

Leadership meetings in Thailand

In June 2012 the National Office and Country Team Leaders met with the International Leadership Team and Council in Chiang Mai.

Three primary aims were identified: growing a shared understanding of our mission; growing a deeper empathy for each other and an appreciation of the differing responsibilities we carry; and beginning to agree on responses to the five Interserve Crossroads Challenges.

The meetings were prefaced by two days of prayer and worship, a deeply encouraging time which helped to produce profound experiential alignment within the global

leadership. This was based on mutual interest and submission, and in community and service towards one another. There was a renewed and deepened desire to walk together in our varied roles and calling, in the midst of changing and challenging environments.

In our last GO we shared that Dr Paul Bendor-Samuel, our International Director, was stepping down from his role in late 2013.

At the June meetings in Chiang Mai, however, it became clear that Paul's season as leader was not yet finished, and it is with great joy that we can revise the earlier announcement. Paul and his wife Liz will continue in their role for at least the next three years. ☺

Protecting children in Kurdistan

Ajwan was just fifteen years old when she was raped by one of her brothers. She was living with her parents and siblings in a village in Kurdistan, Northern Iraq.

When Ajwan was found to be pregnant as a result, she was sent off to a reformatory to have the baby, which was then taken from her.

Ajwan agreed to charges being laid against her brother, despite family pressure, and he was convicted and sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment. But when Ajwan returned home, she was murdered by another brother in an 'honour killing'.

'Honour killing' is illegal in Kurdistan, but

even though it is outlawed it still happens and it targets the weakest. Tear Fund (NZ) and Interserve are helping support a new initiative through an NGO in Northern Iraq to upgrade child protection services in that region. The NGO is consulting and working with the Regional Government authorities, awaiting their final go-ahead and financial commitment to put the plans into action. A highly experienced social worker from New Zealand is working with the NGO to design training programmes for local social workers and is introducing systems for child foster care.

The planning and preparation by the NGO to set up systems and policies is expected to be completed and ready to go by the end of this year. ☺

Destination World: the Call

The last weekend in August saw about 30 mission agencies united in bringing this quintessentially Kiwi Missions Conference to the Christian public of New Zealand.

Preceded by Mosaic, a day when more than a hundred pastors, mission leaders and mission personnel came together, 'The Call' attracted around 260 mission-minded New Zealanders from across the country.

Challenging messages TED-talk style were varied with dramatic presentations and surrounded with worship; interactive workshops allowed participants to dig deeper; and biblical reflection in the evenings placed our missional calling today squarely within a biblical framework.

Mission was considered as both here, at home and within the opportunities we encounter locally, and out there, amongst those who do not have the opportunity to hear about Jesus. Much time was given to informal conversation where interested enquirers were able to meet with agency reps or counsellors to explore God's call on their lives.

Going by the results of the first 'Call' a couple of years ago, we will see more Kiwis, young and not-so-young, stepping out into a missional life in the weeks and months to follow. ☺