



PULSE MAGAZINE

March 2020

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Pulse is the voice of CRC Missions International

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FROM THE EDITOR

Mikaela Groom

Welcome to our March edition of Pulse for 2020.

For our first few editions of this year we are focusing on missionary service. We have a great number of CRC missionaries from numerous countries serving throughout our fields; why not hear from them?

In our March issue we have sourced articles from various Australian missionaries who are serving across the nations. The nations included within this issue are Papua New Guinea, Haiti, the Philippines and Cambodia, among others.

I am greatly inspired by the articles contained within this Pulse Magazine. I have always loved hearing stories from missionaries; those who are currently serving in another nation and those who have returned 'home'.

Mark 16:15 instructs us to, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation".

As I read through these articles and discover more about the people who have written them, it is awesome to see this verse in action.

Each of these individuals have responded to the unique call God has placed on their lives, journeying to new nations to preach the Gospel.



FROM THE AUSTRALIAN MISSIONS DIRECTOR

Pr Mike Cronin

CRC Churches International has a vision of a presence (an effective, ongoing, disciple-making ministry fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus as seen in Matthew 28:18) in every nation by 2045. This will only happen as people in Australia, and every nation that we are involved in, move beyond their comfort zones and reach into other nations.

In this issue of Pulse you will meet some of the Australian heroes of faith who have ventured beyond their homeland

to go and live, and serve, in a different country and culture. In future issues you will meet people from other nations who have stepped out as missionaries beyond their homeland.

At the International Leaders Gathering (ILG) last October, after our National Conference, an idea was raised of opportunities for Australian young people, and others, to receive training to be equipped to go to the mission field. The Australian International Missions Team (AIMT) responded to this request by asking Pr Jeremy Steel to conduct two Missionary Connect Weekends in 2020, and then a Missionary Training Intensive in 2021. This will be followed with opportunities for short-term mission trips, and will develop pathways for medium or long-term missions involvement. See back page for details.



MINISTERING ACROSS THE NATIONS

Rachelle Hardy from Reality Christian Fellowship

To put it simply: I love being a missionary. I think that from the first time I arrived in Papua New Guinea (PNG) in 1992 until now, I have just enjoyed serving as a missionary wherever I have been asked to go.

My missionary life all started with God placing a desire in my heart at a young age, even though I did not fully recognise it at that time.

I am predominantly based at Bethel Centre in Port Moresby, PNG. I am part of the Bethel International Training ministry team; more specifically, I am involved in the World Missions Faith Training School. I also help in the Bethel Visa Office, monitoring and processing visas, passports for our missionaries and workers, among other things.

Every now and then I am also sent out by Bethel, when asked by Pr Barry Silverback, to help and assist in some of our other training ministries in different countries, especially in India.

One of the constant and biggest challenges that I face as a missionary is working at, and fitting in with, different cultural mindsets and ways. Some things are easier to understand and accept than others.

Although it may be difficult to fit into

another culture and accept new ways of doing things, it is important to remember that the people who I work and live with, also have to adjust to my cultural ways and mindsets.

Due to a mix of cultures on the mission field, it is vitally important for missionaries, and the people they are working with, to realise that misunderstandings and misinterpretations have to be worked at when they happen.

My advice for anyone who is willing and feels called to be a missionary, is to be assured - before you make a commitment and go out - that the ministry you are about to embark on is from God and not from anyone or anything else.

It is crucial to accept that many things will be unknown and new, but if you are totally assured and committed to what the Lord has spoken to your heart - and you are committing and communicating everything to Him - you will be able to work through the challenges, unexpected things, disappointments, cultural differences, and bear fruit wherever He places you.

I enjoy the wonderful team of leaders, missionaries, workers, students, congregation members and others who are such a valuable part of my life both in PNG, my homeland of Australia, as well as all of the nations we are involved with.

And I LOVE just going home to see my

mum and dad in Melbourne, as well as my brother and sister along with their families. I can't wait until the next time I am able to visit!

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MISSIONARIES IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Wally and Leona Grant are an Australian couple serving at Bethel Christian Centre in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (PNG). They were sent out from Swan Hill Christian Centre. They have just returned to PNG from furlough in Australia, after serving their first term of three years, and are now entering into their second term.

Why have you decided to become missionaries?

Wally: I am a missionary because I have always wanted to help other people. We also felt the call of God to come to PNG

and serve Him here.

