Resonate

ISSUE 25

THE technology ISSUE

GLOBAL INTERACTION

GIVE ME SPACE

THE CASE FOR RETREAT IN A TECHNOLOGY SATURATED LIFE

May Mission Month

SPECIAL EDITION

15 MINUTES WITH *Janie*

Technology impacts us all. For some people, it's as natural as the air we breathe. Some of us love to seek out the newest products while others wait until their device dies before moving on. Communications Manager, Janie Alcock tells us why she both loves and hates the technology in her life.

What technology could you not live without?

I was born and raised in the UK so Skype is my best friend. I love being able to see my family's faces. I use it on my phone, my computer and my TV. My niece always wants to Skype with our dog and it's hilarious watching him run around trying to work out who's calling his name. One of the highlights is talking to my elderly grandparents. I love to watch how awestruck they are to be seeing me on their computer and I have to smile while they use the screen to rearrange their hair and clothing before our conversation begins.

Are you a techie?

No, not really. I find that I am often competing with technology for people's attention. I like it simple and I love it when it works. When there's an issue I leave it to my gadget loving husband who works in IT and loves to experiment.

We are currently controlling our phones, TV and car system with our voices. This virtual assistant is like the third person in our marriage and seems to get on better with Toby as she struggles to understand my accent (or maybe she is choosing not to)!

What new technologies are you using in your role at Global Interaction?

The mission world struggles to keep up with technology due to the cost but we need to continue to develop relationships with a wide range of age groups. It's great to have a new website and I am excited about starting a Resonate blog so that we can nut out some of the challenging issues with our readers.

How would you share the Gospel in 140 characters?

That isn't my style at all... I am all about hanging out with people and when an opportunity arises I love to discuss my faith. My tweet would be, *"Who's free for coffee?"*

3 FACTORS to consider when evaluating technology

1 VALUE

Does it increase the quality of your life? Does your new fitness band really make you fitter (would it be better to spend the money on a gym membership)?

2 CLARITY

Are you getting your message across? Is technology enhancing your communication? (Maybe your mate would appreciate a F2F more than an emoticon.)

3 PURPOSE

What is the real need? Most technologies have many more options than you know – check out blogs and YouTube to learn how to get the most out of a product you already have before you invest in something new.

MEET THE *Neighbours*

A GLIMPSE AT WOMEN IN THE BUDDHIST WORLD

Two Global Interaction teams work in Thailand and Cambodia where the majority of the population are Buddhist. Cross-cultural worker Janelle, serving the Khmer people of Cambodia, provides a glimpse into the life of her friend Channy who is wrestling with the message of following Jesus and her Buddhist worldview.

Channy is a hard-working business woman in the tourist part of Siem Reap. Channy believes her success is attributed to the merit she gives at the Buddhist temple and by giving to the beggars that frequently ask for money at her store. Khmer Buddhists believe in reincarnation and that by doing good things for others, such as giving food or money to the poor or the monks will result in their next life being easier and more prosperous, and their ancestral spirits will be kinder to them. Recently Channy was robbed of money by a homeless teenage boy. As she started to seek justice by going to the police and demanding her money back, she was overcome with compassion and instead decided to give the boy some food and organised for him to be accepted by a local NGO for homeless kids. Whilst this is perceived as 'doing good' with a view of receiving merit for yourself, it is also counter to Khmer culture to help and forgive those who do the wrong thing by you. When I listened to Channy tell me this story, I saw a clear picture of how Jesus is working in Channy's heart in a way that reflects His compassion and forgiveness, just how He wants us all to care for others. She is seeking to understand Jesus and I believe Jesus is revealing Himself to her in unexpected ways.

ADVENTURES WITH THE
HARLANDS

Introducing LUKE & BELLE

Regular readers have enjoyed reading the adventures of the Beeck family for the past three years. As they prepare to finish their first term we are pleased to introduce you to Luke and Belle. Let's hear from this young family from Queensland as they embark on their journey to long-term cross-cultural mission in Thailand. Take it away Luke!

Anyone who's lived overseas will tell you that there's a honeymoon period when the challenges of the unfamiliar culture are drowned out by the sights, smells and wonder of living in a new world. It's not surprising then that God called us to cross-cultural mission on our actual honeymoon. Belle and I had felt drawn to overseas mission for a while but it took a serendipitous encounter with a young Thai boy to make us stop and ask the question, "Does God want us in Thailand?"

