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Love changes everything:

Mission that makes a difference

Daughters of Cambodia:

Love and healing for Cambodian prostitutes

Tough love:

Reaching out across barriers of shame

A place of smiles:

Caring for disabled children in Thailand

"Lives and communities transformed through encounter with Jesus Christ"



My first son, Sam, was born on December 13th 2009. For my wife and I, things haven't been the same since. Watching a child develop and start to smile and laugh (as well as cry!) is a privilege and a joy of inestimable proportions. One of the many joys has been experiencing the love that has been shown to us by our friends.

On the day of his birth – a Sunday, as it happens – people at our church were praying for us before the service. When he was born I sent friends a text message to let them know; the lady doing prayers read it out in church five minutes later. Our vicar came to the hospital the next day to see how we were. Other church friends, including a couple who used to work in Nepal with Interserve, popped round with gifts the same day. Since then other friends came round to drop off clothes, a baby bath, teddies, flowers, and food (for us, not for Sam!). Our postbox was jammed with letters and cards from England, Canada and the US, from Christian and Muslim and atheist friends. We felt overwhelmed with love. We still do, actually.

This kind of love is a precious thing. Many of our friends have gone to amazing lengths to give us things for the baby. Why should they do this? They don't expect anything in return. They certainly don't expect payment. There would be no point in doing this, were it not for the love they have for us.

This is the same love which motivates the work of Interserve. Think about it: why on earth would someone move to Cambodia or Mumbai to work with the victims of human trafficking? Why would anyone move to Thailand to work with disabled children who are rejected by their families and communities? They do this work for free. In fact they often spend their own money to help other people. They often give up prosperous careers in order to help other people. Crazy, isn't it?

Crazy, and utterly magnificent. "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves" (Philippians 2: 3). This kind of love is completely mad when compared to the standards of this world, and that is why it is so wonderful. This kind of love changes everything, and long may it do so.

Matt Vaughan

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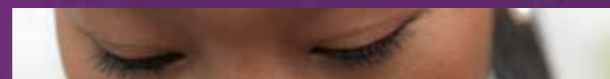
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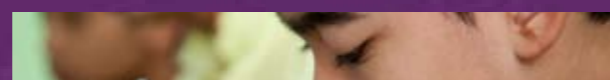
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Photos do not necessarily relate to articles for sensitivity reasons.

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Tough love

How an Interserve Scotland Partner reached out across boundaries of shame and dishonour

In many of the poorer houses here the walls don't always reach up to the roof which is shared by several houses. There is often a gap through which sound travels from next door. Or through which, if you stood on something tall – say, a table – you could look.

I was visiting Wendy when I met Amanda in this way. She squeezed up against the top of the wall to peer over at me. I could only see a slice of her face: an eye, part of a smile, a flash of the orange scarf tied around her hair. She greeted me and chatted for a few minutes before disappearing again behind the wall.

In a scandalised whisper, Wendy told me Amanda's story. Unmarried, she had had a relationship with a local man and become pregnant. Her parents kept her hidden at home ever since. When the baby was born Amanda's mother strangled him because he was illegitimate and a shame to their family. Amanda is still imprisoned in the house; she has never been out since.

"Do you visit her, Wendy?" I asked.

"No, my husband won't allow it."

"Does anybody visit her? Does she have any friends?"

"No, nobody visits her because of what she did."

We sat in silence for a bit as I chewed over the information. I was horrified that Amanda's mother – a woman who had once held her own babies in her arms and loved and nurtured them - could have killed her own grandson. I wanted to cry for that little boy that never got to live. And I thought about Amanda, lonely and isolated, forever living out the consequences of her sin. And then I thought about the community. Steering clear. Staying away. Lest they be contaminated by her sin, or incriminated by association; tainted.

Neither her family nor her neighbours will forgive

Amanda for what she has done. And while her family will deny what has happened, others like Wendy will continue to repeat it in hushed tones. It will be revisited often, as a warning to the young women of the neighbourhood, against the follies of romantic involvement or of doing anything else which might bring shame on their families.

Yet I know that there is forgiveness available for Amanda. There is One who has already redeemed her and who is waiting to take possession of His prize. One who sees that she is precious, though at fault; beautiful though broken.

