

WHAT DO YOU HAVE
IN STORE FOR ME?

Does mission harm
more than good? DO
I HAVE GOD?
TO GO? GOD?

Question time



Geoff Maddock is Global Interaction's VIC/TAS State Leader. He is a deep thinker with experience in local and global mission contexts.

There are many questions we can ask about mission and our place in it, but do we ever question mission itself? Is it justifiable today?

It's reasonable to have mixed feelings about an enterprise with such a mixed legacy. The history of mission is undeniably intermingled with colonialism and the harm associated with that. It's right to acknowledge the brutality of some mission endeavours and to recognise mission efforts were often accompanied by cultural dominance, economic cruelty and military conquest.

These coercive practices have no place in God's mission. But where does that leave mission in this century?

As we consider this question, we hold in tension the importance of reflecting,

confessing and lamenting with the conviction that there *is* good reason for hope-fuelled mission in the decades to come. But this conviction rightly leads us to another question.

What Kind of Mission?

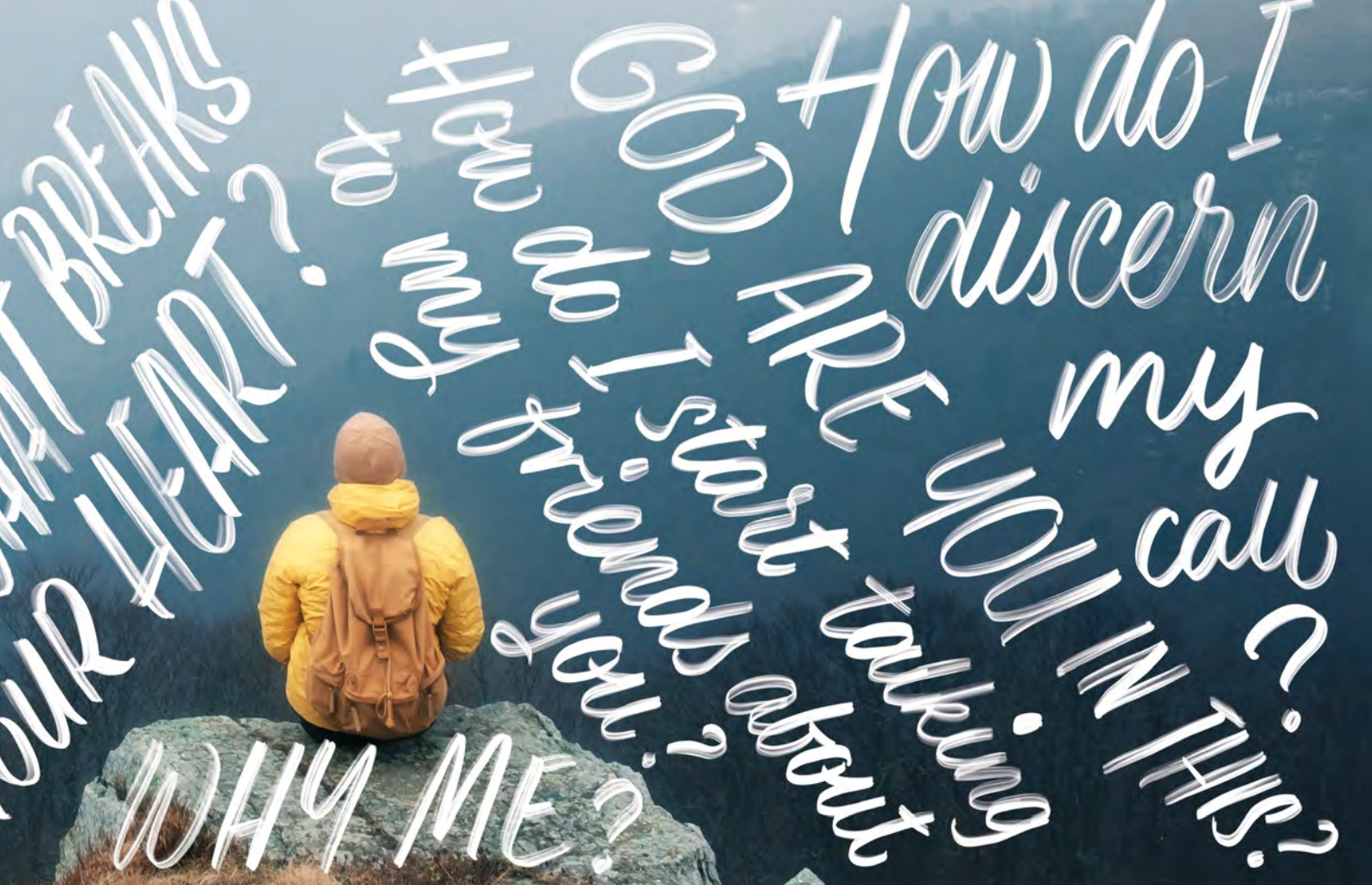
When we talk about God's relationship with the world, certain scriptures leap to mind, but one in particular captures the Christian imagination. John 3:16.