We decided to spend some of our honeymoon visiting a home for marginalised children. We were heading to a music store nearby to buy a ukulele for the kids, when we ran into a little boy from the home in the driveway. He spoke no English and we could only butcher a few Thai phrases so communicating was done mostly by some strange form of finger puppets. He was visibly upset and was running away from the home.

It was obvious he was seeking attention so we took him back to the home and arranged to take him and another boy out for milkshakes. It was in the mild chaos of this moment that we caught each other's eyes and simultaneously had the same thought. **God had us in exactly the right place at the right time to change the course of this little guy's day and potentially his life. We knew God was saying something.**

It took a serendipitous encounter with a young Thai boy to make us stop and ask the question, "Does God want us in Thailand?"

This encounter, along with short-term exposure trips with our church and other experiences, led us to be convinced on the idea of mission work in Thailand. We wanted to sell up and make the move in a few months with no plan and no idea what we were doing. Well, it's been three years since then and we're thankful for the time God has taken to prepare us, even though this time in limbo is still tricky to navigate.

One of the main things that drew us to working with Global Interaction was their catch cry, 'empowering communities to develop their own distinctive ways of following Jesus'.

It's something we're really excited about; peeling back the layers until you're left with the bare bones of the Gospel and allowing that to take root in the hearts of a people from a different culture. We can't wait to see the unique ways that the Ethnic Thai people express their faith and love for Jesus.

Part of us wants to be over there now, diving into culture and language learning and making more finger puppet friends but we're also dreading saying goodbye to friends and in particular, family. Belle grew up in the Philippines and her parents worked very hard to move the family to Australia. Although they're Christians and have gotten used to the idea, they've never really understood why we would sacrifice so much of what Australia offers to move to a developing country. And to boot, we're taking their only grandchild with us. We're learning to leave it in God's gracious hands.

John recorded in Revelation 7:9 that before the throne of God he saw "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language." I want to stand there that day, worshiping God, next to my Thai brothers and sisters.

GIVE ME SPACE

The case for retreat IN A TECHNOLOGY SATURATED LIFE

Late last year I read a cross-cultural worker's newsletter. It started with, "We are so thankful for our retreat, it's been a significant few days and we feel refreshed from the down-time. It's been a huge blessing to us all." I paused to wonder what do they do at a retreat? Retreats are not an everyday topic with my friends – I don't know anyone who does this kind of thing. When I hear the word retreat – images come to my mind of soldiers withdrawing from enemy fire!

I sat down with Val Holt, a Global Interaction Director, to find out more about what happens at the cross-cultural workers' retreats. She explained how the teams spend time away from ordinary life situations, not a holiday or an escape, but time to rest and be guided through activities giving intentional space for connection with God.

As I reflected on our conversation I was surprisingly confronted with the realisation that I would really benefit from a proper rest, a retreat of my own. I know that giving intentional extended time with God would require stopping but I find it so hard to even slow down for a moment. Do I sit on a train looking out of the window? Nah, I play with my phone. Do I sit down with a cup of tea if I have a few hours alone? No way, I channel hop, put the washing on and call a friend all at the same time! I am not sure whether my inability to rest is linked to my extroverted nature but I know that given a choice I would rather do something (or many things) than stop and do nothing.

I GUESS YOU COULD THINK OF A RETREAT AS A BIG... DEEP... LONG... BREATH...

But it's not just the busyness of doing things – my mind is just as hectic as my hands. I am always ticking things over in my head, planning, arranging and rearranging. It's no surprise given that I am immersed in a culture that is entertainment and task driven and overflowing with a lot of stuff! According to a technology report by the BBC*, "In the course of a day, the average person in a Western city is said to be exposed to as much data as someone in the 15th century would encounter in their entire life." No wonder we need a break!

I guess you could think of a retreat as a big... deep... long... breath (and for Christians we dare to acknowledge the breath of God).

This time to pause is so important to re-engage our senses which are numbed by the overwhelming and aggressive demands for our attention. It gives our bodies and minds a chance to slow down, recharge and refocus. This space, away from the busyness, helps us to reflect on our life, how God is working in us and what He desires for us.

From the beginning of time God has called His people to pause. In Genesis we read about how He gave His people the Sabbath to enjoy rest after working and to spend time with Him. Jesus took Himself away from the crowds and modelled to His followers how to take the time to realign their hearts with God. Christians throughout the centuries have followed His example and sought closeness with God in monasteries, in nature, in cathedrals and more recently in spirituality centres.

