



Tooling up for mission

My father was a carpenter, and an artist with glass, aluminium, wood and, my personal favourite, copper. He made windows and baptismal fonts for churches, and ornate backgrounds for restaurants and bars. He sand-blasted glass to make beautiful picture windows and mirrors. I especially enjoyed watching when he took a sheet of flat copper and beat a picture out of it through thousands of tiny taps with a hammer. Different tools for different materials and different designs.

Living out our faith in a way that meaningfully communicates its essence resembles the many diverse jobs my father did. We know that communicating our faith requires more than just one method and one script to work from. So much depends on our hearers and observers. What is their experience of life and faith? What ideas do they already have (fact or fiction) about following Jesus? What is happening socially and politically in their country and community?

Our goal at Eastwest college is to help students develop insights, both personal and cultural, and develop skills useful to them in cross-cultural service. Foundational biblical input will always be essential, but understanding the cultural bias with which we can sometimes read scripture releases us to share the truth less hindered by our own starting point and more attuned to the starting point of others.

With that in mind, Eastwest College's training is more of an equipping and resourcing of our graduates than producing "one size fits all" workers, who do things the same way in each circumstance. As a team of experienced workers ourselves, we understand the value of developing skills like discipleship, language learning, spiritual warfare, community development and others, as tools to have on hand for the many situations they will encounter. God is a creative God and our graduates will go on to serve as business people, church-planters, development workers, medical personnel, teachers, and some will even be street performers and musicians sharing the gospel in artistic and creative ways.

As my dad's workshop resonated with the sounds of tapping copper, cutting glass and the smell of varnish and sawdust, so there is the noise of singing, talking and praying, and actions of truth, love, justice and challenge occurring as Christians serve all over the world. Adding to the skills of each worker before they go out is our vision. Hearing of the impact they have made and seeing the hand of God at work in their settings is our delight.

Martin was born in Ireland and has been in cross-cultural Christian work for two decades. Having previously served for three years on staff at Eastwest College, he returned to the Principal role in 2014. His passion is to see Christians equipped to serve in cross-cultural and challenging contexts.

Martin



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Summer BBQs and Fruit Salad

When travelling, a common topic of conversation is food – the good, the novel and, well, those other stories. Often a highlight for Kiwis is the array of tropical fruits readily available elsewhere. Things that are not so easy to enjoy back home. Combined they make for delicious breakfasts, snacks, drinks, desserts and accompaniments. These gastronomic delights also make for wonderful illustrations.

Mixed together, varied looking and tasting flavours resemble life in a multi-cultural team of diverse personalities and backgrounds, working together for something beyond their individual selves.

Here at WEC, that's the way we like to do things. This issue is a bit of a fruit salad; stories from around the world combining to declare the praises of their Creator at work.

No summer BBQ is complete without some meat. So there's plenty to chew on; our Feature Page story is one to savour – the unexpected development of a deaf church from the seed of martyrs.

Together we can give thanks for the past year and pray for the people involved. We can even ask God what our part might be for the New Year ahead. Grab a seat, a cool drink and dive on in!



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Spreading the Gospel where it's thinnest

Around the World



WEC's primary goal could be summarised as, "to spread the gospel where it's thinnest." Catchy, but easier said than done. The least-reached peoples of the world remain largely resistant to the Gospel, challenges abound in difficult locations, risk and sacrifice are commonplace, and fruit...well let's just say that some WEC'ers develop a robust theology of suffering and the sovereignty of God.

BUT, the promise of Scripture that His church would be built remains. Despite the challenges, faithful and courageous men and women are seeing breakthroughs. One of our privileges in the home office is hearing these encouraging stories – a few of which we'd like to pass on to you. Remember, as prayerful supporters, you too are part of the story.

Faith Goal Progress

Around 18 months ago, half way into our eight-yearly faith goals, we had begun to reach 21 new people groups, were working in 89 new church planting locations, and had added 364 new long-term workers. The previous 10 years have seen over 200 new churches planted. Exciting eh?!

These figures represent real people encountering a real God. Check out these story briefs...

An East Asian team, at work in a highly restrictive area, offered prayer to a person in great need. God graciously healed. One thing led to another and townsfolk, even monks, lined up in their droves for prayer. God continued to move, healing many. A powerful gospel looks like good news!

