

JULY 2014



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of God

A RANGE OF WHOLISTIC APPROACHES



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**[663] A small branch office in Central Asia researching business opportunities for website development in the region is in need of a Web Designer / Developer (1-2 years).**

Interserve is an interdenominational, international mission fellowship working amongst the peoples of Asia and the Arab world. Our mission Partners seek to share the love and message of Christ by utilising their many and varied professional skills. We work in partnership with local and national churches and partner organisations, amongst the most marginalised and where Jesus is least known.

Lives and communities  
**transformed** through  
encounter with **Jesus Christ**

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**This new edition of GO reflects on a range of differing wholistic approaches to the mission of God Interserve has been committed to for more than 160 years now. Practice and reflection need to be two sides of the same coin, mutually informing each other, but also helping us to determine the way forward, to discern how God's Spirit is seeking to guide us into the next season of organisational life.**

We have talked in past editions about change, about deepening our spirituality and strengthening community, and about building the next generation. Currently we are wrestling with our purpose and identity as a worldwide mission fellowship in a much-changed global environment. All too often we human beings desire the seductive safety of status quo over the at-times-painful work which change brings upon us. Yet without pain there is no gain, as the saying goes. For disciples of Jesus there is no other way!

As we look at our world and its needs and opportunities, it is paramount that we be innovative and creative. Our heavenly Father is the ultimate Creator and Innovator, so we can lean into Him to learn how He works, and follow His example. After all, that was the Jesus way – doing only what He saw the Father do, He continually surprised His followers with new approaches.

Making wholistic disciples was the theme

of our last magazine – that was how Jesus framed the task for all who would follow Him. He modelled it; He grew His little band that way and amply demonstrated that the approach works (and so much better than all of our wonderful programmes). He is committed to working with us as we obey Him, as we help build disciples into a transformed and transforming community, His church.

As God's community on earth, the church – with all of its faults, warts and wrinkles – is nevertheless God's way 'to demonstrate His wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places' (Ephesians 3:10). Building the church forms the core of Interserve's deepening commitment to 'see His kingdom come and His will done, here on earth as it is in heaven', and so we work alongside, within, and through it.

Engaging in such outreach, we dare not neglect to intentionally focus on deepening our own personal and corporate spiritual walk, and on becoming emotionally whole. It seems improbable but so many of us who profess allegiance to Christ, and even serve in His name, do not spend time with Him, nor allow Him to go to those painful and broken places which cripple and blunt us. Christians can be some of the least emotionally healthy people around, yet God's call is to restore, to heal, to renew. Taking His healing to the nations, going as healers of individuals and communities

requires us to experience this as well, accessing His throne of grace.

And for that we need to regularly draw aside, into silence, reflection, contemplation. We live in a noisy and unrelenting world, more so than for any previous generation. Many of us are out of control, driven by forces outside of us, no longer aware of our emotions, ourselves, and our choices. Sabbath rest and rhythms of life are crucial elements of spiritual discipline we need to relearn if we want to know God and make Him known. Many of those who have gone before us can teach us such things, and can inspire us to believe that faithful prophetic minorities can and will turn nations. Soli Deo Gloria!

*Joanne*





## Interserve Day 2014

**Our eighth annual Interserve Day was a great success, and guest speakers Paul and Pat Stock were warmly received by the 220+ people in attendance.**

One attendee wrote, “For the first time I really understood the value of ethnomusicologists, the foundation they lay for the gospel and the truths they teach to dispel the lies embedded in the culture. Brilliant!”

Having outgrown our previous venue, this year we gathered at Grace International Church in Glen Innes. It was an inspirational and informative time as we heard from Partners and On Trackers about how God is

## Mentoring for Mission

**The word ‘mentoring’ seems to be a bit of a buzz word these days. In the dictionary a mentor is defined as: a guide, advisor, coach, teacher or tutor.**

In Mentoring for Mission, we think of it as walking alongside those who are seriously considering mission. We aim to help them grow in their call and relationship with God, to walk with them, to guide them through the hurdles and to pray with them through the questions and challenges.

