

# What a year...

I recently returned from a year in Guinea Bissau, West Africa.

Before I left, I thought I'd struggle with the physical, practical aspects of daily life but I ended up with a higher level of comfort than I expected, which weirdly took some getting used to. I was looking forward to the work I would be doing but I also ended up doing many things that didn't feel quite so 'me'.

I spent the first four months absolutely exhausted, as well as getting sick every couple of months. This meant turning down opportunities to mix with the local people. Language learning continued to be a struggle. I did improve but never to the extent where I could truly explain my faith to someone. And then there was the sometimes disorienting experience of having to field up to five different cultures in every conversation. At times it was a good laugh, but when something you say casually causes offence because of cultural misunderstandings on a daily basis, it's tough.

Don't misunderstand me – I did have some amazing opportunities, and meet some wonderful people. It's easier to offer crazy anecdotes and victorious testimonies, but life isn't all entertaining stories, eh?



Abby, a teacher from West Auckland, spent last year in Guinea Bissau working with the diverse WEC team there, as part of her mission journey.

Abby

It's all very well being a missionary and 'serving God' when it's fun, challenging, and what you expect, even if you're out of your comfort zone. But when EVERYTHING is challenged you really find out who you are and what kind of ground your faith is planted in!

Because of the cultural differences in church and prayer styles, it was hard to connect with God in a way that felt normal or helpful. Many times throughout the year I questioned why God asked me to come at all.

I still have those questions. But I have to trust God. He knows the Guinean people, he knows me, and he's big enough to hold on to my questions and help me along the way.

I can also see him in this last year; not in ways I expected to, but in other ways... The way I relax is with a good book. During the year, EVERY TIME I ran out of books, someone just 'happened' to send me some, or just 'happened' to offer me a couple... every single time. Not big, in the 'let's save the world' picture... but in my life, a blessing. He also gave me a friend who I could be completely myself with – the good, the bad, and the downright ridiculous – who is now a friend for life. A massive blessing.

So do I have amazing miracle-stories to tell you? Nope, not really.

Do I know what this last year was all about? Nope.

Would I do it again? Well, I'd rather not go through the rough stuff again, but... yes.

Why? Because if God asked me to be there, then it was the best place for me. And hopefully, one day, maybe even soon, I'll understand more about what the year was all about. But till then, I'll keep loving God, being his daughter, and doing whatever I'm doing, with him.

Calling courageous Kiwis to the mission of God

SUMMER: 2011



## Great Expectations

Charles Dickens wrote about them and all of us have them, expectations that is. One New Zealand city even has had as its slogan, "More than you expect". Can you guess which city?

When it comes to missions and missionary life we sometimes hear people returning from the field saying, "It's not what I expected." Or "It's not how I expected God to use me." There are a whole range of questions and considerations around this idea of expectations. Often our expectations aren't met. Maybe we were too idealistic, maybe our expectations were reasonable but events conspired against us. How do we understand God in these events?

When people want to join WEC, as part of their orientation, we look at what kinds of reasonable expectations a person can have for their first two to three years on the field. Things like; a good grasp of the language and culture, a satisfying ministry/role, positive team relationships, a broader understanding of what God is doing in your country of service. We also want to see people go out who bring to life an acknowledgment of personal inadequacy and God's sufficiency, and a compassionate awareness of human frailty in self and others. This enables us to not only survive but really grow when things don't go as we expect.

In this issue of GOinto we hear from a couple ministering through rock music who say Muslims are not who you expect. We listen to Jason Mandyk of Operation World on expectations and



trends. And we talk with our Candidate Directors to see what kind of things WEC is expecting from people interested in long term mission work and when one might expect to be ready to go.

We hope you enjoy the read and learn 'more than you expect'.

