

VISION

MARCH 2011

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES
TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN
DISTINCTIVE WAYS
OF FOLLOWING JESUS



GLOBAL | INTERACTION

GUIDE 2011

The Global Interaction Guide 2011 is now available with information about the people groups we serve, our cross-cultural workers, ways you can pray and projects you can support.

Contact your State Office to get your copy of this year's Global Interaction Guide.



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Cover image: Women's saving group in South Asia,
Irene Schuringa

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Street stalls of Asia, Roger Drew

POWERFUL PARTNERSHIP

Roger Drew is the (relatively new) Director of Partnership Development at Global Interaction. He brings a depth of experience to the role, having previously been the missions pastor at Crossway Baptist Church in Victoria, the State Director for OMF, and he and his wife Kirsten served cross-culturally in Thailand.

Six months after joining Global Interaction as the Director of Partnership Development I can honestly say that I'm delighted to be part of the team. I'm often asked what I love about Global Interaction. Without a doubt, I share the passion for our vision to empower communities to follow Jesus. I'm moved by the stories of lives transformed. I'm inspired and challenged by those with the courage to "go" and live among these people. **Yet, there is one other group of people whose lives and ministry make an enormous Kingdom impact – those who partner with us.**

This last week, I received a letter from Ken and Roz, a farming couple in Queensland who are preparing to join the cross-cultural team in the Silk Road Area. Like most new workers, the excitement of following Jesus to the "ends of the earth" has been tempered by the knowledge that this step of faith comes at a cost – to them, their family and to their business. As I write this, much of their livelihood (crops) has been inundated by the Queensland floods. They share, "It would be all too easy to look at the devastation and throw our hands in the air and say 'it's all too hard and can't be done.'" Yet, in the midst of this, they joked, "wouldn't it be great if we received a significant amount of our support..."

Little did they know that God was already at work in the life of a donor who gave a generous gift toward their support. The impact of this person's gift went way beyond the financial. In a letter of thanks Ken and Roz said: "Can you imagine how our jaws dropped in utter disbelief on the day we received an email saying that this (support) has actually happened!!! What a confirmation!!! How wonderful that you, being obedient to the call of God on your life, and more particularly your finances, can have such a tremendous impact on a middle-aged farming couple whom I suspect you have never even met. We can only repeat thank you!"

I remember my own hesitations, even doubts, leaving our own family farm and heading out to Thailand 15 years ago. I remember the profound impact made by those who committed to partner with us. While partnership is expressed through the finances, prayers and encouragement of those around us, there is something more at play. There is a divine corporate "yes" – a confirmation and affirmation given not only to those God calls to "go" but also to those who "send".

I can honestly say that my life and ministry have been shaped by those who have partnered with us. Many years after returning from Thailand, my wife and I sat in the kitchen of a dear friend. Noticing that our photo was placed next to those of her children, I asked why she should put it there. "I pray for you every morning. Of course I'd have you there." Another partner has called us on every birthday and anniversary for the past decade and a half.

For those who serve overseas, partnership is not just a convenience or necessity. It is life-changing.

ROGER DREW
Director of Partnership Development



Maz and Ezzie with Puia



Temple in South East Asia, Mark Jessop

CULTURE SHOCK DOWN-UNDER

Maz and Ezzie, along with their son Puia, are missionary candidates with the Baptist Churches of Mizoram, seconded to Global Interaction work in South East Asia. In March last year they arrived in Australia to spend one year training, preparing and building a partnership team. Arriving in Australia has already given them first-hand experience of transition and culture shock, so they have a bit of an idea of what to expect when they join the team in South East Asia.

When we received the congratulatory phone call from Global Interaction informing us that our one year Australian visas were finally approved, we were too excited and filled with enthusiasm and anticipation at what lay ahead to worry about what we would leave behind. We started planning, packing... there was so much to do and it was difficult to decide where to start.

“Culture shock” had crossed our minds, and we knew that we were bound to face a lot of changes which would be exciting and stimulating, as well as overwhelming and frustrating. Using an Immigration Department guide book, we read some practical tips on how to begin our lives in Australia. But after we arrived, we experienced many changes that are inexpressible.

Unfortunately on our flight to Australia we were seated in separate rows. It was difficult to ignore our baby crying for his daddy, who was sitting thirteen rows behind. Our requests to swap seats were denied. Feeling rejected and helpless we continued to call on our heavenly Father – pouring out our hearts and feelings. Surprisingly, the woman sitting next to Maz who shouted at us a few minutes earlier changed her mind and told him that she’d be happy to swap seats with Esther! Praise God!

