Malaysian friends were responding to Jesus' commands about mission and they were

intentional about growing believers, using their gifts and helping them find their identity in Christ.

We learn, firstly, that **Jesus asks us to "go and make disciples of all the nations"** (Matt 28:18). He also desires that "you be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). These

commands are for all of us. The Apostle Paul said, "we are Christ's ambassadors" and that God has given us this task of "reconciling people to him" (2 Cor 5:18).

Secondly, **mission involvement grows people and churches.** We can attend church and hear great sermons or belong to a small group and enjoy discussing the Bible but being actively involved in mission forces us out of our comfort zone and leads us on a faith journey where we see God and the world at work in new ways. We will learn how to trust God in ways that becomes a catalyst for faith development.

Thirdly, **mission involvement is a great way for more people to use their gifts.** ▶

There are so many opportunities to use your skills and training in mission contexts both in the short term and longer term. We are seeing business and trades people adding to the mission effort of teachers and nurses. We are seeing trained linguists working with new people groups. We are seeing those with management and accounting skills mentoring nationals or helping internationals.

Fourthly, **mission involvement while being about serving others for the sake of Christ, is also an experience**

of identity discovery and formation. Finding our purpose and passion for life in serving Christ in mission is a compelling outcome of the process of mission engagement. This is needed in a world that focuses on gratifying and bettering self.

How is our Pakistani friend doing? A few weeks after meeting him I received a 'Whats App' message describing how he, alongside his discipler had led two others to follow Jesus. He was being engaged in mission, following the commands of Jesus and intentionally grown through engagement in the process of mission.

Along the way he is discovering his giftedness and developing a secure identity in Christ in the context of the life of the church.

The nature of mission work is changing in a world that is much more connected. The flow of people groups, the speed of transportation, the flow of money and the issues of health and safety create new opportunities and risks. Navigating these is something your church mission agency would love to help with. We can connect you with people who have the experience and skills to help you along the way. ■

For further help related to mission strategies and opportunities that will grow your people and church contact Russell Thorp (Missions Director) at GC3 **021481088** or by email at missionsdirector@gc3.org.nz

JOHN DE JONG

THE CHANGING FACE OF MISSIONS

WHEN WE THINK OF CROSS-CULTURAL, OVERSEAS MISSIONS WE MAY HAVE IN OUR MINDS THAT MISSION HAS BEEN DONE IN THE SAME WAY SINCE JESUS GAVE THE GREAT COMMISSION IN MATT 28:16-20. BUT THIS IS NOT THE CASE.

As the church has grown, mission has been carried out in different ways over the last 2000 years. The way we have done mission has been shaped by what is known as the Modern Missionary Movement. This movement began in the late 1700s, and its most well-known leader was William Carey. At this time most Christians were European, and Carey felt God's call to take the Gospel to other parts of the world. It may surprise you that Carey experienced tremendous opposition. Many Protestant Christians believed that the Great Commission only applied to the Apostles, and that it had nothing to do with us. When Carey presented his vision for overseas, cross cultural mission, a senior church leader rebuked him: "Young man, sit down; when God is pleased to convert the heathen world, He will do it without your help or mine."¹ Nevertheless, with God's leading, Carey was a pioneer in a missionary movement that took the Gospel to all corners of the world over the next 200 years.

The New Zealand Open Brethren churches were strongly involved in this missionary movement. James Kirk is often remembered as our first overseas missionary, riding from

Owaka to Wellington in 1896 and leaving his bicycle leaning against a building as he boarded a ship to Argentina, in response to God's call to take the Gospel to the unreached. (Actually, the first NZ Open Brethren overseas missionary was probably Houlton Forlong, several years earlier). These missionaries were amazing servants of God who accomplished much, often at great personal cost. But times have changed, and our missionary involvement has also changed.