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reaching people planting churches



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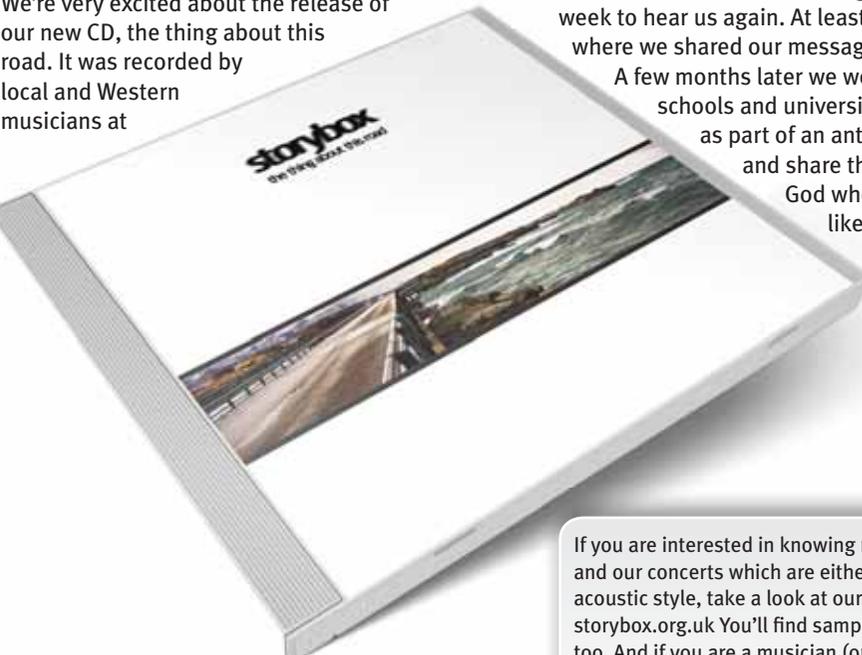
# Rock music tells the story

Do you have a stereotypical image of a Muslim person? A bearded man, a turbaned Bedouin on a camel or a burka-clad woman? If so, you may think that rock music would have limited effectiveness in communicating the gospel!

But in reality there are a huge number of Muslims in the world today who are nothing like these stereotypes. They are young, urbanised and, even if they don't speak much English, are still fans of Coldplay, U 2 and Michael Jackson – as well as their local pop stars of course. If you visit various 'translate the lyrics' websites, you can find plenty of non-English speakers debating the deeper meanings of English-language pop song lyrics.

It is these sort of people that our band Storybox has been trying to reach in Turkey and surrounding nations for the past few years. Using a mix of local-language cover songs, well known Western pop tunes and a good sprinkling of our own New Testament-inspired storytelling music, the band has played to thousands of (mostly) young people.

We're very excited about the release of our new CD, the thing about this road. It was recorded by local and Western musicians at



commercial standards so we hope it will open even more doors with the media. Featuring a mix of pop styles, many of the songs tell New Testament-inspired stories – including four that retell the story of the Prodigal Son. The liner explains something of the spiritual significance of the tale along with a link to a website where people can find out more. We tried to pitch it such that the Gospel message is clear, but not offensive in a country which has many misconceptions about the Christian faith.

What has been the response to the music? Well, a few months ago, we had the opportunity to play on a university campus. Universities here are totally secular, and nothing religious (regardless of the flavour) is tolerated. We couldn't say much to them about Jesus there, but we invited those who were interested to come out to a nightclub later in the week to hear us again. At least 50 came to the gig where we shared our message with them freely.

A few months later we were able to play in schools and universities in Kazakhstan as part of an anti-drugs campaign and share the message of a God who loves his people like a father. This was in public during Ramadan!

If you are interested in knowing more about Storybox and our concerts which are either rock or more acoustic style, take a look at our website: [www.storybox.org.uk](http://www.storybox.org.uk) You'll find samples of the music there too. And if you are a musician (or know one) who would like to tour with us for a couple of weeks (or longer) please do get in touch.

# Beyond 9/11

Jason Mandryk, author of the latest edition of Operation World, reflects on current trends.

The last edition of *Operation World* came out just days before 9/11. In a few horrifying minutes, we recognized the world would never be the same again. Nine years later we can say that both everything and nothing has changed.