Over the past year we have been working on the practicalities of Mentoring for Mission to ensure there is support for both mentors and mentees. We want it to be a purposeful journey which will maximise the

moving across the Interserve world. And it built a sense of shared community amongst attendees across a wide range of ages and ethnicities, from long-term supporters to those just introduced to Interserve.

Interserve Day 2015 will be held on 2 May, with guest speaker Dr Cathy Hine, our current International Director of Ministries. She has been with Interserve for over 25 years, and her current focus is on research, writing and advocacy for women living under Islam. Her depth of insight will help us reflect on appropriate missiological responses. You won’t want to miss out on a great day, so please reserve the date now. ☺

mentees’ learning opportunities before they go overseas. Currently there are eight mentoring partnerships in full swing, with a number of people yet to be paired with a mentor.

We hope to see more enquirers going on to serve with Interserve, enquirers who have gained a deeper understanding of God’s heart for the lost and of His plan for them, and who will be more effective in mission, whether in NZ or overseas.

It is exciting to see this happening. Please pray for the mentors and mentees and their relationships, that God will use them to further His kingdom and to better equip those He calls to cross-cultural mission. ☺

## Maori name for Interserve

**Good things take time, and so it has been as we have explored the development of a bicultural identity for Interserve NZ.**

As an organisation specialising in cross-cultural service, it is fitting that we recognise the bicultural origin of our country, Aotearoa New Zealand. When we look at the values of Interserve it seems that mostly we fit well with Maori values, though we have much to continue to learn and gain.

At this year’s Interserve Day in May we announced that we will now be known as Interserve/Nga Ringa Ringa Atawhai. This translates literally as ‘Hands of Grace’. We love the sound of this, as we are people who like to get our hands dirty, serving in Asia and the Arab world – seeking to receive and share the grace of God. The word *atawhai* (look out for it the next time you sing our national anthem), means not only grace, but also mercy, kindness and hospitality: “Love is patient, love is *atawhai*...” (1 Corinthians 13). It is also appropriate that this term was originally used for women, considering that Interserve was started by women, for women, 162 years ago. To receive an in-depth explanation, please do contact us.

We have only begun to explore where this new part of our identity will lead us, but we’re excited by it. We are committed to it being not just a token exercise, but an ongoing journey. Join us on it! ☺

# THE GOSPEL OF PEACE IN A LAND OF WAR

**I was numb from the terrible news: a number of our close friends and colleagues had been murdered while returning from a medical outreach to a rural district in the Central Asian country where we served. It was as if my emotions shut down. I brought those who had been killed to mind one by one, reflecting on what I remembered of them and how our lives had intersected. The process was emotionless as I played a slide show of each one in my mind.**

In the following days and weeks the numbness gave way to other manifestations of grief. I was angry with the perpetrators. I was sad beyond words. I was confused about where God was in all the mess. I asked the question often asked in such moments of madness: “What does all this mean?” In my struggle, I came to the conclusion that meaning was something that I could have a part in fashioning. If the loss of my friends was to lead to a significant outcome, I could play a role in that outcome.

Over a year later I met to discuss peacebuilding with a number of Virginia Tech students in a room that had been witness to the worst school shooting in US history. Thirty-two people were killed and seventeen wounded in April 2007 when a mentally unstable student took out his rage on an innocent community. The university, in response, converted the use of the rooms where the tragedy occurred into its

newly formed Centre for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention.

I recounted to the students my experiences of loss and the efforts we were now making to respond appropriately to our tragedy by opening a peacebuilding programme through our agency – in much the same way that Virginia Tech had responded to theirs. Our country of service, well known for its violent years of war, seemed ripe for such a venture. A number of projects had been started over the years to emphasise nonviolent approaches to conflict.

We launched the peacebuilding programme at a memorial service on the second anniversary of the killing of our colleagues. After a time of remembrances, the gathered group of fifty watched a video about the nonviolent protests in 1960 in Nashville, where blacks were barred from eating at lunch counters. In the reflections after the viewing I remember two responses from

members of one of the minority communities present. They thought that maybe this kind of thing could happen in the US, but would never happen in their homeland.

