

Resonate

ISSUE 27

THE
Mindfulness
ISSUE

MINDFUL MOMENTS

Being mindful of God and others

May Mission Month

SPECIAL EDITION



GLOBAL
INTERACTION



15 45 MINUTES WITH

JEAN-CLAUDE AND JOYCE

Jean-Claude was born in Burundi in East Africa and grew up in a poor family in a war-torn society. For five years he lived in a refugee camp in Tanzania. He was one of the 'lucky ones' and migrated to Australia in 2004 where he had the opportunity to build a better life. He started to work and learn English, complementing his fluency in Swahili, Kirundi, Kinyarwanda and French...pretty impressive huh?!

Jean-Claude felt called to reach the various African communities in Brisbane and was encouraged by his pastor to plant a church. Sounds simple doesn't it? I'm sure it wasn't, but Jean-Claude tells the story with simplicity and modesty. Every challenge he faced is gloriously understated. Meeting in a school hall, the church is a joyous place of worship, particularly for people who have experienced great loss. Jean-Claude has pastored the church for the last ten years and raised up many leaders. Equipped with his TAFE study in English, Jean Claude began the daunting task of studying at Queensland's Baptist Bible college. It wasn't easy but he made it through!

Joyce entered the scene in 2006, arriving from a Tanzanian refugee camp having experienced terrible hardship. When she was a little girl her mother ran for her life from her abusive father. Joyce and her brother survived the negligent and harsh treatment of their father and step-mother. She remembers fetching water from the river one night when an attacker armed with a large knife was near. A passer-by quietly warned her of the danger and she ran to safety. She thanks God for keeping her safe.

Jean-Claude fell for this beautiful, shy, woman with a gorgeous singing voice and they married a year later. They have busy, happy, safe life in Australia, raising their four kids and serving a growing church community.

Here comes the bombshell.



God prompted Jean-Claude through a World Vision ad on TV and a dream to consider returning to Africa. (Who says watching TV is a time-waster?!) At first they were unimpressed by the idea, but with prayer, wise counsel and self-examination, they concluded that God's call was clear. The door to returning to Burundi was closed, but they explored the work of Global Interaction among the Yawo in Malawi. They are preparing to join the team soon!

GOD PROMPTED JEAN-CLAUDE THROUGH A WORLD VISION AD ON TV AND A DREAM TO CONSIDER RETURNING TO AFRICA.

In 2009 Jean-Claude sent a letter to the Australian immigration department, requesting they allow his mother to join the family in Australia. After seven years of waiting, he received a letter saying "granted"! Bahati Nahabandi saw her son for the first time in 15 years. Bahati has learned English, played with her grandkids and most importantly, become a follower of Jesus. Jean-Claude had the privilege of baptising his mother! While the thought of leaving his mother again is heart-wrenching, he is comforted to know that she is safe.

Jean-Claude and Joyce have known, in a way that many *Resonate* readers can only imagine, what it's like to be protected and comforted by our loving God. They are keen as mustard to share this love with those who haven't had the chance to hear about Him. As they prepare to join the team in Malawi, join us in prayer and support for this amazing family.

3 ways you can support Jean-Claude and his family

1 SMS JEAN-CLAUDE and your email address to **0427444784** to receive quarterly news from the family or head to www.globalinteraction.org.au/subscribe

2 SMS SUPPORT to **0427444784** to discuss joining their partnership team, or check out the Global Interaction website. www.globalinteraction.org.au/Jean-claudeJoyce

3 Queenslanders can contact the State Team to arrange a coffee, small group meeting or church visit with Jean-Claude and Joyce. Call **07 3354 5603**.

9 months ago, Luke and Belle, with their son, left their home in Brisbane and joined the Global Interaction team in rural Thailand. To kick off the theme of this edition of Resonate, Luke shares his thoughts on 'mindfulness in mission'.