The challenge is to transform the rest into an intentional time to be with our own thoughts and be aware of God's presence. God made each of us unique, so the things that are life-giving and help us connect with God are very different for each person. Along with reading the Bible, it could be spending time in nature, with people, in books, in art, in music or practicing ancient rituals.

A great example for me is my sister who was determined to make space in her life for this kind of retreaty stuff. For this to happen something had to give. So she turned her phone off for 40 days, yep, 40 days! As she grieves the lack of instant communication with friends she is feeling a sense of freedom from the ringing, texts, WhatsApp, Facebook messages, IM, Skypes and emails. The time and mental space has allowed her to be more present in the moment to enjoy her family and natural surroundings. She has come alive in her relationship with God.

I admire her pursuit and am more than a teeny bit envious.

Armed with my new found insight about the value of retreat I needed to find something that suited the way God created me. I have always loved nature. So I did it, I booked a retreat with my husband away from the city.

We left our mobiles at home, woke up to the birdsong, walked through rolling hills and swam in the sea. I felt annoying and persistent pangs to check my phone but after a few days I could embrace the time and delighted in hearing whispers from God as we spent time outdoors. I knew I had to do this again... and again.

The overwhelming sense of calm and joy I felt after our retreat was something that I long for in the everyday. Over the last few months I have been trying to build space for more life-giving, God-centred activities and put boundaries around energy-sapping friendships and stressful events. My new love is a turquoise bike which I cycle to work along the river. On my bike I can't talk to anyone (although sometimes I talk to myself), I can't check my Facebook and I am not stressed by the traffic – I simply pedal, admire the beauty and talk to God. I praise Him and ask that He shows me His agenda for my day and that I will view each interaction through His eyes. I have been pedalling away for six weeks and I notice I have more life-giving, God-ordained moments than ever before.

JANIE ALCOCK

Want to explore retreats for yourself?

- *Simplify* by Bill Hybels
- *Sacred Pathways* by Gary Thomas
- *Sacred Pauses* by Macrina Wiederkehr
- *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence
- www.pray-as-you-go.org
- www.spiritualdirection.org.au
- www.wellspringcentre.org.au

* http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20130516-how-city-life-is-changing-us

May Mission Month

Jesus instructed His followers to spread His teachings to all the nations of the world (The Great Commission). But what sounds like a ridiculously huge task was given a plan in Acts.

BUT YOU WILL RECEIVE POWER WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES ON YOU; AND YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES IN JERUSALEM, AND IN ALL JUDEA AND SAMARIA, AND TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.

Acts 1:8 (NIV)

In this study we interpret these places as our friends and family, our neighbourhood, the marginalised and the least-reached people of our world. Ultimately this plan requires us to 'go' to someone somewhere!

The mission God calls us to is always present. Many churches will set aside a particular month to focus on this mission, particularly our calling to go to the "ends of the earth" to make disciples.

What will you do to be a witness and who will you go to?

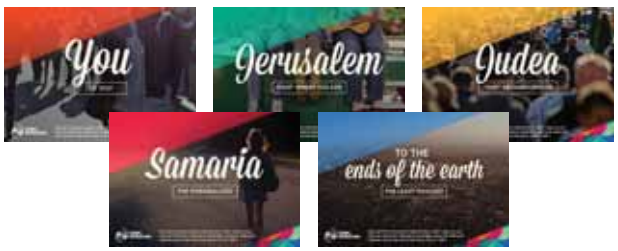
The following studies form part of the Global Interaction May Mission Month resource to help you and your church focus on and broaden your understanding of mission. This year we share some tools to tackle this plan so that together we will reach many more people with the transforming message of Jesus.

How to use this resource

Use as a small group study. Read the passage and discuss the questions together. As a group, choose to support a Global Interaction cross-cultural worker or project as part of your giving to mission.

If you are not part of a small group, use the passages and questions to guide your daily time with God. Meditate on the Bible verses, journal your responses to the discussion questions and challenge yourself to learn more about the people around you and overseas who need to hear the message of Jesus.

For pastors or leaders, visit the May Mission Month page www.globalinteraction.org.au/mmm. Here you will find detailed sermon notes, children's activities, DVD clips plus extra resources that will help you involve your congregation and small group throughout May Mission Month.



