

Intercon Musings

Intercon, WEC's four-yearly meeting of leaders from all over the world was held in Seoul, Korea in May. For the most part it could have been held anywhere, as scheduled sessions consumed all daylight hours, and most evenings too. Not so bad, if I ignored the reality that breakfast, lunch and dinner would involve extra 'mini meetings', talking shop with people from all over the world. Regardless there were many personal highlights crammed into two full weeks.

Top of my list was the Sunday morning multi-lingual worship gathering, where we basked in his presence. God was there and we all knew it, felt it, and enjoyed it. Special.

I'm glad that I didn't have to share after that! God is an impossible act to follow. The honour fell to famed mission researcher Patrick Johnstone, and the message he brought was another major highlight. He reminded us that in our roles our primary task is to make disciples. He challenged us to consider what is Kingdom culture, and emphasized multiculturalism as the greatest challenge ahead for the global church and every agency.

one
glorious
hope

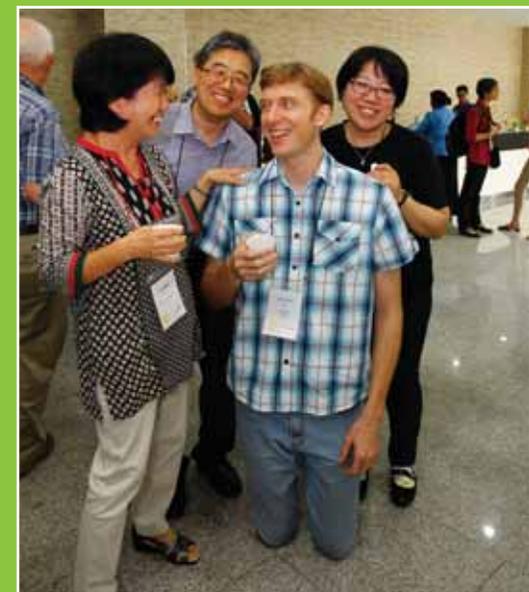
WEC's demographic would suggest we're very multicultural. With workers lining up from many more cultural backgrounds WEC teams will become even more diverse. Despite this, we're acutely aware that we have much to improve on. Without getting it right on our knees, Patrick rightly challenged, any goal together will be flawed. Lived well though, our commitment to work in multi-ethnic and multi-lingual teams is one of the most beautiful demonstrations of the gospel there is.

In describing Pentecost and the Antioch church, Patrick spoke of God's pleasure in the variety and unity that validate the gospel and enrich us with the best of each culture. Tribalism and prejudice are crucified on the cross, as are any personal or cultural agendas. This was wonderfully displayed in the business sessions too, where people were patiently listened to regarding major organisational decisions. God's Spirit spoke. We came to agreement in unity. No winners and losers. It sounds easy but it wasn't.

My lasting impression of Intercon was not the busyness, but rather the way God is leading us to be "movement orientated" as an organisation. With so many new paradigms and mission opportunities he's challenging us to be more flexible as a fellowship. I left encouraged, challenged, and inspired – and just a tiny bit tired!

Joseph is married and has four wonderful children. He speaks an obscure Turkic language, supports Liverpool and likes to keep the company of rabbits.

Joseph



Delegates having a laugh during a tea break

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Calling Kiwis to the mission of God

Missional Church and 'CQ'

Surnames Smith, Jones and Wilson once ruled the nursery. Statistics NZ recently revealed that Wang, Li and Chen top the most common surnames list for babies born in our most diverse city. Last year 15 of the top 20 surnames in Auckland were of Asian descent. Granted, certain ethnic groups have a higher proportion of common surnames. However, Massey University sociologist Paul Spoonley maintains its indicative of an increasingly multicultural New Zealand, whose largest city is closing in on being a quarter Asian.

This migration led diversity is expected to rise significantly over the next ten years. By 2023 over 500,000 Aucklanders are likely to be of Asian descent. Currently 40% of Auckland is born-overseas - one of the highest ratios for a city of its size in the world.