ADVENTURES WITH THE HARLANDS

Episode N°3



Belle recently bought one of those 'mindfulness' colouring books and she's really liking it. As an introvert and an artist I can understand the deep enjoyment one finds in a solitary, creative exercise like this and Belle has found it a great stress-reliever. The act of colouring forces her to be still so that her brain isn't being force fed stimulation but is free to wander and ponder. It's a way to practice being attentive to her thoughts, feelings and most importantly to God's voice.

Now, you might think that living in rural Thailand means we don't have to fight our culture of busyness. The funny thing about culture is that you take it with you wherever you go. The pace of life here makes us farangs (foreigners) look like a pack of cheetahs with a partiality to brightly coloured energy drinks. In between moving from Australia to Thailand, then moving from a big city to a rural village, setting up a home, learning a new language,

making friends and caring for our toddler, it's been hard to be still, quiet and mindful! When we're too busy to stop and reflect on yesterday, it's hard to be mindful of today. We're caught in the same old battle against busyness while trying to make time for God and ourselves.

At a recent conference we attended, the speaker shared the way he does daily devotions by reflecting on the past 24 hours, looking specifically for God's presence. We were given time to do just that and although it wasn't ground breaking stuff by any means, it was still significant for me. I realised that I couldn't remember the last time I had given myself the space and time to reflect with God. In the short few minutes I recognised several times throughout the last day when God had spoken to me. I shudder to think of the many countless times God has been speaking to me but I've missed his precious voice simply because I wasn't listening.

In our current context being mindful means being open to God's agenda in any given situation. Recently we've had opportunities to pray for a few people, including Belle's language helper. Interestingly, the question we're being asked is 'how do you pray'? God is so good in giving us these opportunities, not only so that we can bless others but also by growing our faith as we demonstrate what we share with others.

I'm thankful for the times when I'm forced to put everything down for a moment and just be with Father. He's always there, we just need to be attentive. If you're in the same boat as us, then I pray that this serves as a reminder to make time to be still and know that He is God. It is one of the most impacting things you can do!



MINDFUL MOMENTS

When was the last time you stepped out the front door and found yourself in a completely unknown environment? When each sensory experience, from the sounds of the streets to the air you breathe, arrests you to the point where all you can do is stop... and take it in? For Global Interaction cross-cultural workers Janelle, Scott, B and Phil, the answer is everyday. When they left the familiarity of home to serve in Africa and Asia, they expected their lives to rapidly transform as they adjusted to new languages and ways of life. But what surprised them was that the transition also brought remarkable clarity, calm and mindfulness.

Although mindfulness goes by many names (like attentiveness or carefulness) the practice is widely regarded as a moment-by-moment awareness of our environment and an acceptance of the thoughts and feelings that arise in response. It's not about emptying our minds or filling them up with 'happy thoughts'. Instead, it's an exercise in anchoring ourselves to the present. Because mindfulness shifts our focus away from past or future anxieties, it has become a popular prescription for good mental health. (The recent adult colouring-book craze certainly attests to the growth of this trend.) For those who find colouring in the lines anything but relaxing, there are also puzzles and books and ironically even smartphone apps designed to instil calmness and harmony in our digitally-distracted lives.