So this morning, as I write this, I am asking myself again "what would Jesus do?". And the problem is that I know the answer. I'm just not sure I'm ready to act on it. In a culture where reputation is everything, am I willing to throw mine down, to bring Jesus to this woman? And while the questions crowd in, "what would the neighbours think?" and "would they still want to know me?" or perhaps seemingly more important, "what will it do to my witness?", I know that these thoughts are foolishness. The truth is that this is incarnational living. The demonstration of God's forgiveness. The extension of His grace to all. And if it ruffles a few feathers in the neighbourhood, so be it. As John said, "He must become greater; I must become less." (Jn.3:30) After all, His reputation is my concern; my own is not.

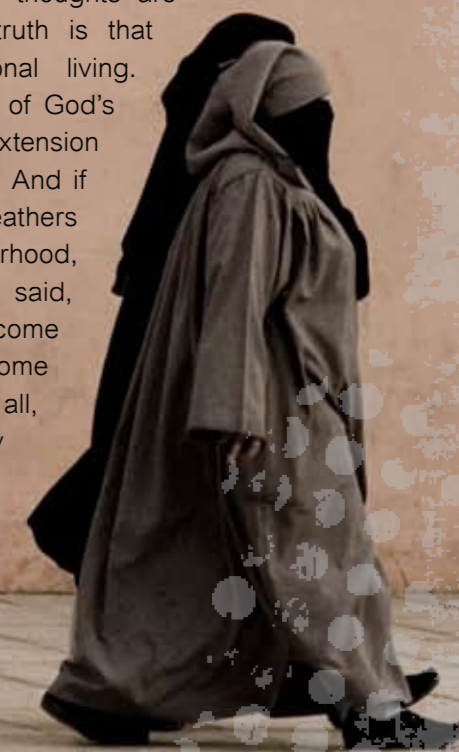




Photo by Linda Bell

The little girl and the doctor

The story of Sitara, a young girl from Central Asia. As told by Kelly, a Partner of Interserve New Zealand.

One of my favourite sights in our village is of my neighbour, a little girl about eight years old, herding her family's turkeys home at the end of the day. The fields are hued with gold as the setting sun reflects off the ripening wheat and she quietly walks along, arms outstretched and waving, chivvying on a flock of turkeys with their chicks in tow. To go out at this time of the evening is to risk being caught in 'rush hour traffic' as cows, goats, sheep and donkeys return from their day of grazing on the hills. Most herds are a mixture of all of these animals and most come from a number of different homes. Yet, somehow, as several children run along behind, ensuring no stray is left behind, each animal seems to find its way into the correct yard as the herd goes by.

Though this may sound like a story about animals, it's actually about children. For the past few years I have been working as a paediatric nurse in a project which provides health care in an isolated area of Central Asia. In that time I have been struck by the high number of children who are brought to us with serious health complaints or with diseases and conditions that would be easily treated or prevented back in New Zealand. I have often become angry about what I considered to be cases of blatant neglect.

Sitara was a beautiful nine-month old girl, just old enough to crawl... and just old enough to fall into the family *tandoor*. The *tandoor* is an in-ground oven, hot enough to cook bread quickly, and when Sitara landed on her elbow she suffered full thickness burns which exposed the joint. The burn was over a week old and infected when I saw her. Her father had taken her to the local clinic nearest their home, but when informed that the clinic was not equipped to deal with such a severe burn he had refused to take her to our hospital.

I re-dressed the burn but explained to the family that, at the very least, Sitara would need skin grafts. Indeed, she probably would require even more radical surgery, which we were not able to



do. I referred them to a children's hospital in the capital but Sitara's father was reluctant to make the journey, claiming hardship and poverty. I continued to impress on them the severity of Sitara's situation and the necessity for further help and they finally agreed to go. When they said they did not have the money I agreed to help with transport costs. Although my heart grieved at the inevitable disability little Sitara would have to live with, I was confident that she would receive good care at the children's hospital in the city. However, as days turned into weeks and we received no word of the family's arrival in the capital, I realised that the family must have decided not to go and had instead taken their little girl home, most likely to die.

My feelings of helplessness and anger were overwhelming as I struggled to make sense of the situation. One thing that helped was putting myself in the father's shoes: what factors influenced his choice to take his seriously ill daughter home instead of to the hospital? I believe there were several: they were an extremely poor family and, even with assistance, it would have been an expensive trip which he had no real way of financing; he had never been to the city before and the thought of travelling all that way for a treatment that, in his mind at least, would be unlikely to save her life, probably seemed pointless; he understood that losing children was inevitable - he'd already seen several of his children die in infancy; he had other children to provide for, and in his absence there would be no-one to take care of his family and his small piece of land.

