

GO NEWS

FEBRUARY 11

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GOD IS SHAKING THE NATIONS

Attention was focused on Sudan and Lebanon as 2010 drew to a close, with the impending referendum in Sudan and indictments in Lebanon for the death of Rafik Hariri. There were many calls to pray for Sudan, recognising the referendum raised potential for war in this strife torn country.

2011 began with a bang, quite literally, when a bomb exploded on New's Year Eve outside an Orthodox Church in Alexandria as they were celebrating mass. Then suddenly Tunisia erupted, calls for change and the removal of President Ben Ali resulted in the end to more than 20 years of authoritarian rule. The question began to be asked whether this could be repeated in other countries, including Egypt, and many commentators said no, Egypt did not have the level of education that Tunisia enjoyed.

How wrong they were: the end of January saw people come out onto the streets and call for change, violence erupted, and in the end,

with the implicit backing of the all-powerful military, the protesters won the day and another leader was toppled – with the jury still out on what is to come. And it did not stop there. The President of Yemen announced he would not stand for election after his term ended in 2013, and added that he would not pass power on to his son. In Algeria, the President announced that he would soon lift the 19 year state of emergency. The Palestinian President is reshuffling his regime, Jordan and Iran have seen demonstrations calling for change, and the government in Lebanon has fallen with the future there increasingly uncertain.

What in the world is happening? Or what is God doing in the world at this time, in particular in the Middle East and North Africa? He is building His Church. Last year we were hearing reports of God at work in ways we could not have imagined. He is shaking the nations. God is at work for purposes that are far bigger than anything we could have asked or imagined, and I for one want to

see Him bring to fulfillment all He has purposed for this region.

These are challenging days. Our peace has been shattered, there is uncertainty, risks, and instability. I am reminded, though, that when we pray for peace we need to pray for God's wholeness for the nations, not just the absence of war or conflict. In Egypt, where the new year started with suffering for the Church and fear about the future of relationships with Muslim neighbours, recent days have seen Christian and Muslim standing together to protect their neighbourhood, relationships being built that would otherwise have taken years.

At the end of last year I felt we needed a year of focused prayer and fasting for this region, not knowing what the beginning of this year would bring. It is still our cry that many would join, setting aside one day a week, throughout 2011, to fast and pray for the Arab world. God is at work. I don't know what the end will be, but I know I want to be where He is, joining hands with what He is doing, and seeking His glory in these nations. God is building His Church. We have an opportunity to be part of that great work by joining with the Church here, to stand with, support, and be a part of it, serving God's Kingdom purposes. One leader wrote that he feared the weakening of the Church in Egypt, as many foreigners have gone, and many local Christians are also looking to leave. He asked that we not forget the Church, a cry that has been echoed by leaders in Lebanon, Iraq and elsewhere. In the midst of conflict and turmoil there is still the need for people who will be available to God to come and live in this region, join hands with the Church and be messengers of transformation. ✨

The author has been serving in South Asia and the Arab world since 1986. To learn more about fasting and praying for the Arab world, see page 4.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Growing in Fruitfulness' is the third of our new International Priorities, and, you may say, a no-brainer.

After all, didn't Jesus command us to go and bear much fruit? Didn't He tell stories where a farmer reaps 30, 60 and a hundred-fold of what he has sown, or where fishermen almost sink their boats under the load of fish they haul in? Didn't He curse a fig tree that was less than fruitful? And doesn't His word challenge us to produce fruit that remains?

In business producing 'fruit' is what keeps a company alive: productivity is tangible, measurable and rewarded. On the other hand, having a sole focus on measurable results devalues the less-tangibles aspects of life, such as relationships, because they do not seem to create profitable outcomes. However, the not-for-profit sector often swings too far the other way, by

placing little value on measurement, and leaving success and productivity undefined and vague.

Jesus obviously thought that fruitfulness was important, and whether we are a business or a not-for-profit, it is crucial that we are accountable and honest with ourselves and others about how we are doing. Our vision and mission is to see lives and communities transformed through encounter with Jesus Christ, and as a fellowship we have identified what areas we currently need to focus on in order to achieve measurable results, without compromising our values and beliefs.

Here are some of our foci for growing in fruitfulness these next years: integrated mission in the market place, business, creation care, and reconciliation; ministry to marginalised; discipleship; helping

Diaspora Christians to make disciples; engaging effectively with dominant religions and worldviews.

None of these are the end goal. And the tension between tangible and intangible elements will always be with us. But in our desire to see Jesus made famous, and His Kingdom come, in the troubled nations of the Middle East and elsewhere, let us allow God's Spirit to fill these priority areas with contagious, reproductive life.

For a complete version of our IPs, please contact our office.



WALKING IN A MINEFIELD

It was our third day in Kurdistan, in northern Iraq. As we scrambled up a snow-covered mountain side, we saw a line of rusted metal signs with a skull and crossbones symbol, and wondered what this meant.

Our Kurdish guide announced: "It means 'private property'." But then he whispered to me, "It's a minefield, but don't worry – it's probably all been cleared." When I told our team members, one of them said, "Look, that sign over there is clearer – let's go and get a photo." So we just walked across the minefield: at the time it seemed a very natural thing to do.

