



A Perfect Cultural Mess

The most frustrating thing about being an MK (missionary kid) is not being an MK! As a child I grew up in a Central Asian country. Coming home I was uprooted from familiar surroundings, deposited back in my “home” country and expected to fit in. This doesn’t always work as well as it should. After 6 1/2 years travelling and living in politically and economically unstable places, New Zealand is a shock to my system. I haven’t seen a single gun since arriving at Auckland airport 4 years ago. I have not heard the local imam’s morning call to prayer, nor felt the ground shudder with military explosions. Outside of other MK’s I haven’t met another teenager who understands why this is strange. Most teens I meet aren’t interested in the plight of spiritually starved people in faraway places. Few care that human rights don’t exist in many nations. I even met one boy who didn’t believe countries outside of NZ existed!

So I’m here; a quiet Year 11 student with a Kiwi accent. Over time my memories, language and behaviours learned in Central Asia have faded. I am no longer expected to be different. People don’t ask about my life overseas anymore. They no longer ask how I’m fitting into NZ, as I’m supposedly an established Kiwi now.



Only, on the inside I’m not. I’m a cultural mess, a confusion between Asian and Western; Muslim influences, Western behaviours, jumbled etiquette and expectations. Mostly I’ve learned to be Kiwi, but I still make occasional mistakes; saying or doing the wrong things, that draw confused looks from those around me. “She is not an MK now”, they seem to say, “Why does she still behave differently?”

It is hard to understand where I belong and it is hard to help others understand. However, being an MK is well worth it. My view of the world is much wider and perceptive than if I’d stayed in NZ. My faith and trust in God is very personal and real. He chose my life for me. He understands better than anyone the trials of life. God has taught me that his friendship is the best friendship a girl can have.

Looking ahead, I want to become a teacher of MK’s. This dream has been on my heart since I was 12. God has led me through the joys, sorrows and incredible experiences of being an MK, so I may grow up to serve him and the next generation of MK’s.

Miriam (pseudonym) and her Kiwi family spent 6 years living in predominantly Muslim communities in Central Asia. She enjoys cooking, writing and debating.

Miriam



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Calling Kiwis to the mission of God

Reflect || Reset ▶ Relaunch

Christmas is a season of grace. In this issue we reflect on the grace experienced by four members of our WEC team. Their ages and stories are vastly different. We’re confident that each will encourage and inspire you, as you consider afresh God’s promises, his purposes, and your participation with him in mission.

It Took 20 Years

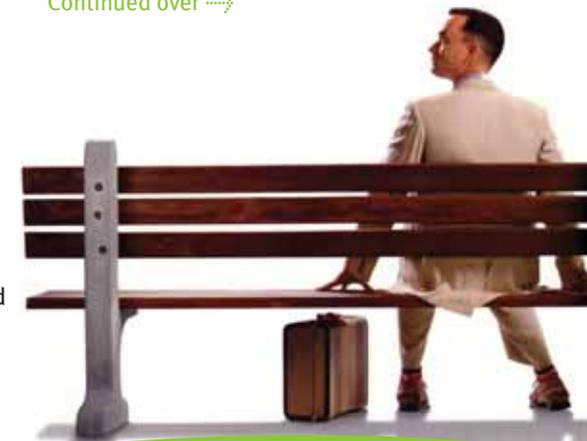
Back in 1994 Rwanda was in civil war, Nelson Mandela became President of South Africa, and Forrest Gump was released. Perhaps the most well remembered line from the movie is, “Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you’re gonna get.” The years through to 2014 were certainly a mixed box for me.

In 1994 I set off with my wife to Worldview, a WEC training college in Tasmania. These 3 years were so significant that I still mark life as being pre and post-Worldview. 1996 was momentous in that we spent the first semester in Mexico and upon our return our first son was born. It also marked my last, what I would call “good year,” until 2013. What followed were many good times but no sustained period of peace and calm.

These years saw me largely fail in ministry, face seeing my second son require a life-saving operation hours after his birth, a temporary marriage separation (followed by reconciliation), several unplanned changes in job and location, and my wife suffering increasing mental health issues. Then just as hopes were rising for a new day, the sudden and unexpected death of my wife of 15

years hit hard. Along with the dramatic change to sole parenting, and the associated grief, another new job and relocation were necessary.