WE ALL LOVE VISUAL REMINDERS – we've created a series of five striking postcards to keep Acts 1:8 in your mind. Stick them on your pin board, wall or use as a bookmark for your Bible (if you still read paper!)

Order for free or print your own at www.globalinteraction.org.au/MMM/postcards

You

OR YOU?

INTRODUCTION

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and *you will be my witnesses* in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

Remember when it was wonderful to be told, regularly, that you were special? Maybe you heard lots of talks assuring you that you could do anything. "The world is your oyster, you can change the world, you will make a difference!" You gravitated towards the parts of the Bible that reminded you that you are deeply loved.

And you are.

So it stood to reason that as you grew up everyone, not just your family and your God, would love you as well. You'd be famous. Then you finished school and discovered everyone thought they were special and unique. Suddenly it got harder to stand out from the crowd.

READ & DISCUSS

Read Matthew 5:13-16

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

- *Think of a time you humbly served a person or a group (and therefore Jesus). Discuss about how you found the experience.*
- *When you read the collective term 'you' in the passage, what difference does it make to the meaning compared with a singular term 'you'?*

Read Acts 1:8

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

- *How does collective thinking ('you' as the people of God) impact how we might carry out Jesus' mission?*
- *What are some gifts and skills God has blessed you personally with?*
- *If those personal gifts are actually gifts to the collective people of God, how could you contribute to the collective mission Jesus has given?*

PRAY

Look once again at Jesus' words in Acts and pray them in a way that applies to your church.

> *Lord, we pray that (church/community) would recognise the Holy Spirit's power and be your witnesses in (Jerusalem – our friends/family), (Judea – our neighbours), (Samaria – those that are marginalised in our community) and to all the ends of the earth (the countries we prayerfully and financially support).*

Expand your prayer to include those issues or needs that God brings to your (collective!) minds.

WEEK 2

Jerusalem

RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE

INTRODUCTION

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in *Jerusalem*, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

Jesus' commissioning to His followers began with the calling to share His story right in their own capital city. A city that was the centre of Jewish expression of faith. While in some ways it may have been easy to begin here, imagine telling family, teachers and leaders you have information they don't. It sounds a bit arrogant! Yet this was the task Jesus set them.

READ

Read Acts 2:1-14

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken... Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: 'Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.'"

DISCUSS

Until the events of Acts 2, the teachings of Jesus were known to have been shared in groups, families and towns. As an international crowd gathered in Jerusalem, the disciples had the opportunity to share the Good News locally and see that message spread far.

- You probably don't need to learn a whole new language to communicate God's story with friends and work mates. Still, not everyone means the same things with the words they use (it was a strange day when 'fully sick' became a good thing!). *What area of culture or language might you need to learn more about to communicate with others (younger people, work mates, uni students)?*
- *As a Christian you will likely be growing because of God's leading. What might your friends or family notice is different about you?*
- *If your behaviour has changed and people ask you about it, how could you explain it? How could this explanation point people to Jesus and be said in a way that is respectful? Use a specific example if that helps.*
- *What questions of meaning and faith could you ask friends or work mates who do not yet follow Jesus?*

May Mission Month

www.globalinteraction.org.au/mmm

Judea

"OUR" NEIGHBOURHOOD

INTRODUCTION

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in *all Judea* and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8 (NIV)

As followers of Jesus we are mindful of the calling to meet the physical and spiritual needs of people around us. Many churches work to provide food hampers, support groups and classes to address needs in their neighbourhoods. Jesus, when sending out His disciples, gave a very curious instruction...

READ

Read Luke 10:1-7

"After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.'"

DISCUSS

Jesus instructed the disciples not to bring food but to eat what was provided. The context is important. In the Hebrew culture, hospitality was as natural as breathing, so even a stranger would be welcomed and provided a meal. Still, by being the receivers rather than the givers, the disciples were on the back foot in terms of a power relationship.

- *Can you think of examples of times when Jesus ensured the person He was talking to had the opportunity to give or participate rather than only receive?* (Try John 4, Luke 7:38-38 and John 11:39)
- *How could the sharing of faith be strengthened when both people are given the opportunity to give and receive?*
- *In your neighbourhood there are people who have both physical and spiritual needs. How do you get to know them better?*
- *Who are the people in your neighbourhood you are serving and what talents or experiences do they have to give?*

WEEK 4

Samaria

THE MARGINALISED

INTRODUCTION

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and *Samaria*, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

The term 'Good Samaritan' has become a part of our everyday language to refer to someone who has done a good or kind act. In our Aussie context being a Good Samaritan does not sound shocking or ironic. However, a Samaritan to Jewish ears in Biblical times was someone to be avoided, hated and certainly not trusted. In our context, we name these people 'the marginalised'.