Furthermore, for many families the decision about whether or not to seek treatment involves

the gender of the person - sadly it is still true that women and girls will have to wait longer before they receive any form of health care; the distance they will have to travel; the financial status of the family and the perceived value of the person who is sick.

I have also learnt that the clinic or the hospital is rarely the first stop for a child who is ill. The family will usually take them first to a local 'healer' in their own village, then to the nearest mullah who will provide prayers and talismans, depending on how much the family can afford. Finally, if none of that works, they may then take the child to 'the doctor'. There is a habit and a pattern to what is accepted and expected and if the pattern is not followed and the child remains sick or dies, then the one who made the decision not to consult the local healer and mullah first will be blamed.

Working through it in this manner helped me to better understand the complex situations I was dealing with but of course did not change the sad reality for little Sitara and many other children like her. In a country where one in four children will die by the age of five years it's easy to get the impression that a child's life is viewed as of very little worth. But I have seen the agony as a father pleads for some action to be taken to save his precious son or daughter, and the pain behind the fatalism of parents accepting the loss of yet another precious life. And all I can hold on to in those situations is the hope of a Father who longs for us to find our way home, checking that no-one is left behind, just as the children do when the time comes for the animals to return home every evening.



NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN!

Two children are trafficked for sexual exploitation every minute. Many of them end up in the brothels of Mumbai. Anita writes about the work of Oasis India in tackling this evil trade.



"I woke up in a strange place. I was beaten and kept locked in a room for 2 days... I cried out loud, asking for help and to be returned to my village but nobody paid any attention. For three days I didn't eat then I was brutally raped in succession by 3 men. My nightmare had begun. I serviced customers every day, sometimes up to 30 customers a day... I did not have a choice, I was their slave!"

Sarita was trafficked as an 18 year old from a village in Karnataka. She was taken overnight in a car to a brothel in Mumbai under the guise of getting a job. Oasis rescued her and she was placed in a government home. The night she was rescued she found out she was pregnant and HIV positive. The Oasis counsellor was able to restore hope in her and she is now in an Oasis vocational training course. Sarita informed Oasis that they were the only ones who gave her any encouragement. "As for my future, I want to stand on my own two feet and help others... I have flashbacks all the time and I feel so much shame. Men have taken everything from me... When I feel low, I pray about it... I know that Jesus is with me."

Modern-day slavery unfortunately is alive and well. EUROPOL has stated that the profit from human trafficking has become the second highest grossing black market activity in the world.¹ Today it is estimated that two children per minute are trafficked for sexual exploitation. However, international recognition of human trafficking is fairly recent and has only now begun to shift from criminalising the victims to supporting them. Unlike the historical slave trade, however, modern day human trafficking is underground and not plainly visible to the developed world.

In the last two years the Oasis anti-human trafficking team has intercepted 28 child trafficking victims who were being brought into the city for forced labour. This particular intervention focuses on transit points and rescues children before they reach the worksite or brothel. The Oasis Anti-Human Trafficking team has also performed several raids to rescue sex-slaves and slave labourers. Since July 2007 Oasis, in co-operation with local law enforcement agencies, has successfully rescued over 187 people.

¹ Chalke, Steve, and Cherie Blair. *Stop the Traffik : People Shouldn't Be Bought & Sold*. 1st ed. Oxford England Chicago IL: Lion; Distributed by Trafalgar Square Pub., 2009. p 12.

Soon after a raid the rescued victim is taken to the police station. A case file is opened and reports are collected. The victim is then forced to wait for the caseworker to process their case. This could take anywhere from six months to three years. The whole experience of being enslaved, rescued, and post-rescue, is a traumatic life experience. The victim's mental, emotional and physical state upon entering the home is often extremely fragile. Furthermore, in its current form the aftercare system is unacceptable. The victims are denied their possessions, they lose all access to the outside world, and have little freedom. Most times the homes are overcrowded, with sub-standard hygiene and sanitation. In addition, their physical and psychological trauma is not addressed. They may receive one government sponsored counselling session. It is not uncommon for traffickers to try to visit and threaten the victims in the government homes. Both non-governmental organizations and the government, along with the rescued victims, want to see a better aftercare system. An official at one government home in Mumbai (who declined to be named) told us, "My dream is to have a programme in place where each rescued victim would want to be there, where they will be able to make choices in their own rehabilitation, and that they will leave the home feeling good about themselves."