When we first touched down in Queensland we bowed our heads, thanking God and committing ourselves to go through any changes for His glory. We felt like we were in a daze, perhaps partly due to jetlag. We were surprised to learn that we required a car seat for Puia. We’d never had to use one at home. It was hard to wake a sleeping child, making him cry almost all the way. As we drove out of the airport we thought, “Are we really here in Australia? The land of kangaroos, koalas and emus? The beautiful country we learnt about at school?” We had to pinch ourselves to make sure this wasn’t a dream.

In the months following those first few experiences, we have tackled many differences in our new environment. We had to

abandon all the familiar cues of social interaction and adapt to new lifestyles, signs and symbols: from a strong communitarian and close-knit society to individualistic culture; from familiar streets and local shops to unfamiliar confusing streets; using a second language more often than our first language; changes in food and eating habits; different and highly organized traffic rules; and many other things to get used to. **Despite the fact that we are very open to the changes and able to adapt to differences, from time to time we still feel stress, bewilderment, puzzlement, confusion and anxiety.**

Above all we are convinced that we’re not here by chance or accident and are conscious of our choice to be in this new environment. Often this is the reason we have been able to face cultural differences. **Our commitment to serve the living God includes our willingness to undergo culture shock wherever we are called to serve.** We count it as an opportunity to draw closer to Him who has brought us this far, providing us with whatever we need. Even as we anticipate immersing ourselves in our environment-to-be, we know that it will take more energy and effort than now. As we prepare and encourage ourselves to accept more cultural differences, we also accept ourselves and are continually conscious of our divine calling and the decision we’ve made. **As a result, our feelings about moving again to a new culture are positive, and we are eager to connect with people and begin the adjustment process again.**

MAZ & EZZIE
South East Asia

Maz and Ezzie’s Australian visas expire in March. Global Interaction is committed to sending them to join the team in South East Asia then. But we still need more people to partner with Maz and Ezzie financially and through prayer. If you can help, please use the form on the back page or call 03 9819 4944.



Hannah's work, Bruce Roberts



The streets of Central Asia, Bruce Roberts

A STORY OF NEW LIFE

A number of years ago a couple working with Global Interaction developed a friendship with a Muslim family in Central Asia. The father, Sam, was a highly respected member of the community. Over a period of years the couple were able to share their lives with Sam and his daughter Hannah*. One way they did this was by introducing them to a special book, the Bible.

After a few years Sam sadly died and he left his daughter his calligraphy business. **As she continued to read the Bible she became more and more convinced that the words of the book were from God (Allah – Arabic; ZhengZhou – Chinese) and she declared that she would live her life according to the book.**

About two years ago a non-Muslim Chinese trader opened a similar shop nearby to Hannah's shop. Unfortunately for him, his skills were not as good as Hannah's and so his business did not do as well as hers. One lunch time the trader went for a lunch with some friends and they enjoyed a little too much alcohol with their meal. When he returned to his shop the trader was upset because his shop was not doing as well as the Muslim lady's. In his frustration he began to yell abuse at Hannah and even threatened her. Eventually, brandishing a knife he went to her shop. As he continued with his tirade, Hannah's mother stepped in front of her to protect her, just as the man brought his knife down. The knife badly cut the mother's raised hand and at once the man realised the seriousness of his situation. To harm a Muslim woman in this way meant death at the hands of the community. To save himself the man fled.

As word quickly spread, many men of the community gathered to support the family. They vowed to do harm to the man, until Hannah stepped forward. She told the men that they were not to touch the trader, that he had offended her family and that she would deal with the situation. She told them that they were not to touch the man or his shop and they were to go home. Reluctantly the men left and did as Hannah had asked.

After three days the trader cautiously returned to his shop to find it untouched. He sat at his table and waited, ready to run if necessary. For the next seven days the man quietly sat at his table. On the seventh day, Hannah walked out of her shop and went over to the man. She quietly assured him that her mother's hand was healing and said to the man, "I forgive you." She then returned to her shop.

How Hannah responded was something previously unknown in her community. She had learned how God values forgiveness and asks us to forgive our enemies. She had read of how Jesus forgave those who persecuted him. **In a very practical way she put into action what she had been reading from the Bible.** Today, though Hannah is culturally Muslim, she is living her new life with God in practical ways that honour Him. Pray that her example will create opportunities for her to talk and share the story of Jesus with other women in her community.