In the two years since then, the peacebuilding project has held seminars, coaching participants in skills for conflict transformation in the workplace. Our able co-workers have trained community development facilitators in “do no harm” practices as they help empower villagers to solve their own problems. Classes in ‘Peacebuilders’ English’ have helped students in our learning centres gain both conversational skills and a new awareness of peacebuilding. Teachers conducting literacy lessons among poor women in the community have been trained in peacebuilding in the home. One woman reported that her family has remarked on the positive changes in her behaviour since she took the peacebuilding class. “I’m not as angry as I used to be,” she said.

We were not alone on our journey. Others were working in peacebuilding before us and it has been to them that we have looked for guidance. The Mennonite community has a number of organisations committed to peacebuilding. Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in the US advised us in our project start-up. Some of us attended EMU’s Summer Peacebuilding Institute, while others attended a similar study programme at the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute (MPI) in the Philippines.



The ethos of the development agency Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has been one of fostering peacebuilding activities in all their programmes. MCC has undertaken to fund our peacebuilding project. They have also sent expatriate co-workers as consultants to provide direction for the programme. MCC have trained local workers in peacebuilding and have sponsored two of our local colleagues in their studies at MPI.



Not only is physical healing needed from the damage caused by violence, but also emotional healing.

While our Mennonite friends have supported our venture in peacebuilding in practical ways, Interserve has not been without its own voice in shaping our ministry. In its foundation documents, Interserve reflects on its values as regards relationships by affirming that our "... commitment to relationship shapes the way we work. Where there is breakdown of relationships in society (individuals and communities) we pray and work for reconciliation."

What does that look like in practical terms? In our case it meant setting up a programme of peacebuilding activities that raise awareness in a war-torn country. What about in other places where Interserve works? Most places where Interserve Partners serve are, thankfully, not suffering on-going war. However, a painful past often lies just under the surface. In our ministries of reconciliation where we work towards the transformation of lives and societies, we often uncover hostilities and find ourselves unwitting peacemakers.

What about right here in New Zealand? We in Interserve NZ have recently been on a journey to develop a greater awareness of our bicultural heritage. Where is that journey taking us? Will we uncover a history of missed opportunities and, worse, injustices inflicted by members of the body of Christ over the two centuries since the gospel was first preached on these shores? We can relegate such events to the dead pages of our past, or, where we find that the memory of

those events hinders the work of God's Spirit in our land, we can own them and work towards reconciliation in our own times. It is all well and good to go to regions of conflict in the world with the gospel of peace, but we need to be aware that the broken may not be far away from each one of us.

My English students were elated when they poured into my early morning classroom. Many of their number had sat outside Parliament and fasted for days in protest at the discrimination being practised against their people at a university. The government had researched their grievances and had sacked the man behind the discrimination. Their marginalised community had won a moral victory through nonviolent means. "Nonviolent action can work," my students remarked. Theirs were fresh voices from a new generation finding a different way forward amongst generations at war.

The journey will be a long one. More of our friends have been killed in recent months. More lives have been cut short in their peaceful service in a land of war. More widows grieve and more questions will be asked. I cannot say in what ways these recent losses will be remembered. However, from our experience I can see that an intentional plan to promote peace can yield a fruitful outcome in the lives of those we touch for Christ's sake. ☺

*The author and his wife have been serving in Asia with Interserve since 1983.*



# TECHNOLOGY & TEE

**Everyone is aware that we have entered the digital age, where new technologies offer many new possibilities for delivery of information, for connecting people and for providing spaces for them to work together. How might these be used so we see more lives and communities transformed through encounter with Jesus Christ?**

One huge area of development is the use of technology to provide access to resources and information. Here 'digital' has advantages over 'paper' in a number of areas: younger people may prefer it, storage can be more secure in areas of persecution, and materials can be accessed globally. Websites are already making resources and training materials available in many languages, e.g., *farsinet.com* in Persian.

In most countries different versions of the Bible are available for your mobile phone. MAF Learning Technologies has developed an exciting Android app called Estante (Spanish

for bookshelf; see [www.maf.org/estante](http://www.maf.org/estante)) that allows users to download and share resources.

So far, so good. Digital technology is well able to make information available, online and offline. But can new technologies help in teaching, training, discipling and preparing godly leaders?

