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RESONATE”

ISSUE 05 // SUMMER 07/08



Is Green the New Black?

With the west embracing the environment as the latest fashion, cross-cultural workers couldn't be happier

CARYN ROGERS

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Tea for Two

A MODERN TAKE ON MISSION

Ode to Missionary Fashions

DAN SAUNDERS

FIFTEEN minutes

Pre-school teacher Nina (28) and her husband, IT guru Nick (29), packed up their lives and moved from Sydney to South Asia as members of Global Interaction's Gi6pro team. They arrived a few months ago and are staying for a year.



Q What is your current work?

A I teach English to adult staff in a Non-Government Organisation. A bit different to my usual classroom, I have to refrain from singing children's songs at times!

Q How many times have you been lost finding your way around?

A Who told you?! I have been lost so many times, but I can get around our local area now without too many problems. It doesn't help that the 'landmarks' I use change (like huge advertisement signs that are there one day, gone the next).

Q How has Nick taken to the change?

A Nick has loved it from day one! He is very adventurous and loves to go exploring to find new places. Nick definitely had a clear call to work amongst unreached people groups. God told me to be open...so here I am!

Q Do you have a favourite local custom?

A I discovered that when a woman has a baby, friends and family visit bringing *misti*. It's like a small jam donut (minus the jam) in a sweet syrup! I think this is great - pity I don't have a baby...

Q Describe the most unusual thing you've eaten so far...

A Imagine a cold, black, stringy, weird-looking vegetable. It doesn't taste like any vegetable I know and the texture is gross. I put most of it on Nick's plate!

Q What do you miss most about Australia?

A The freedom of going places without being noticed. When some other foreigners here went to the zoo everyone was taking pictures of them rather than the animals!

www.gi6pro.net.au

POP QUIZ

- Q 1** Which three countries share land borders with Indonesia?
- 2** What is the official language of Malawi?
- 3** Why does the Malawian president want to move from tobacco to cotton production?
- 4** What does black represent on the Aboriginal flag?
- 5** What is the main ingredient in Dhal?
- 6** What eating utensils do Thai people most commonly use?
- 7** Which of these four countries share borders with each other: Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand?
- 8** Who was slave abolitionist William Wilberforce's mentor, as retold in the film *Amazing Grace*?
- 9** Of the estimated 16 000 prisoners of Cambodia's Tuol Sleng Prison (in operation during the Khmer Rouge regime), how many survived?
- 10** How many islands make up Indonesia?

- A**
- 1 East Timor, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea
 - 2 English
 - 3 Decreased cigarette consumption in the West
 - 4 The people
 - 5 Lentils
 - 6 Fork and spoon
 - 7 Cambodia and Laos
 - 8 John Newton
 - 9 7
 - 10 Approx 17,500

marinate your MIND

MICAH CHALLENGE AUSTRALIA Website



The Website

Micah Challenge Australia - www.micahchallenge.org.au

Snapshot Summary

Micah Challenge Australia is part of a global movement of people from churches, agencies and groups who are inspired to equip and engage Christians to speak out on issues of global poverty and injustice. It is part of the Make Poverty History coalition in Australia.

The Micah Challenge website has some valuable resources; from teaching and prayer material to practical advice on how people can get involved - whether it's speaking to your local member of parliament, talking to a friend about global poverty or organising an event. A highlight is the *What Can One Person Do?* DVD. It has some great film footage and plenty of creative ideas for positive action. Make sure you subscribe to the Micah e-newsletter and keep updated with the latest information and events from around the country.

Recommended For
Everyone

LETTERS to the EDITOR

The spring edition of Resonate asked the question, Short-Term Mission – would you like fries with that? So we took it to you, our readers, to see what your feelings on the topic were.

Instead of creating a generation of Christians who are simply consumers, with good preparation and planning of trips, we could inspire a generation to follow Jesus by living with deep concern and compassion for our world as a whole.

Megan, CANBERRA

Prior to a short-term trip I took in '99, my life was all about me and success meant achieving selfishly in this short life. How things change.

Andrew, WA

I laughed at the 'Contiki' Christian package but am still an advocate for people going on short-term mission trips. As well as personal change, short-term missions are important for revitalising our Western churches – people come back with a new understanding and application of God in their lives which, hopefully, impacts their community.

