

- 2 From the Director
- 2 Steppe by step
Mongolia's Christian history
- 3 On Track & Partner News
- 4 Book corner
Global Mission Handbook
- 4 Service opportunities

OPEN DOORS IN THE Arab world

It was almost midnight when the knock came at my hotel door. "The political security police are downstairs, wanting to question us," my colleague informed me, looking very worried.

I was leading a team of eight Aussies, of diverse ages, occupations and ethnicities, and we'd been invited to teach at a university in this North African country. But it looked like we were now in big trouble, and I prayed silently as we walked down the stairs.

The plain-clothes policeman greeted us while his partner looked around. Then he asked (in Arabic), "Why have you come to our country? What are the objectives of your visit?"

My colleague, an Australian citizen who had been born in this country, answered him in Arabic: "We came to teach English at the university."

"Is that all? What else have you been doing? Where have you been going?" the policeman demanded.

My colleague was very astute: "We've been sightseeing, and went out for dinner in your lovely town. Tonight we were the guests of the Dean of Engineering, Professor Ahmad."

The policeman jerked backwards as though he had been hit. Professor Ahmad was politically powerful in this town, and we were clearly people not to be messed with. His attitude immediately changed. "Of course we are only concerned for your safety: we need to know your movements so we can protect you... we are sorry to inconvenience you." He excused himself and they departed.

This event typified many aspects of our short-term trip. Every time we hit a dead-end or a crisis threatened, God opened up an unexpected door.

Even before we left Australia, the university that originally invited us pulled out, leaving us in the lurch two months before we were due to depart. A "chance" visit to a friend in another city in Australia landed me in the house of some Muslim friends of his. I mentioned my disappointment about having to cancel our trip. He immediately phoned his brother-in-law, who worked at a university in the country we'd been planning to visit. "They would love to have you," he informed me, after he'd hung up the phone. A new door had opened.

Our two-week course, aimed at helping the university faculty teach English effectively, was very well received, and on the final day they held a celebration for us, and issued a heartfelt request for us to return. From the first day they knew that we were all followers of Christ, so we had opportunities to talk about our faith, and pray for course participants.

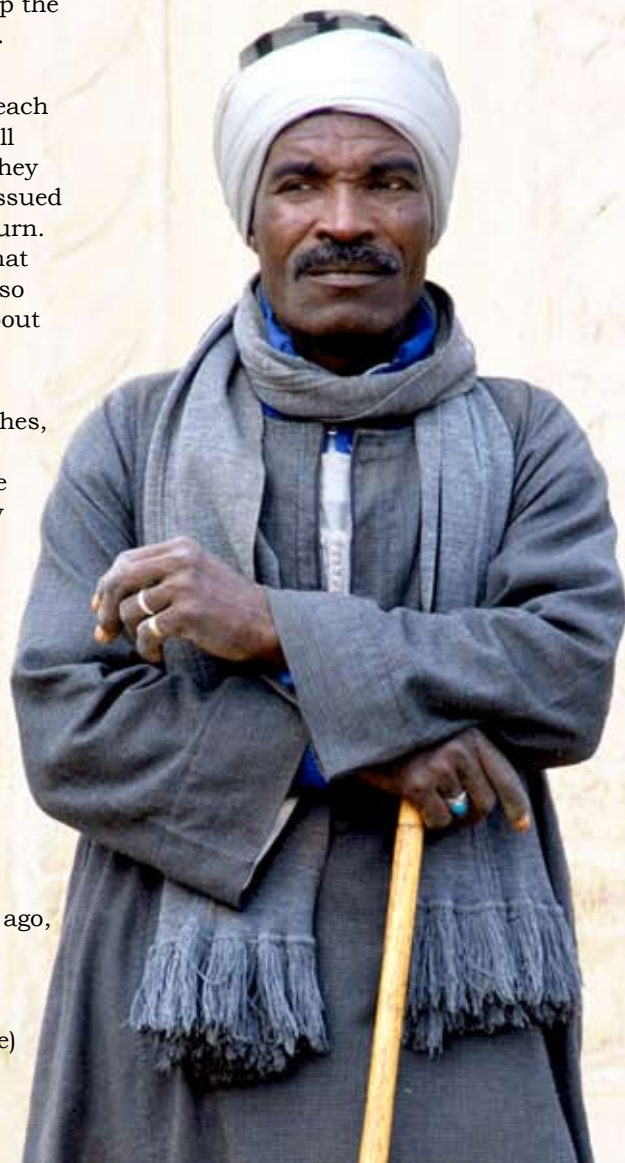
We also attended several churches, and were even able to bring a word of encouragement to some of them; however, it was mostly ourselves who went away encouraged. We visited various projects, including a medical clinic, a home for street kids, and a theological college, and were moved by the faith and courage of the Christians we met, both local and expatriate, who are serving Christ in very challenging and sometimes dangerous situations.