In this area, experience of pastors, teachers and cross-cultural workers from New Testament times onwards has repeatedly emphasised several vital principles:

- 1) the importance of content: teaching must be sound, Christ-focused and Bible-based;
- 2) the importance of obedience to Christ: at the heart of discipleship;
- 3) the importance of relationship and community: modelling, mentoring, growing as disciples and learning to be church are not solitary activities. And Asian cultures in general place great importance on relationships – they are 'hi-touch' before they are 'hi-tech'!
- 4) the importance of contextualisation: understanding culture, and addressing relevant needs, so that real learning and lasting transformation take place.

Connected to these principles, we might add another: the importance of good educational methodology. Training and discipling are not only about imparting information – they





are also about equipping with new skills, and formation of godly character. Head, hands and heart are all three vital for whole-life growth in service. New technology needs to be harnessed to serve these training goals, not used for its own sake!

To ignore these principles is at best ineffective, and at worst dangerous. Examples might be downloading materials prepared in one culture for learners in a very different culture, trying to create a course from videos of lectures or sermons that are not interactive, or focusing simply on information for the head, and ignoring practical application and the needs of the community.

So, one way forward is to start with models of training that are in line with these principles, and that have already proved fruitful, and then ask how technology can enrich and strengthen something already good.

One example is TEE, traditionally standing for 'Theological Education by Extension', but now more readily explained as 'Tools to Equip and Empower'. TEE is a method of church-based training that has been active for half a century, and in any one year probably at least 100,000 Asian and Arab Christians are learning through TEE<sup>1</sup>. TEE combines three different strands of learning: individual learning through home study prepares the student for interactive, participative learning at a weekly group meeting led by a trained facilitator, which leads to learning by doing through practical application. In fact, for decades TEE has been using the 'flipped



classroom' now favoured by progressive campus-based institutions!<sup>2</sup>

How can technological innovation be used to enrich TEE?

- **Through delivery of course materials:**

Print-on-demand companies now allow TEE courses to be printed anywhere in the world, such as Nepali language materials in the USA, Canada, the UK and Australia to serve the Nepali diaspora there. And prototypes are being developed for courses on hand-held devices that can easily be brought to group meetings.

- **Through support for group leaders:**

Small group leaders are so vital to the

fruitfulness of TEE. The internet can provide them with additional downloadable materials and can connect them with peers and mentors for continuing training and support.

- **Through connecting groups with a wider circle of learners:** Regular, usually weekly, face-to-face group meetings connected with the local church remain a core strength for TEE, with obvious advantages. But technology allows occasional connections with others outside the local context. For instance, diaspora Afghans are linking up using Skype.



**Jorge\*** It was in a prison cell that Jorge's faith in Jesus Christ deepened and strengthened. Unjustly imprisoned in a predominantly Islamic country, Jorge already knew he was a Christian, but his faith was weak. He was visited by local TEE tutors during his imprisonment, and their encouraging presence helped to bolster his faith. He began taking TEE courses, was tutored by personal visits and mail, and then completed both his certificate and diploma courses of study.

As Jorge's faith and personal conviction grew, his fellow prisoners and guards noticed a difference in how he conducted himself. His lived-out testimony gave Jorge opportunities to talk about Christ with those around him. His TEE training helped Jorge in personal scripture study, and enabled him to instruct and counsel fellow prisoners in the Christian faith, as well as to tackle questions of faith from sceptics. Now released from prison, Jorge plans to continue his studies. ☞

**Paul\*** After coming to faith in Jesus in 1985 whilst studying at a Syrian university, Paul was encouraged by local church leaders to develop his gift of teaching. He was ready to serve the Lord in any way he could. But since Paul lived far from any seminary or Bible institute, his dream of theological education seemed nearly impossible. It would involve leaving his work and family, to which he was also committed.

However, in 1996 when a group of TEE leaders travelled to Syria to hold a tutor training seminar, Paul enrolled to become a tutor. The church in Syria was experiencing revival at that time, and TEE courses helped Paul greatly as he provided leadership to the growing churches.

In March 2005, Paul gained his Bachelor of Theology degree. He says, "I thank the Lord for TEE. It has been able to reach so many people like me in places where seminaries do not exist." ☞

**Sonam\*** was a Muslim Mullah, a righteous young man who took his faith seriously. In his Central Asian homeland everyone was meant to be Muslim and only traitors turned away from this way of life.