SERENA "A lot of our students craved the joy that many Christians take for granted, and thanked us for returning some laughter and happiness into their lives."

Thinking about it later, I realised this did not seem to be a wise decision. However it became a metaphor to

me of our whole trip. Going to Iraq in the first

place did not seem a wise thing – try getting insurance to visit a country on your Department of Foreign Affairs' "Do not travel" list. Nor did taking a team of mostly non-teachers to teach classes full of university and college lecturers. Nor did showing the movie, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, to a 100% Muslim audience, with group discussions afterwards.

MATT "One of the most rewarding things was seeing our students make connections with each other."

How did this all come about? I was leading the team of seven Aussie and three Kiwi Christians (Matt, Jeremy and Serena) who wanted to make a difference by doing something completely different.

The three-week trip can only be described as a testimony to God's goodness. From our arrival, our Kurdish hosts took great care of us – paying for all our accommodation, meals and transport. The English conversation course that we gave was well-received, and included a range of methodologies including debates, role-plays, case-studies and puzzles. Our students were well-engaged

from the beginning and had fun. Out-of-class activities included field trips, fun days and the C.S. Lewis movie nights. Relationships with our students developed and blossomed during these times, and some serious sharing of the good news took place. Even in the classroom, our students gave us opportunities to share about our faith. A couple accompanied us to the Christian church services, and were put in touch with other believers. The students weren't the only ones happy with our visit: we have officially been invited back by the university.

Sometimes the signs indicating danger, like those in the minefield, may not tell the whole truth. We

JEREMY "How to describe my experience? Challenging, oppressing, beautiful, sad, exciting, hopeful, eye opening and rewarding."

survived that walk, the way we survived the whole trip – by walking by faith. Throughout the trip, I was reminded of the thought: "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." When we move outside our comfort and ability zone, the Lord takes over. As Nahum testified: "The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in Him" (Nahum 1:7). ☺

If you are interested in joining Bernie on his next trip to Kurdistan (probably January 2012), please contact our office.



ON TRACK NEWS

Our On Track programme offers short-term service opportunities, that give a taste of what mission to the hard places is like. For ages 18-75+, On Trackers serve from one month up to two years. Planning a gap year, OE, elective, sabbatical? Or wondering what to do in retirement? Contact us to arrange your tailor-made service opportunity!

Divine encounters in Pakistan

Peter is an 18-year-old engineering student who recently spent six weeks On Track.

“Being born in Hong Kong into a missionary family, I have spent much of my life travelling, mostly in China. The last couple of years I have been studying civil engineering at Auckland University.

“After much prayer, I felt led to serve God short-term in Pakistan. Once

I accepted a volunteer position in Bach Christian Hospital in northern Pakistan, it all happened very quickly. I had scarcely a month to organise my itinerary, and received my visa the same day my flight left Auckland.

“Interserve teamed me up with a professional engineer to design and build a solar panel to heat up water for the hospital laundry. The laundry used about 1000 litres of water daily and needed it heated up to 60 degrees even in winter. During the first five weeks, I toiled alongside this engineer constructing a tank and stand and searching for materials required for the panel. I also prayed for patients in the male ward as often as possible, and some were wonderfully healed by God.

“I was encouraged to see the whole hospital meet at the local chapel every workday morning to sing and listen to a short message. I witnessed some encouraging conversions!

“I spent my final week in Pakistan with a nationally famous evangelist, in Karachi, the largest Muslim city in the world. We journeyed to an abandoned flood stricken village in the Sindh province giving out blankets, water containers, tracts, New Testaments and CDs. An estimated 20 million people were affected by these floods and some water still remained from August.

“I was given an amazing opportunity to preach at a local church in a fundamentalist Islamic district in Karachi. Christian reporters also interviewed me on local television to give my feedback on starting up a permanent Christian TV channel in Pakistan.

“From a northern wedding to a southern funeral, my time in Pakistan was Spirit-guided, protected, and filled with divine encounters. I couldn't have dreamed of more.” ☞

PARTNER NEWS

Long-term Partners form the core of our mission, serving some of the neediest people in Asia and the Arab world. We have more than 800 Partners worldwide, from many diverse cultures and nationalities. Contact us to learn more about how your faith, life experience and professional skills can change lives.

Building bridges with coffee

Ben and Alice serve in the Middle East, in the areas of education, hospitality and business.

“They never told me I would host art exhibitions and coffee tastings when I bought my ticket to a ‘hard place’ country twenty years ago.

“In fact, back then, I was indifferent to any hot beverage. However, thirst must be sated somehow during the work day, and since the quality of water I was given here seemed somewhat dubious, I switched to coffee, assuming that it had at least been boiled. I was struck by the somewhat more than dubious taste of the local instant variety, and wondered how millions of people could be excited by the taste.

“My personal journey with coffee began at that point: I started roasting green coffee beans using a very

kiwified stainless milk jug on spit over a gas hob. It only lacked the number eight wire. The passion developed to near obsession level with a recently installed monster that can barely fit on a bench top but produces kilos of wonderful fresh roasted coffee.

