

BULLETIN

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*“Let everything that breathes
sing praises to the LORD!”*

Psalm 150:6 NLT

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EDITORIAL

SINGING IN THE REIGN

by Dr Jay Mātenga, Executive Officer, Missions Interlink.

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Tena tātou katoa e te iwi mīhana...

This month's whakataukī (proverb) is, “**Nā te pō, ko te ao, ko te waiatatia o te Atua.**” [In the beginning, God sang the world into existence]. Or, more literally, the full proverb says, “It was in the night that the gods sang the world into existence. From the world of light, into the world of music”. God/gods, it is difficult to tell whether or not to capitalise the word when interpreting te reo Māori (Māori language). But the two can reasonably be fused together, since, biblically, the lesser created beings derive their life from and do the bidding of the greater pre-existent being we call God. So, who sang the world into existence? Ultimately, the Great Creator.

I am enjoying watching *Rings of Power*, the new prequel to the Lord of the Rings. It is stylistically different from Peter Jackson, but nonetheless honouring to the work of the famed Christian mythologist, J R R Tolkein. The latest series is derived from the piecemeal works within Tolkein's tales of the **Silmarillion**. In that book Tolkein recounts the beginnings of the cosmos, out of the great void in which existed only Eru (also called Ilúvatar), Tolkein's equivalent of the Hebrew Creator (Elohim, Yahweh, Adonai, etc). I can find no direct reference to Tolkein being exposed to Māori mythology, only Norse, but his Silmarillion creation story is remarkably similar to Māori tradition, as told by Rev Māori Marsden in his writings collected in “The Woven Universe”.

Both accounts embellish Genesis 1 and John 1 with beautiful mythos that, while not Scripture, resonate with biblical fidelity. In both accounts, Io (Māori)/Eru (Tolkein)/God orchestrates the singing of the material world into being out of God's communal essence, pre-existent in the great nothingness. The Bible doesn't actually say creation was formed from ex nihilo (out of nothing) because it is sourced in God's vital essence, but it was ‘nothing’ in a material sense. John testifies to as much, for in the beginning was the λόγος (logos), consciousness realised or the thought made manifest—that's not nothing. We translate logos as 'word', but it is a rather bland and easily overlooked interpretation.

Since all of creation resonates at certain frequencies—for example, granite stone hums at 6900Hz and sandstone harmonizes at 8700Hz, light has frequencies, the frequency of human music tuning is around 432-440Hz—is it not reasonable to imagine the logos sang the world into being?

I am not trying to put forth any new doctrine or counter traditional orthodoxies regarding the creation of the universe, but to broaden our imagination and theologically connect our lived reality with revelations about our God in the Bible. Part of our lived reality is music and music remains a mystery

to science. Some tests have been done concerning the effects of music on the human being. Most of us respond differently to different musical frequencies, and we express and feel emotion in musical forms. Science can determine the ‘what’, but not the ‘why’. As a singer, I can testify to the unique dynamic experienced in corporate singing that is transcendent and transformative. I experience this powerfully when participating in a collective vocal harmony, such as the peoples of Te Moananui a Kiwa (Pacific Ocean) love to do.

A **study published in 2015** found that singing as part of a group speeds up and reinforces social bonding and has a multitude of positive wellbeing effects, personally, socially, and we could add, spiritually. This should not be surprising since the young David, teen musician, was so well known for his craft that he was called upon to play healing music for the depressed and anxious King Saul, which the tormenting spirit could not abide (1 Samuel 16:14-23).

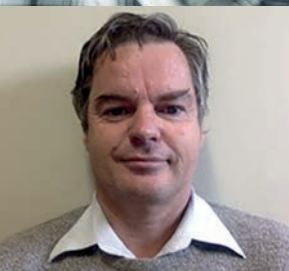
As Laidlaw College Principal and Evangelical historian Dr Roshan Allpress has noted, the Evangelical movement became a worldwide phenomenon in no small way due to a hymnbook that spread throughout the colonies, solidifying a sense of common identity and fresh theological commitment. Whenever strangers met within this tradition, the familiar hymns soon bound their hearts to one another. One could argue that similar happened during the Charismatic wave of the 70s/80s with Scripture in Song songbooks. Even Hillsong among other popular worship music producers, has had a unifying effect on the rise of World Christianity, as Pentecostal as that rise is. Even indigenous worship is taking similar forms as **this list** of top Ghanaian worship songs suggests.

I believe singing still has a generative effect. It may no longer conjure matter out of consciousness but it can still inspire and motivate toward great creativity. In their bonding power, songs, like those gospel laments sung by gangs of slaves, can energise us in our work, especially if they contain sound theologies of eschatological hope—for deliverance, healing, relief, rest. Songs sung together about a shared vision of a desirable future have power to create that future.

We all have a unique voice to add to the song of the Spirit as we follow the Spirit in our harmonious participation in God's mission. To ground the metaphor beyond the mere use of our voices, our song is our doing. It is our unique contribution in fulfilment of God's purposes in the world alongside that of others, which creates a kind of harmony, a harmony of action. In that vein then, let us keep singing, fitting our unique voice in among myriad others, **Together: On Mission.**



EQUIP



OLD WITH THE NEW

WISELY MOVING INTO THE FUTURE OF MISSIONS

By Joseph Bateson. Joseph with his wife Lois are graduates of Eastwest College and currently the leaders of WEC Aotearoa New Zealand, based in Gordonton. They lived and worked in Central Asia for seven years among a Turkic Muslim people. Joseph also serves as Chair of the Missions Interlink New Zealand Council.