One day while saying his prayers in Arabic, he suddenly found himself declaring, in his mother tongue, "Jesus is Lord". He cursed himself for such blasphemy and thought he was losing his mind! Then, in his dreams, he met a man in white and the experience changed him profoundly. In the past he had been witnessed to by a Christian friend, and now he felt he must go to church with him. There he soon came to know that, indeed, Jesus is Lord.

Sonam grew in his new-found faith and went on to study theology at Bible College. During this time, and immediately afterwards, God used him to plant two or three churches. But he found it both challenging and problematic that, in such a mountainous country, it was not easy to visit his groups to nurture them, and it became all the more difficult when he started a family and had young children.

After some time, he was introduced to TEE and realised that this was just what he needed. Here was a way to help his groups grow in faith and become effective disciples of Jesus even when he was not there! Sonam now leads the TEE programme in his country, and he is convinced of its importance to help people, especially in isolated areas, to grow in their knowledge and understanding of the Lord. ☞

**Shahid** "I was studying for my MA when I was asked to translate a TEE course called the 'Life of Christ'. I was not a believer at that time, but I had a very good relationship with some missionary friends and I had already translated some books for them.

"As I was translating this course I had the opportunity to learn in-depth about Christianity and I think that Jesus was descending slowly, gradually, into my heart. Eventually, when I was translating the sixth book, I became a follower of Christ! Now, I am translating more books into the Bangla language, to make them available to our Bangladeshi people." ☞

**Wailes** "I first came to know about TEE in 1999, when I was a university student in Bangladesh. At that time, I had no possibility of going to seminary for theological education, so I was excited to be able to attend TEE classes. I continued studying until I qualified for my Bachelor of Theology degree. I became a TEE tutor myself in 2004, and since then I have had great opportunities to train many people.

"I had one group of students from a low-caste Hindu background who worked in a hospital as sweepers. Since TEE is so flexible, I was able to organise group meetings according to their free time, even if it was at night. It was exciting to see how, during their night duty, they took the opportunity to share with their nonbelieving co-workers the things they had learned from the group meetings. If they faced any difficult questions, then we would discuss them at the next group meeting. In this way, through the TEE programme, many came to know about Christ and to accept Him as their Saviour." ☞

\* Names have been changed



Another fruitful training model is the residential college that brings learners together in community for an intensive, immersive experience. How can technology serve this pathway for learning?

Multimedia resources could enrich it. An example here is Third Millennium Ministries ([thirdmill.org](http://thirdmill.org)), an organisation that provides a seminary-level, multimedia, theological curriculum as a resource for training colleges worldwide. The aim is to free up time for local trainers to focus less on imparting information, and more on training in ministry skills and personal development.

In England, All Nations Christian College provides cross-cultural training, with a strong commitment to learning in community, and reaching head, hands and heart (see [www.allnations.ac.uk](http://www.allnations.ac.uk)). A team was tasked with developing e-learning courses – but could e-learning create community at a distance, and lead to real spiritual growth? Team member Kate Wiseman comments, “We were amazed at the level of interaction and the deep relationships that were built up between e-learning students.”

So technology can play an effective role in bringing together individuals unable to meet face to face. But perhaps ‘blended’ learning programmes offer a good way forward in some situations – the advantages of face-to-face participation with the possibilities of e-learning. In a blended programme, learners come together face to face for short

periods of time, and then use e-learning for the rest. For example, the Pars Theological Centre ([www.pars.theology.com](http://www.pars.theology.com)) is providing Farsi language training by Iranians for Iranians. The Centre’s BA programme blends online study, intensive face-to-face teaching conferences, and church-based training with mentoring and opportunities for ministry.

In summary, technology does not need to replace what is already fruitful – but it can make it even better. It can improve access to resources where needed, complement face-to-face relationships of learners with learners, and learners with tutors, and link isolated learners – opening doors that were previously closed to many people.