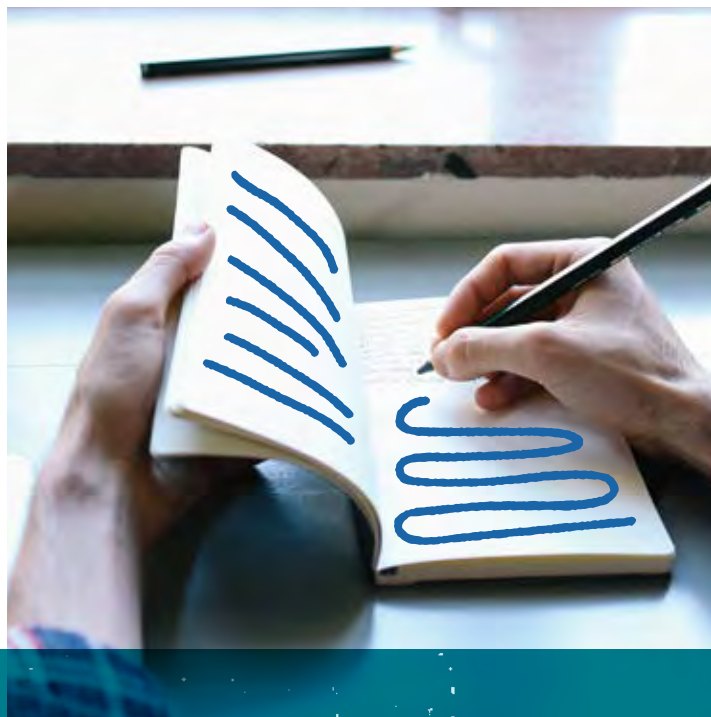
But there is nothing novel about mindfulness in a Christian context. Throughout the Bible we read about renewing our minds, taking every thought captive and not being anxious about tomorrow. Jesus certainly had this covered, encouraging his followers to slow down and consider the lilies of the field (long before mindfulness nature retreats came into vogue). My discussions with Janelle, Scott, B and Phil inspired me to do just that (no colouring-in required).

What does mindfulness mean to you?

For B, who teaches English in Central Asia, mindfulness begins as an inward awareness of God's activity in her daily life. 'It is being really intentional and conscious of God's presence and what is going on around me.' The refreshing consequence is that when she shifts her focus onto the author of her faith, she actually discovers more of the person God made her to be.

Phil in South Asia has been on a similar journey. He explains that as he cultivates this self-awareness, he develops a more deliberate awareness of the needs of others. This is vital to his work in supporting community development projects in a desperately poor part of the world. 'I want to truly see the people around me and not just get tunnel-visioned about getting a task done.'

For Janelle in Cambodia, being mindful amidst the demands of the team's busy sports ministry is a daily exercise in focus and diligence that has strengthened over time. 'I try to constantly consider what the situation is, what people are feeling and thinking. It helps me take a step back and look at it a bit more thoughtfully.'



So, what is the purpose of mindfulness?

I soon realise that mindful living helps these cross-cultural workers to forgo distractions so that they can cultivate more authentic relationships with others and in turn, be more productive in their respective roles. Before Scott and his family in Mozambique can build communities of faith in the local villages, they must stop trying to 'do' and first listen, observe and learn. He says, 'we're here to build relationships with people on a deep level. You can't do that without being attentive to the moment and what's going on for those people'. This quiet revelation stuns me... it's only when we stop looking at the 'task' that we truly begin to see the need.

Without mindfully preparing for each day, Phil believes he would be paralysed by the sheer scale of the needs to be met. 'I need to make sure that in the practice of doing what I'm doing that I'm not forgetting why I'm doing it.'

At the same time, Phil says, we can also evaluate and breakdown any stereotypes that we may have about different people groups to better understand and serve their needs. A happy thought dawns on me as I talk to Phil: this Biblical purpose of mindfulness not just about accomplishing our own spiritual wellbeing, it is the starting point to a more other-focused and fruitful life.

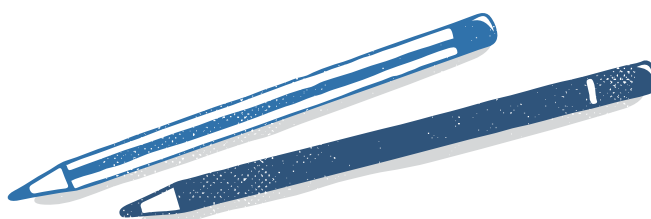
How do you practise mindfulness?