Oasis, while being acutely aware that it can only scratch the surface, has been able to provide some health care and counselling, conduct life skills sessions, literacy classes and small



amounts of vocational training in 3 homes. From 2010 in Mumbai Oasis plans to provide a fuller integrated programme in the home for young girls, combining health care and education, life skills and counselling, general skills, cognitive activities and creative activities. If Oasis is going to make a tangible difference we need to model complete aftercare. Potter's Wheel is a property that was generously given to Oasis and that would be ideal for 24/7 care of rescued girls. Located 21 hours away from Bangalore it is a sprawling 3 acre wooded campus ideal for a safe home. Our dream is to see each survivor have the opportunity to come to terms with their pain and find restoration and healing.

Potter's Wheel is intended to be a safe home and will be a facility where those rescued will feel safe and comfortable. They will have access to physical and psychological care all the time. They will have room to eat, sleep, play, and study without fear. The staff will also have access to them all the time. It will not look like a prison. Instead it will be a place where the girls are given space to grow, learn, and have the chance to live a happy life. Oasis' job is not to transform but to allow space and insight and share love so God can transform and restore. The girls will be able to go through a tailor-made, wholistic, integrated programme, where gifts and skills are developed and where they are empowered to make positive choices regarding their future. There will be time, space and care so that the girls may be able to begin letting go of the shame from the past and move forward into a new, healthy way to live in community with others.



The daughters of Cambodia

Amanda writes about her work with Cambodian prostitutes

Two hundred years after Christians helped to outlaw the transatlantic slave trade, vicious forms of modern-day slavery are flourishing across the world. Globally, the buying and selling of human beings is organised crime's fastest growing business. In Cambodia, the commercial sexual exploitation of children and young people has escalated over the last decade into what is now an 'industry'.

Tragically, a large proportion of girls and young women are knowingly sold to traffickers or brothels by their families, with children as young as four having been sold into the sex industry in Cambodia. While the majority of girls are from Cambodia, around one third come from other countries, predominantly Vietnam.

Girls often want to escape but are constrained by having nowhere safe to go and the need to constantly earn an income. Sex workers are typically uneducated and have no prospect of finding alternative employment. They are the outcasts of society in Cambodia, despised in the local community and have little chance of getting married or changing their lives. Daughters, a non-government organization reaching out to victims of sexual exploitation in Cambodia, has designed a programme which aims to help these women in a holistic way.

Daughters' day centre is a safe-haven in the heart of an area of brothels in Phnom Penh. At the day centre four small, fair-trade businesses make sewn products, cakes, jewellery and T-shirts. Two of these businesses are in partnership with other organizations. All girls receive a salary from the day they join a business which facilitates them

being able to leave the sex industry immediately.

Girls receive medical treatment at the Daughters clinic, therapeutic and counselling services and benefit from a range of creative and fun activities such as dance and expressive art workshops. A night shelter for girls aged under 20 provides a safe, nurturing home where they have the freedom to reintegrate into society and also take responsibility for their own lives, cooking and cleaning for themselves. Social work services assist girls and provide interventions to prevent younger siblings or children being sold.

Daughters has an outreach to local brothels to build relationships with new girls and offer medical treatment and creative activities, with the aim of giving girls respite from their traumatic situations and generating hope by telling girls about what Daughters can offer them. Daughters is a Christian organisation and has a weekly on-site church meeting, at which attendance is entirely voluntary, providing discipleship, worship and a ministry time. Girls are free to enquire about, choose or reject Christianity.

In the 20 months since Daughters opened its doors over 100 girls have left the sex industry to start a new life, and are experiencing healing and freedom from trauma. Our aim is to empower girls with the courage and inner resources to make and sustain healthy choices for their lives by restoring dignity and hope, building self-worth and showing respect and care, through meeting their needs in practical, medical, psychological and spiritual ways, and by Christian love.

www.daughterscambodia.org

From pain to hope

Since I came to work at Daughters, I feel I am living a different life, like I am a different person.