Everything has changed in that the way we view the world is very different; plus there is an growing list of things we did not predict – US and British troops occupying Afghanistan and Iraq for years on end, the Chinese economic juggernaut... Other changes have greater eternal significance. Among them:

- **The speed that some historically Christian countries have become secular** in society and culture, including the UK, and Australia. I suspect we have an impending similar crisis in the USA, South Korea, and South Africa.
- **The rise of a strident, militant atheism.** That this has coincided with increasing secularisation and a declining number of evangelicals is no accident.
- **The depth of syncretism existing throughout Christianity.** This is not just Christians visiting the witch doctor, but also Christianity that is as much about success, consumerism and buffet-style personal spirituality as it is about being disciples of Jesus.
- **The rate at which the missionary presence has shifted from being mainly Western to being overwhelmingly Majority World.** This has come from the explosive growth of missionary sending from Latin America, Asia and Africa, and also from the emergence of a tent-making force from developing world countries such as the Philippines.

- **An increase in religious fundamentalism and persecution.** Not just under Muslim and Communist/ atheist regimes, but among Hindus, Buddhists and, dare I say, even Christians. Dangerous forms of radical fundamentalism perpetrate oppression and violence.
- **The continued growth of the church in China.** While this is slowing slightly, Christianity's influence and acceptability is increasing significantly. The Chinese church now faces the challenge of retaining its youth – a generation that has grown up in the faith is being tempted away by materialism.
- **The tide of humanity called immigration** has already transformed the face of Europe, North America and Australia in many ways, both good and bad. This is a mere shadow of what is to come.

In the midst of all this, it's apparent that those things which matter most are, by and large, unchanged.

- Although the percentage of humanity that has heard the Good News has increased, the total number of unevangelised increases every day – 1.75 billion and growing.
- Although there are churches in tribes which had no Christians nine years ago, there are still people groups where the gospel has had little impact.
- The number who have come to faith in Jesus is greater than ever before, and so is the challenge to disciple them.
- The Great Commission is vaster than even the statistics can communicate. Evangelisation is not just using Tracts or the Jesus movie. It involves making disciples, transforming world-views, changing communities...

I can only conclude that, even while the world changes, its deepest needs remain the same. How we might approach the task will shift and morph, but the task itself does not.

Were the church to grasp the Bible in one hand and Operation World in the other, and truly devote itself to prayer and action, we might see great advances for the kingdom of God in our generation.

Ever made a New Year resolution to pray more?  
Here's your chance – buy a copy of the new Operation World.  
Order by contacting us or your local bookshop.

# Mission Expectations

## What does WEC expect from its missionaries or 'wanna-be' missos?

WEC are looking for courageous Kiwis with a hardy personality. By this we mean people who have certain positive traits that will enable them to serve God joyfully and be productive under difficult situations. You need to be able to retain and maintain emotional, physical and spiritual health when under stress.

### What might some of those traits be?

- **Generosity;** A hardy person lives life richly – giving love, energy, resources, time.
- **Responsibility;** S/he understands that wherever they are they are making something better or worse.
- **Perspective;** The hardy person is not narcissistic, knowing 'the plot doesn't revolve around me; the story doesn't begin or end with me.'
- **Hope/Joy;** The hardy person is not habitually pessimistic, critical, or easily discouraged. Their hope frees them to experience joy in daily life.
- **Flexibility;** A hardy person is able to enjoy second choice.
- **Use of Time;** A hardy person is a self-motivated starter when necessary. They can reframe boredom into productivity.
- **Support;** They can develop healthy relationships in a group.
- **Others;** sense of humour, learns from mistakes, can face confrontation, is a learner, accountable to others, demonstrates gratitude, self-knowledge, and resourcefulness...

### How do you screen for those traits and what other things are you looking for?

WEC is quite unusual in that we have a 12 week orientation for all applicants. Through a variety of learning opportunities we desire not only to screen applicants or candidates but to help you find your fit within WEC. At the end of Candidate Orientation we envision that you will have a clear sense of where and how you will serve, be convinced that WEC is right for you, and have a growing understanding of how WEC works worldwide. It is a two-way experience, us getting to know you and you getting to know us.