Julie, SYDNEY

Long-term workers are the foot soldiers in God's plight for humanity. Often forgotten by their friends and family back home, it's vital that these workers receive the support of fresh hope and encouragement from Christians who have a heart for them. Sometimes short-term visits can change the outcomes of these battles for eternity.

Sam, SYDNEY



I'm in my forties and recently went on my first Global Xposure trip. Going to Cambodia was one of the most powerful experiences of my life. Let us all take up all the opportunities, both everyday and overseas. I was stretched to the max but am so grateful for the life-changing experience.

Eartha, NSW

If you missed the article, check out the last edition of Resonate at globalinteraction.org.au

craig's COLUMN

After multiple short-term mission stints around the globe, Craig and Talitha have been settling into life in Mozambique; meeting the locals, learning the language and finding their way around. They've just had their first experience of what it's like to be on the other side of the fence as missionaries hosting short-term Global Xposure teams...

I was a teenage lad with long flowing locks (OK, so they've all fallen out now) when

I went on a whirlwind Global Xposure adventure to Africa with Global Interaction. It was awesome. I was pushed out of my comfort zone, met heaps of people and God challenged me to think seriously about cross-cultural work.

Talitha and I then wanted to give other people the opportunity to be exposed to mission, so we took a number of short-term trips back to Africa. They weren't without their challenges - trying to organise a travel 'plan' with missionaries as well as looking out for young adults who were tired, hormonal and preoccupied with their love interests. We constantly had to remind ourselves that we were once like them!

We're on the other side of the fence now and teams are visiting us. It's great to be on the receiving end of gifts: lollies, DVDs, Aussie flags, clip-on koalas and other goodies.

I wonder if Chinese factory workers realise they're educating Africans about Australia through vest-wearing Koalas!

OK, so some work things are put on hold when teams come out. And when we have a ream of teams who join us on village visits the locals start asking, "Who are all these white people – are they all your friends?" I reckon they must think we're the local rent-a-crowd crew.

We just had a team here in Mozambique and I must say, in a selfish way, it was encouraging and made me feel good. I actually knew more ChiYao language than someone else for a change!

So I sit on the fence when it comes to the usefulness of short-term missions. While they can add a lot of work for the long-termers, many of us missios are the product of short-term teams and our lives were changed by them.

If you're ever thinking, "Hey, I should go on a short-term trip," go for it. One day you too might be sitting on the fence with me.





tea 4

A MODERN TAKE ON MISSION

2

For some reason, stacks of Aussie believers seem to think that reaching people for Jesus requires a Billy Graham gift of evangelism – the ability to stand, microphone in one hand, Big Black Bible in the other, and passionately convince the masses of their need to repent. While this method may have worked back in the 1950s, mass rallies couldn't be further from the current reality for cross-cultural missions. In China, it's often just a conversation over a cup of tea, no microphone needed.

It seems a great many regular church attendees are suddenly 'busy' whenever a visiting mission speaker is coming through.

They'll talk about their need for more recruits . . . 'the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few' saying will be trotted out, and I'll feel miserable and guilt ridden . . . again. There's no way I could do that. I couldn't lead the masses to Jesus!

And just as well.

Statistics reveal that not many folk get introduced to JC via the tent crusade method. But a whole lot more do come to know Jesus through a trusted relationship with a friend or family member - more than 90% in fact. Even if they do go to the tent crusade it's because a friend got them there in the first place.

It begs the question: since you most likely came to trust in Jesus via a relationship, why would it take something else overseas?

Mission isn't that different, it's not rocket science. Minus the passport, language and cultural differences, you've got the same basic issues. Folks overseas aren't likely to respond to a stranger wielding a microphone, but they certainly might be willing to listen to their Aussie friend who has come to live among them.

Or knit among them.

Or go to the gym among them.

As a Global Interaction team member serving amongst a Muslim Unreached People Group in China, I have to restrain myself from the urge to strangle some well-meaning Christians when we're back in Australia. It drives me crazy whenever I hear someone say, 'What you're doing over there is so brave/amazing/terrific. I could never do what you're doing!' I want to scream, 'Why not?' What's so brave about drinking cups of tea? Where's the 'magic' in going to the gym with your buddy? What's all the fuss about sitting down with others and knitting (or any other hobby for that matter)?