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It Took 20 Years *(continued)*



In time I met and became engaged to a lovely young woman. Hope returned. Sadly this too was shattered, as my new fiancée passed away. Subsequent years were characterised by struggle, and particularly my eldest son battled with the reality of our circumstances and undiagnosed ASD.

By 2012 life was definitely improving. I married a wonderful woman given in answer to my prayer for “a beautiful woman of God, who wants to change the world with me”. A new ministry opportunity opened up and though much struggle remained for my son, the clouds were breaking. While 2013 saw the loss of my new mother in law to cancer, life for our family had improved greatly. In 2014, I returned to the path I had set out upon 20 years earlier, and we joined the team at WEC NZ as a family.

The path I have walked I would not wish upon another, but along the way I have discovered much about the nature of the Christian journey, what it is to become more Christ-like, and the character of our great God.

I have grasped how God’s goodness is not dependent on my circumstances. Saturday morning, July 7, 2007, God was good. Saturday afternoon, even after having told my 7 and 10 year old sons their mum has just died, God was still good!

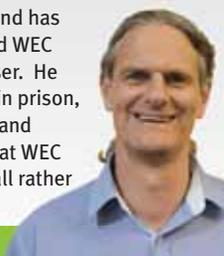
I have experienced the immensity of God’s grace. Although at times I wandered unfaithfully, he constantly remained faithful, drawing me gently back to his fold. Our God is truly the God of second (and third and ...) chances.

I have also encountered the beautiful and humbling experience of being sustained by the support and prayers of others. Even when these friends were in far flung distant places, their prayers ascended to the throne of grace and provided what we needed to get through. Without this, I have no idea how we would have survived.

As I reflect this Christmas I still have some wonderings about what we underwent. But this I know with absolute certainty, God keeps his promises! Maybe like me you have sensed the call of God at one time, but one way or another life has prevented it from being fulfilled. One of my favourite Christmas scriptures is Galatians 4:4, which begins, “In the fullness of time, God sent his son...” This phrase reminds us he is still at work even while we wait. Don’t give up! His promises will be fulfilled. Maybe the “fullness of time” for you is just around the corner. In the meantime, hold your future loosely and let God hold you tightly.



David is married to Kendal and has two teenage sons. He joined WEC earlier this year as a Mobiliser. He brings with him experience in prison, school and parish ministry (and balance to the sporting mix at WEC HQ as he follows the oval ball rather than the round one).



David

God Uses My Ordinary Life

The following are some musings from a new worker throughout her first year in the Middle East.

Several Months In

Life has settled into more of a routine. My language is improving. My conversations are getting deeper. This is great, but challenging. As conversations turn to faith, I’ve realised I don’t have the answers. Even if I had the language, I still wouldn’t have the answers. I love hanging out, but I feel as if I’m no good at these conversations! I’ve been wondering how I’ll ever be ‘useful’ here.

Two Weeks Later

God graciously reminded me that I’m here because he wants me here. It’s his work, not mine, and of course I don’t have the answers - I’m not him! All he’s asking me to do is to live an ordinary everyday life here, keep close to Him, and trust that he will use me, as and when he wants to.

“Take your ordinary every day life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work and walking-around life – and place it before God as an offering.” Romans 12:1 - The Message

Rivers of Life

As I was preparing to come to this desert land, God spoke to me through this verse. “For I am about to do something new...I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.” Isaiah 43:19

When it eventually rained, the results of 30 minutes of rain were amazing! Within a week, the desert wasteland I usually walk in was green. It hasn’t rained since, but there is still a fine carpet of ‘grass’ where the river flowed so briefly. I am reminded of the huge difference even a little water can make. Dormant seeds suddenly spring to life.

A Surprise - One Year In

A few days ago, an older local woman came to visit me! Not a big deal back home, but in this culture, the ‘lower status’ person always visits the ‘higher status’ person. Not having to worry about hosting had been fine with me. So when she announced she was coming, I went into a bit of a spin! I don’t have coffee cups! I don’t know how to make local coffee! It took me almost 3 hours to shop and prepare for a 45 minute visit.



It was well worth it. Her honouring me as a friend and an equal signified a change in our relationship. Despite going through a tough time, she decided that I was trustworthy enough to share deeply with. My language limitations remain, yet I was able to pray with and encourage her. I’ve realised I’m beginning to have a place here.

I can’t convince her to see that it’s Jesus that she really needs. But I can continue to trust that he’ll use my ordinary, everyday life – my language learning, visiting, being a friend life - to show her Jesus. That’s something we can all do.

