

Global Interaction

Going Green

Media constantly bombards us with the environmental crisis of climate change. There are scary predictions of the effects of sea-level rises, temperature changes and increased storm activity that cause concern in all regions of the world. We often hear debate about how much of the climate crisis is caused by human activity and the accuracy of predictions, however, these days few would argue that the phenomenon is real. **As people of faith, I would argue that even if human induced climate change is not real, the biblical mandate to care for creation is real. In Genesis 2:15, God gives humanity the responsibility to tend and care for His creation.**

In Australia, we have the ability to make personal choices and influence national decisions that have some bearing on climate

change. Over 10 years ago, as an Environmental Planner, I had access to sea-level rise data and storm surge predictions that enabled me, as a decision-maker, to know if coastal developments were appropriate. However, in many of the locations Global Interaction works across Asia and Africa, countries and regions are not prepared for the emerging effects of climate change. Some of our cross-cultural workers observe seasonal shifts causing problems in agriculture, and heat in urban areas is creating challenges for human health.

So what does this mean for Global interaction?

For starters, we concur with the Lausanne Movement, a global movement that mobilises evangelical leaders to collaborate for world evangelisation.

They say:

- *“If Jesus is Lord of all the earth, we cannot separate our relationship to Christ from how we act in relation to the earth. For to proclaim the gospel that says ‘Jesus is Lord’ is to proclaim the gospel that includes the earth, since Christ’s Lordship is over all Creation. Creation care is thus a gospel issue within the Lordship of Christ.”*
- Lausanne Movement, Cape Town Commitment (2012)

Global Interaction has been at the forefront of implementing this commitment in South East Asia. Working in a Muslim context, where there is a similar creation story to our own recorded in Genesis, we are engaging with hundreds of thousands of people in our



environmental improvement projects. These projects include clean-up days, waste banks (exchanging recyclable waste for books and other daily needs etc.) tree planting, and education around green lifestyle and food through our Café project. **Crucially, participants are invited into a conversation about how our efforts to improve the environment are spiritual acts and that we are joining our Creator God in His plan to redeem His creation!**

So we are already working in the space, but Global Interaction has recently considered we could be doing more. Our Board, with the advice of our Missiological Advisory Committee, has recently added a statement to our Theology of Mission. In discussing what it means for our mission to be wholistic, the following paragraph has been included:

“A concern with the whole creation involves care for the whole environment, both people and places. God’s act of creating is His first missionary act and God’s design for creation ensures the nurture and care of all that lives and breathes within it. Creation first nurtures and cares for us. Caring for God’s creation is therefore, in return, an expression of His kingdom and a practical demonstration of loving our neighbours. Programs that focus on environmental issues are a unique opportunity to demonstrate the love of Christ to people and all living things that are inextricably bound up with the created physical environment.”

For a full reading of our Theology of Mission, see our website at www.globalinteraction.org.au/TheologyOfMission

What does this mean for our work across Asia, Africa and Outback Australia?

Our teams now have the mandate and are encouraged to consider platforms that include creation care as a way of communicating the Gospel.

We have a fantastic model operating in South East Asia that we can adapt in other Muslim majority regions. More research will need to be done to consider how such programs could be adapted to connect with Hindu and Buddhist communities. We are committed to undertake this research and partner with others active in those communities in order to learn from them.

Global Interaction is also engaging innovative new thinking around organisational stewardship across national and state-based operations. In our local Australian setting, these developments are anticipated as new ways of honouring our Creator God more broadly, across all we do.

If you are reading this article and feel that you have skills that might fit within a cross-cultural context, bringing together environmental sustainability and faith, please contact me at our National Office, or speak to your local State Director. We’d love to explore how you might partner with us in this new approach to see God’s kingdom come.

— Andy
Director of Mobilisation,
Partnership and Development

Episode 3 of this year’s May Mission Month video resource, *GROW where you’re planted, SOW where He calls*, featured the Creation Care project in South East Asia. Please email info@globalinteraction.org.au for the video link and password or for further information as to how your church, business or organisation might explore deeper alignment with creation care values.