BRUCE ROBERTS

**Note: some names have been changed for security reasons*

Join with us



JOIN THE MOVEMENT

There have been moments in history where God has called a group of people to serve him in a particular place or particular way.

1. *The Cambridge Seven*

In the 1880s the American evangelist D.L. Moody visited Cambridge University during a tour of Britain. After one week of meetings, large numbers of students gave their lives to serving God. A group of seven 'ordinary' students – family friends, study partners, cricket team members and rowing buddies – applied to join the China Inland Mission that had been recently founded by the now-famous Hudson Taylor. Sensing a unity of purpose, the men spent a month sharing their vision with other university students throughout Scotland and England. The seven sailed to China to begin their ministry, and they were soon followed by hundreds of young people who also gave their lives to missionary work.

2. *The Haystack movement*

Every Wednesday and Saturday at the Williams College campus in Massachusetts a group of students gathered for prayer and discussion. One day in the summer of 1806 their meeting was interrupted by a thunderstorm and the students took shelter under a haystack until the sky cleared. The special focus for their prayer that day was for the awakening of foreign missionary interest among young adults. On that day, these first American student volunteers willed that God should have their lives for service wherever he needed them. This was the initial impulse for the missionary movement in the US, impacting thousands of lives throughout history.

3. *The Five Barley Loaves*

More than 125 years ago Australian Baptist Missionary ministry began, predominantly by the work of five single women in their 20s. These well-educated women were sent from Baptist Churches around Australia to work among women in East Bengal.

Churches raised the 150 pounds a year needed for their expenses. At their farewell service in 1885, Silas Mead preached from the story about the feeding of the five thousand. The women became affectionately known as the Five Barley Loaves and are an icon of pioneering Baptist mission.

4. *Now in Western Australia*

Right now, in Western Australia, we are witnessing a similar movement of the Spirit. Over the last year or so, twelve adults and their families have responded to the need for more team members to serve with Global Interaction in Africa. The team members are preparing to minister among the desperately poor and marginalised Yao people of Malawi and Mozambique, empowering them to develop their own distinctive ways of following Jesus.

While Global Interaction WA has had a steady stream of team members over the years, they have never experienced such an influx of interest at one time. God is certainly moving!

The team members in WA are celebrating the flurry of interest and enjoying sharing their stories in a number of churches. Yet, along with the excitement, they are aware of the mammoth task ahead of them. For all of these team members to get to Africa and begin their vital ministry, significant funds and many prayer partners are needed.

2011 will be a busy and very significant year for the Baptist churches and Global Interaction community in WA. We ask that you uphold them in prayer, as well as consider joining one (or more) of their partnership teams. It is a privilege for us not just to witness, but also to be a part of another movement of Spirit as God leads his people into mission.

Watch the new short video *Join the Movement* at www.globalinteraction.org.au/Church-Partnership/Join-the-Movement.aspx



Scott & Bek

Levi

Having spent two years in **Mozambique**, Bek will return with her new family as soon as possible. They're preparing by studying Portuguese and theology.



Cameron & Katherine

Jack & Matilda

With experience in agriculture and health, Cam and Kath are excited to empower Yao people of **Mozambique** with life skills and an understanding of Jesus.



Alan

After a Global Xposure trip 2009, Alan is preparing to return to **Mozambique** for two years. Experience in construction and trades will enable him to share practical skills as well as his love of Jesus.



Ryan & Donna

Caleb & Eden

Global Xposure trips to Malawi awakened the possibility of long-term service in Ryan and Donna who are now preparing for ministry in **Mozambique**.



Andrew

A number of Global Xposure trips have developed Andrew's passion for sharing the Gospel in **Malawi**. His great passion is to see local people empowered and disciplined in the Gospel.

Note: Andrew is currently on medical leave



Arthur & Debbie

After three years in Zambia and two decades working and ministering in various parts of WA, Arthur and Debbie feel God's call to serve long-term in **Malawi**.



Ben & Sam

Elizabeth

After two years of service in Malawi, Ben will return to Africa, this time to **Mozambique**, with his new family. They are studying Portuguese and theology.

Join the movement in WA where 12 team members are preparing to serve among the Yao people in Malawi and Mozambique. Please prayerfully consider if you can join a prayer and financial support team of one of the Yao team.

