

40 YEARS OF SHARING GOOD NEWS



In April of 2017 we celebrated the 40th anniversary of Morris working with the B people of South Asia. Morris answered the call to head to South Asia in 1977 and has never looked back.

Morris, originally by himself and then with his family, lived in South Asia for 14 years. For strategic reasons the family moved back to Australia but continued to walk alongside the people with whom they had developed strong relationships, while continuing to form many new ones. Morris regards the past 40 years as a time of obedience, learning and growing in love for the people to whom God called him.

During a meeting, which Morris 'by chance' attended, the speaker was Stuart Robinson who had just returned from South Asia. Morris heard the need and thought God might be calling him into cross-cultural mission. After applying to Global Interaction, Morris completed a four-year theological degree, which gave him a Biblical base for his future work.

The first four years in South Asia were spent at a university hostel for young men and in a ministry that disciplined individuals. At the end of this time, he suggested that local men should be trained to take over the running of the hostel. Morris believed, even then, in empowering the local people to provide independence from missionary workers in the future.

During home assignment in 1982, Morris married Ros and they later had three daughters. During the 14 years, the family predominantly lived in provincial towns in South Asia. During that time, there were two major floods that left millions of people isolated from services. In the 1988 flood, the family were marooned while their colleagues and their extended family had no idea if they were safe. Thankfully, they lived in a brick house so Morris could block the doors and drain holes to keep the water out of the house. With enough stored food and by boiling the water they could keep their young children safe and healthy.

Morris and Roslyn with first daughter Emma (Top Left)
Most B people are involved in farming or fishing
- Photo taken by Phil. (Right)

Morris travelled to rural villages to disciple people, providing weekly and monthly meetings in homes and facilitating a reading room from a rented space in town so people could study the Bible. A team of people began an NGO that continues to work to provide transformation of marginalised B people through education, training and group formation. Morris continues to work in a leadership role with the NGO but from Australia.

Morris' ministry among the B people looks very different today than the first few decades. There are now very few foreigners working in the area as local B people who've come to faith now share the message among their communities. This empowerment of local people is integral to Global Interaction's approach that enables people to share Jesus in ways that are cultural meaning.

Morris' heart still lies with the B people and his work from Australia involves developing leadership capacity among local people, facilitating short-term volunteers, leading the small team of long-term cross-cultural workers and building partnerships in Australia to help sustain strategic projects.

Another significant change that has occurred over the past four decades is the completion of a culturally appropriate and linguistically accurate version of the Bible. This is the result of a great deal of hard work from a team of people, including many volunteers. It allows the B people to hear and read the Good News in their own language with accessible vocabulary.

Morris reflects on what he has learnt over 40 years and highlights the value of relationships, loyalty and commitment. He has appreciated the importance of maintaining a broad awareness of community issues and how they affect people. A surprising lesson has been how he now reads the Bible with a different frame of reference.



Drawing on his experiences of communal-focused culture, he reads the Bible with an Eastern perspective (which is aligned with where it was written), very different to that of the Post-Enlightenment Western perspective.

Morris is a humble man who would rather talk of Christ's love than his own talents. Through his many years of service, he has not only persevered in sharing the Gospel to see many come to faith and walk alongside them but he has also rallied authorities to stop violence from outraged religious leaders, saving the lives of countless villagers. He stood firm with his family in the face of floods that impacted the lives of millions of people (he was the guy heading out in a dinghy to check on the neighbours). His sense of humour and his faith have gotten him through many tough times and these, along with intelligence and encouragement in his service and leadership, have helped many others survive trials thrown at them, both at home and on the mission field.

Into the future, it is Morris' hope that the B people will be able to continue sharing their faith in their own distinctive ways. He hopes he will have further opportunities to share Jesus with others as he continues to work with Global Interaction and the NGO in South Asia.

Morris sitting in on a workshop with local NGO staff
Photo taken by Phil (Top)

Morris towards the end of first term circa 1980/81 (Right)