A South Asia team has recently taken up the goal of uploading a short evangelistic video each week. The last six videos have been viewed over 25,000 times in this largely unevangelised country.

Several of our Middle Eastern teams continue assisting Syrian refugees. More recently they've been involved with longer-term social and educational needs. Forty children went through a life changing trauma recovery course. Nine year old Lucy's mother was so impressed with what her non-communicative daughter had expressed visually, that she apologised for her initial complaints.

A North African bush region is experiencing great openness. Through health and literacy courses,

alongside community gardens and fencing projects, many villages are being transformed.

In West Asia, two workers praying outside every mosque in their city trusted God to create a spiritual hunger in one particular imam through the reading of Jesus' life in the Qur'an. When other team members returned, they discovered their prayers had been answered. The imam and his wife are now engaged in a Discovery Bible study exploring the identity of Christ.

Local Cross-cultural Advance

As mission has become truly global, God continues to wonderfully move the nations around, providing unprecedented opportunities among migrants, international students and refugees. WEC Branches in the UK, Australia, NZ and others, are seeing great fruit in café, bookshop, university and English club ministries.

Mobilising for mission is an unheralded growth area in WEC. New mobilising teams have been established in Thailand, the Philippines, Korea, Vietnam, Egypt, North East India, the Gulf, the Spanish speaking Americas, the Pacific and shortly Eastern Europe and Sub-Sahara Africa. Many other existing teams have been intentionally training and mobilising new cross-cultural workers from within their own fields of ministry.

So despite the difficulties and often "impossible" scenarios, God is busy utilising his whole church to spread the whole Gospel among the whole world. Ready to explore your involvement?

When not exploring mission issues and options over coffee, Eric loves to hang out with his girlie whanau and follow football in the colours of Tottenham Hotspur.

Eric



More than an OE

I arrived home in August 2014 from a year studying at Capernwray Hall in England, followed by a month in Kenya and a month in the Philippines. I didn't know what the next step was, but I knew God had placed cross cultural mission on my heart. After testing the waters in several places, I talked to WEC about an opportunity they were advertising to mobilise young people for cross cultural mission in the UK. I heard God saying to me, "If you go to somewhere unreached, that's excellent; one you, serving me where the need is great. But, what if you could inspire and encourage fifty more young people to do exactly the same thing?" From that moment on I caught a passion to do just that.

Since arriving in England in June, I've been meeting young people through camps and conferences. I'm feeling so encouraged! Many people I've met have a burning desire to serve the Lord with all that they are. Looking ahead I'll be going into universities and schools, encouraging people to become involved in cross cultural ministry, on campus and abroad.

God is continually revealing His heart for the nations to me. I pray He will use what I say to impassion the hearts of my generation.

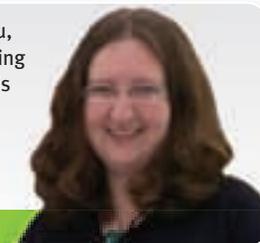
I'm trusting many will answer the call to go and tell precious people of a God who loves them. Every day, all over this beautiful and diverse world, people suffer and die without knowing their Saviour. My prayer is that this reality will break the hearts of my generation and that we will rise up and go; bold and unafraid, Christ in and with us, to fulfil his call upon our lives. God doesn't need us to do this for Him, but He wants us to be a part of His story. He invites us to step out of ourselves; our ordinary, comfortable lives, so that He may use us to do extraordinary things for Him.

I've found, the more I step out for God, the more I begin to hear what He is saying to me, through His word and through prayer. I'm beginning to see changes in myself that can only be Him in me, and it's wonderful. In the world's eyes, I'm a strange, 24 year old Kiwi girl with not much to qualify her for success. Although my CV is not flash, God takes what I offer and in return gives me this opportunity to be part of His story.

My take on Mark 10:29-30, verses that challenge and encourage me, is that anything we might give up for God is nothing to compare to what we gain. History has proven this to be true and I'm certain it will be for you too, if you courageously step forward. What might 2016 hold for you?

Bethany hails from Timaru, enjoys music and embracing the British lifestyle. She is serving the WEC team mobilising for mission amongst young adults.

Bethany



How can they hear?