A TRUE STORY.
Location: a Muslim majority town in Central Asia, with less than 10 known local believers. There's a knock at our door and a young Muslim-background believer is standing there. He says to us, "There's a guy downstairs who wants to know about the book and about Jesus. Can you tell him?" Why, yes we can!

We share the gospel with the young man, we give him a book, he returns to watch the Jesus film, he accepts Jesus as his Lord and Saviour, he's baptised and we have the awesome privilege of discipling him, who we'll call Eric. Eric is not from our city, but a city we'll call 'Forgotten Town'. A city with no church, and where Christian expats are not permitted to reside. There is no witness to Christ in Forgotten Town, yet God has made Himself known.

In another part of our town, an expat is working with local young people and sharing stories of Jesus. A guardian of three of the youth visits and pulls the expat aside, asking, "Have you been

telling these children about Jesus?" Knowing that his answer will cause no end of trouble, the expat confirms he has. The Muslim guardian replies, "I am so glad. I have always loved Jesus." Shortly afterwards this man and the three youth call Jesus their Lord and are baptised. This man returns to his home town—Forgotten Town—where he leads a taxi driver, Sam, to the Lord. And now here is the exciting bit. The bit that makes my hair stand on end to this day, 20 years after this happened... Eric and Sam are brothers! From a town with no church, with no foreign Christian witness, where missionaries could not get into, God could not be kept out! In completely different ways, one in our city and one at home in Forgotten Town, Eric and Sam, two brothers, meet Jesus in unique ways. This is the mission of God! And we, for all of our weaknesses, foolishness, and inadequacies, by the pure grace of God, are part of it!

A NEW DAY
As a Christian of European descent, I am a minority! Hallelujah. The growth

of the church in Latin America, parts of Asia and Africa in recent decades is awe inspiring. Whatever else we may say of the last 200 years of world missions—of the mistakes, the colonial attitudes, the cultural blunders and biases—we must rejoice in the incredible fruit. We are, as never before in history, a world wide family that can truly and universally demonstrate the expanse and intention of the prayer of Jesus in John 13:35 and John 17:21-23. A church where Jew and Palestinian, Hutu and Tutsi, Uyghur and Chinese, Ukrainian and Russian can join together in the cosmic choir of worship. In Missions Interlink, and here in the BULLETIN, Dr Jay Matenga has brought to our attention and rightly emphasised John 17:18-26 as a paradigm of mission. I see it as both a result of mission and as part of the outworking of mission—a part, if you like, of "being My witnesses". We need to grasp and rejoice in this.

A WAY FORWARD
As a person that came out of the traditional Roman Catholic Church

(complete with bells, smells, and the now rarely experienced Latin Mass), I am personally very thankful for the Protestant Reformation of the church. Yet, in these days, I am hearing of many Christians bemoaning how the Reformation saw an end to many of the positive spiritual disciplines that had been part of the church for centuries. In these days many are rediscovering these ancient paths—paths that were cast aside, ignored and forgotten simply because they were ancient paths! In gaining so much in the Reformation, some things were needlessly lost.

I believe God is doing a new thing in missions. We are entering a new season, a reformation. There are an increasing number of places in the world where traditional missions methods are no longer prudent, effective or possible. There is an increasing number of places where Western missionaries are not welcome—tarnished by their connection to colonial empires. God must indeed be doing a new thing, whether that is sending different people, or a leading us into a new paradigm of mission, if He

is to gather these people to His throne, that their voices might be added to the heavenly choir (Rev 7:9).

This is truly a time when 'everyone to everywhere' has never been more a reality. But it is not yet a total reality. Across South Asia, South East Asia, East Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and North and West Africa, there are thousands upon thousands of 'Forgotten Towns', towns with no Church to demonstrate the oneness of the Kingdom, with no one to preach by word or deed the hope of Christ. The cry of the Apostle Paul still rings in our ears "how shall they hear unless someone preaches to them; how they preach unless they are sent."

AN OLD CHALLENGE

Yes, God is doing a new thing! But let us be careful that we do not make the assumption that in doing a new thing, God is discarding all of the old. In these changing and challenging times it behoves us to come humbly before the Lord, with an attitude of repentance and of seeking. Repentance for the arrogant mistakes we have made in the past. Seeking a way forward that will

take the call to missions (Romans 10), the scope of missions (Matthew 18:18-20, Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:8, Luke 24:45-49, John 20:19-23) and the end goal of missions (John 13:35, John 17:21-23) seriously.

Perhaps the simple whakatauki, "ka mua, ka muri" (walking into the future backward), a conference theme for WEC Aotearoa a few years ago, sums this up nicely. We walk backward into the future. Where we have gone before can have a positive bearing on where we are to navigate to now. If the leaders and later inheritors of the Reformation had exercised the wisdom of this whakatauki, maybe we would have incorporated and continued some of the best parts of the old traditions.