When I was fourteen, I came to Phnom Penh to work as a housemaid in the home of wealthy Cambodians because my parents were poor and they had left home to find work in Thailand. My employers didn't pay me a salary, but gave me two meals per day. Then the husband began to make advances towards me so I ran away. I had no job and no money. I met a girl working in a Karaoke bar who offered me a job. The job involved sitting with customers and playing CDs for them to sing. But all the customers liked me and tried to touch me. If I objected, they threatened to call the bar owner and demand that I lose my job. One customer asked me to go to a guesthouse with him, and I refused. But he had a gun which he pointed at me, and threatened to shoot my legs if I did not go, so I had no choice. The bar owner never intervened because this was a normal occurrence in these places, it happened all the time.

After that it was often like that, I had little choice about who I had to have sex with because they were wealthy or threatened me. I was filled with pain in my heart. It was so hard to bear. Customers often made derogatory comments to me; they did not care if I was crying and if I asked them to stop they would not. If I asked them to wear a condom they said they would rape me. There were customers who pinched and twisted my skin and some hit me. There was nobody willing to help me and I cried alone every night with no one to care about me. I started to think I was crazy. I was often so depressed; I felt I had no worth or value and my life was cheap. I cannot describe the pain.

Since I came to work at Daughters, I feel I am living a different life, like I am a different person. I used to cry at night and be unable to sleep; now I still cry but then I pray to God and I feel peace and am able to sleep. I feel so much better in my life than before. At Daughters I find comfort and strength, the staff value me, I have close friends and I know many people here love me and care about me. And I can talk to people here if I feel bad. I feel loved.

Nightmares of the past

My name is Charya. I am 15 years old. I have seen things that no child should ever see. When I was 7 years old, my mother died.

My father couldn't care for my sister and me so we went to live with my aunt but she wasn't a good person. She took my sister and me and sold us to a brothel. I was only 7. My sister was only 4. They locked us in a room, so we couldn't escape. They forced us to watch pornography so we could learn what to do. If we refused they would electrocute us. I still have nightmares about it.

After 4 years someone rescued us from the brothel. Now I am in a Christian foster home. I have a mum and a dad and I have a chance to go to school. They give me the opportunity to meet with counsellors and other girls who have been through similar circumstances. We pray together, sometimes we cry together. We can show our feelings of hurt, our disappointment and our grief due to what has happened to us. All of this is helping me heal and gives me hope for the future.



A place of smiles

David Giles, an Interserve England and Wales Partner, writes about a project which cares for disabled children in Thailand

People with disabilities are stigmatised in many cultures but in Thailand the outlook can be even worse. In its reincarnational belief system – a mixture of Buddhism and animism – being born with a disability can be considered to be a punishment for misdeeds in a previous life. Parents of disabled children are often ashamed and embarrassed, or simply unable to afford or understand the special care that their child requires. This can result in disabled children being simply handed over to the Thai authorities.

Over 2000 of these children are accommodated in state-run wards in the Pakkred district of Nonthaburi, north of the capital Bangkok. Facilities are basic but slowly improving. However, little is provided except for food, water, a change of nappy and a mattress. That's it. Nothing for the children to do. No stimulation. No colours. No sounds. No love. No affection.

Nearly 25 years ago, Wasan and Chariya Saenwian, Christians from a Buddhist background, decided that this wasn't good enough. They founded the Christian Care Foundation for Children with Disabilities (CCD) as a Thai NGO with the objective of providing help to abandoned children and those who have been given into government care by families too poor to support them. Their ministry is inspirational and wholistic and CCD now offers a range of different services.

At three of the government-run homes, CCD runs daycare centres. Here, children can be taken out of the institutional surroundings for a period of learning, fun and stimulation. It's usually the only

time of the week that they will enjoy friendship, love and individual attention. Heading to a CCD daycare session after the stark environment of the wards is a breath of fresh air. The arriving children have expectant, beaming faces, and are immediately welcomed into a music time. They beat drums, rattle shakers and sing along with some Sunday school favourites – CCD makes no secret of their Christian faith. The daycare centres also provide educationally- and developmentally-appropriate activities for each age range and ability, as well as a well-equipped sensory room.

On a separate site, CCD's Rainbow House cares for up to fifty youngsters on a residential basis. After physical and occupational therapy and special needs education, many Rainbow House residents are successfully integrated into local schools to progress their academic development. For the older ones, Baan Piam Rak (House of Love) is a nearby group home which provides an opportunity for independent living. Residents are given life-skills training, including cooking, shopping and washing.