Let's think about the situation in which people like William Carey and James Kirk engaged in overseas mission. 1. It was the period of global colonisation by European nations. The relationship between colonisation and the modern missionary movement was complex. Often colonial governments did not like missionaries, and sometimes drove them out of mission fields. Missionaries sometimes spoke out against the harsh effects of colonisation and tried to defend the people they were evangelising. On the other hand, the colonial period often gave western missionaries protection and access to places where they could carry out missionary work. 2. In this period western missionaries came from industrialised and technologically



John is married to Rebecca. They both grew up in West Auckland and met at Lincoln Road Bible Chapel, which is still their home church. In 2005 they moved to Yangon, Myanmar, to work with the church there. They took Adam (two-and-a-half years old) and Grace (10 months) with them. Sarah and Charlotte were born over there. John taught Old Testament and Hebrew at the Myanmar Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (MEGST), along with preaching and teaching in the local church. Rebecca was involved in women's and children's ministry, as well as home schooling the children. They returned to Auckland to live in October 2017, and John has found work lecturing in Biblical and Intercultural studies at Laidlaw College, based at the Henderson campus.

developing nations, and there was a strong sense of cultural superiority and ethno-centrism that permeated western thinking. This is not to say that all missionaries of the period accepted this worldview, but it affected many to different degrees. 3. Industrialisation meant that missionaries often came to the mission field with significant financial resources. 4. In this period

¹ <https://www.wholesomewords.org/missions/bcarey10.html>

most Christians in the world were Europeans.

The world we live in is no longer the same and this affects how we do mission. 1. The colonial era is over, and we now live in a post-colonial world. Post-colonial nations still feel the humiliation of colonialism, and often see missionaries as part of the colonial process. 2. Technology has become globalised but western ethnocentrism remains strong, "Our way is the right way." 3. The financial imbalance between the western and non-western world has grown, and western missionaries often find themselves regarded as wealthy people on the mission field. 4. The greatest change is that most Christians are no longer white people and most Christians no longer live in the "western" world. This is a result of the Holy Spirit's

work and the work of the countless missionaries during the Modern Missionary Movement. In 1910 two-thirds of the world's Christians lived in Europe, in 2010 that figure was one quarter. In 1910 Christians in Sub-Saharan Africa made up 1.4% of the world's Christians; in 2010 they made up 23.6%. And on the statistics roll.² One hundred years ago no one predicted that the church would grow in this way. "Come and see what God has done, his awesome deeds for mankind" (Ps 66.5 NIV).

These changes mean that for us, Christians in NZ in the 21st century, missionary involvement has also changed. The Gospel hasn't changed, the Great Commission hasn't changed, but the way we go about overseas mission has changed. Over the next twelve months I will reflect on what

mission means for us in light of these changes but let me put in a nutshell. Western Christians are no longer the main people bringing the Gospel to the unreached. In places like Myanmar, where we lived for twelve years, and in many other places in the world, it is the local Christians who are involved in cross cultural missionary work, evangelism and church planting. These churches are young and full of zeal, and we were often left in awe at the energy and commitment of these Christians. Now we need to think of mission in terms of how we can join in on God's work with the local churches in the so-called "mission field." How can we contribute? What gifts can we bring to the table? As part of this we must set aside western ethnocentrism and learn from our brothers and sisters in other places, "so that we may work together for the truth" (3 John 8 NIV). ■

² See <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-exec/>



KEVIN HONORE | DAY 25, GC3 DAILY PRAYER GUIDE

A GLOBAL MOVEMENT

FOR MANY YEARS, I HAVE BEEN CHALLENGED BY PART OF A VERSE IN 1 THESSALONIANS 1. VERSE 5 SAYS: "YOU KNOW HOW WE LIVED AMONG YOU FOR YOUR SAKE." I HAVE OFTEN WONDERED WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE IN THE MISSIONS CONTEXT. WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR US TO 'LIVE AMONG THEM FOR THEIR SAKE'? IT CONTINUES TO CHALLENGE ME.

Of course, as we continue reading in the book we get a number of insights into what it is actually saying. Let me identify a few aspects of this:

- The Gospel message was shared and it produced work out of faith; labour motivated by love and endurance out of hope (1:3).