Norman Grubb, an early leader in WEC, had a prayer that captures it nicely. "Lord, what are you up to today? Can I be part of it? Thank you." This is the prayer of missions. What is He saying to us today? What do we need to start doing? What do we need to stop doing? What do we need to keep doing? What is He doing? Wouldn't you want to be part of it?



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CORRECT CHRISTOLOGY

ESSENTIAL FOR SHARING THE FAITH

By Stephen Thompson. Stephen grew up among Muslims in East Africa and later served with SIM among the peoples living on the Horn of Africa. At present he lives in Mt Roskill (with wife Rachel, three grown up children, one son in law and one grandchild) where he attends Mt Roskill Baptist Church and operates a business that brings him into contact with the many ethnic people in his neighbourhood.



In the early 2000s my wife Rachel and I decided to take a year's study leave from our work as global partners with SIM. I went to the local university and talked with people in the theology and religious studies departments to discuss what I might study. In the theology department I was encouraged to complete a bachelor of theology and develop a clear Christology or doctrine of Christ so I could adequately engage the Muslims. From around 2010 I opened a Facebook profile with the nickname I had in Africa and I still find I'm almost daily debating and reasoning with Muslims—most commonly, it is about the person of Christ. All Christians today, in our pluralistic, multi-cultural and multi religions society, need to have a good Christology.

For the Christian there is much in the Qur'an about Jesus which we can affirm as we interpret it through our background of understanding the Bible. This can also be true for many Muslims, based on their knowledge of Jesus in the Qur'an when they come to read the Bible and especially the New Testament. It can be a bridge to accepting Jesus as their Saviour. David Shenk gives an example of one such

positive experience as he recounts the testimony of Ahmed Haile. "On one occasion Ahmed and I were enjoying tea together, when he exclaimed, 'How can I speak negatively of the Qur'an, when it is the Qur'an that planted the seeds in my soul to quest for the Bible and its message!'" As a boy Ahmed attended Qur'an classes where he memorized the Qur'an. He had a particular Imam (religious leader and teacher) who gave him a positive understanding towards the Christians and their revelation known as the Injil, from the Greek euangelion (εὐαγγέλιον) meaning the good news/gospel. Later, when he was given a Bible to read, he was ready to accept its message.

On the positive side, the names and titles of Jesus in the Qur'an and the Bible tell us a lot about who Jesus is. I will explore some here.

JESUS OR 'ISA

Specialists in Oriental Studies often debated where the Muslim name for Jesus came from. Did Muhammad mix Jesus and Esau up? Was it necessary because the style of the Qur'an is poetic? Often Jesus is associated with Moses (Musa in Arabic) in the Qur'an, so perhaps it was because Musa and 'Isa together rhyme. In my opinion, the English word "Jesus" and the Muslim name "'Isa" appear to come from the

Greek Iésous (Ἰησοῦς)—but without the genitive or possessive ending, 'ous'. The angel told Joseph to name Him Jesus "for he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21 ESV). The original Aramaic name for Jesus was Yeshua which comes from the Hebrew Yehoshua meaning "the LORD is salvation." Jesus is Saviour.

Muslims argue that Jesus only came for the Jews, and often Matthew 15:24 is quoted: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This is reflected in the Qur'an. He was to be a Messenger to the Children of Israel (Surah 3:49). Matthew is unique among the gospel accounts here. This seems to be because his purpose was to show the Jews that Jesus was *their* promised Messiah. But then, after his resurrection, he opened it up to the whole world (Matthew 28:18-20). This concurs with the other gospels and the letters of the apostles that state more plainly that Jesus' ministry was first to the Jews and then to everyone else (Romans 1:16).

MESSIAH OR AL-MASIH

The name Jesus Christ or Christ Jesus is the English name and title for Jesus. Christ comes from the Greek word Christos (χριστός) meaning the Messiah or the anointed one (Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ or *mashiah*). Messiah is a type

of title for Jesus. He not just titled Messiah but is “*the* Messiah” signifying his uniqueness. In the Old Testament, the children of Israel anointed those chosen for the office of priest, prophet or king. They were “messiahs” or anointed ones. Jesus was the one who fulfilled all these roles in the Bible. No prophets of biblical proportions were expected after the Messiah had come. Jesus as Al Masih is mentioned eight times in the Qur’an. Today many Muslims understand that Messiah means the anointed one or the chosen one but they don’t see anything special about Jesus in this regard. All the prophets were chosen ones.

PROPHET OR APOSTLE

When the people observed Jesus and his ministry they called him a prophet (for example, Matthew 21:11). Some of the disciples still held he was a prophet even after his crucifixion (Luke 24:19). Jesus himself seemed to confess he was a prophet when he faced rejection in his home town (Mark 6:4 and other similar passages). After his resurrection, Jesus claimed that he was predicted in the Law of Moses or the Torah (Luke 24:44). The obvious passage we find is Deuteronomy 18:15-21, where God says to Moses “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers” (verse 18). Muslims claim this passage is talking about Muhammad whom they claim comes from the tribe of Ishmael, the brother to the Israelites. However, in the context it is clear that it is about an Israelite prophet. A similar term is used about the type of king they were to appoint in Deuteronomy 17:15 and of the Levites having no inheritance about their brethren but the Lord (Yahweh) being their inheritance (Deuteronomy 18:2). Similarly the apostles claimed this passage as being about Jesus (Acts 3:22).