- Go to www.globalinteraction.org.au/support
- Call 03 9819 4944
- Fill in the form on the back page



School students in Malawi, Richard Payne

PEOPLE GROUP PROFILE

THE YAO OF MALAWI AND MOZAMBIQUE

Global Interaction's primary focus is to serve nine least-reached people groups who have little or no knowledge about Jesus. Some people in these groups will go from birth to death without ever hearing His name, and most will never learn of Him in meaningful ways. In addition, many people in these groups are socially and physically disadvantaged. One of these least-reached people groups is the Yao (otherwise known as Yawo) people of Malawi and Mozambique.

About the people

The Yao people originated from a treeless, grass-covered hill called 'Yao' in north Mozambique. From the 1500s to the early 1900s the Yao grew into one of the most powerful military and trading groups of the region. It is not known what caused the Yao to migrate from the hill, but most agree that three main groups migrated to Malawi in the early to middle 1800s while some remained in Mozambique. It is estimated that today the Yao number more than 2.5 million people and live predominantly in three countries: Mozambique, Malawi and Tanzania.

The Yao were introduced to Islam through their slave trading relationships on the east coast of Africa. When the British, at the request of Christian missionaries, stopped the slave trade of Yao merchants, the Yao turned to the religion of their slave-trading partners, and grew highly resistant to Christianity.

Although 90% of Yao people would consider themselves Muslim, much of their practice is influenced by traditional African tribal beliefs. Many live in fear of witchcraft, magic and the spirit world. Ancestors are important in traditional religious life and are believed to be able to bring good and bad fortune to individuals and the village. Every village has a mosque at which formal prayers are conducted five times every day. The Yao are not strict about wearing distinctive Islamic dress.

Adopt the Yao

Your church can adopt the Yao people, committing to:

- learn about the Yao people;
- pray for them regularly and in an informed way;
- do everything possible to enable them to experience fullness of life in Jesus.

Contact Michael Stark on 03 9819 4944 to find out more.

The cross-cultural teams

Global Interaction has two teams working with the Yao people – one in Malawi, the other in Mozambique. They're about a four hour drive from each other, but it does involve some bumpy roads and sometimes tenuous border crossings.

Malawi

The team in Malawi is involved in developing and nurturing faith groups which are at home in their culture. These faith groups, called Life Groups, are now led by local leaders and are involved in helping the community identify and address issues related to health, education and poverty. Steve and Glenda Venz, who previously spent 12 years in Zambia with Global Interaction, will take on the role of Team Leaders. They are currently building a partnership team and hope to join the team in Malawi in the middle of this year.

Mozambique

The team in Mozambique is still in the initial stages of connecting with the community. Many of the team members are at candidate stage, building partnership teams to support them prayerfully and financially (see p.6-7). Just recently one of Jonno Crane's friends in Mozambique made a decision to follow Jesus. He's one of the first Yao believers in the area. This is really exciting news!

To support any of the cross-cultural workers in Malawi or Mozambique financially or through prayer:

- Go to www.globalinteraction.org.au/support
- Call 03 9819 4944
- Fill in the form on the back page



South East Asia, David N

AN EVER-LASTING LEGACY

Over the years, the work of Global Interaction has been greatly supported by generous people's bequests. These gifts make a profound difference, helping least-reached people hear about Jesus for the first time. Nathan Reid, Global Interaction's Bequest Officer, shares about how a simple cup of tea and a biscuit can lead to such an ever-lasting legacy.

The scene is an ordinary Australian lounge room. Two people are comfortably seated on lounge chairs chatting. The casual observer could mistake this for a harmless conversation. But this is work – serious work. The tools of the trade – a scotch finger biscuit and a cup of tea (or alternatively, a latte and a biscotti). But no matter the tool, the work remains the same. Two people are meeting to do some subversive kingdom planning to make a genuine difference among some of the world's least-reached people groups.

A scene like this is often what happens when a person is writing their will and is also considering the influence they will have beyond their own lifetime. Like Global Interaction, they share the conviction that God's greatest gift is a life-changing experience of Jesus. Like Global Interaction, they share a vision to see growing vibrant faith communities among nine least-reached people groups. With all these things in mind, they have contacted Global Interaction to discuss how their gift of a bequest could be used in empowering communities to develop their own distinctive ways of following Jesus.