Reuniting families is another of CCD's key aims, as founder Wasan Saenwian enthuses: 'Love is kind, and we aim to rescue the lives of children. One of our goals is to put kids back into a stable family.' Fifteen have been returned to their natural families so far, but it is often impossible as parents routinely give false details when handing their child over to the authorities. The next-best option, Wasan explains, is adoption: 'The Bible teaches about the importance of the family – and if we can't put kids back into their original families, we try to find families who will accept and nurture them.' He has put his words into action by adopting a son himself, bringing the number of adopted children to 38.

Community-based rehabilitation is a growing aspect of CCD's work. This involves teaching the parents what disability is and how to care for their disabled child. Through a network of centres in four provinces, CCD helps to share the



burden of supporting disabled children through support groups and practical help such as toy libraries and assistance in accessing medical facilities. Training is also provided, to help older children develop essential skills.

The scale of the problem in Thailand is huge. 'Too much to cope with,' confesses Wasan. 'Thinking of the two-thousand-plus is too much to bear but taking each child as an individual – on a one-to-one basis – the impact on that child is huge.'

With culturally-entrenched perceptions of disability to overcome, it's often an uphill struggle. 'We need to develop a culture of equal rights for disabled people in Thailand,' continues Wasan, 'to counter a lack of knowledge about disability to ensure that disabled people have a good quality of life – and to enable them to take their rightful place in mainstream society.'

This is where Interserve England & Wales Partners David and Sarah Giles come in. Working with

CCD as International Communications and Development Officers, the couple are involved in activities such as promotion, advocacy and media relations. They are currently fundraising for a plot of land adjacent to Rainbow House which will be used to build a new vocational training centre and apartments for independent living. 'It's a fantastic organisation to be working in,' says David. 'The work is so varied – we can be helping out on a children's camp one day and being interviewed on BBC local radio the next.'

'While it's relatively easy to talk about disability in the Western media, it's much harder to achieve positive coverage in the Thai press. In a context where disabled people are still being hidden away, it takes a brave editor to publish inspiring articles about the achievements of CCD's children. We know that cultural shift doesn't happen overnight, but ultimately we are trying to make the unlovable lovable – just like Jesus did. That needs sensitivity, creativity and a great deal of prayer.'

Teaching English, showing Jesus

Fresh thinking on how to show God's love through teaching English

By Damian, an Interserve England and Wales Partner

All of us are able to remember a favourite teacher, someone who stood out, someone who left a lasting impression on our lives. Would it be fair to say that we often learned as much from who that teacher was than what they actually taught? It is both exciting (and daunting) to ponder how our presence in the classroom interlinks with our spirituality and the way we teach.¹ The way in which we live out our belief system, the Jesus way, has the potential to touch our students as much as the content of our lessons.

That is why teaching English is very precious – to kingdom work, ourselves, and the people around us, the reason being that teaching English should be all about relationship. Every time students are asked to turn to one another and practise an aspect of language, there is interaction, dialogue and exchange. The way we treat our colleagues, local staff and family will be noted by onlookers. The measure of love and concern for our students (even disruptive ones) will be remembered by at least some. When the photocopier is in a bad mood, you can be guaranteed our reaction will be recorded in someone's memory. People notice kingdom qualities in the everyday events of our lives and relationships. We embody His love, forgiveness, reconciliation and relationship by doing just that – persevering, loving, giving, forgiving, hoping and praying – even when there is no encouragement or apparent response.

It is incredible that an estimated two billion people are learning English in the world's education systems and as independent adults.² We have been given a (limited?) God-given opportunity to meet this huge need for language skills and improve the quality of life for individuals, families and communities. It could be limited because English has become a 'basic skill' in many of the world's education systems and millions are gaining proficiency in the language. As early as

2010, it is predicted that the number of English learners could begin to decrease with demand for teachers accordingly.³ For now, though, it is enough to know that a third of this world is learning English and there is a harvest that needs diligent and committed teachers for an intense and complex task. Moreover, the demand for English teachers is significantly greater in the least evangelised parts of the world.⁴

It is true that teaching English has allowed legitimate access for my family into a region that has often been hostile towards believers, as well as flexibility and the potential to interact with people from all walks of life – at work and in the community. There is a bewildering mix of children, monks, students, doctors and foreign business people in my class. We see these people around town every day. Being vulnerable has had a profound effect on interdependency. They help us with our electrical problems. We visit their shops and eat in their restaurants. They come round for pot-luck parties. Their children play with our child in the garden. They come to sample English tea. They take a Scripture portion and talk about spirituality. My wife helps them with their homework. Being a teacher in community has profound relationship potential, especially when the role of the non-teaching spouse and children is seen as a precious part of that teaching witness. Why study about English food and not actually try some especially cooked by the teacher's wife?