WORD OF GOD

Jesus is the logos (λόγος), the Word of God. He is God’s ultimate communication or bridge with and to humanity. This is the name for Jesus in both the Bible (John 1:1-18) and the Qur’an (4:171). The concept of “the Word” or logos is perhaps the most important concept when considering who Jesus is. The Greek stoics and the Jewish philosopher Philo considered the logos as divine reason, or principle through which natural creation comes into existence or grows. John 1 and the creation story are similar, in that

God creates through his Word. In John, the Word is a person and not just a divine principle. When we think about “word” in English we think about communication. In Jesus, God is communicating with us and even more than that he is dwelling with us. Jesus as the Word of God is God entering our humanity. Now in Heaven he reigns and intercedes for us (Hebrews 7:25). As he became the same humanity we exist in, we know he understands us (Hebrews 2:18). He is God in Heaven whom we can picture as understanding us and interceding for us because of his humanity.

SON OF MAN

In the Bible, Jesus is also the Son of Man and the Son of God. Both these titles can cause some confusion for our Muslim friends.

In the gospel accounts “the Son of Man” was a popular title Jesus gave himself. “Son of Man” has two main uses in the Old Testament. Firstly there is the prophet Ezekiel. God calls Ezekiel “Son of Man.” According to the commentaries God is emphasizing that he is God as opposed to Ezekiel who is a mere creature. The other example is in the book of Daniel. In Daniel 7 there are two figures, one is “the Ancient of Days” and the other is “the Son of Man.” “The Ancient of Days” is a picture of God and he gives the Son of Man dominion or rule over all the peoples of the world and it an everlasting or long reign. Muslims can rejoice when they understand the term “the Son of Man” as referring to Jesus as a human and prophet. However Jesus seems to more strongly refer to himself as that king of heaven and judge (Matthew 25:31-33).

SON OF GOD

In the gospel accounts “the Son of God” also seems to refer to two aspects of who Jesus was. He was the Messiah and he came from heaven. We have Peter’s confession as recorded in Matthew’s gospel. (Matthew 16:16 “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”). This relates to the covenant with David. God would be the father of David’s descendent and he would be God’s son (2 Samuel 7:14 “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”). The Messiah would be known as “the Son of the most high God” (Luke 1:32). Also in the gospel accounts he is the Son of God because he came from heaven (John 8:23) and has a special relationship with God in heaven as

“the one and only Son of God” (John 3:16). The words “one and only” or “only begotten” (KJV) come from the Greek monogenes (μονογενής) which is correct in the KJV but its meaning can be confusing. God did not have relations with a woman to produce a son, but rather it means he was unique, as in “one and only”.

OTHER QUESTIONS

There are other important questions Muslims raise which we need good answers to too. If God is eternal and never dies (immortal, 1 Timothy 6:16), then who was on the cross? If it was just Jesus in his humanity there then would that be enough? I tell my Muslim friends that it was the human Jesus who died on the cross but in the death of Jesus, God suffered for our sins but didn’t die.

Recently I read an article by R C Sproul where he was adamant that God is unchangeable (immutable) and cannot even suffer. Perhaps we should say that God is a person and as a person he can feel emotions, such as love and even regret (Genesis 6:6). Some go further to add that God is not only omniscient (all knowing) but also omniscient (aware, affected, feeling and sensing all things). So the cross was something God did not take lightly but as a person God suffered, even though God’s essential being was not changed. The divine act on the cross is a mystery!

CONCLUSION

The study of Christology has to be an ongoing study for all of us. For example, another place to look to understand Christology is Church History. The exact nature of Jesus was an important topic in the early church and resulted in several important councils where it was the main topic. The council of Nicea (AD 325) was convened by the Emperor Constantine to resolve the controversy of Arianism, a doctrine that held that Christ was not divine but was a created being. This controversy continued to blight the church for decades after this council. Another important council was the council of Chalcedon (AD 451). The Council of Chalcedon issued a definition which repudiated the notion of a single nature in Christ, and declared that he has two natures in one person (hypostasis). It also insisted that he was fully man and fully God—and so must we, with all his disciples.

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2023

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GO



OFF THE BEATEN TRACK UPDATE ON HEALTH & HEALING AT ARAPOHUE

By Janet Curle, co-Director of Arapohue Retreat Charitable Trust. Janet is the author of *The Wild Side* and *Radical Lives 1 and 2*.

The Wild Side Charitable Trust is participating in the mission of God by responding to the urgent need in Auckland/Northland for a rural residential healing and recovery centre. Arapohue Retreat is being established after the old Arapohue Bush Camp (in the countryside near Dargaville) was purchased in August 2020.

The buildings were very run down and required major work to be carried out before adequate accommodation is available to fully commence the residential programme.

Over the past year, restoration work has been completed on three main accommodation buildings (The Farmhouse, Dargaville House and The Cottage), which are now occupied by volunteer staff, a paid staff member and a couple of respite guests.

Although not officially open, Arapohue Retreat has already helped 8+ people get their lives back on track. Here is a recent message from a former Arapohue Retreat guest:

I have been able to give my testimony to a Christian on methadone and P who says she's living in 2 worlds but scared of withdrawal. I was able to tell her exactly what God does with that and about my experience at Arapohue*. If that's ALL I can give, well it seems so important to bring hope to the hopeless.