For God so loved the world...

This truth is the doorway every missional idea and practice must pass through. It also contains the *means* of God's loving mission – the incarnation.

... that he gave his only Son...

God's non-coercive, bodily love for the world is the fountainhead for all we hope to do in mission. It is simultaneously the *motivation* and the *method*. To escape the mistakes of the past and freshly align ourselves with a biblical missiology,



we need to embrace God's unqualified affection for the whole world as shown to us in the ways of Jesus.

Many of our past mistakes in mission are tethered to a dualistic worldview that dismisses God's care and concern for bodily life while focussing on the afterlife. The flipside of this is that we privilege physical matters and ignore the spiritual realities of God's world.

As we consider mission in the 21st century, we are compelled to return to this crucial question: How can we be ambassadors for the whole Gospel to the whole world? At the very least, this requires an embodied commitment to God's love across the street and around the world.

Evangelism or Social Justice?

Jesus was questioned about why He wasted so much time enjoying food and friends. The religious people of His day seemed to be concerned Jesus wasn't

prioritising the right things. Some today also assume we should either prioritise 'evangelism' or 'social justice'.

In the second half of the 20th century, evangelicals had a vigorous debate about what was more important for mission – evangelism or social justice. Into this debate stepped a humble scholar, a pastor by the name of Rene Padilla. **He argued there was no need to choose, in fact, by choosing one over the other we were doomed to failure.** He said that evangelism and social justice were like two wings of an aeroplane...we need both!

As we reflect on mission, seeking God's leading and drawing on scripture, we return to the world-embracing love of Jesus. **And in embodying this love, we cannot dismember the good news in order to accommodate our unbiblical dualism and must recognise that mission is as much for neighbouring nations as it is for our actual neighbours.**

Questions are so important!
The above image poses questions pertinent for each of us.

If these questions resonate with you, get in touch with the Global Interaction team. We're here to journey with you in your discernment.





Why Mozambique?



Most Yawo people of Northern Mozambique identify as Muslim, and while they respect Jesus as a prophet, they don't know Jesus as He presents Himself in the Bible.

Cam serves in Mozambique. Building on Geoff Maddock's exploration of the biblical basis of mission (pages 11-12), Cam explores why he and Kath's answer to 'where?' is Mozambique.

The chance that a Yawo person will encounter Jesus as He is found in the Bible, in their context, is very low. There is very little access to Bibles, literacy rates are low and there are only a handful of Yawo followers of Jesus in the Yawo population.

My friend Rachid spent his life farming and seeking God through his Muslim faith. His life story contains hard work and dislocation due to living through two wars.

He started noticing me as I rode my motorbike past his house and became curious. One day he stopped me and asked me who I was and why I was here in Mozambique.

This was the start of our friendship and soon we were meeting every week to share Bible stories and talk about life. We met in his home, out at his farm or as we visited people in the area.

Through relationship, opportunities opened up to share who Jesus is and the freedom that comes with knowing Him.

After learning who Jesus is, Rachid decided that he wanted to follow the Jesus path. **He saw through God's Word that Jesus is the doorway to being in relationship with God.**

Would Rachid have ever discovered Jesus if we didn't encounter each other in the Mozambican bush? I can't say for sure. Maybe God would have worked out another story. But what is apparent, is that God had a plan when He called us, an Australian family, to Mozambique. The plan involved Rachid hearing the stories of the Bible in a way and language he could understand.

This unlikely friendship between an Aussie and Yawo man resulted in Rachid being introduced to Jesus despite being part of a community where very few know Him.

The story of Yawo people encountering Jesus is only just beginning. **There is continuing need for Jesus followers to be here so that many more may discover what following Jesus means for them. Could God be prompting you?**