### What other things are you looking for?

We are also looking to see you bond with WEC, demonstrating a personal commitment to our objectives and living out our principles and core values. During the 12 weeks we will work with you to ensure that you have the necessary relational, cultural and stress management skills to function well in an international team. We will also expect you to display the necessary character and ministry capabilities to contribute to the objectives of WEC.

# Skills & Mission: what does God want?

So you've got skills, a qualification, work experience, a trade, a degree. You're dozing in church and then a lightning bolt appears with the question; "How could I use my skills for God in missions?"

Good question, but is it the right question?

First up it seems that God doesn't care much about your skills. Instead he seems to be looking for poverty of spirit, meekness, righteousness, mercy, purity, and peacemaking (Matthew 5) and love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5). If you are not cultivating these, then all the skills, qualifications and capacities are, well, without meaning to be harsh, pretty much useless in God's economy.

But, I hear you say, these apply to all Christians; surely there are some specifics that apply to missions?

There are.

The first is passion and ability to share Christ – in words.

There's been a rumour doing the rounds for the last 200 years that St Francis of Assisi said, "Preach the gospel; when necessary use words." At first glance it appears as if St Francis is belittling the speaking of the gospel in words. As it turns out he didn't actually say that. Instead he told his friars not to preach in the open air unless they had received the proper permission to do so. Then he added, "Let all the brothers, however, preach by their deeds." St Francis himself was an open air preacher.

"Preach the gospel, when necessary use words" is like saying 'Tell me your phone number; if necessary, use digits.' It's pretty hard to tell someone your phone number if you don't use the digits from 0 to 9, and it's pretty hard to share the gospel with someone without using words.



### Practically how does the orientation work?

Our time together in a more structured way is normally between the hours of 9am and 3pm Monday to Friday, however, there will also be some evening and weekend ministry involvement. All candidates are expected to live on-site and comfortable, fully furnished units are provided.

### What should I do if I want to join?

You must show clear evidence of being born again by the Holy Spirit and demonstrate a sincere commitment to serve the Lord. You also need a comprehensive knowledge of the Bible and evidence of application of biblical principles in everyday life. If you have not completed Bible training you will need to commit to completing this required training within five years of arrival on the field.

You should have achieved a good standard of proficiency in your profession and be actively participating in the life of your church and frequently sharing your faith with others.

If you are interested please contact the national office and arrange to meet with our Candidate Directors for a preliminary interview.

**Candidate Orientation dates for 2011 are;** 21 February – 13 May, and 11 July – 30 September

Makes sense. There is only so much you can assume from someone's actions. And there are biblical examples and commands. Have a look at Romans 10, 2 Timothy 4:2, Psalm 40:9, Matthew 4:17, 1 Peter 1:25, 1 Corinthians 4:5, just to name a few.

It's important to understand that the idea of preaching simply means opening your lips and speaking truth. It has nothing to do with the format of the speaking event (in a church or on a street corner) and nothing to do with how many people are involved (2 or 2000).

God wants people who can 'preach', that is speak with others about Christ. This applies to all Christians but to be a missionary you really need to be all over this one. Have a go – practise, practise, practise.

The second set of skills required are those that you may use to serve your host community. They can be many and varied – teaching, mechanics, medicine, journalism... and the list goes on. These skills may also be your way of getting the necessary permits to stay in a country.

In this sense there's only one way to see what kind of fit is possible when it comes to finding a 'skill fit', and that is to talk with people from your church and mission agencies who can guide you a bit.

So the short answer is: Yes, God can use your skills in mission. But keep your priorities – first seek God's kingdom, secondly learn to communicate Christ, and then look for a fit between your skills and ministry positions.

See [Some key questions](#) ►

# SITsvacant

Gambia – Nurses, Midwives and Medical student electives

Minimum period: 6 months

**Description:** Are you in a medical profession and looking for an opportunity to have a glimpse of the "real" Mission life?