Spread across China, Muslims are strong in number, well over 11 million. Although they live alongside millions of Chinese Christians, very few have come to faith through the witness of Chinese believers.

It's not complicated reaching out to Muslims with the good news that Jesus is more than just a prophet. It's all about relationship, relationship, re-la-tion-ship.

It may shock some of our supporters to learn that we didn't mention the name 'Jesus' publicly for the better part of our first three years overseas. We were learning the language, getting into our new culture, and investing in friendships. We had to earn the right to be heard. We couldn't jump off the plane and toss around Bibles, Jesus film DVDs, or (gulp) tracts. Muslims in this part of the world are all too wary of the ways of the 'Crusaders'. They despise that approach as much as Australians do when they go shopping and get an ear full from the guy outside Westfield shouting about sin and damnation.

But our Muslim friends don't have an issue with us living among them, sharing meals together and visiting one another's homes. We spend a great deal of time just 'being', rather than 'doing'. Naturally they ask us questions about our faith, and then we have permission to share how Jesus is real and how he changed our lives.

"Initially I didn't have a clue how I was going to reach out to Muslim women," says my wife Rebecca (name changed). "So I took my knitting down to where they gather and sat with the women each day. In those early days when my language gave out, knitting eased the silence.

"It wasn't long though before the shop where I frequented soon became 'knitting central'. Muslim women from all over began coming around to compare patterns, techniques and show off their jumpers. I soon became infamous as 'the foreigner who knits'!

"Jumpers and scarves weren't the only things made during the many hours spent among those women. Very special and precious friendships developed, some of which are now eternal friendships. We simply decided to love our new circle of friends into the Kingdom. At the end of the day, it's the ones and twos that reach the ones and twos."

We've been here for eight years and unfortunately there are few team members or culturally relevant resources for Muslim Chinese yet several hundred have come to know Jesus. Across China, small communities of Jesus-followers are beginning to emerge. They avoid calling themselves 'Christians', preferring instead to be known as 'lovers of Jesus'.

Being labelled as a 'Christian' is akin to social suicide for a Chinese Muslim. Helping them to find their own distinctive ways to follow Jesus means that their community identity remains 'Muslim', but their faith identity changes to following Jesus.

They don't see any conflict with being a 'Muslim lover of Jesus'. After all, the majority in this city are not adherents of Islam. Rather, Islam underpins a cultural identity, but there isn't a lot of faith to be found for many people.

Westerners get hung up with images of headscarves and thinking that the clothing automatically makes someone a follower of Islam. For many, the head covering is more of a fashion accessory than a statement of humility or Islamic piety.

Most Muslims in our city are secular Muslims. Some take Islam seriously, the rest see it as a community identity which differentiates them from the majority of Chinese. So if they decide to follow Jesus, remaining connected to their community means remaining 'Muslim', that is, Muslim in culture, lovers of Jesus in faith.

"Our part in that transformation is miniscule," says Rebecca. "We simply make friends, sow seeds, and watch the Holy Spirit go to work. We have the fabulous privilege of having front-row seats in watching a people group come to grips with unconditional love, a personal relationship, and the wonder of grace.

"We wouldn't trade this for all the tea in China."

DOING LIFE together



Once upon a time in Thailand, Lyn and Lee Morris, by happy coincidence, met Nuut, and dreamed of changing Thai lives through art. Baan Handicrafts was born. Along came Kay a little while later, and now, they can't imagine life, or business, without each other.

LEE:

As part of learning the local language, we started attending a little Thai church where we first met Nuut. She was introduced to us as a Fine Arts graduate majoring in sculpture. The thought began to take shape of this young woman working alongside us, solving one of the biggest dilemmas in trying to establish a project: finding the right people to empower and be co-workers in a project. Nuut accepted our offer of partnership and soon we had set up a training programme teaching women affected by HIV/AIDS to make products that would sell, so providing a secure income with flexible hours for the times when they are sick.