This guest had been through 15 medical detoxes for heroin and methadone addiction, but none of

them had worked. She had been told not to come back because they couldn't help her. Yet, at the Arapohue Retreat she was miraculously set free in 3-days by the grace of God and the power of the Spirit in prayer. On the 4th day she was out of bed and grooming one of the horses! An additional building, Okahu House has been partially restored (new roof, some building repairs, electrical work and downstairs floor restored). It still requires plumbing, toilet and hand basin, kitchenette, window and door repairs, ceiling repair and insulation, and interior and exterior paint. The next project is Stage One of the Hoyle Lodge kitchen restoration, so that more people can be fed from a well-equipped kitchen facility. The estimated cost is \$27,000 to repair and outfit half of the kitchen area.

Ray and Jan Curle, the Co-Directors of Arapohue Retreat are reaching out to individuals and churches for donations, grants and practical help to continue the restoration work... so they can offer hope where others fail, and help more people to get free from addictions and receive healing for trauma.

For more info on the projects needing funding please [download here](#). To make direct contact you can call Ray on 09 439 5717 or email him at ray@thewildside.net.



Ray & Jan
Arapohue Retreat Directors
and Wild Side Charitable Trust
Trustees



Jonny, Shiloh & Charli
Jonny is
Arapohue Retreat's Property
Maintenance Manager



David & Marie
David is
Arapohue Retreat's
Technical Advisor

THE ARAPOHUE TEAM

Ray and Janet Curle are Arapohue Retreat Co-directors and Wild Side Charitable Trustees. Ray formerly worked for Bill Subritzky and was a founding member of Promise Keepers NZ. Together, they also run Wild Side Publishing.

Jonny Curle, Ray's youngest son moved up from Auckland two years ago to help at Arapohue Retreat and he lives on site with his wife Charli and their baby, Shiloh. Jonny has a heart for helping young people and has a strong affiliation with Yaakov Brown and the Beth Melekh International Messiah-Following Jewish Community.

David and Marie Curle have just returned from Fiji where they constructed a prototype, hurricane-proof dome house. Previously, they were both involved with Charisma Ministries and David was the video director for Dove Ministries and Promise Keepers NZ. In his early years, he was a youth pastor at Hillsborough (now Hills) Baptist and Greenlane Christian Centre.

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ABUSE IN MISSIONS WHEN SENDING ORGS FAIL MISSIONARIES

By Sarita Hartz, an author, life coach, enneagram 2 x 1 wing, former missionary (7 years in Uganda), missionary care coach, wife, infertility warrior, and mother to one miracle boy. This article is curated and slightly edited from [Sarita's blog](#).



I love missions. Being on the field, loving people, learning from them, letting God transform you as you seek to be the hands and feet of Jesus, is an absolutely beautiful calling. It's one of the most fulfilling things I've ever done — to be able to live in my purpose on the field. I miss it every day. But they were also some of the hardest, most traumatic years of my life.

I've been on both sides of the coin—first as a missionary for other organizations, and then as the founder of my own because of the spiritual abuse I endured. I've made mistakes I've had to learn from, both as a missionary and as a founder, but one of my biggest regrets is not taking better care of myself so I could provide better care for our volunteers. This was years before I'd ever heard the term “member care” or knew how deeply it would intersect my life. Once I became a life coach for missionaries, I was burdened by the widespread challenges so many are facing without support: post traumatic stress, acute trauma, vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, adrenal fatigue, burnout, toxic environments and spiritual/emotional abuse.

BACKGROUND

Through therapy, education and training I equipped myself on how to provide the best care for missionaries.

In 2018 I shared blogs and FB lives on the topic of “toxic missions” and spiritual abuse in missions which had over 12,000 views and then I launched a survey, *Rate Your Missions Organization*, which collected over 200 responses from missionaries like you who wanted to share your stories.

Honestly, many of those stories broke my heart. To hear how pervasive mistreatment was from neglect or not receiving care/counselling, to shaming while struggling with anxiety or depression, to outright spiritual/emotional abuse with missions leaders claiming they could hear the voice of God for your life better than you.

Christianity Today recently interviewed me for an article that will soon come out on the topic. This prompted me to put my efforts towards organizing and sharing parts of the data I was entrusted with. To my knowledge, this is some of the most recent data on member care or the lack thereof, within sending organisations/churches.

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL/EMOTIONAL ABUSE?

A trauma specialist with the Allender Centre, Rachel Clinton Chen says, “Spiritual abuse is a distortion, exploitation and weaponizing of God's power and authority used to manipulate, control or harm people, their personhood, their bodies, their

relationships, their autonomy, primarily through the tools of shame and fear.”

Emotional abuse involves non-physical behaviour that belittles another person and can include insults, put down, verbal threats or other tactics that make the victim feel threatened, inferior, ashamed or degraded.