**Qual's:** Doctors, nurses and midwives, medical students – especially those with a long term interest in mission.

Central Asia – Student

Minimum period: 5 months

**Description:** To learn the local language at the University and make contacts with students, sharing your life, values and faith with them, as part of a team reaching out to students at the university.

**Qual's:** No specific qualification required other than the ability to make friends cross culturally.

Russia – Football (soccer) coach

**Description:** A football (soccer) coach is needed to start a children's/youth club in villages in rural Russia. The football program will be used as a way to evangelize and disciple the children and youth, integrate them with the local church, and provide an alternative to drinking and drugs.

**Qual's:** 1. Coaching experience (preferably with some sort of certification for the benefit of the authorities) 2. Previous experience working with children and youth.



WEC is serving in a huge variety of church planting focused ministries and professions in over 70 countries. These are just a few random examples among numerous other possibilities. Visit [www.wecnz.org](http://www.wecnz.org) and click on Opportunities to search out more. Better yet, pick up the phone, call 0800 GO INTO, and get the full picture.

[More Info](#)

# NZoutlook

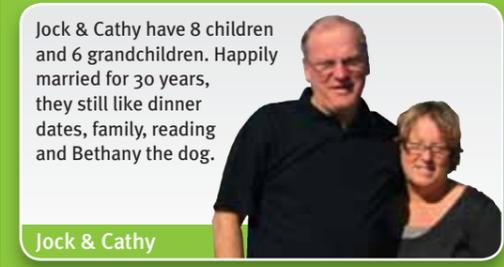
Outside our windows is a maize field. It was planted by a huge machine guided by GPS. Then as there was gentle rain, it sprouted furiously and grew and grew. Later it was sprayed and fertilised by another giant machine. It grows so quickly I feel like I can almost see it grow overnight.

Of course, it slows in dry times and can wither in times of drought. But when rain comes maize leaps upwards at a furious pace nurtured by the fresh water and the subterranean water in the soil below.

God is a farmer. He looks for those who will farm his farm and grow his crop. He is looking for those who will break up hard ground. He is looking for sowers. He looks for those who will tend and nurture emerging plants, and for those who will ultimately reap the harvest – reaping sometimes in ones and twos, but also in the great binding of an abundant crop. He looks for everything that supports farming – like an RD1 store.

But it all depends on rain. God's Spirit brings the rain. He is responsible for this part. We are utterly dependent upon God for his rain. Good farmers do their job, but ultimately trust God for the rain to complete the task.

God's call to work the farm has not changed. God's church is to farm and support that crop. Huge tracts of our global world are only waste as there are no farmers for the Lord there; or the numbers available to farm are completely inadequate for the vast landscape available. We need planters, intercessors who break up the ground, those who can plough, weeders, those who can nurture and oppose bugs and pestilence, gatherers and harvesters, and everything in between. Let's farm and be ready for rain when God sends it.



Jock & Cathy have 8 children and 6 grandchildren. Happily married for 30 years, they still like dinner dates, family, reading and Bethany the dog.

Jock & Cathy

# Some key questions

## Hasn't God given me these skills so that I can use them for him?

Yes, and no? You are not the centre of the universe – sorry to break it to you. God has stuff he's doing and it includes you, but you may need to be flexible and might need to be prepared to give up some of what you have, or learned, or loved, to be part of something greater – God's kingdom. But there is no waste with God. Your skills are likely to be used in ways you never imagined; sometimes all of them together no matter how diverse your skills may be!

## What about the poor, social justice and the environment?

Absolutely. We too are passionate about the use of resources, the power of disparities, the bringing of God's reign to earth in it's fullness. So it becomes a strategic choice. What are you going to do about these issues? For us we say we'll bring the gospel, see groups of locals form into churches and help catalyse them to start addressing these issues, from the inside out, in sustainable, local ways. Others choose to do it differently, and that's cool.

## What happens if there are no opportunities to use my skills in a particular country?

Be flexible, learn a new skill, be prepared to do anything to help and serve and share the gospel. But don't whatever you do, give up. Push open the doors.





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