



Spreading the Gospel where it's thinnest

Out of (& Into) Africa

Africa, where it all began! Back in 1913 WEC founder, C.T. Studd, ventured deep into the Congo to share the good news of Jesus Christ. Over the years many more joined him; not only in the Congo but throughout Africa and now into nations on every continent.

A century later the many nations of Africa resound with the worship of multiple languages. Now many of these people are wanting to share this same good news with others who have not yet heard. At the same time, there are well over 1000 unreached people groups still remaining in Africa. Islam is seeking to spread; poverty, inequality and injustice prevail in many places. And, as it has always been, the only true and lasting hope is Jesus Christ. There is a church in Africa reaching out; and a church yet to be birthed. Such are the contrasts of this vast and beautiful land.

At our recent Africa region conference, there was much rejoicing at what God has done and a presentation of the challenge that remains. Today people from many places continue the work of CT and other pioneers. This issue tells some of the stories of today, many involving Kiwi's willing to step out, reach out, and spread the gospel where it is thinnest. As you read, ask yourself "What's my role in this?"



many pastors fled their flocks. The impact of this ministry was recognised by the government, when the team received a medal and financial gifts.

Today Daniel continues to lead this ministry despite a hereditary heart condition that claimed the lives of his two sisters. Because of his failing health he has been seeking to build a home for his family, but has been unsuccessful. Instead, in an act of great faith, he donated building materials he hoped to use for his home, to the church he planted, for their facilities. This act has been a huge encouragement to the impoverished members of the church. Tearfund who previously provided support have redirected funds to the north. Once again we look to God to do the impossible. Please join us in praying for Daniel and this vital ministry.

Eileen served in Burkina Faso for 37 years. She is now home in Auckland enjoying retirement and encouraging the next generation of gospel bearers.

Eileen



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Riding the (Radio) Waves

The gospel first arrived in the south west of Burkina Faso in 1931. When I arrived in 1974 little progress had been made. The Lobi were a proud people; warlike and animistic. There were only four qualified pastors. With few roads and poor communications, discipling of new believers was difficult, especially in the rainy season.

Our first solution was to offer teaching materials on cassette tapes in local languages that were listened to on dynamo powered machines. While good, this could only reach a few people. To extend our reach we bought time on a local radio station. But staff opposed this and it was expensive. We ended up producing our own radio programmes in a mattress lined, airless room.

Later Daniel Kambou, a recent Bible College graduate, was asked to take on this project. He was to present his plan to the Church Council. Imagine our surprise when Daniel proposed building our own radio station! An even greater surprise was that after discussion and prayer, we accepted his proposal. Now the real battle began, but God was faithful as He delighted in doing the seemingly impossible.

Within a week of the station being completed, a meningitis epidemic broke out. Three nights in a row I attended the funerals of Christian friends. I had the only car, which became the hearse. I had just taken a body for burial when I was called to the radio station. The front of our building had been completely crushed by a large lorry. This lorry was parked as usual when inexplicably the brakes failed. It took off, somehow managed to turn right and then left before colliding with our studio, narrowly missing three volunteer workers sleeping inside. Hindsight showed that God was even in this, as the insurance money built a better studio.

Despite continued opposition, God's Word goes out in nine different languages, as well as health, development, women's, youth and children's ministries. The radio can be heard in the market places and even in neighbouring Ivory Coast where it became a wonderful encouragement to the Christians there during the civil war, especially as

WEC International



reaching people | planting churches | mobilising for mission

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Milk, Mud Huts and Mission

It was hot. I was sweating. The milk and couscous I'd eaten for breakfast was curdling in my stomach. Nervous. What did God have in store for us? What did I have to share? I sat as I always do, near the back, and watched people fill the seats around me. Five, ten, still more coming. Excitement building. As the meeting began, I realised I was surrounded by more than 30 leaders from all over West Africa, who had answered the call of Christ from our people group. I sat shocked.

These saints lead groups of believers that are meeting and growing despite persecution. I sat stunned as believer after believer introduced themselves, and shared what God was doing; miracles, healings, dreams, visions and suffering. God is moving. Never before have there been more believers in our people group. God is doing a new thing. It brings tears to my eyes to have the privilege to be witnessing His amazing work.

Our people are called, "The custodians of Islam" by Operation World. They claim to have brought Islam to West Africa. Although Fulanis are some of the most fervent Muslims, there are increasing pockets of believers arising throughout Africa. It's clear to us that God's Spirit is at work, and it's exciting!