The most exciting thing for me has been to see a deaf church in Turkey grow to maturity. The group began organically and faced significant testing early on, but the Holy Spirit was guiding them both directly and through wise counsel of mature believers. This forced the body to become a unified whole.



In the last two years, we have seen accelerated maturing among our deaf brothers and sisters. They now have a national leader with a God-given motivation to evangelise his deaf countrymen. He regularly teaches them and encourages them to share with their friends and family. It seems that everyone has grown to a point of learning to serve one another joyfully, in worship to the Lord. So how did it all begin?

Martyrs Provide Unexpected Seed

Several years ago we never imagined a deaf church. The believers were still in shock after the torture and killings of three local church leaders. It was challenge enough simply holding them together through the fear and desperation. Into this dark time came a spark of light: a text message from a man named Ahmet. We met him at a tea house.

We were surprised. Ahmet was deaf. We didn't know sign language, but he knew how to read and write, and he was hungry to hear about Jesus. So we wrote and we wrote. When we ran out of paper, we wrote on napkins. At the end of each conversation, he would take everything home. He still has the notes in a folder – including the napkins.

Ahmet became deaf through an illness in infancy. As a young man, he became a very devout Muslim, praying five times a day, keeping the fast, and studying the Qur'an. Ahmet was born and educated in the South-East, where they had schools for deaf children. A natural athlete, he was recruited onto deaf sports teams and travelled all over Turkey meeting more deaf people.

Ahmet joined an Islamic ministry to the deaf and became an assistant Qur'an teacher. His former sports team-mates tell of the long nights on overnight buses, when he would pass from seat to seat teaching the Qur'an instead of sleeping. He was a passionate and aggressive Muslim evangelist. But he was empty inside.

One day, a text message came. One of his former deaf Qur'an students had met Christians in the capital city. He wanted to know more about Jesus. Ahmet's interest was piqued. He asked the student to learn if there were any Christians in his city. His student contacted the church, and they found us. So Ahmet came to drink tea.

We knew no sign language. We had no training for this. But God was working. Ahmet saw something different in Jesus, something attractive. He began bringing his family and friends. We would write on blackboards. Ahmet would read it and sign to the deaf. They would sign their questions back, and he would write them down for us.

Within a year, we saw a deaf church form, collapse, then form again. Within two years we had a core of four believing families, and Ahmet was reaching out to his many deaf friends in other cities. He would work 60 hours a week

providing food for his family, then stay up all night on the internet talking with people from other cities. Whatever he learned from us he would pass on. The energised evangelist was back, but with a different mission. For four and a half years, he worked tirelessly, taking on more and more of the teaching load.

God Continues to Surprise

In February 2015, Ahmet lost his job as a result of his Christian faith. Fortunately, his workplace gave him severance pay and made sure that he was eligible for seven months of half-salary and insurance (workers compensation).

For two months, he searched, but could not find any work. After praying with Ahmet about this and asking the Lord for guidance, several of us began to think God might be leading us in a new direction. While Ahmet was receiving workers compensation, we could provide the other half of his salary and begin a trial ministry period. Ahmet could receive training in Bible story preparation and visit seekers in other cities.

The experiment was a success. Ahmet continued to work very hard, travelling to many cities to preach to the deaf. The local church, though still relatively small, has since decided to support Ahmet's ministry full time.

The bottleneck we see now is this: Ahmet cannot be everywhere at once. Deaf people from many cities want him to keep teaching them, since they cannot read the Bible for themselves. As a result, we are working hard to translate the Bible into sign language as quickly as we can. This is a crucial need.

We thank God that nationwide there are now two small yet functioning deaf churches. The first, in our city, is comprised of twelve baptised deaf believers who meet bi-weekly. The second, in a larger western city, is comprised of four baptised believers who are in weekly fellowship.

We're also aware of at least nine deaf believers in a southern city (not as yet meeting together), plus a number of others scattered across the country who have little to no access to regular deaf fellowship. There is an urgent need for discipleship of these believers, and follow-up of those who are in sign or internet-based discussions with them.

What a privilege it has been to see this silent witness take shape and form into new faith communities! God's creativity astounds, as the gospel continues to spread inaudibly in this, one of the largest unreached nations of the world.

Trent (pseudonym) and his family have been based in South-East Turkey for over a decade. Amidst tough ministry conditions they've seen afresh the power of God at work in surprising places.