- The Gospel came with power and transformed them from the inside out (1:5).
- The Gospel was received with Holy Spirit joy in the midst of severe suffering (1:6).
- They imitated the team and became a model church in the whole region (1:7).
- The gospel message rang out from them and faith became known everywhere (1:8).



FROM PAGE 3...

- They turned from dead, lying gods to serve the living and true God (1:9-10).

I am quite sure that this deep impact, life transformation and message resonance emerged from the way the team engaged with the community. In 1 Thessalonians 2 we see that the team loved them like mothers, worked alongside them like brothers and encouraged them like fathers. In addition, the Gospel was delivered in the context of a loving relationship. In 1:8 we read, “we loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.” Here is both the content (gospel of God) and the context (our lives) of effective gospel transformation. This church became a model church within a matter of months though Paul and his team were only there for a few weeks (Acts 17).

So we have an example, but what would this look like for us Kiwi Christians today with a desire to see this sort of impact in our communities and in distant mission fields? What does it look like, this ‘missional living for their sake’? This ‘loving-so-much that we share the gospel and our lives as well’?

I have to admit that most of my ‘going’ has been on my terms. I have managed

Somehow, we have to jettison our preoccupation with putting ‘bottoms on seats’ in church buildings and focus on living among the people, for their sake...

to work ministry around my family, my timeframes and my agenda. The intensity of missional mindset found in 1 Thessalonians is extremely radical and very difficult to execute. It is rarely seen in practice and increasingly challenging for Westerners to attain. I am in awe of those who are able to make it work.

Perhaps the main reason why we at Bright Hope World concentrate on supporting transformation through outstanding local people, rather than sending in outsiders, is that they are able to achieve things no outsider could ever achieve.

Take Worku, whom I met at Pathways College thirteen years ago. He is a refugee who returned to Ethiopia and has been, for the last ten years, responsible for planting hundreds of churches in his homeland. He is supporting dozens of church planters. He has built an income generating school with 1,750 pupils that employs over 100 people and supports hundreds of widows, elderly and blind young people.

Take Gideon and Jennifer in Zimbabwe, who are seeing whole villages transformed as they turn barren, arid landscapes into green, flourishing gardens.

Take T Raja, who with his family, chooses to live with more than 700 mentally and physically challenged people in Bangalore, India. He rescues human detritus from the streets, and houses and feeds them. Every year he buries hundreds of people with dignity; people who have had the opportunity to hear the name of Jesus and know genuine Christian love.

Take Bassem, an insurance agent and part-time pastor in Beirut who is seeing multitudes of Syrian refugees come to faith as they pass through Lebanon on the way to somewhere else in the world.

As we partner with people like this we are challenged by their tenacity, resilience, flexibility, relational capacity and willingness to be inconvenienced. They will do anything to deliver the Good News. Their lives are ministry; they do not turn it on and off. They rarely get a break – how do you have a break from

those you love intensely? They do not come and go; they are embedded in the community. Their lives are vibrantly different from others. There are always hordes of people hanging around and often living with them. They live at a similar economic level and conditions to those to whom they minister. I am totally challenged by this.

As I look at Paul and his team, and the people we partner with, something else becomes very evident. When ministry is done like this, when people are completely transformed and overwhelmed by the power of God, the Spirit of God and the Gospel in the context of relational intensity and integrity, whole movements begin.

Niranjan in Nepal starts a clinic and a chicken farm sees thousands of people trained and tribal groups coming to faith. Hundreds of churches are established and numerous micro-loan programmes are initiated to empower people.

Santosh, on the border between India and Bhutan, commences a training programme and children's hostel. He sees churches planted in two of the most difficult countries on earth.

Friends in Indonesia initiate an outreach movement that is doubling in numbers every fifteen months and has spread to fourteen other countries. There are no church buildings, the average size of a group five to six people, they cannot sing songs and they often meet in small minivans for security.