When we arrived in our previous village, we were welcomed by the imam. He's an old man with failing sight, but great energy. He still tends his own fields while running the mosque, conducting funerals and other ceremonies in the surrounding villages. Virtually adopting us we were given a mud hut to live in as we learnt their language and culture for three years. Learning everything from scratch was hard work – it was like being a child all over again. Often we felt like we made little impact, but we realised that behind it all God's hand was at work, when the imam said, "You have brought peace to our compound." We eventually left the village for what God was calling us to next, and gave him a gift of the New Testament in his language. Now he is studying it with other imams, who are desiring their own copies. Young people too are increasingly open to talk about God and want to watch the Jesus film on their phones.

We quickly learned that our work is not so much about what we could do for Him. It's all Him! It's about God's Spirit, at work through us and despite us, and even when we're not there anymore! It was His will for us to spread His fragrance in that village for that time. And when we were gone, it left a vacuum. They said, "The blessing has gone", and it left them seeking Him!

Would you keep praying for the Fulani people? This is their time, and maybe yours too, to be the fragrance of Christ among them.

Kevin and Debbie (a Kiwi) are working in West Africa as part of a team reaching out to the Fulani people. When not meeting imam's they're kept busy with three young children.

Kevin & Debbie

Tales from a Desert Islander

Bang-bang-bang! There's someone at the door. I open my eyes; it's only just light. My watch says 5am - my favourite time for sleeping. Bang-bang-bang! The knocking is insistent. I climb from under my mosquito net and trudge off to see who's at my door.



I'm greeted by three young, smiling faces with outstretched hands. Each shakes my hand saying, "Salaam aleekum." Kali often shows up this early. But this time he's brought two friends along. I pull a mat out onto the sand and go to make tea.

The boys sit, eagerly drinking their cups of hot sugary tea. They have many questions. "Why don't you go to the mosque with us on Fridays? Why don't you pray like we do?" My brain is still waking up, but we have some interesting discussions. Eventually they run off to play.

I take some time in Bible study. Before long there is another knock at the door. This time it's Doukika, a young man from church. Several hundred adults attend each Sunday. They've come from the south of Chad to work or study here. The service is in French, but worship is in various southern languages. Doukika leads the Young Adults group. It's exciting to see their desire for God's Word and prayer. However, they tend to live in the same area of town, with few learning Arabic or dressing like the Muslim locals of Abeche.

This morning Doukika wants to review his talk for Wednesday night's group. We also discuss our heritage as sons of God. We leave together as I need some phone credit, mangoes from the local market, and lunch from my friend's sandwich shop.

They know my favourite and start preparing it when they see me coming.

Today even the breeze is hot, so I return home for a rest. Just as I lie down there's another knock on my door. The 3 o'clock call to prayer has just rang out from the mosque not far from my house. This time it's Adoum who has come to talk. Relaxing together on the mat, a good discussion follows about the differences in what we believe.

The 5 o'clock call to prayer interrupts us and Adoum has to rush off. The sun is setting and I have some Arabic reading to do. But it's hard to concentrate with sweat still dripping into my eyes.

Heading to bed, I remember the article I'm supposed to have written for WEC. But my computer isn't charged and there's no electricity tonight. It'll have to wait for tomorrow. I crawl back under my mosquito net and give thanks for the day and the privilege of sharing Christ here.

Aphia, from Vanuatu, serves in Abeche, Chad. He enjoys sports ministry as a way to share God's love with young people, and helping the church reach the unreached.

Aphia

Conversations with Ali

Little Ali is proud to be an Arab. He knows he lacks much learning, but tries to hide it by talking as though he knows a lot. He runs a little shop nearby, and loves to have people see us in discussion. Ali inevitably seeks to turn our conversations into a points scoring exercise of Islam over Christianity, yet he's terrified if I open my Bible. Here's a couple of our recent exchanges:

"Don't you have a daughter you could give me in marriage?"

"I have one daughter who is happily married," I replied. "But why do you ask? You have a wife don't you?"

"Yes indeed, I have two. Ten children by the first and three children by the second."

"Well, that sounds to me like you have plenty to be going on with. Don't get greedy!"

This set him off. He passionately explained what Islam teaches and how it is good to have up to four wives.