Many possibilities are ripe for development. Let’s pray for the people, time and financial resources to use the technology that is already available to serve the Great Commission! ☺

*This article was prepared by Increase, a group with the aim of connecting and strengthening church-based training movements, including TEE, across Asia and beyond. For more information see [www.increasenetwork.org](http://www.increasenetwork.org).*

<sup>1</sup> For more stories about the use of one of the sources of TEE courses used widely in Asia and beyond, see [www.seaninternational.com/news.html](http://www.seaninternational.com/news.html). For more information on TEE, see the Increase TEE e-newsletter on the Increase website.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Flipped classroom’ – a model in which teachers pre-assign whatever lecture-type material is needed as homework, and use the classroom time for peer and interactive learning.

Technology does not need to replace what is already fruitful... but it can make it even better.





# PARTNERS IN GOD'S MISSION

**Sameh\* and Nihad\* are Christians from a Muslim-majority country in the Middle East. Sameh worked with the leadership team of a company which provided training in management, and Nihad taught English; they also led small discipleship groups for new believers from a Muslim background.**

When they first began sharing about their desire to serve Christ as workers overseas, they were frequently asked, "Why do you want to go to people outside our country when there are so many people here who still don't know Jesus?"

"But two other questions came to our mind," Sameh and Nihad explain. "One was 'Do these people have the same opportunity that people in our home country have?' Our answer to this one was: definitely not. And then, 'Will there always be an opportunity for these people to hear about Jesus?' God is in control of that, but for now, the door is open for us to go and share."

And so they moved to another Middle Eastern country as Interserve Partners to serve in a nation that had no known church. Because they already spoke the language and understood the culture, they were able to add real depth to the

team in evangelism and discipleship.

Sameh and Nihad represent the emergence of a fledgling mission movement in a country that has traditionally only received missionaries. Because the church in their home country is just learning what it means to participate in God's mission, the ways for people like them to serve overseas are very limited. However, serving now in an Interserve team, Sameh and Nihad receive the support and accountability they need to help them live in a troubled and difficult country.

We also have other Interserve Partners who come from countries that historically have only received mission workers: a young doctor from Central Asia is serving in South Asia, a young woman from the exploding church in North East Asia is serving in Central Asia, another young woman from Eastern Europe is engaged in ministry in South Asia, and two families from the largest Protestant denomination in Ethiopia are serving in South Asia. This has all come about through partnership: the primary sender for each of these Partners is their home church, which has been enabled, through partnership with Interserve, to send out their mission workers.

Partnership brings together the things God is doing and those He is inviting into His mission without demanding it is all done one (my) way. As the church emerges, grows and matures in traditional countries of mission activity, it too wants to participate in what God is doing in His world today. Through partnerships God is releasing new resources



into His Kingdom work, as the whole body is engaged in the mission of God.

Partnership does not just happen. It requires an intentional commitment from us to honour each other and release each other into ministry together. There are some principles that guide us in this venture.

**Partnership means participating in God's mission** wherever He is at work, including promoting what God is doing in emerging contexts. Birthed through the dedication of pioneer missionaries, the church in Ethiopia is emerging into a new phase and wants to be part of God's work. Its workers have been trained in evangelism and church planting and have a vision and passion for hard places. The church in Central Asia, although only 20-30 years old, is also capturing a similar vision. We want to assist them by removing barriers that would prevent them from participating in God's mission.

**Partnership requires extravagant generosity**, sharing what God has entrusted to those of us with a longer history in mission. This includes more than just money; practical skills, training, processes and procedures, member care, community and accountability – these represent some of the areas where those who have journeyed longer can contribute resources for the sake of the whole body.

**Partnership means we must value each other** and the contribution each one brings: whether I bring 80% or 10% is not the measure of who has the power in the

partnership. Neither of us can do it without the other. And we allow each other to shape who we are, the way we do ministry and the values that enable us to do it together.

**Partnership means commitment** to seeing sustainable, mature, interdependent mission movements develop: we don't want to grow dependency, and so partnership requires a bearing and sharing of the cost by all parties. It means that the resource load, including finances, is phased into the processes of the partnership over time, recognising that the capacity for all the responsibilities takes time to develop.

How is this working out in Interserve?