READ

Read Acts 8:4-8

"Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralysed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city."

DISCUSS

Philip was willing to cross social and religious barriers to go to the hated Samaritans. He understood that God called him to love these people and that God's mission extends to even them.

- *Why might the Samaritans have been so joyful about Phillip's message and work?*
- *Who are the marginalised in Australian society and in the city or town where you live?*
- *Are there any bad experiences or prejudices you have to ask God to help you overcome?*
- *How can your church or small group specifically build relationships with marginalised people?*

May Mission Month

www.globalinteraction.org.au/mmm

Ends of the earth

THE LEAST-REACHED

INTRODUCTION

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to *the ends of the earth*." Acts 1:8

The biggest challenge and the greatest opportunity for the Gospel to continue to spread around the world is with those who are known as 'least-reached'. They are the two billion people in the world today who will go from birth to death without ever hearing the Good News about Jesus in a way they can understand.

READ

Read Acts 13:44-52

"On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy. They began to contradict what Paul was saying and heaped abuse on him. Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us: 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.' When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honoured the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed. The word of the Lord spread through the whole region."

Read Matthew 28:19-20

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

DISCUSS

When Jesus' disciples shared the Good News, they began with people like themselves. People who spoke their language, shared their faith in God and lived close by. Even as Paul travelled, he began by sharing at the town's synagogue. Yet culture and heritage would not stop them, and they shared Good News with people not like themselves.

- *It has been almost 2000 years since Jesus commissioned His followers to make disciples of all nations. We can now travel to many countries and call anyone for almost nothing online. So why hasn't the message gotten out to everyone? What might be preventing groups of people from learning about the Good News of Jesus in a way they can understand?*
- *If God sent your small group to share His story of hope to a least-reached people group, in a country far from Australia, how would you prepare? What would you need to know? Where would you begin?*
- *How can you become more aware of global mission, particularly to the least-reached?*

THE POWER of the SM

Sitting on the train heading home from uni I'm a hive of activity – rant on Facebook, Instagram a pic of my designer sushi and reply to a friend's dinner invite with a smiley face. With my smartphone in hand I'm the master of my domain. This is the world I live in. I've now checked in with everyone in my virtual world.

It's not until I take a rare moment to look up from phone that I realise I'm surrounded by people. People with full lives, people with great hopes and deep hurts – people that I know are there but didn't actually notice while buried in my mobile. I have to admit I've never given a second thought to the way I use technology while in the presence of real live people.

> ***SHOULD I SWITCH OFF MY VIRTUAL FRIENDS IN ORDER TO SWITCH ON TO THOSE IN FRONT OF ME?***

Putting my phone down for an instant, I begin to reflect on the power of this hand-held device (plus the laptop and iPad in my backpack and the Fitbit on my wrist). They are an extension of who I am, tools that allows me to communicate, integrate and connect.

It's incredible! (However, I also wonder if hyperventilating every time I misplace my phone might be a sign that not all is well).

As a follower of Jesus do I need to be connecting with people – strangers even – that enter into my daily space, not just those online? Should I switch off my virtual friends in order to switch on to those in front of me?

In moments of great technological crisis (which this of course is) what could be better than to swipe on my phone and message a couple of people who have done some of this thinking before me?

When cross-cultural workers move into a new context, building relationships with the local people is their first priority. They aim to get to know people and earn the right to share the message of Jesus with them. As technology native Aussies they have had to think about how best to use technology in their new setting.

So in true Twitter style here's a couple of pros and cons from Global Interaction's cross-cultural workers... in 140 characters or less!

PRO – ease of communication with local friends

#LuluinCentralAsia
My 200 English students are technology lovers. I receive texts all hours of the day for catch ups, prayer or help. It's vital to my work!

PRO – keep in touch with home

#BillinOutbackAustralia
With a phone in my pocket I can easily share news with supporters. When I miss family I can see their faces in an instant.

CON – the technology gap

#PhilinSouthAsia
Technology is key to my work but expensive – it separates us into the haves and have nots.

CON – to stay 'in the moment' when things are hard

#TiminMalawi
Constant communication with home hinders integration into our community. Learning culture & language is hard... posting on Facebook is easy.