Leona: I believe that as Christians we are all called to the mission field. It is just that our fields look different! Our field just so happens to be in PNG for the time being.

What are you involved in as a missionary?

Wally: I mainly partake in grounds and maintenance work, as well as building things, such as bridges, buildings, and best of all, friendships. I am also involved in a little bit of mentoring and pastoral care work.

Leona: Anything I can do to equip another person. My main role is working within the Finance Department, but I also have the privilege of doing some teaching and a little bit of pastoral care and counselling work.

What have been your greatest challenges as a missionary?

Wally: One of the greatest challenges for me would be adapting to the different culture. Learning to accept and do things in a different way has not really been my way. Also, leaving family, especially grandchildren, and friends, behind.

Leona: Being away from family and friends is certainly hard. I think one of the hardest things as a missionary is knowing that there are many needs, but not having enough time to help more in certain areas can be frustrating.

What is the greatest reward, or aspect, of being a missionary?

Wally: Seeing the smiles on people's faces when you help them with things that they have never experienced from

our culture, and to give something back without a price tag attached to it. I also love having new brothers and sisters; family in Christ.

Leona: The greatest aspect of being a missionary is the people; by far the people! It gives me great joy to work with an amazing group of people who love the Lord and are committed to World Missions.

What advice would you give to a person who feels the call to be a missionary?

Wally: Why haven't you gone yet? Also, one important thing to realise is this: do not try and push your culture onto them, instead, work with them.

Leona: What are you waiting for? GO! It is also a really good idea to ensure your finances are in order before you go.



SERVING IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Sue Withers from Beachside Christian Fellowship

Prior to becoming a full-time missionary I had served in the Royal Australian Air Force as a medic and a nurse for 27 years.

I had a God-given desire to commit to full-time missionary work, with a focus on teaching preventative health to people in other nations.

While I waited for the right time to become a full-time missionary, I went on many short-term mission trips.

I have been a missionary in Papua New Guinea (PNG) now for almost seven years.

One of the main ministries that I am involved in is the, Early Learning Mobile School (ELMS).

We started ELMS in the underprivileged areas around Port Moresby, teaching

children phonics and foundational bible stories. Our main focus within this ministry is to preach the Gospel.

Many parents have reported back to us that their children are now doing very well in primary school as a result of ELMS.

I am also involved in health work at Bethel. There are three of us nurses who run a small clinic and are health advocates for our Bethel family.

The biggest challenge that we face within this ministry is ignorance. Some common issues are the belief that amoxicillin fixes every sickness, and being oblivious to the consequences of unhealthy living.

A majority of our patients are dehydrated; many people think they have malaria, but in some cases they

just do not know that they need to drink more water.

We teach preventative health, hygiene and first aid, to the Bethel students. As a result of our teaching, many students adopt healthier behaviours.

The ultimate goal is for our students to be equipped to teach health awareness wherever they go. I love the adventure involved in going walkabout with a health team of students to remote villages.

We have a vision to open a health centre at Bethel; we currently have about 6,000 handmade bricks.

Wherever we are serving in the Kingdom of God, we must walk in love and unity, seeking the Lord for discernment and wisdom, staying close to Him.

MINISTERING IN HAITI

*Jocasta Keeley from
Momentum Canberra*

I prayed a prayer to make an impact for God in one poverty-stricken nation and He answered. He took me to the other side of the world, far from every comfort zone, to Haiti where nothing is similar to what I had known. God called me, He gave me a heart filled with love for the Haitian people, especially children.

Is missionary life challenging? More challenging than one could imagine: two different cultures merging, trying to reach a place of new understandings; feelings of loneliness in a crowded place; missing the comforts of home. Missionary life is about having your world turned upside down on a daily basis, sometimes in a challenging way, but also in the most rewarding ways.

When I realised there were more children beyond the walls I was surrounded by in my first term in Haiti, New Gen Nourish Haiti was birthed. This is a nourishment ministry providing meals, English lessons, assistance with education, and simple Bible teachings. This is my passion, this is my God-given work. Advocating for these children who have captured my heart completely; reminding them of their worth; building self-confidences; and

genuinely loving them deeply is such a small glimpse of my calling here.

