



Living Out

Andrew Palmer, NSW/ACT State Director, pays tribute to a ministry that has equipped a movement of followers of Jesus in Hong Kong.

It's altogether likely you have heard the phrase "preach the gospel always, use words when necessary..." This quote is almost universally attributed to Francis of Assisi, but actually there is no evidence Francis ever uttered these words or held to any theological position that downplayed the importance of the spoken Gospel witness.

In all likelihood, the idea is an interpretation of a genuine Franciscan quote: "It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching." That is to say, what Francis was concerned about was that the actions of the Church matched their rhetoric. Today we would probably simply say, "Practice what we preach."

In 1987 a young family applied to work with Global Interaction in Central Asia. Lindsay and Jane were professionals with a heart to live out their

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— St Francis of Assisi

faith and serve cross-culturally. Their initial assignment of two years saw them teaching English in mainland East Asia, whilst raising two children. Through significant political upheaval that saw them briefly evacuated, they served two terms.

Following further study in England where Lindsay was awarded his PhD at Oxford University, the family in 1998 moved to Hong Kong and Lindsay took on a role at the Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary teaching New Testament, Theology and Christian Thought (among others!).

Lindsay's research interests have direct and deep missional implications.

His examination of the being and nature of God led him to consider the reality and meaning of beauty, and how this intersects with the Christian life in art and symbol. Consequently, this led two post graduate students to begin to explore the use of art and beauty in counselling practice around dealing with trauma. Lindsay has continued to work with them in research, workshop, and feedback methods to further enhance the study. This is an example of the Kingdom of God in practice.

Through Lindsay and Jane's work thousands have been trained to serve in Churches and ministries across Asia. The multiplication is extraordinary,



The Gospel



and this is where our passions meet the sovereign purposes of God. **Prior to graduating, a student named Carmen shared how the example of sacrifice of Lindsay and Jane coming all the way to Hong Kong to teach them impacted her life, so much so, that she decided to pursue missionary work. Carmen has now been a cross-cultural worker in India for over ten hard years of highly effective ministry.**

Other students have gone out all over the world in pastoral and teaching positions. It is clear Lindsay and Jane's ministry has been wonderfully strategic. Crucially, it is person-centred.

For years Jane has met with women from across Hong Kong – many not-yet-followers of Jesus – to listen and care and provide support in what is one of the busiest (and sometimes most isolating) cities in the world. This pastoral work has colloquially become known as Jane's "Yum Cha Ministry". Meanwhile, Lindsay's gentle spirit and listening ear has pastored many young students as they shared their joys, dreams, sorrows, fears and hopes with a trusted mentor. And this is where this particular story swings back to where we began: Lindsay and Jane have for the better part of the last thirty years lived

out the maxim of St Francis: their *walking* has matched their *preaching*. In short, they have lived out the *whole* of the Gospel.

Many opportunities present themselves for engagement within the communities we work in today – and teaching English is one ongoing relevant mode. Done well, it opens up the world, grows skills and capacity to navigate a globalised economy, and provides a natural context for sharing the life transforming story of Jesus, as we also commit to learning the heart culture and language of those among whom we work daily. **I am sure that God is raising up women, men and families who, like Lindsay and Jane 31 years ago, sense God's calling to use their professional expertise for the glory of His name and the expansion of His Kingdom!**



Following more than 30 years of ministry, Lindsay and Jane will conclude as cross-cultural workers in late 2020.



Above: Lindsay and Jane with their children David and Rachel, 2017.

Above left: Lindsay and Jane, 1988. Left: Lindsay with a class at the Seminary, 2012.