Creating time and finding a physical space to contemplate is a sure-fire way to a mindful day for these workers. Scott never found a place to escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life before he became a cross-cultural worker. Now he regularly retreats to the mountains near his home in Mozambique. 'That's my mindfulness place. It's my time to sit with God, to read the Word, to play some worship music and really just listen to Him.' Finding a haven in Cambodia where she can absorb and appreciate her surroundings has also sparked an effective ritual for Janelle. 'I sit on a beautiful little balcony area which overlooks some mango trees... and I count my blessings (by writing them down), listen to the sounds and just appreciate being in this place.' B similarly uses her time to unwind, and wait for fresh insight. 'Reading devotions is how I find inspiration. Sometimes I even put quotes that I really relate to up on the walls.'

THE BIBLICAL PURPOSE OF MINDFULNESS IS NOT JUST ABOUT ACCOMPLISHING OUR OWN SPIRITUAL WELLBEING: IT IS THE STARTING POINT TO A MORE OTHER-FOCUSED AND FRUITFUL LIFE.

Not one of the workers spoke of getting instant answers to their questions or overnight solutions to their problems. But it is clear that they have learnt much from these mindful moments about how to be attuned to God and to those around them. It seems that in a world striving to enhance its productivity at the cost of relationships, these cross-cultural workers have flipped this principle on its head. Prioritising relationships, by being mindful of God and others, actually increases their productivity. Now that's something we can all be mindful of, isn't it?

MAGGIE



May Mission Month



Over the next five weeks we will explore the story of the sending out of the 72 disciples as recorded in Luke Chapter 10.

This will be a time for you, your small group and church to dig deep into this chapter and tease out what it says to us about Jesus, his mission and ultimately our mission to people across the street and across the globe.

Up until the end of Luke 8, the disciples have been *following* Jesus; they have been *with* Jesus, *watching* Jesus, almost like spectators of His mission. But now they are invited to step out of the grandstand and onto the playing field. They are called to be participators in Jesus' mission. A process that began in chapter 9 with the sending of the 12 disciples is now continued with the sending of the 72. The theme of *sending* will become a great theme of Luke's book. The mission that began focusing on the lost sheep of Israel will be extended to all nations.

How to use this resource



Use as a small group study. Read the passage and discuss the questions together. As a group, choose to support a Global Interaction cross-cultural worker or project as part of your giving to mission.



If you are not part of a small group, use the passages and questions to guide your daily time with God. Meditate on the Bible verses, journal your responses to the discussion questions and challenge yourself to learn more about the people around you and overseas who need to hear the message of Jesus.



For pastors or leaders, visit the May Mission Month page www.globalinteraction.org.au/mmm. Here you will find detailed sermon notes, children's activities, video clips plus extra resources that will help you involve your congregation and small group throughout May Mission Month.

Time to get our hands dirty

“THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL, BUT THE LABOURERS ARE FEW. THEREFORE PRAY EARNESTLY TO THE LORD OF THE HARVEST TO SEND OUT LABOURERS INTO HIS HARVEST.”

INTRODUCTION

As Jesus commissions His followers to take the Kingdom of God to the towns and villages in the region He begins by explaining what is ahead of them. They are few, but who need to hear this message are many. Their role is an important part in bringing about the Kingdom of God. They are people sent by Jesus himself.

READ

LUKE 10:1-3

*After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. And he said to them, “**The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go your way; behold I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.**”*

In these few verses we see that:

- > Jesus sends believers into their wider community to witness to the Kingdom of God.
- > There is a desperate need for people to commit to being a worker in the ‘harvest’.
- > God wants us to pray for people to take up the task of working for the Kingdom.
- > Those already working in the harvest are in a vulnerable position.

DISCUSS/REFLECT

1. How does this moment of ‘sending out’ either challenge or confirm your view of mission?
2. In what areas of your community are you a ‘labourer’?
3. Set an alarm on your watch/phone for 10:02 (as in Luke 10:02) each day and pray Jesus’ prayer. As we pray for workers we must be aware that we might just be the answer to our own prayers.

Travel Lightly

INTRODUCTION

Jesus didn't just say go. He also gave His disciples instructions for their mission trip to the people of Israel. Jesus' time was limited and the purposes of God were culminating in His suffering, crucifixion and resurrection.