Teaching English, however, is so much more than a means to an end, so that one can do a so-called greater spiritual task. Limiting Christian witness to direct and explicit forms of evangelism would be a great loss - for teaching is precious in itself. Rather than being 'missionaries in disguise', we should see teaching as part of the evangelistic witness of our whole lives (cf. Rom. 12:1). Moreover, in the midst of difficulties

and discouragements, it is good to be reminded that the quality of my teaching is a vital way of sharing God's love with my students. In meeting their most immediate and pressing need, that is, helping them out with their English, the diligence with which I offer my expertise is a 'visible and credible' measure of my concern. The way in which we teach also makes one of the 'strongest and clearest' statements of what a Christian is like - and indirectly the One we follow.⁵

Ponder the reflection of this thinker: The work expresses and agrees with our word of testimony; the word explains the witness of our work. Work is not just a means to an end, a necessary activity so that we can love and witness. Work is a part of that witness.⁶

I am convinced that many students think deeply about the reasons behind quality teaching, commitment to the task, a caring attitude, an 'as for the Lord' work ethic (cf. Col. 3:22) and clear moral standards.⁷ All the more so when they realise that many of us are volunteers who have left family and put aside career opportunities back home. This had led quite naturally to some questions and opportunities to share – with discretion. Relying on His power and wisdom, we can only trust that our efforts in and out of the classroom will do more than improve grammar but also have eternal impact in this difficult country. May the reflections continue.

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Scattering the seed

The joys and frustrations of mission to the hard places, by Karen, a Partner of Interserve USA

We could hardly contain our delight as my husband and I listened to “Brad” describe his new life. He chuckled as he talked, clearly bubbling with joy; “I feel so clean! I feel like I’m new-born! I don’t even want to think about the things I used to do!”. Later that day, as I pondered the work of God in Brad’s life, my mind went back ten years to the time when we were visiting friends and churches to raise support for our overseas work. One day we were talking with a family about the challenges of ministry among people of the Central Asian world where the “soil” can be very hard and progress slow. “Why waste your time and money and talents in a place where you’ll see so few results?” was the response.

I have to confess, there have been many times since coming here when I have wondered if my presence here is making any difference at all. More seasoned workers have offered encouragement, assuring my husband and me that the acts of kindness we show and the Biblical truths we share through our health and education programs are not secular work but instead are spiritual acts of service. But still, could I dare to hope that simply living out my faith through the power of the Spirit in a place where speaking the Gospel is illegal could actually make a difference?

I like the definition of evangelism that describes it as “representing the Kingdom of God and bringing it into places where it is not.” We know that it is the seed of the Word of God that produces the Kingdom in people’s lives. Jesus

describes this so beautifully in the parable of the sower in Mark chapter 4. The longer I am in this country the more I understand the power of the seed to bear fruit wherever it is planted.

One day I told “Alisha” that I was fasting and praying for her cousin who had recently been kidnapped. When he was released a few weeks later she acknowledged that there is power in the name of Jesus. On another occasion, seed was planted in “Samantha’s” heart when she learned that Jesus offers her protection from the jinn (demons) of whom she is so afraid. Or we share a meal with “David”, a mature believer, and promise our prayers and support as he tells us of his plan to shepherd a group of young seekers.

God says in Isaiah 55: “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth... so will my word be which goes forth from my mouth; It will not return to me empty”. The beauty and hope of the Gospel is that the power is in the seed, not in the delivery or the gifting of the farmer. So often, the bits of seed we sow through our daily testimony and simple acts of kindness appear small and insignificant to us. It often appears to us that nothing is happening; but just as a seed of corn begins to germinate out of the sight of the farmer, so the seed of the Gospel begins to grow in a person’s heart, sometimes long before it will show and produce a great harvest. Please pray that the Lord would bless the seeds that we scatter in this dry, hard land.



Love is...

My heart sank. Nick and his A level drama class were preparing their devised piece which would be filmed and sent

to the examiners as a major part of his final assessment.

“What’s your theme?” I asked. “Love is...” came the reply.