Here are some examples of how this plays out in the stories I collected as part of my research:

Being at a remote base is fatiguing. We needed counselling to debrief a traumatizing flight experience my husband had. They offered outside counselling to my husband but said they wouldn't cover mine because I was a ‘support spouse.’ Also, when I was pregnant we had very limited options for maternity care and giving birth there with my condition was unsafe. I could only use the furlough time accrued which was limited so I had to take an international flight near the end of pregnancy by myself with a toddler, because the organization refused to modify outdated maternity/paternity policies. Our team leader was spiritually abusive. Our family along with a few families were in process of finally leaving the organization. He gave a speech to our island outlining right and wrong reasons to leave, shaming several of

us in front of others. He told us he knew God's will in our life that God needed us to stay where we were. I personally felt so overwhelmed by shame both public and private. The narrative seemed to be that leaving the organization would be like not listening to God. Part of the reason that the organization's narrative is prevailing is because there isn't a safe and effective way to report spiritual abuse or to question the way things are done without repercussions or gossip because there is no confidentiality.

—Anonymous, Indonesia

After being sexually assaulted on the field, my leader told me I had two weeks to prove myself if I wanted to be apart of the team. He told me that even if they caught the guy the police would do nothing. He took me door to door in our hotel so I could ID the guy who attacked me. I was also still staying in the same room I had been attacked in. I was so traumatized that I didn't ID the guy. Later, I confessed that I hadn't identified him. My leader convinced leadership that I was a liar. They sent me away for counseling and was told that the counselor needed to clear me to go back on the field. The counselor did clear me to return to the field but the team leader manipulated everyone and turned them against me. No one came to ask me my story about what happened. When I got back I was kicked out of the organization and my story was swept under the rug. I tried to get them to hear my story and warn them about the leader but they wouldn't listen. It took them 2 years to finally realize what I had been saying. Unfortunately my entire team of 8 adults now all need trauma therapy because of the team leader hurting all of them.

—Anonymous, Madagascar

When I was serving, the organisation had a lot of people coming only 2 years. Some of the leaders' attitudes were 'Use them, we'll get a new lot in a couple of months.' This was their answer when approached about giving people 'self-time' to prevent burnout.

—Annette, South Africa

There was a total lack of care by the home office for those of us on the field. We were told we'd have

weekly check-ins, but they never happened. Most communication was done between the home office and the country director, so our voices were left unheard. The organisation's president verbally beat me up one night at our yearly staff retreat—he belittled me and told me how I wasn't doing my job well, would never be a leader, etc. At one point, I was sitting there shaking my head and say "no, no, no!" I left that staff retreat destroyed and confused, but to him, "everything was under the bridge." Whenever I asked for more info on the future direction of the organisation I felt belittled, I believe it was because I was a woman questioning him. The five of us who had been on the field that year were trying to voice our problems/struggles, and as a group, we asked for help. We had some pretty traumatic experiences that year, and needed a way to process and grieve. The 'solution' was a two hour session with the psychologist from the church that donated office space to them. After our 2 hours, I think she realized that we all needed much more follow up care, but we had no other debriefing or counseling after that. I ended up having to leave the org and begin my own.

—Anonymous, Liberia

These abuses are unjust. Even more of these stories have been leaking out in the media. Missions organizations and Christian NGO's need more member care and transparency. Period.

UNHEALTHY MISSIONS INDICATORS

There are some unique dynamics to missions creating unhealthy working environments and incidents of spiritual, and emotional abuse. We are relational beings. When you feel abandoned, abused or shamed by the very people who are supposed to take care of you, it's devastating. Here are some indicators to watch out for:

1. The mission is placed above loving those who serve the mission. These servants are human beings willing to sacrifice, to move to another nation to try their best to love strangers. Their souls are bearing the weight of human suffering, poverty, injustice and yet safe parameters are not put in place for them to process all of it. So when they are (inevitably) struggling

with their mental health, anxiety, depression, trauma, miscarriages, financial strain, abuse, organisations can too easily focus more on the work they are doing—what their output is, how many churches they've planted, etc.— versus how they are as a human being.

2. Because you're in ministry it is often assumed you will need to sacrifice your life to a point of martyrdom. I've worked with clients as a life coach and when I noticed they were experiencing negative effects of trauma and burnout I recommended some self-care strategies. When they tried to implement them, my clients were told by their organisation's leaders that they were being selfish and there wasn't time for self-care. This is the 'toughen up' mentality, very prevalent in missions, that leads to burnout on the field— leading to damage to personal relationships and to the people they are trying to serve.
3. Many missions organisations still lack their own member care people whose job it is to see to the welfare and emotional, spiritual, and physical health of the missionaries serving. Ideally this person would have training in mental health and trauma, but often times they may only be providing pastoral care. Or they leave the financial burden on missionaries to seek professional member care elsewhere.
4. If there is a person in place, hired by the organisation, there may be misaligned incentives. So when missionaries are finally open and honest with someone about their struggles, with a person they feel safe with, they may twist your words, misrepresent you to the organization, request missionaries to be removed from the field, etc. In such cases there is not enough confidentiality or safety for missionaries to be authentic and honest.
5. It's a hierarchical structure. Often there is a "team leader" who is in charge on the ground but this person may not be taking good care of themselves or be healthy— or missionaries may have personal conflict with the leader and have nowhere to turn because the leader blocks it. Or it can be a top down approach with the sending office in charge—and those on the field who may have the most experience on

the ground or be going through the most trauma, don't necessarily have a voice... especially for women.

6. Because there's a lot of attrition and turnover within missions organisations, people who speak up about injustice towards missionaries or even abuse on the ground within the organisation, end up being asked to leave or shamed into departing and things are swept under the rug.
7. There are power dynamics at play. The people at the top rely on donors for money and they don't want to risk losing that so there's an incentive to cover things up—even abuse.