The people of Israel needed to hear Jesus' message of peace and stop trying to build God's kingdom in their own way through violence and revolution. These instructions give us valuable insight for the way we can do mission today.

READ

LUKE 10:1-7

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

At first glance, this doesn't quite sound like a very sensible or effective mission strategy (greet no one? Really?), but if we look a little closer we see that:

- > When Jesus sends workers out into the harvest field He gives them all that they require.
- > Being a harvester requires us to carry little and not hold onto our 'things' too tightly.
- > There is much to distract the disciples and us from the mission that God has given.
- > There is an urgency to this mission, and we need to keep our eye on the main game.

DISCUSS/REFLECT

1. How are you trusting that Jesus has equipped you in this mission right now?
2. What might you be holding onto too tightly? What do you need to let go of in order to walk more lightly as a pilgrim of Jesus?
3. Is there anything distracting you from being in the harvest field right now? What can you do to change that?
4. When did you have to complete something urgently, what did you have to do? How would your sharing of the message of Jesus through your words and actions change if you see it as urgent?

Person of Peace

📌 INTRODUCTION

Jesus gives the 72 advice about how to build relationships and share His message with the people they would meet in the towns and villages. When the disciples were invited into the homes of people, their intention was to bring peace to that place. If that peace was accepted then the peace would rest upon that person and home. If this wasn't the case, the disciples were to move on to the next place.

📖 READ

LUKE 10:5-8

"Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' And if a person of peace is there, your peace will rest upon them. But if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the labourer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you."

From these few verses we get a sense of how we are to approach others as we carry out the mission of Jesus:

- > It is important for us to approach our mission with grace and peace.
- > Relationships with people take time and require discernment (the disciples stayed in people's homes, they ate together).
- > As God's workers we are to be culturally flexible. Notice that Jesus told the disciples to eat whatever was put in front of them. The disciples weren't to let food, personal preferences and cultural differences to get in the way of sharing Jesus' message.

💬 DISCUSS/REFLECT

1. When you are involved in ministry to your neighbours or through your church, how might you demonstrate an intention of peace?
2. Are you building deep relationships with people in your community?
3. How are you serving the communities you are part of? In what ways can you build relationships through serving, helping others or sharing a meal?
4. Share a story about a 'person of peace' you have met – some who responded to you in love or openness.

The Kingdom of God is Near

📌 INTRODUCTION

The clear focus in today's verses are that Jesus is the presence of God's saving activity among people. Jesus is the Good News of salvation and restoration to the world. The 72 were to journey with a passion to see the gift of Jesus, His peace and His kingdom be embraced by all people. They were to believe that God's greatest gift is a life transforming relationship with Jesus and they were to take that message to people who had not heard. It is a holistic mission – sharing the Good News in what they say and how they act.

📖 READ

LUKE 10:9-11

“Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.”

These verses at first glance are quite confronting and yet they shed light on the difficulties of God's mission:

- > Our lives, both our actions and our words, are to demonstrate the message of Jesus.
- > There are times when moving on from relationships seems to be required if the mission of God is to be fulfilled.
- > God will judge those who reject him. But Jesus has already said the harvest is plentiful, we are to be part of God's solution.
- > People will accept or reject the Good News. Whether they respond positively or negatively is not ours to judge, it is for God.

💬 DISCUSS/REFLECT

1. How do you think we can discern if we have a relationship we need to move on from in order for the mission of God to be fulfilled?
2. What part is God calling you to play in your local setting so that others may have the opportunity to enter the Kingdom of God?
3. What do you know about least-reached people groups (check out globalinteraction.org.au for more info)? What part will you play in helping these people hear the message of Jesus? Pray, give, go?

Being a part of the solution, not the problem



INTRODUCTION

We know the problem: not enough workers for the harvest. But God's already decided on the solution: US. We, followers of Jesus, are the ones who have been sent by Jesus to share His Good News to the people of the world. We continue to be God's messengers. We are His workers in His harvest field, seeking to share the Good News with the people who need to hear it. We are here to be part of what God is doing in the world. This salvation is wide and deep.