We've known for decades about IQ and EQ (Emotional Quotient), but what of CQ (Cultural Quotient)? Simply put, our CQ reveals how well we understand and connect with those culturally different to ourselves. With significantly greater global connectivity and mobility our CQ becomes incredibly important.

One NZ university is even restructuring its entire BA programme to incorporate compulsory courses like Global Citizenship. Reactionary PC behaviour?

Not at all. Multiple studies among big business have consistently shown that "soft skills," such as our ability to work effectively across cultures and in multi-cultural teams, is one of the most highly sought after qualities. The implications for God's people and his church are significant.

In an age where society, indeed the global church, has witnessed an explosion of diversity, most New Zealand churches continue along a well worn path. Many churches are failing to connect with the diversifying cultures of their neighbourhoods, let alone reflect this changing dynamic in their life and ministries. Before us is a divine opportunity, one that many other societies have missed – missional church hand in hand with intentional and intelligent cross-cultural engagement. Read on...



▼ inside

• Bottling the Essence of Kiwi • Put Yourself in the Picture • Missional Church Blindspot • Intercon '14

WEC International



reaching people | planting churches | mobilising for mission

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Bottling the Essence of Kiwi

Why do we think and behave the way we do? I was born this way. It's my personality. It's because I'm a woman, or rich or poor, or educated, or from the city or country...



There are a myriad of reasons for our behaviour. One of these is our culture. Anthropologist Charles Kraft defines culture as the shared assumptions, values and beliefs of a group of people which result in characteristic behaviours. Culture is often defined by our ethnicity, but can also be determined by our relationships (think of gang or church culture). Culture affects what you think, say and do. It's learned and shared and is mostly hidden below the surface, like a submerged iceberg.

Because the biggest part of culture is submerged or hidden it is often a challenge to understand it. Gallic flair, Yankee drive, Italian passion, Chinese industry, Kiwi...er...purity? For many New Zealanders, the question of national identity seems ill-defined. If you were to bottle the essence of being a New Zealander, which adjectives would you choose?

Taruni Falconer of Intercultural Dynamics says that Kiwi's social DNA can be summed up by six broad characteristics: ingenuity, fairness, restraint, modesty, earthy (a pragmatic and grounded people who are deeply connected to the land)

and informal. Hofstede, in comparing the cultural values of 50 different countries, also noted that New Zealanders come with the least "power distance." That is, a very flat hierarchy, and a view of authority that minimizes the difference between those with high and low status. For example, at this year's Parachute Music Festival, people had the opportunity to receive a piping hot sausage from none other than John Key on the BBQ.

New Zealand culture was also shown to be quite strongly independent or free-spirited. Generally speaking, while we esteem "mateship," we make our own decisions and take responsibility for ourselves. Our time and possessions are our own and children are taught from a young age to stand on their own two feet. Terms like "harden up" are emblematic of a culture that expects its citizens to refrain from snivelling and demonstrate resourcefulness with physical tasks.

As always, one's standpoint is crucial in interpreting any behaviour. Some Brazilian international students commented on how shy they find Kiwis, and how reticent we are to touch or kiss when greeting. A Chinese student revealed how difficult, even disrespectful, she finds it to call her lecturer by his first name.

There's much more to New Zealand being multicultural than a changing demographic. It requires a thoughtful and genuine posture. If we want to build bridges of understanding, across which we can share life and faith, a great place to begin is to grow our own cultural self-awareness. One of WEC's Glocal Workshops might be a good place to start.

Andrea works as an International Student Advisor at Waikato University. She is also part of a church plant initiative in north Hamilton, is married to Matt and has three sons.

Andrea

Put Yourself in the Picture

Ever thought you'd love to step out in faith to be salt and light across cultures? Keen to equip yourself for his mission with a diverse group of students and staff from across the globe?