ARTPHONE

> ***HOW DO WE AVOID USING TECHNOLOGY AS AN ESCAPE FROM OR BARRIER TO REALLY ENGAGING WITH PEOPLE AROUND US?***

True, there are positives and negatives to technology in all contexts. I guess the big thing that I have failed to do, and what these cross-cultural workers have done, is to question if our technology either helps or hinders our relationship with others.

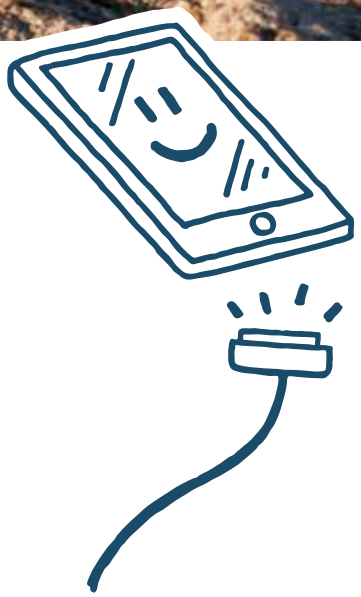
If we see technology as a tool, there's no denying that it can be incredibly helpful. Never before have we had so many great applications for communication, directions and connecting with people. The challenge is: how do we and cross-cultural workers avoid using technology as an escape from or barrier to really engaging with people around us?

God calls us to be among people that do not yet know Him and that requires not only our physical presence but also our mental and emotional engagement. For a cross-cultural worker this might mean changing the way they use technology to better relate to the people around them. For me sitting on the train surrounded by people (or any of the myriad spaces I enter each day), it may mean putting the phone down and being attentive to where and how God is working in people's lives... right in front of me.

And as the train pulls into the station, it's time for my epiphany... Maybe, just like cross-cultural workers, I must constantly adjust to the context around me. I want to question the norm to make wise decisions about how I use technology and resources as tools. That way I might be able to deeply engage with people.

All this in one train ride – how's that for productivity?

HAYLEE FREUDIGMANN



Reflection Questions

- *What are your key motivators for connecting with people? Does technology help or hinder you in this?*
- *What might be some barriers for you to having a smartphone free day? Is this something you could do to see what impact it has on your engagement with others?*
- *Is the use of technology something that you've ever discussed with your friends? Why not chat about the impact of technology on your own friendships?*

SENDING OUT THE NEWS

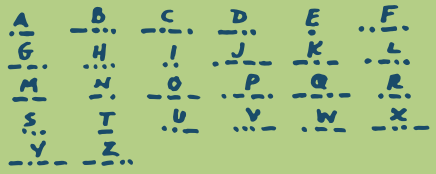
With the push of a button communication across the other side of the world is near to instant, news about friends or family, current events, even jokes or funny memes can be shared momentarily.

It wasn't always this easy, this simple.

YE OLDEN DAYS

For hundreds of years messages were brought by courier, in cargo trains across deserts, through shipping ports or on a direct route via horseback, camel or donkey. In some cultures runners carried important messages on foot for hundreds of miles. These couriers carried messages that could change the path of a man's life or the fate of a kingdom. They were sealed with wax and branded with a signatory ring to prove authenticity or carried by a servant who entrusted his life to its safe keeping. In a mission context, cross-cultural workers waited patiently for any news from home and by the time it reached them, tattered and discoloured from months of arduous travel, the news would be old, everything in it would have already happened, loved ones dead and buried, prayer requests long ago answered.

WHEN GREAT-GRANDPA WAS BORN



The 1900s brought with it the use of electricity as a means to send messages and enhance communication. It was a turning point for the modern world, Morse code and short telegrams could be delivered all over the world in a matter of minutes. Although the technology was expensive and dependent upon the location of the telegraph station and the number of words, it provided a way for news to be spread quickly. Cross-cultural workers were enabled to respond quicker. They could seek medical attention or try to get home in time to farewell dying loved ones. Fathers in remote locations were able to hear from their wives in city hospitals about the birth of their children.

THE IPHONE GENERATION

The computer age radically changed the way we communicate, how fast we communicate and what we communicate. Information, the good, the bad and the ugly is transmitted in abundance on a daily basis. Gone are the mission slide-shows and floppy discs, now many cross-cultural workers have access to the internet, laptops and mobile phones, and are only as far away as the touch of a button. Instant connection face-to-face is no longer a luxury but a daily commodity.