READ

LUKE 10

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go your way; behold I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the labourer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town."

DISCUSS/REFLECT

1. Jesus expects His followers to share the message of the kingdom to the towns they go to and the people they meet. When was the last time you shared about your faith with someone else? What is stopping you from sharing something of your faith in the coming weeks?
2. The kingdom of God is near. How can you bring the kingdom of God to people in your community? Talk in specifics, what would this tangibly look like?
3. Who will you ask to hold you accountable and follow you up if your words/actions do not share the message of Jesus authentically?



AM I A Greenie?

It's always interesting to observe how different church congregations respond to the same sermon. Believe it or not, cross-cultural workers recycle sermons when we visit partner churches during our few months in Australia during home assignment.

For me, the first week is the most daunting. I have been away from Australia for three years and I have to deliver a well-crafted sermon to eager supporters and friends in my native tongue, which I haven't used properly for ages! On subsequent weeks, English words flow in my brain more swiftly and I refine the content and delivery over and over. After a few months I have a few succinct, theologically sound, confidently presented and engaging sermons... then I hop on a plane again!

**IS CARING FOR
CREATION A LEGITIMATE
MISSIONAL ACTIVITY?**

Recently, my final speaking gig was at a church where I was reasonably well known. I was warmly greeted and held the congregation engaged throughout. I was slick. (After all, this was the 15th presentation within 10 weeks!) At the conclusion, the pastor got up to respond and close the service. His first remark was something like "I think that is the first time we've had a Greenie in that pulpit!" We all laughed and enjoyed the fellowship that followed.

On reflecting on the Pastor's remark, I wondered if he was correct. People had been speaking from that pulpit for over 150 years, could I really be the first? It indicates that my topic, a Christian response to the environment and its place in mission, was rarely spoken of in church.

The reasons we have avoided linking our faith to the environment are many and varied. In Australian Baptist circles, I suspect concern for the environment has probably been considered peripheral to our cause. **After all, are we not to concentrate on the winning of souls? Caring for the non-human creation is surely just a distraction from our core focus.**

But isn't caring for the environment a Gospel issue?

Since living in South-East Asia I've discovered how Muslims have a similar calling to be stewards of the earth as us Christians. We both believe that God has given the responsibility to humanity to take care of His creation. I have found working together with Muslim friends on environmental projects has provided a unique opportunity to share the Gospel.

For my Muslim friends that are aware of their spiritual responsibility for creation (not all are), fear of judgement is the sole motivation for how they treat the environment. However, God's redemptive intentions for all His creation extend beyond judgement, to His new creation, promised to us in Revelation. God's purposes have also been modelled to us through the life and sacrifice of Jesus, which commenced God's process of redemption. It is through following Jesus that we get to participate in God's redemptive plan.

Despite working as a professional in the environment sector for nearly 20 years before joining Global Interaction, I didn't really see it as a calling, nor how God could use my professional background in cross-cultural work. However, over the last few years it has become crystal clear.



I initially came to South East Asia to help set up an education foundation, so I put my career on hold to teach English or whatever else was required. However, the need that is most obvious in this part of the world is environmental management. It is evident before your plane even touches the ground, looking at the colour of the air! Then you get out of the airport and all your other senses get bombarded with the impacts of failures to manage many environmental challenges! Waste disposal, air and water pollution, overpopulation, natural resource depletion, urban sprawl and poor transport infrastructure are significant challenges across much of the developing world.

I saw the need, remembered my skills in environmental management, and asked an important question: Is caring for creation a legitimate missional activity?

Global Interaction's Theology of Mission states:

"Our mission flows from radical commitment of God's mission to fulfill His redemptive purposes for His creation. God calls His people to be participants and it is the church's privilege and responsibility to live out God's love for the world."