Finding an accredited cross-cultural mission training centre can be difficult. Believe us we know! Thankfully New Zealand has such a facility. Set in the beautiful countryside just north of Hamilton, Eastwest College of Intercultural Studies is a tertiary college with a unique focus - equipping men and women to live and work as ambassadors of Christ in cross-cultural situations.



Bible-based

Like all good Bible Colleges, Eastwest College lays a solid foundation of knowledge in Biblical and Theological Studies. A thorough preparation for cross-cultural ministry demands both Biblical understanding and the skills needed to be life-long learners – wherever your feet may take you. It's a full programme and the assignments come in quick succession, so you'll find plenty of people making round the clock use of the outstanding library facilities.

The passion that I have is to bring the Bible to the people that don't have the written word. ”
Alex Jeske

Mission-focused

Because academic achievement should never be confused with equipping for ministry, all Eastwest courses are geared towards a cross-cultural context. For example, the theology course on the church might begin with our own experiences of church, but it moves on to look at church expressions in a variety of world settings. This then leads to a course on church planting in a mission situation.

Other courses cover topics like; how to learn and share in another culture, community development, working with children in crisis, world religions, mission history and cultural anthropology.

The teaching here is so specific for missions. ”
Deborah Youde

Practical

All students are part of an intercultural ministry team engaged in weekly service in the surrounding area - it's crucial to the training. With so many mission options, finding the way ahead can be daunting. A vocational advisor is also available to help you identify where and how your God-given abilities and experience can be used. Because most graduates join international teams there's no substitute for actually doing life and a whole host of practical tasks cross-culturally day to day.

I love this college because it taught me how to live in a multicultural community and how we can build our personal relationship with God. ”
Ashwin Anna

What excites me about living at this college is that you get to live with so many different nationalities and you are all in the same boat together. ”
Elizabeth Simpson

Eastwest is a great place to experience multicultural community living. It's a springboard that will launch you into the world for mission. ”
Daniel Chow

Whether it's full-time, part-time, a block course or just spare time, we can't recommend the college highly enough. So what are you waiting for? Contact the team at Eastwest (see Block Course advert inside) and find out how to get yourself in the picture!

Missional Church Blindspot

Thomas Costain, in his book 'The Three Edwards' relates an incredible story from the fourteenth century. Two brothers, Raynald and Edward, fought bitterly. Edward mounted war against Raynald, captured him and imprisoned him in Nieuwkerk Castle. Yet this was no ordinary prison cell. It was purpose built around Raynald, comfortable and left unlocked. The return of his identity was conditional on one thing – his ability to walk out of the room.



Only Raynald could not. The door was slightly narrower than usual, and Raynald was grossly overweight. All he had to do was lose weight. However, Edward had Raynald served every day with the richest foods, ale and wine. Unable to tame his natural tendencies, he grew even larger, spending the next ten years trapped in his unlocked cell only to be freed after Edward's death. By then his health was so ruined he died within a year – a prisoner of his own appetite. Put simply, to regain his true identity all Raynald had to do was stay hungry.

The church must likewise ask herself how hungry she is to experience the fullest expression of her true identity. If our hunger is misplaced, we'll not only miss what we were collectively created to be, but our self absorption will deny the lost their opportunity for salvation.

For the last 10-15 years the church has been inundated with missional literature, websites and terminology. Being missional has become a buzzword so broad that it's meaning remains unclear. I'd suggest that even it's intended meaning has a curious omission. But first let's define our terms.



Back to Beginnings

The early church described it's nature as, "one, holy, catholic and apostolic." We'll focus here on the last adjective. What does it mean for the church to be apostolic? Both the noun *apostle* and the adjective *apostolic* derive from the Greek verb *apostello*, meaning "to send." The Latin equivalent is *missio*, from which we get the English word *mission*. The apostolic church then is a missionary church.

But Jesus doesn't just send his church out on their own mission; he connects its mission to the very nature and activity of God. South African missiologist David Bosch captured it well, "Mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God." In this sense the church becomes an instrument for God's mission. There is a church because there is mission, not vice-versa. This is why we should speak of "mission" rather than "missions," because the church is to be caught up in a singular mission which begins with the triune God. This idea is known as *missio Dei*, the mission of God.