"OK," I said, "Please listen carefully. I don't want you to misunderstand or be offended".

He listened intently. "If I had an unmarried daughter, I would not give her to you because you have two wives already. I would want her to have a whole husband, not one third of a husband. You expect to have a whole wife, not a shared one. A wife should have an undivided husband."

To my surprise, he looked thoughtful and said "That is true. Those are wise words."

He started quoting and explaining the words of Muhammad, saying, "He said a rich man should obtain up to four wives if he can afford them, and a poor man should fast." "Fasting," Ali explained, "reduces desire, thereby reducing the chances of falling into sin." This is typical of Islamic thinking. The great debates in Islam have always been about laws and procedures, not about truth and theology. Right behaviour, and how to enforce it, is what they love to talk about here.

I cut across what he was saying. "Women are not commodities. They are human and have value because they're created by God. We shouldn't think of them as things to be bought and sold." This led him to talk about the immense respect accorded to mothers. Most Muslim men love and honour their mothers far more than their wives and daughters.

"Is your home a happy one? Do you have peace in your house?"

He pulled a face. "Not really. No."

"In that case," I said, "you should be more careful about telling other people how to run their homes. What you have is not working. May God give you peace in your home."

"Amen," he replied.



Another time, he opened the Koran on his phone to show me the Islamic version of the birth of Christ. He was keen that I should see how the Koran clearly shows that Jesus was not the Son of God.

The screen was small so I patiently went through it frame by frame. Eventually we got to the bit where Gabriel addresses Mary as the sister of Aaron. I asked him to stop and explain that expression. "Tell me," I said, "What is the tafseer (interpretation)?"

"Well," he said, "You know Aaron. He was the brother of the prophet Moses. Mary is their sister." "Are you sure?" "Yes, of course – same parents and everything." "But Moses and Aaron lived hundreds of years before Mary became the mother of Jesus. They grew up in another country, in Egypt. She must be very, very old to be their sister."

He was stumped for a moment. "OK," he said. "Be patient. I have a whole library in this phone. I will look up the tafseer."

Eventually he found it. "Look," he said. "You're right. She was not literally his sister, but her worship was like that of Aaron!"

"So," I pressed on, "when it says 'sister', it doesn't mean sister in the same way it might



somewhere else?" "Exactly." "And if I said so and so is the brother of so and so, it might mean something other than having the same parents?" "Yes," he said, "You've got it." He seemed quite pleased. "And so," I continued, "if someone is described as the son of someone else it might not mean the same as you would normally expect – it depends on the tafseer."

His face changed abruptly. "But," he said "God is one. And God was not begotten nor does he beget. And some people say that Jesus is his little boy! That is a grave error."

"You're right, if people say that, it is a grave error," I replied. He started to look more cheerful – though still a bit uncomfortable. "The thing is, the Angel Gabriel called him the Son of God, and personally, I don't believe in arguing with angels. Instead, we need to ask about the tafseer. What does the expression mean in this case? Certainly not that Jesus was God's physical offspring. No, it means something else." As I went on my way, he thanked me for teaching him something new.

There are parts of the world in which people seem to flock to the Gospel. This isn't one of them. Treating people as real people and meeting them "where they are at" is one thing that authenticates the Gospel. If you don't really want to connect with them, they can tell. Is there any hope for Little Ali? That's in God's hands. But I do know that all those I've led to the Lord were people I "wasted" time with.



This is a very practical teach-yourself guide to opening up the Gospel for Muslims. It is about giving our Muslim friends exposure to Jesus rather than defeating them in argument. Using studies in Matthew's Gospel as an example, Keys enables you to go beyond a few favorite passages and use scripture effectively.

Colin Bearup has worked with Muslims in Africa for over a quarter of a century and has seen a number become disciples of Jesus. Highly recommended by many practitioners. Available from WEC NZ for \$21.50 (plus P+P).



Colin Bearup has been involved in Chad for 30 years and is now moving on to new challenges, such as unreached peoples in the UK and grandchildren! If you're interested in opening up the Gospel for Muslims, we recommend his practical book, Keys. See advertisement above.

Colin Bearup

As always, there are many opportunities worldwide for you to participate in what is God doing "at the ends of the earth". But God is also at work here in Aotearoa. Maybe your next step in mission is here.

Administration – some of our staff are "administratively challenged"! If you have some time and gifts in this area, we would really love your help.