- > Are you a professional who would like to get involved in this project? Contact us today.
- > Give to the Greenie's project at www.globalinteraction.org.au/Greenie
- > Sign up to receive quarterly newsletters about Greenie's ministry SMS 0427444784
- > To read more about creation care check out Gen 1-3, Mark 12:30-31, Col 1:15-18, Rom 8:18-23 and Rev 21. Greenie also recommends *Planetwise: Dare to Care for God's World* by Dave Bookless and *Surprised by Hope* by Tom Wright.

This, together with several other theological beliefs underpinning the work of Global Interaction certainly provides a solid basis for using what many now refer to as Creation Care as a strong platform for mission. I particularly appreciate the statement of a likeminded organisation with respect to our responsibility as Christians to the environment:

"...we believe that the church has a responsibility to care for God's creation as an expression of His kingdom; and that we cannot truly love our neighbours without caring for the land and ecology on which they (and we) depend. We need to care for both people and places... In response to the Biblical mandate to care for creation, and to the growing ecological crisis, (we are) committed to urgent and prophetic ecological responsibility." (OMF)

Global Interaction has been involved in environment initiatives for a few years now in South-East Asia. We have a registered NGO working on exciting projects including Clean Up days, community composting and urban farming programs.

So, yes, while that church pastor and congregation had a chuckle, I suppose I am a Greenie, and one whom God has called to serve in mission. And I hope to share stories of how God is using us to care for creation and express God's love with Muslims in many pulpits in years to come.

ANDY

DOING LIFE *together*

Sydney siders and teenage sweethearts Pete and Nomes are in the thick of preparations to serve in cross-cultural mission. They take some time to share with us their love of God, each other and those who don't know Jesus.



Pete

Nomes and I met at church just after I hit high school and rocked up as the new PK (pastor's kid) in a country town. It was all the way back in the mid nineties. Forget playlists on iTunes and Spotify, making mix-tapes with subtle "I really like you" messages was how it was done back then. It was the classic story of the older brother falling for his little sister's bestie.

In many ways Nomes and I are very different. I'm extroverted, she's introverted. She loves times of complete peace and quiet, I think life should have an endless soundtrack. She's level headed in a crisis, I tend to panic. The list could go on. But we have so much in common too. We both enjoy camping and exploring new places, we both appreciate having a good chat with people over a meal and we both love Jesus and want to follow Him wherever He calls us.

Our journey into long-term cross-cultural work has been more than ten years in the making. Our hearts were opened to this possibility during an overseas trip, before we were engaged. We stood on a rooftop in China and as we looked out over the city we said to God, "if you call, we are willing".

Nomes and I have enjoyed working in childcare, software engineering and pastoral ministry, we've had two wonderfully energetic and cheeky kids and we're currently completing studies at Morling College.

Throughout all of this, God has been constantly prompting, shaping and guiding us. While we're not sure which country we'll be living in yet, we are convinced that He is calling Nomes and I to step out together into the unknown. I'm glad to have her by my side.

Nomes

Pete and I met when his Dad became the pastor of my church. Despite being only 12 (and his terrible 90's bowl haircut!), I had a crush on him and four years later we started dating. I remember receiving his mix-tapes: one was all lovey-dovey songs and another was a hard rock compilation, just so that I knew he was cool.

Pete has the amazing ability to connect with and relate to a wide range of people, putting them at ease and developing friendships fast. I'm not all that comfortable in large groups of people, but I love to have deep authentic relationships with people. We're both passionate about sharing God's love and Good News, particularly with those who have never had an opportunity to hear it.

Have you ever walked along a street at night, lit only by the street lamps that dot the sides of the road, casting their cone of light that illuminates the area underneath them but no further? Our journey has been much like this, except that at each step only the light directly in front of us has been lit. We can see just enough to know where to place our feet next. Sometimes we've even needed to step into the dark gap, trusting wholly in God, and He has been faithful and 'pop!' – on comes the next light for us.

God has definitely been teaching us to trust in Him and to listen for His voice. So as we wait on Him, we're preparing as best we can: finishing our studies, devoting time to prayer and seeking wise counsel. Pete and I have learnt so much about each other throughout this journey and it has brought us so much closer to God and one another.