THE FUTURE

Technology continues to advance. Soon, live chat will become a thing of the past as we are able to project ourselves in hologram form into the living room of a friend living thousands of miles away, to seemingly sit on their couch and have a cup of tea sharing the day's events. Being part of each other's worlds will take on a whole new meaning as the gap of being separated by distance slowly draws closer together. This will totally change the face of cross-cultural mission as supporters feel more connected and literally part of their lives. For good or for bad, who knows?

Doing Life TOGETHER

Picture two little sisters creating community with their teddy bears in forests near their home in WA. Fast forward three decades and the sisters are on opposite sides of the world, creating community with least-reached people groups on the plains of Mozambique and rice fields of Thailand.

Mozambique cross-cultural team member Kath and her sister, soon to be Thai team member Liz tell us about their special bond.

LIZ

Kath is five years older than me; she's the eldest of four girls in our family. We spent most of our lives living in the country town of Dunsborough, WA, with our Dad. The age gap and our family dynamics meant that she was much more than a big sister and often filled the role of mum.

One of my fondest memories as a kid was when Kath got her licence and she took us girls for a drive into the forest about an hour from where we lived for a teddy bears picnic. Kath has always been very adventurous and she would often let my little sister and I tag along on her excursions.

Kath is one of the smartest people I know, she's highly capable at everything. Whether it's a super organised pantry, learning a new language or throwing a five year old's birthday party, whatever she does you know it'll be done to near perfection. This is probably the thing I love and dislike about her the most; it's hard to follow in the footsteps of someone so talented.

Kath has always been strong as she's had to go first at everything. Then I get the blessing of her handing down her wisdom. Following in the footsteps of Kath is something I've done fairly consistently.

When she decided to move to Mozambique to be a cross-cultural worker I felt a lot of emotions. I was excited for her and proud of her decision but deep down devastated at the thought of her moving so far away. When Kath and I lived only a few minutes drive apart I would often pop over to her house, sit on her couch and drink Milo and chat away while she did jobs.

As I prepare to serve in Thailand with Global Interaction I am comforted in the fact that I will be able Skype my friends and family at home. Though I know it won't really be the same.

I'm really looking forward to Kath being on home assignment this year. I'll be able to sit on a couch and drink Milo while she cuddles my new baby and we chat properly.

KATH

Not long after Liz was born our Mum became quite unwell so I often helped take care of my three younger sisters. Most of my early memories involve me trying to be the big, overprotective sister. One day at school Liz was crying at lunchtime and I went over to see if she was OK. Standing up while the eating part was still on was strictly forbidden and I got busted. I've still never forgiven that teacher; I was just trying to take care of my baby sister!

Liz is an extremely talented person. She has always loved beautiful things, ever since she was tiny. She has an incredible eye for detail and loves to use that talent to help bless others like decorating the whole church for special events or creating beautiful gifts. She's very determined and committed and once she sets her mind to something, she can do just about anything. She studied hard to become a nurse and excelled at her job as well as being a wonderful mother to her boys.

When Liz first told me she wanted to join the Global Interaction team in Thailand I swung into overprotective big sister mode straight away. I know firsthand just how tough this job is and I wanted to shield her from it. It wasn't that I doubted her ability – not for a second – but I didn't want her to have to go through all of the hard parts about being a cross-cultural worker, in particular leaving family and friends behind.

Even though we're still close and with Skype we can chat whenever we like, it's not the same. I can't run to her side when she's had a bad day. I can't drop in and lie on the couch and moan about my troubles. I can't go to the hospital and hold my precious new baby nephew.

I wonder how it's going to be from now on for the two of us. We might have to plan to have home assignments at the same time or we'll never see each other in person. Even though it's going to get even more difficult to stay connected, I also know that God has us both right where He wants us and I'm excited to see what He's going to do through Liz in Thailand.

Rice Pudding

SOUTH ASIA

COOKING CULTURALLY

Serves 6

BUY or GROW IT

2 cups milk
10 cardamom pods
4 cinnamon sticks
2 bay leaves
125 grams rice
2 tablespoons sugar
½ cup sultanas
½ cup almonds, slivered

DO IT

1. place milk and spices in a large saucepan, bring to boil
2. add rice, simmer gently until soft (approximately 45 minutes) Rice needs to be mushy and the mixture a little runny. If using cooked rice, decrease the cooking time
3. add sugar when nearly cooked
4. stir in sultanas and almonds to serve

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