Hannah (pseudonym) is a young Kiwi teacher finding her way in a new Arab culture. A lover of coffee, tramping and people, she dreams of a vibrant church in this desert land.



Hannah

A 50 Year Investment

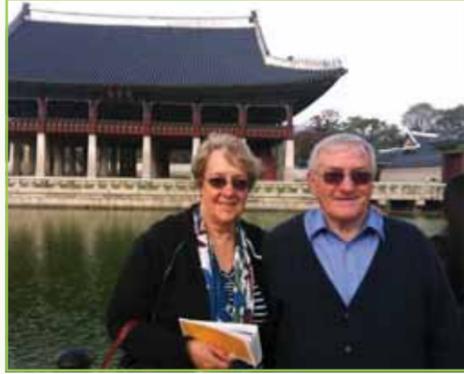
First Steps in Obedience

I was converted in Christchurch on March 20th, 1960. Within a week I was baptised and introduced to the ministry of Open Air Campaigners. Neville Winger, a staunch supporter of OAC and WEC, often said that he respected WEC missionaries because of their faith and for their sharing of God's word wherever they were invited to speak. I too made a promise to the Lord early on, that I would never leave a meeting without sharing something from God's word with my listeners.

God led me to spend two years at WEC Missionary Training College in Tasmania (Worldview), where I grew in my ability to study and ultimately teach the Bible. These were very formative years for me, and laid the foundation for what has become an enjoyable teaching ministry over the years.

While still a student at Worldview, God spoke to me through Scripture in regard to working amongst the Chinese. However, my "call" to Chinese ministry was not widely embraced. It was 1964 and for various reasons WEC's ministry in Taiwan had effectively been closed down. A decision had been made that WEC would no longer focus on Chinese ministry, instead directing anyone with that vision to other agencies.

What was WEC NZ to do with someone like myself? I was convinced that my call was to WEC and equally clear that I was called to Chinese ministry. In the course of the discussions surrounding my acceptance into WEC, the then director Ivor Davies suggested that I retire to another room while the Board members earnestly sought the Lord in prayer. After a lengthy time of prayer I was called back in to face the board and their decision. Still etched into my mind are the words that Ivor Davies spoke to me on behalf of the NZ Board. "When you left the room the majority of the board members were not in favour of accepting you for Chinese ministry. However, after our time of prayer we have unanimously agreed that you should be accepted into WEC for Chinese ministry". A letter was sent to the International Director (Norman Grubb), and in a few months I was on my way to Taiwan, at the age of 23, to study and then teach students in Mandarin.



Worthwhile Investments

We had seven challenging but wonderful years in Singapore, followed by two years pastoring a Chinese Church in Melbourne. Then came an invitation to join the teaching staff at Worldview in 1990. Again the timing and the particulars of the invitation were so obviously of the Lord. We so enjoyed the next 12 years of our involvement in training missionaries. We learned another key biblical principle, that of multiplying your ministry by investing in others. Certainly our time at Worldview was one such investment.

From Worldview we were asked to return to NZ in 2002 to become the WEC NZ Directors. After six years, and at the age of 65, what was asked of us had been achieved. So we stepped down from leadership, but continued involvement in and with WEC, particularly in the Pacific.

More recently we have visited Korea once or twice a year to help a WEC initiative called IMM (International Mission Mobilisation). This exciting new initiative aims to mobilise new missionaries from countries and spheres outside the usual recruitment "pool."

As part of this, we teach the "Perspectives on the World Christian Movement" course to international students in Korea, once or twice a year. The students regularly testify to the impact this course has had on their lives and worldview. Considering virtually all these students are, or will be, Christian leaders in their own countries, it's another strategic investment.



Looking Back

Over the years there has been many a tough decision or season. At times I have cried, "Enough!" But the Lord has been very gracious, even accommodating himself to my restricted understanding of him. Thankfully he has lovingly moved me on in my spiritual growth, and in the quality of my service to him.

Looking back we have seen many "seasons of ministry." I never imagined that my retirement years could be so fruitful. I believe a key challenge for those of us in our latter years is to find ministries in which, and people in whom God would have us invest in. What could God be asking of you in this season?

Maurice has been married to Ruth for 42 years. They love spending time with their three children and six grandchildren. He enjoys riding to Lake Karapiro, walking around Cambridge, solving puzzles, and frequenting second hand shops.