In scenes similar to this one, we have seen many people who have conspired to make a difference in the lives of global communities. One woman, who had served in Papua New Guinea as a nurse in the 1960s, made a provision in her will to set up a fund which now provides scholarships for local pastors to undertake leadership development training. She passed away several years ago but her gift will keep on strengthening the Baptist churches in Papua New Guinea for many years to come.

Others have bequeathed properties or proceeds from the sales of their properties. These generous gifts mean we can empower our cross-cultural staff by providing accommodation when they are on home assignment in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. It would be a wonderful provision to have similar housing in Tasmania, Western Australia and South Australia.

In another instance, we received a parcel of shares from a bequest. The return on the shares now helps us to cover some of our home office costs and releases more funds to be used in our cross-cultural work amongst the least-reached.

So often in our history as a mission, it has been scenes like these in ordinary Australian lounge rooms that have made a profound difference on the global scale. It could be by supporting the cross-cultural workers visiting villages in Thailand sharing the message of Jesus. Or the teachers in classrooms in Kazakhstan sharing the love of Jesus through their vocation. Or the groups of Yao believers gathering around trees in Malawi, celebrating the greatest gift of all in Jesus. The sacrificial and timely giving of Australian Baptists in the form of bequests has made a profound difference.

For more information on making a bequest to Global Interaction please feel free to contact me either by phone or through the Global Interaction website. If you would like to be in a scene such as this one in your very own lounge room, I would also love to hear from you... and I promise I won't eat all your biscuits!

NATHAN REID
Bequests Officer

If you are interested in talking to Nathan to find out more information about bequests, please:

- Email nreid@globalinteraction.org.au
- Call 02 9868 9250



Cambodian street seller, Haylee Freudigmann

READY AND WILLING

As those who lived through the devastating bushfires in Victoria on February 2009 will know, there is amazing destructive power in the spreading flame of an Australian bushfire. It can change lives forever and impact generations to come. The book of Acts records for us a series of stories of another spreading flame. But for the spreading flame in Acts the consequences were very positive, life-transforming and also impacting for generations to come. Acts has often been called the Acts of the Apostles. It would be a mouthful, but it could more helpfully be called ...

‘The Acts of the Holy Spirit through ordinary people who were ready and willing for God to use them.’

In Acts 8, 9 and 10 we find three stories in which there is evidence of a **‘Gracious God’**, a **‘seeking soul’** and a **‘willing worker’**. When the willing worker is alert and ready to respond to the prompting of God, who is always gracious, there is a really helpful interaction with a seeking soul who is trying to make sense of life and explore what it means to have faith in God. More than that, we find doors opening to places such as Africa and Europe and to people who had previously not known about Jesus.

Check the stories ...

In **Acts 8:26-38**, an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in the service of the Queen of Ethiopia, is returning from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to worship God. He had been able to access a copy of the scroll of Isaiah and he is reading for more understanding. He is a seeking soul in whom the Spirit of Gracious God had already been working. Gracious God loves to respond to those who authentically seek and worship Him and He often looks for a worker who is ready and willing. Philip fits the description of a willing worker and a ‘tap on the shoulder’ or a prompting of God’s Spirit sends Philip across to the desert road to connect with the Ethiopian. The willing worker needs to be ready to step

out of his comfort zone and into the zone of the unknown, where God often does his greatest work! Philip listened and asked a good question. At the Ethiopian’s invitation, Philip sat with him, started with what he was reading and shared the good news of Jesus... and the door to Africa opened to the Gospel forever!

In **Acts 9:1-19** Saul, ‘a seeking soul’, although it was hard to tell, was on the road to Damascus when Gracious God ‘zapped’ him. Saul asked two great questions: ‘Who are you, Lord?’ and ‘What do you want me to do?’ (see also Acts 22:9,10). Gracious God looked for a willing worker and Ananias, after a lively and honest dialogue with God, was ready and willing to step out of his comfort zone and go across the road to Straight Street. He greeted Saul as ‘Brother Saul’ and shared the good news of Jesus. Saul was converted, his eyes opened to new perspectives and his life filled with the Spirit of God... and the apostle to the Gentile nations, to their kings and to the people of Israel was on his way! Note he was helped on his way by another willing worker, named Barnabas (see Acts 9:27), who also had to step out of his comfort zone. That is when God is often able to do his greatest work.