“Along the way, my passion for something better to drink began to build bridges with the people around us, and we began to make friends across all walks of life. People who love good coffee. People who will cross town to get hold of a well executed flat white.

“Although most of these bridges are still under construction, some are walkable already. An example started a few weeks ago when we saw sufficient interest among our coffee thirsty friends for a formal coffee tasting. Yet this alone seemed somewhat self serving. We then realised we also had friends with great talents from the local population who could benefit from such an event.

“In traditional Arab societies the relationships go very deep among a fairly narrow, usually blood related, group of people. Local artists usually have a hard time trying to find anyone who can appreciate their gifts. However, the expatriate community has a relatively wide

network of acquaintances among various circles of interest, and the networks between the people of God's kingdom are awesome. An idea took form and got enthusiastic support from our fellowship group: what would it look like bringing these things together?

“We found out today. A gifted local painter with two dozen paintings and a local photographer with a recently published book both joined us in the adventure of a coffee tasting with some extra. Emptied of furniture and walls peppered with well placed nails, our lounge and dining areas became a gallery. A table was set for book signing. Coffee supplies were prepared. And for half a day our house was flowing with coffee, and abuzz with people of all nationalities: they were people we work or sail or camp or hike with, and they had also invited others from their networks.

“People made new friends along with purchases. Our Christian friends now have more people to connect with. A new respect was formed for the creative genius in the people we live among. At the same time it feels like our Creative Father was also honored in His handiwork. We don't know how far these bridges will go, but we are excited to follow a Lord who can lead us into so much from just a bad cup of coffee.” ☞

STUDY TOUR OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Interserve invites Christian pastors and leaders on this tour of a lifetime to discover the Christian church of the Middle East and the opportunities and challenges of Arab Christian ministry in a Muslim context.

- ▶▶ Tour led by Bernie P, lecturer in Islamic studies
- ▶▶ Visit historical sites in Egypt and Jordan
- ▶▶ Meet Arab pastors and ministry leaders
- ▶▶ Explore Biblical themes through Middle Eastern eyes
- ▶▶ Gain first-hand insight into Islam and its practice...

**16-28
NOVEMBER**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT [JULIANA@INTERSERVE.ORG.NZ](mailto:juliana@interserve.org.nz)

FAST & PRAY FOR THE ARAB WORLD!

We invite you to join our Partners in the Arab world on a special journey of prayer and fasting through 2011. This region is on the brink of an incredible breakthrough:

are you willing to set aside time every Thursday to worship, pray and fast, and lift up specific needs? Email juliana@interserve.org.nz, or call 0800 446464, for more information or to register.

VACANCIES

Contact us to learn more about these positions. Many more vacancies are available on our website.

INDIA Vice Principal needed for a school. Paid position (2 years+). [654]

WEST ASIA Administrator/Fundraiser required for school (2 years+). [636]

SOUTH EAST ASIA A medical centre is in need of a Financial Management Coach (4-6 months). [531]

CENTRAL ASIA Engineers urgently needed for a community development NGO (1-2 years). [660]

ARAB WORLD Volunteers needed to run a Student Café for locals (2 years+). [61]

CENTRAL ASIA A community centre is in need of a Librarian (1-2 years). [378]

ARAB WORLD A Tour Consultant is needed for a private tour company. Paid position (1-2 years). [653]

PAKISTAN Dentists are needed for a Christian hospital (1 month+). [151]

ARAB WORLD Lab Technician is required for a school (2 years+). [398]

WWW RESOURCES

Here are some great mission resources available on the Internet.

>> www.miprivilege.info

This is the website component to the discount card many of you received in our December mailing. This discount purchasing package can save you hundreds of dollars when purchasing many common products, and it also supports the work of Missions Interlink, umbrella for most of the mission agencies in NZ.

>> www.missionworld.org.nz

NZ Baptists introduce the new collaboration of major mission agencies serving the Baptist churches of NZ. Each agency is represented but also resources, information, event calendars and more...

>> www.shorttermers.com

This website provides resources and training to empower people for short term mission.



YOU ARE INVITED TO



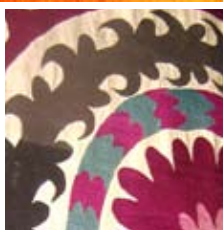
INTERSERVE DAY 2011



INTEGRATED MISSION:
HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE HARD PLACES

GUEST SPEAKERS

- ▶▶ Lyn Pearson (AUST), IS Regional Director for East Asia and the Pacific.
- ▶▶ Ellen Alexander (INDIA), Intl Director of Ministry Development.



REGISTER NOW!

0800 446 464
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WHEN 9:30 am - 4:00 pm, 2 April 2010
WHERE Royal Oak Baptist Church, Auckland
COST \$30 (\$20 if registered by 11 March), \$5 discount for students/unwaged
RSVP by 25 March. Registration is needed for catering purposes.

0800 446 464
www.interserve.org.nz

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