Some weeks later we went to watch the show. Of course I’m biased, but it really was good. At the centre of the plot was the story of King Edward VIII of England and his abdication from the throne in order to marry his love, Mrs. Wallis Simpson. Whether seen as villain or hero, for Edward VIII, love literally changed everything.

At the heart of Easter is the story of a King who gave up everything to win his bride. The sign read ‘King of the Jews’. It was right, but only partially so. He is king of all. And when he died, he thought of me and the whole created order. ‘For God was pleased to have all his fullness

dwelt in him and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross.’ (Col 1:19,20)

Hatred breeds hatred but love calls forth love. The deeper we experience the transforming, all embracing love of God, the more our love is reflected back to him.

The Moravians in the 18th Century remain an extraordinary example of how love changes everything. According to Andrew Murray, they sent out more workers in their first twenty years than the whole Protestant mission movement in the previous 200. Their motto from Isaiah 53:10-12 ‘To win for the Lamb that was slain, the reward of his sufferings’, reminds us that love has its consequences. The more we experience his love, the more we love him. And the more we love him, the more we are compelled to share that love with others. (2 Cor 5:14) If we open ourselves to the love of God it changes everything.

Paul Bendor-Samuel



Interserve is an international evangelical mission with over 800 Partners in a wide range of ministries in more than 30 countries in Asia and the Arab World and among those of other faiths in Western countries. It is voluntarily supported and staffed by Christians from Asia and the West. Partners are normally seconded to churches or other bodies which supervise their work, while Partners maintain fellowship and pastoral links with Interserve.

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urgent job opportunities

> **Sports Coach, Central Asia:**

A sports coach, ideally with a qualification in sport or teaching, is required to work at a university in a capital city in Central Asia. This is a wonderful opportunity for someone with a love of sport to use their gifts to serve local students, encouraging them in their physical and communal development and improving their health. Ideally this would be for a minimum term of one year.

> **Handicrafts Teacher, Central Asia**

A school for disabled children in Central Asia is looking to recruit someone to teach handicrafts to parents of children in order to enable them to earn a living. This project has the potential to have a massive impact on the lives of these children and also their parents - could you come out and add to its ministry? Ref: 1819.

> **Kindergarten Teacher, Central Asia**

A kindergarten teacher is required to set up and run a kindergarten in a city in Central Asia. There is a real shortage of childcare opportunities in this city and the local government is actively encouraging organisations to get involved in order to make a real difference. There are existing facilities which could be used but there is a lack of local knowledge of how to start a kindergarten. Ref: 1825.

> **Teaching roles, Central Asia**

A school in Central Asia which teaches around 70 children from a variety of countries is looking to recruit a number of teachers in different positions. Maths Teachers, English Teachers, Social Studies Teachers, Music Teachers, and Kindergarten Teachers are all required at this exciting and thriving school.

> **Music Teacher, India**

A music teacher is urgently required at a school in India. Teaching this vital part of the curriculum depends upon recruiting an experienced music teacher to work for a minimum of one year. Can you help? Ref: 1822.

> **Principal / Administrator, Pakistan**

A Principal / Administrator is required to run a language school in Pakistan for 6 months of every year. The remaining six months are free to carry out other ministries. This is a vital work which enables Interservers to develop their language skills, which in turn has a massive impact on the value of their work in Pakistan. Ref: 1878.

> **IT / Computer Manager, Pakistan**

An IT expert with networking experience and ideally some experience of teaching is required to work at a school in Pakistan. Computing is an increasingly important part of the smooth running of the school – could you fill this crucial role? Ref: 1875.

> **Evangelist, Pakistan**

An evangelist is required to work at a Christian hospital in one of the most difficult and dangerous parts of Pakistan. This hospital has been providing quality medical care for over 130 years and has built up such a reputation that people come from all over Pakistan, even from the more affluent cities, to this remote frontier, simply because the quality of care is so good. We want to recruit an evangelist to pray with our patients. Ref: 1864.

> **Any job, Anywhere you like**

There are far, far more jobs available through Interserve than can ever be mentioned on the back cover of a magazine. There are endless opportunities to serve God across Asia and the Arab World, in any role, in any part of any country. If you feel called to serve God using your professional skills in a country which has few local believers then get in touch with your local Interserve office – this could be the start of an amazing journey of faith!

**For more information, go to www.interserve.org
or contact your National Office.**

People for the hard places...