Nuut has worked through lots and lots of misunderstandings and communication blunders (mostly mine!). I always admire Nuut's skill and ability, but mostly, I admire her heart for the people whom we are serving. She is a fine artist, though sometimes the 'artistic flair' is a source of frustration in trying to establish a sustainable small business together! That's all just part of working together, and ironing out the 'kinks' as we grow as a team.

We first met Kay when she came to visit her friend, Nuut, at our old office. I wondered who this girl was, and why she was pottering around the place helping wherever she could. We remembered Kay and her enthusiasm when looking for a new administrator. Kay's willingness to learn and her loving nature are much appreciated by us. She is a great language helper and is a very important part of the Baan Handicrafts team.

NUUT:

Lyn took Kay and me to Kolkutta and Bangladesh to look at other income generating projects. I had never been anywhere else but Thailand before. I could not imagine having to live and work in India or Bangladesh. It made me think about foreigners coming to my country to live. We Thais like doing fun things, but some things in Thailand must be difficult for outsiders to adjust to - the spicy food we eat, studying and having to speak Thai.

It hasn't always been easy for Lee and Lyn, but I am thankful for their patience with me. I often struggle to meet the challenges they present to us, but little by little, they help me to develop my skills and attitudes to do the work needed here at Baan Handicrafts. I am very thankful for the opportunity to work with Lee and Lyn.

KAY:

When I started to work at Baan Handicrafts, I quickly learnt that Lyn and Lee were very open-minded and willing to work with younger people like Nuut and me. They are always encouraging me to do things correctly and often show me new ways to work more effectively. Working with foreigners seems to have its difficulties, but, as I look at myself and other Thais, I know we should take a lot of responsibility for helping rather than just saying 'ahhh farang' (that's just foreigners)! Because we think and process things differently, sometimes working in and out of two languages, it's not always easy to understand each other. But we have the same heavenly Father and he is the bridge between us.

For Baan Handicrafts, we are a ministry that attempts to do good business as well as to have good relationships. We have been able to work through some business strategies, but others still need a lot of work. Together we are learning, by doing life together as a team.



East Melbourne Mosque - learning about the nuts and bolts of Islam and Melbourne Muslims



Buddhist temple - more observing, learning, tasting, smelling, listening and experiencing



The Global Interaction team encouraged us to walk with our "eyes wide open", to see God in the everyday-ness



Debrief time at the end of the day raised more questions but gave me a tiny insight into those working cross-culturally. Learnt heaps about culture/religion, experienced God so profoundly.



So multicultural, so much to learn



I didn't realise I had so many stereotypes about Islam and Buddhism!

Xpose is an initiative of Global Interaction to give groups of young adults a cross-cultural experience in their own city. In essence, it is a shorter, localised version of an overseas mission trip. To find out more go to globalxposure.net.au

IS *Green* THE NEW



It seems that wherever you turn there's a new green 'enviro' fad, yet the mission scene has been eco-friendly for years. From Africa to Asia, people are relying on natural resources for mere survival. Cross-cultural workers are breathing a sigh of relief that the West is catching on.

While we may constantly hear about the dangers of global warming, it's easy enough for us just to leave all the houselights on, because we're not sure what we can, or should, do.

Green choices for us Aussies mean greener living for third world countries, and that's good news as far as survival is concerned.

John Wilmot, a Global Interaction team member in Malawi, strongly emphasises the green side of the gospel. "The kingdom in Christ starts here – heaven starts here (Earth). Land is essential in our worldview. It's all in the gospel proclamation to decrease poverty, about Christ reversing the impact on the poor."

Though only managing land the size of an average Aussie-garden, farming in Malawi is very important. With 94% of people growing maize, a massive 90% live off these crops. There is so much pressure on the land due to overpopulation and overuse of properties. The farming process includes everyone, mainly following traditional farming systems. And these systems work reasonably well, if fit and healthy people are working the fields.

But in a country devastated by HIV, whole generations are disappearing. The middle-aged working community is dying out.

Losing entire generations to HIV has many devastating social and relational effects, but it also affects the ability to learn new farming and land practices; better use of the already struggling natural resources. With new technologies unavailable due to financial depravity and death of the most educated generations, grandparents and great-grandparents are forced to keep farming alongside their grandchildren. Malawi is facing a tough battle.

Despite their significant hardships, with over 70% living well below the poverty line, John is constantly amazed at the Malawian's kindness to one another.