IT – we are looking for a volunteer to help us update aspects of our IT system. To improve data collection, organisation and data security. Also resolve some current issues with system use and management. This person would need to have some experience in linux and microsoft and good relational skills.

Catering and hospitality – especially during our 3 month Candidate Orientation course. Taking the lead in preparing weekday lunches and 1 evening meal and providing a welcoming environment for guests.

Social Media – can you work with our current team in making the most of social media?

Mobilising – if you're passionate about seeing the NZ church continue its legacy as one of the highest per capita sending nations, then let's talk. We would love to have representatives in many regions around the country; in tertiary institutions; and seeking opportunities in more churches.

Not all these roles require living onsite in Gordonton (although some time here for orientation and training would be required). A commitment to sharing our values of faith, sacrifice, holiness and fellowship, along with a willingness to be a part of a support team facilitating others to take the gospel to where it is thinnest, is the primary pre-requisite. Some roles could be part time. All WEC staff are volunteers, trusting in God to meet their needs.

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

More Info

It's been said that change is the only constant. For us in the WEC NZ office there appears an element of truth in this statement. After 6 years at the helm Jock stepped down at our recent KiwiCon. Alongside this, earlier in the year we agreed to some significant structural changes.

While Eastwest College remains the same, the rest of WEC has been regrouped into four teams focussing on different aspects of our ministry. Day to day running of the office is the focus of the Operations Team. This includes finance, property and compliance matters. The Whanau Team covers new worker orientation, prayer and pastoral care of workers. Mobilising will be maintaining their focus on mission promotion, resourcing and training within the NZ church, partnering to reach the least reached here and around the world.

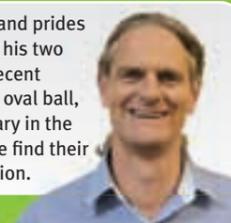
The remaining team is an exciting development. Their focus is on ministry in NZ. This includes missional business opportunities here and extending our relationships with NZ churches to reach the least reached (often migrants) in their communities. (The Winter 2016 Golnto has a great example of this).



Each team is looking forward to what lies ahead and will be looking for new members, maybe there's a role for you?

During this season of transition, we would value your prayers. Finally, whoever coined our opening sentence was wrong! The character of our God remains the same whatever our circumstances. He still desires that none should perish but for everyone to come to repentance. Thank you for your faithful partnership in the gospel.

David is married to Kendal and prides himself on keeping up with his two teenage sons. He loves a decent conversation, following the oval ball, cycling (even when stationary in the garage), and helping people find their place in cross-cultural mission.



David

Lessons in Sandblasting

Ever thought that when you retired, you'd head off on missions? God called Moses at 80 and He called us – although we're not yet 80!

"Are you prepared to leave NZ?" God asked.

Eventually, "Yes God"

We contacted WEC. They gave us some possibilities but we had our list of preferences; SE Asia, national kids... All the doors shut.

God spoke again, "Are you prepared to go where I want you to and do what I want?"

Goodbye preferences, "Yes God." And the doors opened.

We were off, to Senegal, to teach missionary kids. Those who were once strangers at Bouroufaye Christian School opened their hearts to us and we became family for a year.

We went to teach where children call you "Uncle" and "Auntie" and actually want to learn. Most staff were at least 15 years younger than us. How would we fit in? Along with another couple, God had added 'old' to a young and middle-aged community. We became parents and grandparents with listening ears.

But that wasn't all. God had plans for us. He wanted to remove crusty deposits and freshen us up.

Our only constants were each other and God. We were stretched beyond our comfort zone, often digging deep to seek Him. God had the tools, we had the time; time to reflect on Scripture and to read widely from a variety of Christian authors.



God used these to reveal accumulated worldly attitudes and thinking that needed correction. God sand-blasted us. We came to understand that when working with other believers, it is essential that we focus on what holds us together and not what we disagree about. Some of our cherished doctrinal preferences had to be laid aside.

Now we've returned to NZ, people ask if we are settling back in. At one level we can say yes, but now we have 'attitude'. We don't want to be who we were; we don't even want to remain as we are now. We want to stay sharp and close to God that He might choose to use us, anywhere... even in NZ.

John and Susan are sometimes retired teachers and live in South Auckland. They have four adult children and two granddaughters.



John & Susan

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 at 0800 896 477 and put yourself in the picture.