A 1998 book titled, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* was the first work to reintroduce the concept of a missional church. Darrell Guder edited this multi-authored book, which grew out of the Gospel and Our Culture Network, World Council of Churches' discussions and Lesslie Newbigin's missionary insights.

According to *Missional Church*, the American church had been tied to a "Christendom model" wherein the church focused on internal needs and maintaining its cultural privilege in society. The decline of Christendom provided the church an opportunity, they said, to rediscover its identity as a people sent by God into the world as gospel witnesses. Missional church thus emerged as an answer to the crisis facing the North American church. The answer spoke to the very self-identity and purpose and the church, and it continues to speak to us today.

Guder, who recently spoke in New Zealand, puts it this way, "It's taken us decades to realise that mission is not just a programme of the church. It defines the church as God's sent people. Our challenge today is to move from church with mission to missional church."

And it is a challenge. Many a church succumbs to a preoccupation with programmes, facilities and staff. Brian McLaren noted, "The greatest threat to world evangelism is a church preoccupied with her own existence." Missional churches however, organize their life, priorities and resources around God's worldwide mission. With the Bible in one hand and the newspaper (or smart phone) in the other they perpetually ask, "What is God calling us to be and do in our changing cultural context?"



The Cross-Cultural Challenge

There's much to applaud in a missional church mindset. For me however, the rediscovery of the mission-shaped church and her sentness remains incomplete. There seems to be, certainly in practice, a curious absence of any crossing of cultures. That is, any outwardly focused life or ministry seems to be towards the same or similar cultural groups. How can we affirm God's missionary nature in one breath yet see minimal to no cross-cultural engagement in the next? More pointedly, can anything that remains largely ethnocentric truly be missional?

The gospel is uniquely designed to be translated into every tongue, and distinctly embedded and lived out in every culture. This multicultural essence, or "translatability," sets the Christian message and our God apart. While many people, even religions, fear diversity, our God celebrates it.

Beginning most clearly with Abraham and climaxing in Jesus, God's unchanging nature has testified to this gospel, that is, "all peoples will be blessed through you" (Galatians 3:8). Since the first Christian community God has sought to send his multicultural church to every direction of the compass, including our increasingly diverse neighbourhoods.

Raynald's demise symbolises our own human frailties and myopic tendencies. We're designed to be his borderless, multi-ethnic, missional community. Mission is God's gift to the church, and as we join him in his pursuit of all peoples we'll be energised and shaped into all he's called us to be. To develop and hone our intercultural skills is both challenging and crucial. It will demand a courageous hunger, but is well worth the effort. Then we too will play our part and truly experience the joy of him being lifted up in global worship.

Forever changed by the Middle East, Eric now serves as an International Recruitment Consultant. When not hanging out with his wife and girlie tribe, he loves to run, read and follow football in the colours of Tottenham Hotspur.



Eric

SITsvacant

TEACHERS REQUIRED, NOW!!!!

Whether it's a public, English, MK or home-school, there's a huge range of teaching vacancies available. Each is connected to WEC teams and serves the long-term mission efforts in that context. And if you're not a teacher, maybe you could put this in the hands of someone who is... or maybe you could be the horse rancher we require in Central Asia!

Teachers required for all ages

(5-18) – Primary, Maths, Social Studies, Chemistry, Librarian and more

Location: Chiang Mai, Thailand

Term: 1 year

Primary and Intermediate teachers

Including specialists in English, Maths, Science and Humanities. Secondary English, Maths, History, Geography, Science subjects

Location: Central Asia & Caspian Region

Term: 1 year

Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary

English, Music, Biology and Drama

Location: Cambodia

Term: 1 year

School Chaplain and RE Teacher

French required

Location: France

Term: 1 year

Primary and Secondary

English, French, German, Geography, Music, PE

Location: Senegal

Term: 1 year

Home school tutors

Required throughout the world for periods from 6 months to a year

Location: East and Central Asia, North Africa, Mid. East

This is an English speaking school requiring PE, Music, Maths, History, IT, Chemistry, Biology and Physics teachers, as well as support staff

Location: Tirana, Albania

Term: 1 year

These are just a few examples among numerous possibilities to serve with WEC teams. For more info visit www.wecnz.org or call us at 0800 GO INTO

More Info

NZoutlook

Do you like to read a good mystery? Maybe you are afflicted by getting the latest Lee Child book and being one step ahead of Reacher? Did you find Lee's subtle and not so subtle clues in his latest novel?