"They understand the difficulties, but have a resilience. They are incredible at identifying orphans and getting supplies for families. They take these things seriously," John says.

By sharing our resources, it is possible to make sure that all have enough. John quietly suggests, in a very Aussie manner, "Respect that they're human beings. We know what it means to ask God on behalf of this people to 'give us our daily bread'. They just need a fair dinkum chance."

Bangladesh is facing severe environmental crises. With an exceptionally high population, a significant portion of land is taken up for urban and industrial use. Australia has approximately 2.6 people per square kilometre; Bangladesh has approximately 1000. Makes your sardine-can size apartment look like a dream hey?



Losing forests makes way for more people to live; but more people equals more strain on the land and the water supply. As the rivers silt up, 'siltation' (the process of flood waters taking top soil and placing it in rivers) is often exacerbated by land clearing. Flooding occurs regularly, and rivers are struggling to maintain adequate banks and water quality.

One of our Global Interaction team members in Bangladesh comments, "We're trying to work with people to provide them with higher land, where they are less exposed to flooding. The poor people live in more vulnerable areas situated closer to the large rivers while the rich move away. **The environment issues and poverty issues are intertwined.**"

There is another serious issue with Bangladesh's water supply: arsenic. People have been encouraged to put in tube wells by drilling about 30 metres to the water levels. However, the rich can afford to drill down to 100 metres, causing problems with the water quality in the shallower wells where the poor are just trying to get water for survival.

As water is sucked out, the soil around it is oxidised. (When arsenic salts, which occur naturally as trace elements in the ground, are oxidised, they become more soluble). As they drink the water, this poisonous heavy metal accumulates in the body and the increase in these levels over ten years or so leads to arsenic poisoning. It takes a long time, so people drinking the water may only become aware of the arsenic when they become very sick. Skin discolouration, cancer and death from arsenic poisoning are common.

"Through our project Bengalis are being provided with education on water and testing of tube wells. If the wells have high levels of arsenic in them, the tops are painted and we teach them how to make a filter so it can be used safely."

The saddest part is that people sometimes have no option but to continue to drink poisoned water because they are too poor to do anything about it.

In Australia it's so easy just to feel hopeless in these situations: *'With so much wrong, what can I do?'* We can make a change, and the reality is that, as Christians, we must. As human beings we must. Genesis 1:26 says, "Let us make humankind in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule... over all the earth." It suggests that being made in God's image requires us to rule this world as God rules us; pro-active, rehabilitative and involved. The environment doesn't just effect the environment; it affects people as well.

We can make a difference, even just a little one. While taking shorter showers and toting green bags to the supermarket are an excellent start, even the hyped-up media is getting the story right: we are in serious danger of using up the world's resources – and many still don't care. The cold truth is that very few people acknowledge a consumer mentality, and even fewer want to be freed from consumption.

Genuine environmental concern requires genuine environmental action, and often that will mean your dollars as well as your prayers.

So, when you can, choose the green option. Take advantage of the carbon offsetting functions on flights. Take the bus instead of driving. We're all in this together, and if we're not pre-emptively counting the cost, we can be guaranteed that someone poorer than us will be picking up a tab they just can't afford.

We all have a carbon footprint that we'll imprint on this world. What will yours say about you?

For more info on the need and how to make an environmental change, come to an Unearthed forum in your state over the next six months. Check globalInteraction.org.au for details.

fashions on the field

Dan Saunders, a proud son of an unashamed sock and sandal wearer, raises his glass to the unlikely er... sweetheart of the fashion world: missionaries.



I'm a PK (preacher's kid, not chewing gum). As far as I'm aware, just about every other PK I know shares a special heart affinity with MK's (missionary kids). This bond is almost exclusively destined by our parents' fashion choices (or lack of) over the years.

This is not merely a few words at the expense of the knee high socks and 'liquorice allsorts' skivvies. Rather, I would like to pen an 'ode to missio fashions' in celebration of an entire, greatly undervalued fashion genre. Years from now, it will no doubt be studied, with much interest, by sub-cultural anthropologists.