Committing oneself to a missionary life is more than one could hope or imagine, it exceeds all expectations. Missionary life has to first and foremost be a God-given passion, if your story is like mine, you may have to go through a long waiting period but you will come to know that the waiting is worth it. God won't give you a passion that He hasn't planned out for you, so if your heart is constantly beating for the passion you believe He's given you, then know His timing may not have been reached yet.

Feeling a small hand slip into your own and hearing the exclamation of 'Mumma', realising it's you they are calling; the tight squeeze of little arms around your neck, a glimpse of their heart filled with love; listening as the sweet melody of the song you taught them a week ago tumbles from their lips; catching them as they remind each other of the importance of building each other up - it's in these moments that a missionary life is rewarded. These are the moments which make me realise I couldn't trade this space for the comforts I once knew.



LIFE IN SOUTH- EAST ASIA

We are part of the Bible Translation Movement and are based in South-East Asia. My wife is a teacher's aide at our children's school and I am part of the senior leadership of our group. Why do we serve overseas? The answer is simple: Christ's love compels us. It isn't much more complicated than that.

It's a simple answer to why but the how has been much more complicated. You may have heard a lot of things that are challenging: language learning, support raising, local wildlife, but for me, it was the complete and utter humbling that occurs when no one knows who you are. When you visit a place for a couple of weeks, you are usually with a host and your host will ensure you understand what is happening and what to do. The host will introduce you and help people get to know you. The challenge all long-term cross-cultural workers face is that they have to go out on their own. You have to face the community you serve as a completely unknown person.

Let me unpack this a little further. At home in Australia everyone has different areas of belonging: in a family, in a neighbourhood, in a church, a local club or school or university. You know the general rules of the place and know how you fit. And you have people that know you. They know what you like and

what you don't. They know how you normally behave and they trust you. You are known. Over the years I have come to realise the power of Philippians 2, specifically verse 5. Jesus gave up heaven for us. He gave up being fully known for being fully unknown for us. Considering the price Jesus paid, how can I not likewise humble myself to serve others?

So how exactly do I serve? Upon arrival, I had every expectation that I would be part of a translation team. However, I came to realise what God wants of me is to serve in an administrative role. Our five country group has 250+ Staff with about 130 accompanying children. My job is to help keep these people on their tasks by handling the 'Paperwork & Projects'. I'll do whatever is needed to help my teammates work more safely or effectively. In doing so, I am also finding the opportunity to engage with and show love for all our team. I find great joy in loving those who are working in regions openly hostile to Jesus and His message of New Life.

And so if you ask me what the best part of this job is I'll tell you this: being able to love and serve others in a way that God has made me. I'm a cross-cultural administrator for a multinational Bible Translation Group. I praise the LORD that I get to do the work as He has created me to do!

Please note: This couple's names have been removed for security reasons. They are from South Australia and have been serving in South-East Asia for seven years.



SERVING IN THE PHILIPPINES

Vegena Bowering from Christian Family Centre, Seaton and Hobart

I have always known that I would be a missionary one day. My dream is to encourage, facilitate and mentor others for the ministry. A term I appreciate is *mobiliser*; someone who finds ways to train, prepare, support, encourage and send those who have a calling.

I have also had a passion for culture, specifically working cross culturally. I spent six years in Central Australia and I grew up in Papua New Guinea (PNG),



so working in another culture has always been a desire.

I have been in the Philippines since July 2011. When I first came here I had an idealistic idea of what I would be doing but over time I learnt that missions work is fluid; you are not defined by a role or a position, but by your willingness to do whatever needs to be done.

One of my roles is assisting incoming, current and outgoing missionaries with visas. This includes taking them for medicals, interviews and other requirements. I also assist with the visas for our delegates from the Philippines who attend the International CRC Conference in Australia.

Over the last eight months I have been ministering in one of our outreaches; it has been challenging and rewarding. God has really shown me that when we give of ourselves to others, He is faithful

to give back to us so much more.

I am also on the administration and preaching staff for the CMGO Pasig church, and for Pr Peter Hauje our National Chairman in the Philippines.

Other things that I have been involved in are: lecturing in the Bible and missions schools, children's ministry, feeding programs, youth and young adult ministries, discipleship and mentoring, international and local conference coordination, multimedia and promotion, and running missions awareness workshops which involves travelling around the Philippines.

Missions is constantly receiving and sending people as part of the Great Commission. One struggle I have as a missionary is saying goodbye. As a missionary you meet lots of people and make deep connections quicker than you would at home.