Maurice



Prepare for Change

Then in 1972 I returned to NZ and married Ruth (Davies), a fulfilment of a promise given seven years before. Once more I learned to trust God, who works patiently without frenzied manoeuvring on our part. Early in our marriage we learned from Isaiah 1:19, that our stated willingness must be coupled with obedience. At that time, to obey was a commitment to open a hostel for international students studying at the University in Auckland. This became an eleven-bedroom joint ministry venture between WEC NZ and our sending church.

After four good years the Lord again spoke to us saying only that we should, "Prepare for change." By faith we relocated all our students to alternative accommodation that we were comfortable with. Upon closure of the hostel I said to Ruth, "Do you know what the Lord is saying?" "Yes!" was her reply. "So do I," I said. I took two pieces of paper, and said, "You write on your piece what you think he's saying, and I will do the same." We swapped papers and there it was, "Singapore." There were moments of frustration, a season of waiting in submission to our spiritual leadership, a year of almost standing still, and then finally a message from the International office of WEC informing us to, "please go to Singapore".

Our vision was to promote missionary involvement amongst Singaporean churches, and to actively recruit into WEC missionaries from Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong. During those years both Ruth and I were also given the opportunity, sponsored by a local Singaporean Church, to study at Trinity Theological College.

SITsvacant

Vet

Location: Chad

Vet required to work amongst the nomadic peoples of Eastern Chad. Both short and long-term opportunities exist.

Term: Anywhere from 1 month to 3 years.

Mechanic

Location: Central Asia.

Help to train locals as you repair cars and farm vehicles.

Term: 1 year

Teachers

Location: Worldwide

Looking ahead to the next northern hemisphere school year starting Sept 2015, a number of associated MK and International Schools around the world have needs in most curriculum subjects and support areas.

Term: 1 year

Performing Artists and Crew

Location: Western Asia

Musicians, dancers, actors, street performers as well as support crew are required for this established inter-agency creative arts outreach team.

Term: 2 months or long term

Poultry Farmer

Central Asia – a newly established poultry farm requires an experienced poultry farmer to lead this venture. The farm will serve as a training model to locals which they can then follow.

Term: 6 months

Church Planters

Around the world people are still waiting to hear the good news of the gospel. We have teams worldwide looking for more dedicated disciple makers to join them. Take your skills and a passion of Jesus.

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

The theme of this edition is reflections in mission. A reflection can be a way to look at ourselves and our experiences in God. The clarity of the image changes depending upon whether we look into a clean, polished mirror, or a lake full of ripples. When you look at yourself in "the mirror of reflection," what do you see?

Many people see a distorted image. Some see an image they dislike – even despise. But Paul writes that each of us should have a sober [sound, sensible] judgment of ourselves, according to the measure of faith God has given us (Rom 12:3ff). Some are inclined to judge themselves harshly, with no element of faith or awareness of their individual gifting and place of service. While we should not judge ourselves too high, in our experience many people in Kiwi culture judge themselves too low.

So have another look at yourself in reflection – and ensure you mix in the element of faith that Paul requires. According to that measure, who are you and what might you become? We are not all the same. If you can see amazing potential in others, can you see it in yourself? Exercise faith and careful judgement. Maybe the Holy Spirit will surprise you.



Jock & Cathy have 8 children and 8 grandchildren. Happily married for 34 years, they still like dinner dates, family, reading and Bethany the dog.



Jock & Cathy

Short Term Mission

Is mission just for the young? Sometimes it seems society says we have a use by date. But God doesn't.



In recent years we have seen a number of people use their retirement for kingdom purposes. Not satisfied with the golf course or knitting circle people have used their skills and experience to enhance the work of God around the world.

Let's discuss the possibilities for you to serve alongside a WEC team. We'll help you navigate your way, providing support and training.

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



Training for Mission

Is God challenging you to step out and serve him in another culture? By investing first in training, you gain the skills to last the distance.

Eastwest College offers accredited 1-year Certificate and 2-year Diploma courses, to equip men and women to live and work as ambassadors of Christ in cross-cultural situations. Contact the team below and put yourself in the picture.



www.eastwest.ac.nz | 0800 896 477 | info@eastwest.ac.nz



GO GLO-CAL!

WEC NZ offers a range of GLO-CAL Workshops to equip your church for cross-cultural mission.

Check the website for details, or contact the Mobilising Team and book yours early!

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