Being somewhat of an enigma, missionaries' fashions on the field have managed to be simultaneously behind and ahead of the times. If you flick through any celebrity coffee table mag these days, it looks like the rest of the fashion world is playing catch up! Like South Australia's continuing love affair with John Farnham's mullet from the mid 80's, it seems that the Timberlakes, Hiltons and Big Brother evictees of this world will go to great lengths, and fork out big bucks for the coveted 'missio look'.

Conclusive evidence shows that missionaries, many years ago, discovered that 'hang ten' surf shirts don't go with plaid shorts and sandals. But missios? They boldly went there anyway.

They knew that the 'Abe Lincoln' style beard, worn exclusively under the chin, hadn't been 'in' seen since the American Civil War, but single-handedly brought it back from the brink of extinction.

They have plumbed the depths of fashion don'ts. Fully savvy to the fact that dresses made from old curtains were last seen on the cast of 'The Sound of Music', and that few people could pull off high-pants pulled to 3 inches below their armpits - they went there anyway, not caring what others thought!

Guest presenters on 'Rage' have been desperately trying to emulate them ever since.

So please tip your terry towelling hats (or caps with flat peaks) to those who care more for the people around them than they do for whatever Myer's 07 summer collection is...because frankly that's the way it should be! There's something impossibly cool about not caring if you are or aren't. I'll raise my knee high socks to that!

tools of THE trade



NAME: Suzy
(name changed for security reasons)

AGE: 29

CURRENT LOCATION: Woolloomooloo, Sydney – headed for South East Asia

PROFESSION: Hospitality and Divemaster
EDUCATION: Bachelor of Ministry; Travel and Tourism at TAFE; Hospitality Certificates and Diplomas; Retail Travel Consultant.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE: Worked in many hotels, backpacking hostels, as a travel agent, and in my local pub.

SKILLS IN ACTION: My dream is to work alongside a local colleague in S.E. Asia in eco-tourism, particularly focusing on scuba diving. I get to hang out with the 'unreached' locals as a follower of Jesus. Talk about a dream job in paradise – white sands, gorgeous beaches, beautiful people... bliss!

HOW CAN AUSTRALIANS SUPPORT ECO-TOURISM IN S.E ASIA?

Holiday there! Despite the media stereotype of it being a dangerous place, the travel warnings are usually for the same five-ish areas (out of 17,500 islands - you can easily avoid trouble spots). My bet is you'll be safe 'n' sound and well looked after. When you're there, eat local food and purchase local goods and look for areas with ecotourism options.

Global Interaction is setting up eco-tourism businesses, in order to empower the local people to look after their environment and to see growth within their economy. Keep in contact with the Global Interaction team; you may have a skill that could be used to assist the work. And as always - get on your knees and pray; it's not the easiest place to start a business.

CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF GLOBAL INTERACTION?

- Check out discussion questions on the web
- New DVD available
- Go to globalinteraction.org.au to sign up for Resonate

cooking CULTURALLY

NUM TREAP SESAME STICKY RICE from CAMBODIA

Preparation time: 20 mins
Serves: 4 – 6 people

buy it

- 2 cups uncooked jasmine rice
- 1 cup water
- 1 large can (420mL) coconut milk
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ tspn salt
- 1 tbspn vanilla extract
- ½ cup sesame seeds

do it

- Place the rice in a saucepan, bring to the boil and then reduce to a low heat. Cover and cook gently for about 15 minutes or until the rice is just cooked. Alternatively, cook it in rice cooker.
- While the rice is cooking, place the coconut milk, sugar, salt and vanilla extract in a large saucepan. Bring the mixture to the boil and cook over a medium heat until the sauce thickens, stirring frequently.

- Spread the sesame seeds out on a baking tray and toast until golden – about 5 minutes in a 190°C oven.
- Fluff the rice up with a fork to separate it and add to the sauce. Mix well, then spread the mixture out in a shallow dish. Spread the toasted sesame seeds on top of the rice, pressing them down with a wooden spoon or spatula.
- Cover and let the rice set for a few hours.
- Cut into squares to serve.

eat it

- Right now, as a sweet sweet snack.
- For dessert with tropical fruit and, if it's just not sweet enough (what's wrong with you??) add some vanilla ice cream.



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www.globalinteraction.org.au



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empowering communities to
develop their own distinctive
ways of following Jesus