In this part of the Arab world where, as recently as ten years ago, Christians were being crucified in the streets, the church is growing. Christ's followers are taking advantage of the (relative)

political stability to share their faith with those who persecuted them. In places where unspeakable atrocities are taking place, the word of God is taking root, and it is bearing good fruit. Please pray for this country and its people: it faces a very uncertain political future, and desperately needs the peace only Christ can give. ☞

Bernie worked in Asia and the Arab world for over 20 years, and will be the main speaker at Interserve Day 2010.

If you or your church are planning a short-term trip in 2010/2011, contact the Interserve NZ office for possible options.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to GO News! We hope you will find this newsletter to be informative, faith building, and challenging, with news on upcoming events and opportunities. GO News is designed to “connect the dots” between GO magazine, with its focus on story, and our brand-new website, which contains a wealth of up-to-date information and organisational background.

We plan to publish GO News four times a year, as we seek to establish more regular communication with the various individuals and groupings that make up our wider Interserve relationship network: financial supporters and praying friends; alumni; ex On Trackers; mission-minded churches; and those still pondering the crossing of cultures. Our hope is that GO News will be meaningful to you all.

As each of us travels the missional journey Jesus is sending us on, we cannot do so alone, or in isolation – as much as we individualistic Westerners would prefer that at times! Mission requires us to come together; it has always been a communal concern.

Mission began in the Trinitarian relationship where God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit birthed the human project. It was a family affair for Abraham’s tribe to model God’s values and rule on this planet. And it was the band of Jesus’ disciples, His friends, who together were tasked to demonstrate the great news of salvation and God’s Kingdom to the rest of the nations and the ends of the earth. Though times and cultures have changed, this principle – that we as community represent the full wisdom of God – is still true for 21st century followers of Christ.

So we are in this together! And to make this mission-focused community work, we need effective and regular communication in order to build genuine relationship with our friends, our fellow pilgrims on this journey of mission. Effective communication goes both ways, so we would really appreciate your feedback, your responses on any topic raised, your contributions and suggestions. Ma te Atua e manaaki – may the Lord bless you abundantly!



Steppe BY Step MONGOLIA'S CHRISTIAN HISTORY

“Why didn’t anyone tell us this before?” asked a Mongolian Christian, after Hugh Kemp spoke on the history of Christianity amongst the Mongols at a church in Ulaanbaatar in 1992.

This question prompted a seventeen year journey to June 2009, when Tuukheen Balarkhai Jimeer was published in Mongolia. “It’s the Mongolian translation of a book I published in 2000 called *Steppe by Step*,” says Hugh. “There were Christians

on the Mongol steppe before Chinggis Khan, and long before any Buddhists or Communists were in Mongolia. The new church needed to know its own story.”

Hugh and Karen Kemp were Interserve Partners in Ulaanbaatar from 1992 until 1996, with ongoing involvement to 2002. “I realised early in our time in Mongolia that the Mongols are proud of their history. In the 1990s they were regaining their sense of place in the world, and it was a time of huge transition. Researching and correctly telling the Christian threads to their story was crucial,” says Hugh. “It was always my goal to respond to that original question, and publish their Christian story in their own language”.

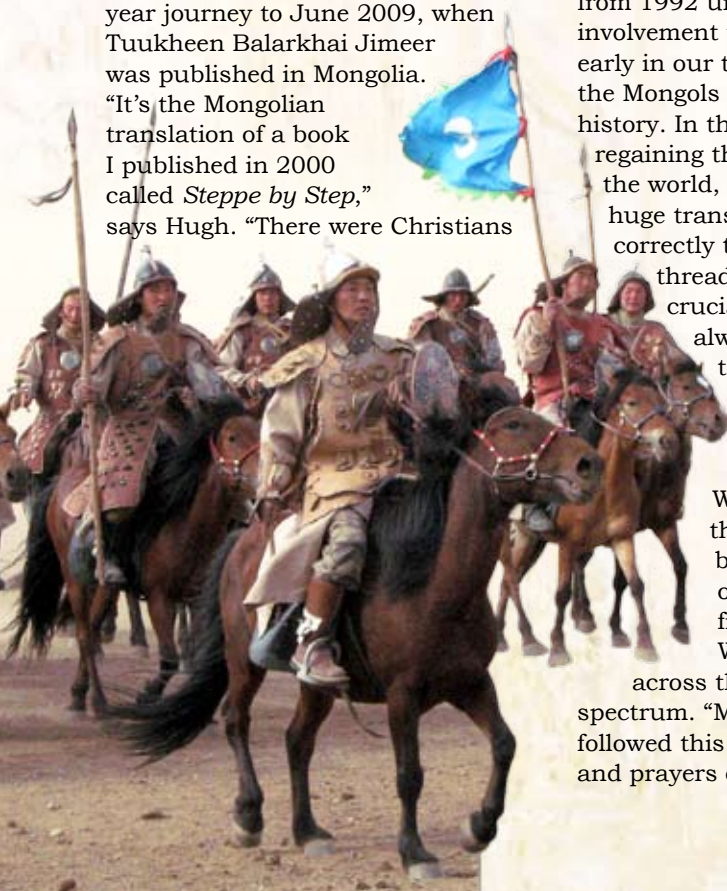
While in Mongolia, the Kemps had a broad cross-section of supporters – from Invercargill to Whangarei, and right across the denominational spectrum. “Many people have followed this project with interest and prayers over the years” says