Wake Up and Watch

I WONDER HOW OFTEN JESUS CALLS US TO BE AWARE OF WHAT HE IS DOING AROUND US.

This reminded me of my favourite Doctor Who t-shirt which says, **“I might look like I’m listening to you but in my head I’m travelling through space and time.”**

Giving people our full attention these days is not easy, is it?

It reminds me of a story in the Bible where Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, preparing to face death on to a cross. His soul is overwhelmed with anguish (sweat like drops of blood fell to the ground!). He gathered his mates Peter, James and John and asked them to keep watch. They fell asleep. He woke them and asked them again. They fell asleep. He checked again and they were again asleep.

Understandably, Jesus was upset. “Wake up! Couldn’t you men keep watch for one hour?!”

Maybe they were too exhausted. They’d just had a big meal, bread and wine – maybe their communion cups were bigger than the fairy-sized ones in my church. Maybe they were willing and committed but simply incapable of hanging in there. Maybe they didn’t care. They mustn’t have realised the seriousness and importance of what Jesus was asking.

Jesus had good reasons for them to be aware to what was going on. God was about to make his Big Move and Jesus was right in the thick of it. He longed for their attention and companionship.

I wonder how often Jesus calls us to be aware of what He is doing around us. Can you recall or imagine Him prompting, “Hey, get a load of this, I’m doing something pretty amazing over here”, or “Come and see me bring transformation to this relationship”, or “Join me in bringing hope to that community”?

Sadly, we’re also likely to hear the disappointment in His words, “Wake up! Pay attention! Couldn’t you keep watch?!” How often are we too tired, too distracted or too ambivalent to give Jesus our attention?

Peter, James and John didn’t have a copy of *Resonate* to refer to, but you do! These tips might help you be attentive to Jesus’ promptings.

- > Check your priorities. Jesus urges his friends not to worry about things like food, drink or clothes. Being consumed by materialism takes us away from the stuff that matters.
- > Carve out time for undistracted, focused prayer. Jesus said, “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”
- > Meditate on the Bible, learn about its context and journal its application.
- > Ask your Christian friends questions like, “What do you reckon Jesus is saying to you?”
- > Look for opportunities to love people around you (and those far away... this is a mission mag after all!)

REV ROB TANNER

When my daughter was two she loved to talk and talk. One day she was chatting away and I did that thing many parents do. I let my mind wander far far away, while muttering things like, “uh huh”, “really?” and “how interesting”. My daughter stopped talking and then a couple of minutes later asked, “Daddy what does the word ignoring mean?”

HEY, GET A LOAD OF THIS, I’M DOING SOMETHING PRETTY AMAZING OVER HERE.

COME AND SEE ME BRING TRANSFORMATION TO THIS RELATIONSHIP.

COOKING CULTURALLY



Beef Curry

SOUTH ASIA

Serves 4

BUY or GROW IT

3 teaspoons turmeric
1½ teaspoons cumin
2 tablespoons coriander
salt (to taste)
½ cup vegetable oil
2 chillies, finely sliced
4 bay leaves
2 onions, finely diced
5 cloves garlic, crushed
5 centimetre piece of ginger, grated
1 kilogram blade steak, diced
3 cardamom pods

DO IT

1. in a small bowl mix turmeric, cumin, coriander and salt, moisten with water. Mix well and set aside
2. heat oil with chillies and bay leaves in a large saucepan
3. add onions, fry on medium heat until lightly browned. Add garlic and ginger and sauté until soft
4. pour spice mixture over onion mixture, stir and simmer for a few minutes
5. add meat and cook until brown, stirring constantly
6. add one cup of water to cover the meat. Bring to the boil, lower heat, then cover and simmer for about 45 minutes
7. add cardamom pods
8. cook for further 10 minutes and serve with rice

VARIATION

Add 4-5 large potatoes after sautéing the onions, garlic and ginger