BEST PRACTICES FOR SENDING WELL

- Treat missionaries as well as you would the people in the countries they are serving. If your people aren't being cared for there is no way they can effectively care for others.
- Prepare staff well. Have training on trauma, PTSD, compassion fatigue, self care, listening to body's signals.
- Allow for self-care to be implemented daily; respect boundaries.

- Have internal member care personnel trained in mental health, and act in highest confidence unless mutually agreed upon to disseminate information to the organisation. Have personnel involved in care planning or outsource member care to a quality professional service.
- Have designated internal human resources staff that missionaries can report spiritual, emotional or physical abuse to who will run it up the leadership chain and take action to assist the missionary rather than burying the abuse.
- Make counselling/coaching part of a missionary's fundraising budget from the beginning. Send member carers on staff to the field to do check in's. While in the sending country, contact-must be regular, weekly to bi-weekly for check-ins. Alternatively, the organisation can pay for outside counselling and not place financial burden of counselling on the missionary.
- Encourage staff to take regular personal retreats with God as well as marriage retreats if married.

- Have a feedback process and conduct anonymous surveys: do not punish members for their honesty. Listen to them.
- Have in-house debriefing or pay for outside professionals upon re-entry.
- Place more focus on the transformation of the heart, and discipleship or personal development on the field verses productivity metrics or numbers.
- Invest in more ways to create a thriving ministry culture. Further ideas for which can be [found here](#).

The majority of positive feedback I received in my member care research involved churches, smaller sending organizations, and some smaller Christian NGO's doing missions.

In an ideal world, missions organisations would operate with love, justice and transparency. If my research, and reports on its findings like this, can help make one small step in that direction, if this can be a spark to light a revolution of change, then the stories of these missionaries will not be in vain. May God help us do better.

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PRAY

PRAYERLINKS

PRAYER FUEL FOR MISSIONS

FEBC NZ

There is fear and uncertainty rising as believers, listeners and the FEBC team face **the potential draft in Russia**. They are pressured by authorities to support the war and listeners are expecting political comments and advice from FEBC broadcasters. **Pray** that the broadcasters receive great discernment, wisdom and guidance to keep on producing content based on biblical truths. May God protect the FEBC team, listeners and believers, filling them with strength and courage.

INTERSERVE

Pray for our international 4-yearly global **Leaders Consultation (LC) meeting in Albania**. Please **pray** for anointed times, the presence of triune God, encounter with one another in love & mutual encouragement, being readied for what lies ahead. Please also **pray** for the NZ Council as they search for and appoint **a new National Leader**. Charles Erlam and Anna Martin are leading in the interim. **Pray** for Susie and family as they transition to Australia.

MISSIONS INTERLINK (MI)

Thank you for praying for Jay's **international travels** in August.

He was blessed by engaging with different leaders at the meetings he attended—missions leaders in Dallas TX, a variety of leaders at the World Council of Churches' 11th Assembly, and WEA Leader meetings. It was a worthwhile trip, proving that so much more can be accomplished face to face interpersonally than over Zoom. Jay arrived home on 12 Sept. and departed again on 1 Oct. for the rest of the month. Please **pray** again for his responsibilities in four locations: Albania (as Secretary of Interserve's International Council), UK (meeting various leaders and teaching at CMS UK's Pioneer training school), Thailand (attending Lausanne/WEA's Asia2022 congress), and Brisbane (South Pacific Regional Member Care Conference). International travel is much more complex than it used to be, and riskier to health with COVID-19 still making an impact. Please **pray** for good flights (and no cancellations), safe travels, endurance and wellness, and for God's grace to make a valuable contribution in every meeting.

OMF NZ

We are so thankful to have **a new Finance Manager**, Kuan Tan, join the team. **Pray** for her as she gets

up to speed with the specifics of the role. Our **nationwide event 'Heart for Asia'** is **on 29 October**, and is being held near Christchurch. We **pray** that this will be a great event for inspiring people on 'the mainland' to get a fresh vision for mission. Please continue to **pray** for our growing **relationship with churches** around the country—that we would be able to partner with them as they explore mission possibilities.

SIM NZ

Pray for SIM NZ as we work alongside churches in NZ for involvement in cross-cultural mission work, as we strengthen our current **church partnerships** and build new ones.

WEC INTERNATIONAL NZ

1-4 October, WEC held its **annual conference, "Kiwicon"**. Saturday was an open day, where we were joined by church leaders, people from the community and folk on their missions journey. The conference is a time of good fellowship, hearing from the Lord and making wise decisions as we seek to go forward together. **Pray** especially that conference speaker Rev. Pane Kawhia's message continues to stir, encourage and transform us as the Lord wills.



15 DAYS OF PRAYER FOR THE HINDU WORLD

OCT 16 - OCT 30, 2022

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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER
FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

2022

6th & 13th November 2022

BLESSED ARE THE PERSECUTED!

Uniting in prayer in a spirit of oneness: if one suffers, we all suffer.