Hugh. *Tuukheen Balarkhai Jimeer* – translated roughly as “by ways of ancient faded pathways” – was published as a textbook for a Christian history course in Mongolia.

“It has much wider potential though,” says Hugh. “It will serve pastoral and evangelistic purposes as well. Mongolian Christians can demonstrate that they have a legitimate place in Mongolian history, and hence a place of influence today.”

The initial response from Mongolian pastors has been encouraging. Pastor Tugulder is representative in this: “The thing that has encouraged me greatly [from this book] is to see the big picture of how greatly God loves the Mongolian people. Because He has been sending His envoys to this nation over the past many hundred years. I felt very strongly that He did not want to abandon us.”

One of the publisher’s aims was to put the book into the hands of every parliamentarian: the leader of the Democratic Party has already acknowledged it. “And it has already had some profile here in New Zealand,” says Hugh. “I’ve given a copy to a Mongolian public servant on a study scholarship here in New Zealand. He responded with, ‘These are my people. This is my tribe. But I never knew this!’”



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!

Changing lives in Central Asia

We chose to go On Track because we are interested in being involved in cross-cultural work long-term but, as newly-weds at the time, wanted to check that we could do this together.

We had already researched and chosen Interserve because of its ethos. We also liked the fact that we could serve using our particular skills and passions – as an engineer and a theological educator. We were

sent to Central Asia as the best fit and went for one year to work in our areas of expertise in a university and a seminary. With only a few hours a week of 'work' we chose to also learn language several hours a week, learn local folk music instruments and explore as much of the country and culture as we could. One of us even ended up a DJ on a local radio station!

The experience was fantastic – life-changing in fact. We fell in love with the people and the country; developed friendships that we deeply value; were extremely well looked after by the Interserve team on the ground; and, learning and receiving far more than we gave, returned home bigger people on the inside. Keen to go back there one day, we came home to work on post-graduate qualifications to enhance what we could offer. We then actually did return with our

baby daughter (whose name is from the local language) as On Trackers again a couple of years later when there was a need for lecturing help at the seminary. The reminder of deep cultural values prioritising relationship and hospitality, as well as many challenging interactions with seminary students on that stint has fed directly into theological PhD research now being undertaken, as well as a conscious effort to be better neighbours in our daily lives. We would love to go back there long-term but sadly, given the political situation, it may not be possible. If not there, you'll definitely be able to find us somewhere else in the world. Whatever happens, we have changed: we believe deeply in the value of cross-cultural encounter.

We're also loyal supporters of Interserve. ☺

Names withheld for security purposes.

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.

Made for a purpose in India

My wife and I, and our two children, have been living in India for nine years, as Interserve NZ Partners.

I have a business in a major city in India, and last year we opened a bank account with a new bank. The process of opening an account isn't easy, so we got to see a lot of our banking relationship manager, a Hindu man named Pradeep.

Over time we developed a rapport with Pradeep; he visited my office, and I travelled to his village and met his family. We have discussed things like his pending arranged marriage, and his career path. Pradeep agreed with me that there is one God, that He created everything, and even that He knows and loves us. However, when I told him that God had a purpose for our lives as individuals, Pradeep couldn't reconcile this belief with his concept of God.

So I shared with Pradeep how God had made him for a purpose and that, if Pradeep marries his fiancé - who he hasn't even met yet - then she will also be part of that plan. After we prayed together, Pradeep said he felt a peace. ☺

Having an impact in Nepal

After having been here in Dhading for four years, we are now starting to see some impact from our work through our partner organisations.

At 17 schools 100% of school-age children of the community are attending school, as opposed to 85% for most schools, and more untouchable caste children are attending early childhood classes.

Local disputes are being resolved on a win-win basis rather than win-lose. One community has recently installed 180 toilets and has been declared "faeces-free".

One poor community grows enough vegetables to last them 6-7 months, with a surplus to sell. Previously they grew none. ☺

Roydon is a food technologist with United Mission to Nepal.