In **Acts 10:1-48**, Cornelius and his family are devout God-fearers – a family of seeking souls. Cornelius is a centurion in a Roman regiment. He was in charge of 100 soldiers, probably fiercely loyal and a good leader. His generosity and regular prayers were offerings that Gracious God accepted and to which he was pleased to respond. In this story the seeking soul had a vision. As well, Peter who became the willing worker also had a vision. In his vision, Peter dialogues with God about what is ‘clean’ and ‘unclean’. Gracious God delights to use surprising ways to encourage, spark or mobilise us out of our traditional, religious and racial comfort zones to move across regions. When Peter and Cornelius met, Peter made sure that there was



Fields of Thailand, Chris Barnden

an understanding that they were fellow travellers and briefly confessed to his own journey. He then gently invites Cornelius to share his journey which issues in a request for Peter to share the good news of Jesus.

Gracious God is always gracious! He is not willing that anybody should miss out on life! There are always people who are seeking to know God or even if there is a God. God's Spirit is always at work in the world and in the lives of men and women and young people to convict and convince them of the need for a relationship with God and a life purpose sourced and fuelled by him. God's promise is that if people seek him with all their heart they will find him (see Jeremiah 29:13). God is always gracious and there are always seeking souls. Therefore Gracious God is always on the lookout for willing workers whose hearts are completely His, whose radars are alert to His prompting and who are willing to step out of their comfort zones. He is on the lookout for those willing to cross the road, the region, the world to connect and travel with seeking souls. On the journey the workers have the privilege of loving them into taking Jesus seriously, asking good questions, sharing some of their own journey and, when appropriate, sharing the good news of Jesus. God often does His best work when we are out of comfort zones and needing to trust Him.

What is it that helps us to be willing workers?

- Let God know you are available... i.e. "Lord, the answer will always be 'Yes' even though I may need some clarity about the details."
- Listen to the Spirit's prompting each day.
- Deal with fears and be willing to walk across a room, a street, a city, a nation or the world.
- Build friendships, show hospitality, serve, care, listen to the stories of others.
- Live a credible life.
- Be willing to share your story and/or introduce Jesus' story, but do it respectfully and gently.

May our response be like Isaiah: 'Here am I Lord. Send me.' And like Mary: 'I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said.'

BILL BROWN
Senior Pastor
Syndal Baptist Church



Michael and Julia, with Josiah and Tillie

WHY WE'RE GOING BACK

At the end of 2010, Michael and Julia concluded their two year Gi6pro program in Thailand. They had been assisting the team with English teaching, health care, relationship building and discipling a growing faith community among the ethnic Thai people. Now they've decided to go back again – long-term!

Ever since we were married we have been working towards serving in cross-cultural mission. While we had both felt called to serve God cross-culturally in some way, neither of us had felt a call to a particular country or people group. As part of going to Bible College after local church ministry, we decided to undertake a short trip to see how we would cope as a family in a cross-cultural situation. So at the end of 2004 we packed our bags and went off to Thailand for one month with Global Interaction.

We had a good time but it was culturally challenging, especially for Julia caring for two young children. While Michael would have been happy to return as soon as possible, we decided that cross-cultural ministry in the future would involve leading teams or doing a short-term role. For the next eighteen months while we were at college we considered all sorts of ministry opportunities, many of which we felt we would enjoy and be able to make a positive contribution. However, nothing fell into place during this time. With about six months left of study, Michael led a team of college students on a short-term Global Xposure trip to Thailand. This was a pivotal time for us. Julia's attitude was challenged and consequently changed by some cross-cultural workers who shared at an Unearthed event, numerous Bible passages, sermons and even words of songs. Michael was personally challenged to consider cross-cultural mission again when the team was visiting Ash Barker (Urban Neighbourhoods of Hope) in Bangkok. The conviction and challenge was so strong that we spoke to Global Interaction about heading to Thailand in a Gi6pro role.

Our two years in Thailand as Gi6pro staff were challenging and encouraging at the same time. **The question was always on our mind about what the future would hold, and at times it was a burden.** For the first eighteen months of our term, Julia would have said that we would not be returning to Thailand long-term. The cultural and language differences were often difficult and homeschooling was a huge challenge, as well as the distance

and changing relationships with extended family and friends. For Michael, he was able to see the positives more easily and was in his element. It was great to see God working in so many ways and be part of this. But at times the need for the unreached Thai people to hear the good news could become overwhelming.