The Voice
of the
Martyrs



Open Doors

SPOTLIGHTS

JIAN HUA FOUNDATION ANNIVERSARY

Join JHF for a 41st Anniversary celebration at **an afternoon tea 'meet and greet' with special visitors from the UK, Doug and Ruth Plummer**. Also hear the latest news from Hong Kong and China, with former JHF Staff, Trustees and Associates to share, along with a time for prayer. All interested friends welcome!

Saturday 8 October, 2022, 2:30-4:30 p.m.
Gracecity Church, 17 Marewa Road Greenlane, AUCKLAND
(formerly Greenlane Christian Centre)

For more information or RSVP ASAP contact Peter: peter.anderson@slingshot.co.nz

VOLUNTEER HELP NEEDED

Arapohue Retreat healing and recovery centre is looking **a person with skills in building/ carpentry experience**, in addition to painting, sanding, cleaning, cooking, veggie garden and orchard maintenance (planting, weeding, mulching). If you would like to volunteer for 2 or 3 months, and you have carpentry skills, food and accommodation will be provided. Only ONE person is needed for this volunteer role.

The Retreat is located in Arapohue, near Dargaville, in the rural Northland countryside. It is drug and alcohol-free (including nicotine and vapes). So they are considering NON-SMOKERS only.

If this interests you, call Ray on 09 439 5717 extn 1 or 027 254 6778. or email him at: ray@thewildside.net.

BUILDING NZ CHURCHES & CHARITIES

Christian Savings is hosting another **Church and Charities Conference** to help under-resourced ministries by providing quality material and robust discussion to enable the sector to flourish. Presenters include: Chris Clarke, Danielle Diprose, Rev. Frank Ritchie, Steven Moe, Chris Bethwaite, & Aaron Hardie.

Christchurch 26 October, 2022
Auckland 27 October, 2022
Wellington 01 November, 2022

For more info or to register, email Christian Savings: conference@christiansavings.co.nz.

SECURITY TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

HEAT is **Hostile Environment Awareness Training and MAF NZ have openings** in the training they are conducting on site in Tauranga. Training is conducted by specialist providers **Hawkeye Dynamics**, who help participants learn proactive steps to reduce risk in any environment.

Tauranga, 7-10 February 2023
Cost: \$2,400.00 per participant

For further information please contact, Jane Eddy at MAF NZ. Mobile: 021 168 1611 or email: jeddy@maf.org.nz.

EASTWEST COLLEGE BLOCK COURSES

Eastwest College of Intercultural studies, is running a series of **self-contained block courses** through to January 2023. These include: Digital Missions, Church Planting, Secular Humanism, Coaching Workshop, and TESOL for Service.

For dates, costs and other details, visit the **Eastwest College website** or contact by email: office@eastwest.ac.nz.

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Special Guest Speaker

Dr Joanna Lima
Intercultural Leadership Specialist.

In her intercultural leadership roles Jo has had the privilege of working with leaders from

all over the globe and is passionate about facilitating their development and increasing their effectiveness as they participate in God's mission.

AGM REGISTER HERE

BEFORE 1 NOV 2022:

<https://missions.fit/agm/>

Wednesday 9 November 2022
Life Church, 24-26 Maich Road
Manurewa, AUCKLAND

All welcome (although only members may vote during the business meeting). Lunch will be provided following the event.

Cost

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For more information contact Andy:

artifacts@artifacts.co.nz or WhatsApp: +64 211 844 386.

MEMBER CARE CONFERENCE

DEADLINE 7 OCT to register for the **South Pacific Member Care Network's 2022 conference in Brisbane Australia**. With all

that has happened in the last few years many of the tools we had for providing Member Care have needed renewing, extending, or even changing as the world around us has changed. Global Member Care Network Coordinator, Harry Hoffmann will speak, alongside workshop presenters including Marion Knell, Dr Katherine Thompson, Jane Harris, and Dr Roger van der Veen. TCK issues, missions workers and disability, and the ever-present issue of conflict are amongst topics being addressed.

To register, visit:

<https://missionsinterlink.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/1216237>

FREE PDF RESOURCE

Conspiracy theories are causing conflict in Christian communities. Friendships are broken, families are torn apart, and people are hurt. People struggle to understand, persuade, or even tolerate each other over these issues. Why does this happen, and how can we address the concerns of those involved?

“Who to Trust?” is the new ISCAST (Christians in Science and Technology) discussion paper produced by volunteers

with a background in science or theology, which surveys recent research and writing on conspiracism. It selects and summarises what is helpful for Christian leaders, Christian knowledge professionals, as well as Christian conspiracists.

The four major chapters examine:

- Conspiracy theories themselves
- The way they affect politics
- Applicable biblical ethics for Christians
- Practical questions about their effects in relationships and communities.

Download **the PDF here**.

For more about the ministry of ISCAST and their other free resources **click here** to visit the website.

SUMMER OUTREACH (TEENS & ADULTS)

TEEN MISSIONS is back on track again with **a summer program** coming up this **December-January**. Teams will be trained at the Queensland Boot Camp and proceed to projects in Thailand, Thames NZ, Injinoo Nth Queensland, or stay on the Sunshine Coast. Check out possibilities at teenmissions.com.au or visit **Facebook**.



*Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice!
Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do.
Remember, the Lord is coming soon.
(Philippians 4:4)*

ABOUT US

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Pioneers, SIM, WEC, World Vision, with individual
member: Jon Horne.



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