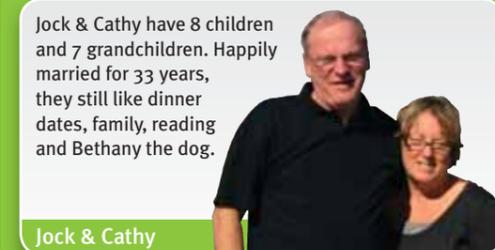


WEC's international theme this year is 'One Glorious Hope' expressing the thought of Christ in YOU, the hope of glory. It comes from Colossians 1 which is inextricably linked to 'mystery' in the Word of God. Paul, like Lee, unravels the mystery for us. He says the mystery has been hidden for ages and generations, but was revealed to us – the saints. God has chosen to make known to the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery – Christ in us. Paul calls this the Word of God in its fullness.

It means Christ in Vietnamese. Christ in Arabs. Christ in the British, Italians and the Canadians. Christ in Koreans, in Kurds and in Russians. Christ in Burkina Bey. Christ in Ethiopians, Eritreans, Jews and Palestinians. Jesus in disciples from every culture, revealing his treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

WEC seeks to disciple the nations as...

a passionate, flexible, truly international movement, so devoted to Jesus, that it empowers this generation to impact the least reached peoples of the Earth with the transforming power of the gospel.



Jock & Cathy

Jock & Cathy have 8 children and 7 grandchildren. Happily married for 33 years, they still like dinner dates, family, reading and Bethany the dog.

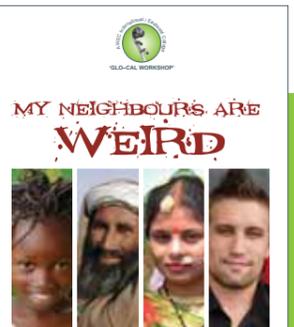


GO GLO-CAL!

"Where partnering with God is both local and global"

WEC NZ offers a range of church-based 'Glo-cal' workshops to equip you for local cross-cultural outreach to the "too - hard - box" peoples of the world.

Contact the mobilising team for details:
0800 GO INTO • mobiliser@wecnz.org



MY NEIGHBOURS ARE WEIRD



INTERACTIVE BLOCK COURSE | Children in Crisis: Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Children

A workshop-style, practical course that deals with the issues faced by children who have been sexually exploited and those trafficked into the sex industry. The course proposes holistic intervention strategies to address the children's needs and to bring healing and hope. It also looks at ways of caring for the caregivers, who frequently suffer from stress, burnout and compassion fatigue. Trainers are Graham and Becky Bee from Australia.

Dates: November 24 - December 3

Host: Eastwest College of Intercultural Studies (Gordonton, Waikato)

Cost: NZ\$265 (Accommodation fee is an additional \$125 p.p/week)

Registration: 0800 896 477 / info@eastwest.ac.nz



Short Term Mission



Been on a team mission trip somewhere, but looking for a "solo" next step? Wanting to put your skills and life experience to use? Only got a defined period of time available?

WEC teams worldwide are hunting for literally hundreds of short termers who can serve according to their gift mix for anything from 2 weeks to 12 months. Maybe you'd consider an internship with one of our international ministries. We'll walk you through the training and church partnership. You'll join with others to share Christ among some of the least reached peoples of the planet.



See www.wecnz.org for details, or arrange to speak with our team on 0800 GO INTO.