Towards the end of our time in Thailand, even though we still weren't sure whether we were called to long-term service, we felt the pressure to make a decision as there were practical steps we needed to make for returning to Australia. We began by planning as if we were not going to return to Thailand. It was then that we felt uneasy and didn't have a peace about this. **We spent time talking with God, our colleagues, friends and family to try and discern what long-term cross-cultural work in Thailand would look like and whether it was for us.** During this time we were excited about ideas that came to us and discovered an increasing desire to serve God wherever we were, together with a peace that God would work through us if loving and serving Him was our heart's desire.

One of the hardest things to discern has been what is best for us as a family. Working cross-culturally has been a different experience for each family member. It was always easy to decide what was best for me if I didn't consider the impact it would have on the other members of the family. **It wasn't until we all felt right about applying to return to Thailand long-term that we were comfortable to proceed.** Whilst Julia would have felt much more comfortable about applying for long-term service with clear, definitive, describable experiences (just like before!), instead it has been a collection of intuitions, thoughts, excitements, lots of tears, uncertainty, anxiousness, handing over, learning and most of all the assurance that God is there with us and will never leave us or forsake us.

MICHAEL & JULIA
Thailand



Men waiting for work



Mosque in Central Asia

XPOSED

In November last year a group of pastors from NSW visited the Global Interaction work in Central Asia. One of those travellers, Phil Blair from Green Point Baptist Church, reflects on the experience and the impact it's had on his ministry back here in Australia.

Why go?

In 1999, Green Point Baptist Church made a commitment to 'adopt' the H* people through Global Interaction, pledging themselves to partner with other churches to reach this lost people group. Ten years later I arrived in the role of Senior Pastor to find this adoption struggling to find much 'traction', with a low level of ownership and involvement, meaning little more than a small percentage of the annual budget and a few faithful pray-ers. I felt God convicting me to make sure I didn't lead a church that only paid lip-service to a missional commitment made before Him.

But here was the problem: how could I call on this congregation to get serious about this commitment they had made unless I was equally serious? So, when the opportunity came to go to Central Asia with a team assembled by Global Interaction, I felt I needed to put my money where my mouth is, so to speak, and model to the church that I'm willing to practice what I preach. And I am so glad I did, for it was greatly impacting on me personally as well!

Unexpected experiences

Central Asia was full of unexpected experiences: great food that didn't make me sick (chicken feet, jellyfish, yak meat), a landscape far more vast and intimidating than any I've ever seen (driving along the edge of 2000m-drop precipices), and sleeping on a clay 'kong' with seven other people.

Another unexpected aspect to Central Asia was how embracing the younger generation is of Westerners, and how much they want to learn about our lifestyle, culture and beliefs. Due to the control and limitation by authorities of global information, there was no end to the questions we received from Uni students, and their desire to soak up anything we would share with them. It provided some great opportunities to share what matters most!

Valuable lessons

The greatest single lesson I learnt on this trip is that God is at work in Central Asia. In every city, town and uni campus we went to, there were stories of how the message of the cross is transforming lives. When we visited a village in the north-west where no foreigner had ever set foot, and where the gospel had never been uttered by a human tongue, we all sensed that we were not the ones breaking new ground... the Holy Spirit was already at work. I can't explain to you the chill that went down my spine as we sang *Lord I Lift Your Name on High* in the middle of this little village filled with people who have never heard the name of Jesus! However, as exciting as that may have been, it was sobering to leave these people in the knowledge that more than likely they will never hear the gospel message in their own dialect before they die.

Another lesson I learnt was that many more Christians in Australia could be overseas cross-cultural workers than we would often think. Cross-cultural workers are not Christian superheroes. Each team member we spent time with was humble, generous, encouraging, and amazingly inspiring. They are ordinary people with willing hearts. Willing to go. Willing to share their story. Willing to leave the comforts of home behind.

Future opportunities

I greatly appreciated the opportunity to be part of the team to Central Asia, and it has made an impact on ministry at Green Point already. We have another trip planned for April 2012, where hopefully we'll see another group of people personally impacted and thereby far more committed to the task of reaching this wonderful group of H people. It's all part of honouring the commitment we've made, and playing our part in taking the name of Jesus to all nations.