Saving lives in Afghanistan

Badakhshan, in Afghanistan, holds the distinction of having the highest maternal mortality rate in the world.

While nine mothers per 100,000 live births will die in NZ, here 6,500 women per 100,000 live births will die. Many things contribute to these terrible statistics, but mostly it's the lack of knowledge.

Our project is sponsoring a course on birth life-saving skills, and last week we met with a midwife who was very enthusiastic about it.

"Do you want to see my home work?" she asked. Out of her bag she pulled a doll she had made in the course. "See the umbilical cord," she said, "with the placenta attached?" We nodded looking at the muslin doll with a red fabric placenta.

"We say, 'Tie off and cut the umbilical cord', and we remove the placenta." She detached the majority of the cord and placenta held by a snap/dome. "Then we wait for the cord to dry up and... *pop*, off it comes." The remaining cord was removed.

Our hope is that the women in this course will be able to mobilise small women's groups throughout the city who will learn how to identify problem deliveries and know how to help. Remember us as we hope to one day see a decrease in Badakhshan's most notorious distinction. ☺

Jim and Lois have been serving in Asia with Interserve since 1983.

BOOK CORNER

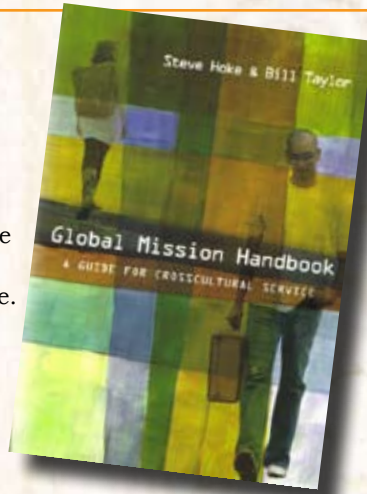
Global Mission Handbook: A Guide for Crosscultural Service is a unique guide for following God's invitation into missions.

It's the only handbook on the Christian market to help prospective workers navigate the topography between their "now" and their future long-term cross-cultural service. It is designed as a wide-ranging prep manual for serious disciples, written primarily for the North American context but applicable in other nations.

"This is not a book to be read in one sitting; it is richly and profoundly more. It brings innumerable specialists together producing what, in my opinion, has never previously been written. It is a comprehensive reference guide for those who seek global service for Christ. Spectacular!"

Ralph D. Winter

Founder, US Center for World Missions



RRP \$40.50

Discount available to Missions Interlink members.

To order, contact Pioneers:
09 634 6466
pioneers@mobilizing.co.nz.

VACANCIES

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

ARAB WORLD Financial Administrator urgently needed for Christian nature conservation organisation (1 year +).

CENTRAL ASIA ESL teacher (paid position) for mainly high school age students. Experience in IELTS or TOEFL exam preparation is highly desirable (3-12+ months).

SOUTH ASIA Doctors, Family Practice Physicians, General Surgeons, OB/ GYN physicians urgently needed in Pakistan (3-12+ months).

SOUTH ASIA Water engineers needed for water quality projects and household filters in poor neighbourhoods (6-12+ months).

SOUTH EAST ASIA Fund raiser/ communicator urgently needed for a Refugee Centre (3-12+ months).

CENTRAL ASIA Community Development Worker to work with team in health, education and small business development (6-12+ months).

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED Interested in helping out Interserve with some voluntary work? We have a number

of jobs available, including database work and helping with mailings. Contact us to learn more.



YOU ARE INVITED TO

INTERSERVE DAY 2010



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Bernie is a teacher from Australia. A 20-year Interserve veteran, Bernie has a deep sensitivity for, and understanding of, the world of Islam and its people.



0800 446 464
09 630 0981

WHEN 9:30 am - 4:30 pm, 22 May 2010
WHERE Royal Oak Baptist Church, Auckland
COST \$25 per person (\$15 for students)
RSVP by 27 April. Registration is needed for catering purposes.

WWW RESOURCES

Here are some great mission resources available on the Internet.

>> www.interserve.org.nz

Check out our new Interserve NZ website! Learn more about our fellowship, browse for event info and service vacancies, and even make an online donation – so easy!

>> www.emisdirect.com

The Evangelical Missions Quarterly explores key topics in world mission. Check out their online version for some free articles, or sign up for an online subscription(US\$13.95).

>> www.businessasmissionnetwork.com

Interested in Business as Mission? This site has interesting articles and hundreds of links to all sorts of related topics and businesses/networks.

0800 446 464
www.interserve.org.nz

Lives and communities transformed through encounter with Jesus Christ

09 630 0981
talk2us@interserve.org.nz

Interserve NZ
PO Box 10244, Dominion Rd
Auckland 1446, New Zealand



Interserve (NZ) - CC11027 is a registered charitable entity in terms of the Charities Act 2005.