Trent (pseudonym)



Are you interested in studying medicine or nursing or would like to work with low-income people, but want to have a gap year? A general helper is needed in Gambia for 6 months to 1 year (from July 2016) at a clinic that provides primary health care - the exact role will vary according to the interests and skills of each individual. Our vision is to use the contact we have with patients to identify those with an interest in the gospel or who would like us to pray with them. There would be opportunities to develop relationships with our mostly Muslim staff and the young people in the village who speak good English and be involved in discipleship activities within the church. Qualifications: Flexibility and a willingness to try new things are essential.

How about teaching English in Nth Africa for 3 – 9 months? This is an established English school and café based in the centre of town. Course materials are provided. Sessions begin in October, January and April. No teaching experience necessary.

Could you be a home tutor for a family serving overseas? There are plenty of opportunities to help families like this one in SE Asia for 6 months:

A family with 7 children need a home tutor for their 5 school age children - especially to teach science and mathematics to the oldest 2-3 children. Or, someone could work with the school age children.

Maybe sport is your thing – how about helping out in Sri Lanka for a month?

An established school in Senegal needs Helpers for the next academic year, starting in August. Work will include helping children with homework, supervising and providing activities for children out of school hours. You will need energy and enthusiasm to work with children.

How about youth work? A few years ago Brazilian missionaries with experience in India planted a new church in the city of Liege, in the French-speaking part of Belgium. This fast growing church urgently requires a youth worker who can share the workload with them; learning from their experience of church planting in Belgium and in Asia. The applicant should have some ability in the French language.

Finally if staying in NZ is more your style from around March next year we will need someone to fill a host(ess)ing role here in Gordonton. Give us a call to find out more.

Although we're not rugby aficionados by any stretch of the imagination, it was hard not to get just a little caught up in the RWC. While the result was wonderful, a feature of the All Blacks has been their character on and off the field.

Rugby and mission – what's the link? Rugby is often described as the game for anyone. There's a position for everyone, whatever their physical stature, with each player requiring a different skill set. Some play at club level, while others make it onto the international stage. But all play with a passion for the game and the goals set by the coach. Mission is much the same. As this issue shows, there is a place for all, whether locally or globally. The requirement is the same: a passion for Him and adherence to the coach's goals – playing for something bigger and beyond ourselves.

The winning pictures from the Rugby World Cup were great and will be an inspiration for many players and supporters alike. We are often inspired by the picture in Revelation 7 of people from every tribe, nation and tongue gathered around the throne of the King. The victory Jesus won, and all that flows from it, is truly inspirational and breathtaking. Taking home the cup is a great thing!



Jock & Cathy have 8 children and, let's just say, more grandchildren. Happily married for 35 years, they still like dinner dates, family times, reading and Bethany the dog.

Jock & Cathy

CHANGING GEARS

a third culture kid transition weekend



Eastwest College of Intercultural Studies is sponsoring a transition weekend for MK/TCKs returning to, or having returned to, NZ ages 15-20. Meet other Kiwi TCKs, learn about your "home" country, run around the Tron, and eat a lot of food. Interested? Write to transition@eastwest.ac.nz to register. Family rates available.

22-24 JANUARY 2016
SPEAKERS FOOD FUN
EASTWEST COLLEGE
GORDONTON NZ
\$50/TCK

Counting Down

We currently have ten 'candidates,' from five nations, joining WEC. They are heading out to countries in the Pacific, Asia, Central Asia and West Africa. During their three month orientation they address topics such as crisis management, self-care, relating cross culturally, working in teams and living in union with Christ. They get to know us and we get to know them. Is three months necessary? Couldn't these subjects be taught over a weekend? The testimony of one former candidate answers with an emphatic, "No!"

"It's typical for most workers to experience a high level of shock and stress when they enter a new culture and the initial euphoria and excitement has worn thin. While I am not too proud to assume I will not experience culture shock in the future, I'm thankful that so far my transition has been smooth and enjoyable, more so than any other new worker here. I put this down to the excellent preparation I was offered before my departure, which put all my expectations into check."

Good preparation is key in any vocation. Mission is no different. To learn more get in touch.



Joseph, part of our Candidates Orientation team, has served in Central Asia and has a soft spot for Liverpool football.