Somehow, we have to jettison our preoccupation with putting 'bottoms on seats' in church buildings and focus on living among the people, for their sake, sharing not only the gospel but our lives as well. Otherwise we will only ever develop programmes, or a church, or a ministry and we will never get to participate in a movement of God.

We must become mother-loving, brother-sharing, father-encouraging, life-sharing, gospel-speaking. And on the back of this, God will deliver real transformation, burgeoning vitality and exponential growth.

But what if we don't? Sure, we will baptise a few, we will disciple some and we will maybe even add more people each year to the church directory. But is that what it's about? Is this really what we're called to?

I yearn to participate in a relationally authentic, deeply transforming, idol destroying movement in which God is obviously, deeply, continuously at work.

Of course, all this starts for us in our own communities. Average Kiwis need to experience this type of relationship with Christian friends. For the sake of our own people, we need to develop this kind of ministry lifestyle and take our families on this journey. This is a role for all of us every day of the week.

Moreover, let me tell you, if we do, we will find ourselves partnering with amazing people all over the world as part of an astounding, global movement of God; lives transformed and people turning to God from idols to serve the living and true God. ■





CRAIG BARROW | PRINCIPAL, PATHWAYS COLLEGE OF BIBLE & MISSION

PARTNERING WITH PURPOSE



BACK IN 2017 MR JIJU NINAN AND MISS PHYLLIS TREASURE, BETTER KNOWN AS MUMMY, VISITED NEW ZEALAND. AS A PART OF THAT VISIT THEY MET WITH ME TO TALK ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF OFFERING ONLINE COURSES THROUGHOUT INDIA.

They have a wonderful Bible college there in Kerala called Rehoboth Theological Institute (RTI), of which Jiju is the registrar. The college has many people from all over India, and beyond, contacting them wanting to study the Bible online. These people are unable to leave their locations due to family or work commitments.

The Bible College has been looking for different ways to serve these people and through Karen Brookes they found Pathway's online material and wanted to see if there was a way to partner with us. Their initial goal was to simply offer

our online courses throughout India. As we met together and then talked over the next year, we agreed that it would be much better for Pathways College to enable RTI to offer their own online courses taught by their faculty. The primary reason for this is simply the cultural and language differences.

It has been a long difficult process due to culture, time and expense, but we are making good progress. It is more than simply videoing RTI lecturers in a classroom as they teach. Communicating well in an online course is quite different from normal classroom



lecturing. We now have an excellent website set up specifically for RTI online courses. We have designed their online program to have two levels of learning.

First of all, there are several introductory courses which someone can take to discover if they are actually able to do online courses and have the time and resources available. If the person completes these introductory courses with the associated online quizzes, and

sorts of incredible experiences starting when she first went out to India at the age of 22 to how she is still continuing to serve the Lord in amazing ways now that she is 82. Many of the stories that she tells through the videos are very moving and continually prove the faithfulness

end', and then she would just quietly remind me that God is always faithful and then every time some incredible thing would happen and God, as always, would come through and bless her and bless the people of India through her. This is going to be an online video series that Pathways College will offer for free to churches and individuals who want to access it. We will write some discussion questions to go with the videos for people to use in a small group setting. It will be out in the middle of 2019, so for more information contact info@pathways.co.nz. ■

Communicating well in an online course is quite different from normal classroom lecturing.

then completes a short assignment, they will be invited into the RTI online degree programme, using a combination of Pathways College and RTI lectured online courses. Richard and Kath Opie have been incredible supporters of this partnership, and without their wisdom, guidance and cultural understanding I honestly don't think we would be where we are now.

of God. The number of times in the interviews she would be telling a story and I would think 'oh my... how will this

The dream over the next few years is to assist RTI to get all of their degree courses online so anyone on the planet can study excellent Bible College material. It is exciting to note that we have also had a lot of interest from Indian people living in the Middle East who have heard of the online course development. Through our partnership we would also love to see some of the Indian folk in New Zealand and America and other parts of the world availing themselves of this study. We received a small gift from the Laing Trust in the UK at the beginning of this project, but the rest of the finances have been provided from the Pathways College budget. We have obviously not passed any of the costs of this partnership on to RTI. I would like to purchase recording gear for RTI to enable them to set up their own studio. If the Lord leads you to make a gift towards this, please contact the college on info@pathways.ac.nz.