You fall in love with your adopted country and still leave part of heart back home. When you leave for furlough and then when you return back to the field, there are so many goodbyes. It can be hard to manage your emotions sometimes; however, I am improving! I am also grateful to have a family that totally gets the missionary journey.

In Manila my greatest struggle is traffic! The outreach church I oversee is about 45 minutes away in normal Australian traffic. Some days it can take 3-5 hours to get there: two buses, one jeepney and a tricycle. I do this twice a week. It

is exhausting, but it is also so rewarding. We have seen great healings and personal growth; it is worth the effort!

The greatest reward as a missionary for me is ministering and connecting with people; seeing them grow in their faith and journey with God. I pray that I have helped them desire God more deeply, and walk more confidently and passionately in God's purpose for them. Seeing young people find their place in ministry and outworking their faith at work is so rewarding. I am blessed to be a small part of God's grand purpose for their lives. I have truly come to know the Filipino church here as family.

I miss my natural family dearly and it is hard missing important events and not being there when family members are unwell. However, I know God made me a promise when I came, if I was willing to care for His family, He would take care of mine.

There will always be doubts, concerns and 'what ifs' about this missionary journey. I encourage anyone who is considering becoming a missionary to not let fear, or other people's fears, stop you from what God has called you to.

Secondly, do not wait until you are on the field to get things in order; your devotional life, your prayer life, your commitment, your flexibility, and your willingness to serve. Do those things now, be involved now, prepare your spiritual core now, because it is much harder to get these in order once you are in the field.



MISSIONARY LIFE IN CAMBODIA

Rebecca Hartskeerl from South Eastern Christian Centre

My name is Rebecca and I am a missionary to Cambodia.

I mostly help Pr Sina and his team of pastors and leaders; teaching and training them in the Word of God, equipping them to minister the Gospel and teach others – making disciples. This includes participating in and

helping as they minister, not just teaching in a class. I also teach English to children and help the people in different ways, whether it is people who are sick, digging wells and water solutions, building houses and more.

Being a missionary has its challenges and its rewards, there are many ups and downs. The most obvious challenges are language and culture.

There have been many times where I have wanted to share something from God or His Word but there is no one to translate for me, and I do not know enough of the language - or even the culture sometimes - to communicate all that is in my spirit to share. However, despite these challenges, I praise God because I know that he helps me in all of this; I am never alone in serving Jesus for he is always with me.



Thus, the greatest reward as a missionary for me is when I have communicated a spiritual truth effectively and have seen it touch and change lives.

There is nothing greater than seeing people get a hold of God, His Word and the life of the Spirit!

Other challenges that we face as missionaries - and of course for all who minister in the Kingdom of God - are those from the enemy; the one who will oppose us at every turn and in many ways.

Opposition from the enemy may be found in challenges that arise when raising support, securing visas, doors that appear to be shutting, sickness (and numerous other problems), and just misunderstandings with the people in the culture you are working in.

One thing that I learnt a long time ago is to be sure of your calling; know what God has called you to do. God is faithful and He will always help us through our journey and bring us to what He calls us to. God does not call us for a specific purpose just to slam the door shut in our face.

There will be lessons to learn, yes, but God will always lead us to the place He wants us to go when we surrender to Him and His will.

Proverbs 3:5 says, 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding'.

Therefore, the greatest advice that I can give anyone who feels called to the mission field, is be sure of what God is calling you to; seek Him for confirmation and clear vision and then trust Him with it all.



PATHWAY TO MISSIONS

Connecting, training and resourcing your missionary journey

Speakers: Pr Barry Silverback and Jeremy Steel

This event is for those who have a passion and desire to be involved in missionary service in the nations. Whether it be long-term, short-term or a missions trip – this weekend is for you.

TWO LOCATIONS FOR 2020

South Australia

Christian Family Centre, Seaton (185 Frederick Rd)
Friday 26 June, 7pm to 9:30pm | Saturday 27 June, 9am to 3pm

Victoria

Turningpoint Church, Cranbourne (1785 South Gippsland Hwy)
Saturday 25 July (times to be confirmed)

There will be a small cost to cover food and printed materials

To register your interest please contact Jeremy Steel
steeljeremy0@gmail.com

**CREATING PATHWAYS | CONNECTING WITH LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE
VALUABLE INSIGHTS | MISSIONARY NETWORKING**