PHIL BLAIR
Senior Pastor
Green Point Baptist Church

*For security reasons we refer to this least-reached people group as the H



Steve & Glenda



Arthur & Debbie



Graeme & Pat B



Ken & Roz S



Mark & Val H



Jotham & Fiona



Belinda Horne



Shannon Lawton



Scott & Kathryn Girvan



Michael & Chasely Paech

IN THE FAMILY

WELCOME

We're excited to have a number of new candidates preparing to join our cross-cultural teams:

- **Steve and Glenda**, from Wendouree Baptist Vic, previously spent 12 years in Zambia with Global Interaction. They will take on the role of Team Leaders for Malawi.
- **Arthur and Debbie**, from Kalgoorlie Baptist WA, are also joining the Malawi team.
- **Graeme and Pat B**, from Croydon Hills Baptist Vic, are returning to South Asia, where they previously served in the 70s and 80s.
- **Ken and Roz S**, from Dalby Baptist QLD, are preparing to join the team in Kazakhstan.
- **Mark and Val H** are returning to South East Asia, where Mark will take on the role of Team Leader for both the IB and IS teams.
- **Jotham and Fiona**, and their baby boy Zakkai, from Hughes Baptist ACT, have been accepted as candidates. It's still to be determined which cross-cultural team they will join. Jotham and Fiona worked with the team in Cambodia in 2009.

In the National Office we've had **Belinda Horne** join us in the role of HR Administrative Assistant and **Shannon Lawton** as Partnership Development Administrator.

GLOBAL INTERACTION BOARD

At the Global Interaction Board meeting in August, **John Peberdy** was elected as the new Chairperson and **Michelle Farrell** as the new Vice-Chair. Both John and Michelle have been involved with Global Interaction, including serving on the Board, for a number of years. **Michael Pittendrig** was re-elected as the Treasurer of the Board. Joining them on the Board for 2011 are: **Norm Nix** (NSW), **Ivan James** (TAS), **Ashley Saunders** (QLD), **Kaye Walker** (VIC), **Gary Le Cras** (WA), **John Gronow** (NT), **Rachel Bowey** (SA), **Ken Clendinning** (Australian Baptist Ministries), **John Hickey** (BWAA) and **Keith Jobberns** (General Director). Pray for all the Board members as they serve in this capacity with Global Interaction.

COMPLETION OF SERVICE

After more than 10 years working with the team in Malawi, **Scott and Kathryn Girvan**, along with their four girls, have concluded their service. Praise God for their ongoing faithfulness and passion over the years for empowering Yao communities.

In March **Michael and Chasely Paech**, along with their children Hannah, Rachael, Alicia and Joshua, conclude six and a half years of service in Kazakhstan. Praise God for their faithful ministry among the Kazakh people, for their commitment to the team and for the many relationships they established.

Bruce and Cheryl Roberts concluded their service at the end of 2010 after six and a half years working with the teaching team in Central Asia. Praise God for the leadership and care that Bruce brought to the team as the Team Leader, and for both Bruce and Cheryl's ongoing commitment to seeing people come into a relationship with Jesus.

After a three year term in Kazakhstan **Chris and Bronwyn Downes**, along with Esther and Sarah, concluded their service at the end of 2010. Chris and Bronwyn were heavily involved in establishing the English language school and a number of other inroads into the community.

Almost 15 years ago **Sunny Mak** joined the Global Interaction work in Hong Kong. Since then he has been involved with editing and writing theological works, working on Bible translation, pastoral ministry, leadership development and teaching theology. He also completed a Greek-Chinese lexicon. He finished with Global Interaction in January.

Lahlupuii Sailo (Puii) has been a valuable member of the Teaching Team in China since 2003 (seconded from the Baptist Churches of Mizoram). As a teacher and student mentor she had a vital impact on the lives of many young women at the two universities in which she taught. Puii returned to her home in Mizoram in August.

Mim Hosking served for three years in the role of Young Adults Consultant in Western Australia, concluding at the end of 2010. In that time she's journeyed with a number of young (and some not so young) adults as they have explored their involvement in cross-cultural mission. Thanks for all your hard work, passion and commitment Mim!

We are very thankful to **Jim Kime**, who stepped in for seven months as Interim State Director in NSW and ACT. Jim and his wife Marilyn have a long history with Global Interaction, and we have really appreciated his leadership and wisdom in this role.



May Missions Month

2011

GLOBAL | INTERACTION

Global Interaction's May Missions Month empowers churches to strengthen their commitment to cross-cultural mission.

For more information about how you can be involved in May Missions Month contact your State Office or go to www.globalinteraction.org.au



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