An exciting offshoot of all this is has been the desire to get Mummy's testimony, her life's story, recorded in some format. For a number of years, Kath Opie had been trying to get a biography written about her. However, Mummy is honestly so busy serving the people of India at the orphanage and at RTI that she did not see this as a priority. Finally, through Kath and I, we were able to sit down with her and record a series of videos. Over a number of short 20 minute interviews, we have recorded some of the most amazing stories of Mummy's life. All



DEAR HEAVENLY FATHER

A REFLECTIVE PIECE WRITTEN BY A GAPPER AFTER THEIR TIME IN THAILAND.

Dear heavenly father...
 Unfairness is surrounding me.
 I said I wanted justice,
 I remember saying oceans of it.
 I want mercy and rivers flowing full of it.
 This morning I woke crippled in thought,
 More of you and less of me.
 But that means sacrifice.

How can I sacrifice, in a society full of false humility,
 vulnerability and accountability?
 What does it mean to be a Christian?
 Who am I?

Do I continue pretending like what you did for
 me is common news?
 That dying on a cross for me is worth just sitting in pews.
 Funny how I can do exactly that.
 I gave so little of my time to community's in Thailand and yet
 I received so much more, if that's not grace than what is?
 Some might say I had heart surgery, the removal of one's spiritual
 heart replaced with more perceptive and objective.
 Thailand has corrupted my soul, even consumed my
 fruits that you let grow.
 And let's be real, God you took control.
 I give you permission to fuel passion in a way that I have
 never known passion before.
 Don't let my emotions control my devotion to you.
 But break my heart in two.
 Let's start at the beginning.
 Who am I?

My culture screams slave to sin, you scream
 Daughter of the King of kings.
 And I must admit, I forget the sovereignty in the identity
 I hold in you.
 I am incomparable, I learnt to live from so many of your parables.
 More of you, less of me.
 Who am I, in you?

Well I am sensitive, which means my convictions run deep in me,
 Sometimes Lord I turn them into condemnation and let them
 sit and have tea with me.
 I'm continually renewed in you.
 You create an environment where shame falls off my shoulders
 and purpose comes in the form of boulders.
 Here we go,
 Who am I.?

In Thailand this calling became more and more
 fluent, as others became truant.
 I heard it in the whispers of my prayers, my face
 started to stream so many tears.

A MOTHER TO MANY.
 Looking back, I can see the planting of such seeds, now
 I just need to sign the deed.
 And I'm scared.

A MOTHER TO MANY.
 This doesn't mean a husband and 12 children.
 It means, vulnerability needs to run through my veins and
 acceptance needs to radiate me in all ways.
 Passion needs to be action not just a fraction of my emotions.
 Christ needs to live in me.

I need to be a safe place, where youth may lay.
A MOTHER TO MANY.
 Lord I need wisdom too.

I need a servant heart imbedded in my nature
 I need radical change that only comes from you.
 More of you and less of me.
 Where do I go from here?
 Lord mould me, fold me.

You told me you had a plan for me, and man its GOLD!
 Guide me. Hide me. Hold me.
 And you will make me

A MOTHER TO MANY.
 O' Lord I know that not for a minute were they forsaken,
 But Lord.
 Kani kani ko warioatapu
 Dance with my soul.



PLEASE INFORM ME ABOUT:



GLOBAL CONNECTIONS IN MISSION



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GC AID

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- Info on commendation e-Connect
- How can I find out more about cross-cultural mission opportunities?
- How I can help fund mission
 (Please accept my gift of \$ _____ for _____)

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