- Those coming from partnerships with individual churches, emerging mission organisations and larger denominations are accepted into Interserve as full Partners. This provides a community, support, accountability, and training for those who would otherwise be isolated. It increases the capacity of the Interserve team and the church in our countries of service to demonstrate the reality of God in diversity.
- Interserve has helped emerging sending structures to develop and evaluate what it means to understand God's call and assess the suitability of someone to pursue their call. This has included bringing together a group from Ethiopia and Kenya in a workshop to look at what it means to assess the call of someone in East Africa.
- Interserve has helped those from emerging

contexts access training in cross-cultural ministry. It facilitated links between the second largest denomination in Ethiopia and All Nations Christian College in the UK to assist the Ethiopian Church to develop training for its workers. It helped the young doctor from Central Asia to participate in on-line cross-cultural preparation training.

- Through the resources of Interserve, pre-field orientation has enabled new workers from emerging contexts to address important issues as they prepare to leave. An Interserve partner went to Ethiopia to spend a week with the two families and the church to help them understand the very practical issues of preparing for service and what they would become part of.
- Interserve has provided networks so that emerging mission-sending contexts can raise finance to help them support their workers. In addition, Interserve is absorbing a percentage of the organisational costs for an initial period so that workers from emerging contexts can participate in a supportive team as part of a bigger organisation.

Partnership is not a pragmatic response to the realities of today. It is commitment to reflecting the reality of the body. Even the weakest part is important for the whole. ☞

*Cathy Hine is Interserve's International Director of Ministries.*

\* Names have been changed



# DISCIPLESHIP THROUGH SONG

**Paul and Pat Stock, our guest speakers at Interserve Day 2014, work amongst the Hindu tribal peoples in the southern province of Sindh in Pakistan. They run a Village Outreach Programme, with 55 trained workers who, each month, teach Bible, health, and literacy in 165 villages. Paul is an ethnomusicologist and works in an audiovisual centre that develops culturally-relevant Christian resources. The following article is taken from what Paul shared at Interserve Day.**

How do we share Christ with illiterate village people who do not like to listen to sermons or speeches? After about five minutes they will stop listening to the preacher and start talking amongst

themselves – “How’s your buffalo?”, “I like your dress”, and so on – and sometimes they even just get up and walk off.

So we started asking questions: How do they teach their beliefs? How do they learn? What is their style?

My father, who was a missionary in Pakistan for over 50 years, conducted research on how people in that culture shared their faith. And he found out something very interesting. The Hindu religious leaders spread their faith through singing – the Bhakti movement teaches that Hindus can gain merit and a higher caste status, and even escape from the cycle of reincarnation, through devotional singing to their gods. Since music is a part of every spiritual occasion – the Hindu peoples of Sindh, Pakistan, love music and dance – my father proposed that we take advantage of this great opportunity, and write songs in this indigenous worship style about Jesus Christ.

So I took this idea and ran with it. I have written over 200 songs in various languages in the indigenous style of the people. I initially wrote a lot of songs on death, salvation and heaven to sing at funerals, which can last for up to fifteen days. Worship services are held every night with bhajans (Hindu devotional songs) sung one after the other, and on the last night they sing right through until morning (they believe that if you sing really well, the spirit of the deceased may move up in the cycle of reincarnation). Hindu religious leaders



Naming ceremony



are invited to sing four songs each, and in between the songs they share a little about what they are singing. Our teams are also invited to sing at these all-night funerals – sometimes we are the only Christians present. They invite us because they enjoy listening to our songs with their new words yet traditional-style music. It's been a wonderful and effective way to share the gospel.

Then we started writing songs not just for funerals, but for weddings, baptisms, naming ceremonies and so on, so that their whole-life events will be permeated with Christian truth. For weddings we have written lots of songs that teach Christian marriage principles, for example, *Your wife is a gift from God. Do you understand or not? We will not let you hit her. Do you want to marry or not?* Traditionally, men are taught to give their wives as much pain as possible, in order to gain respect from them. So we are fighting against a lot of such things in their culture, and trying to bring the truth in culturally appropriate forms.

Singing and dancing form a huge part of their culture, but they had stopped doing a lot of the dancing because people had started drinking heavily at the tribal dances. They said, "The men drink, and bother the women, and fall over each other: so let's just stop the dancing." But the Christians said, "Let's stop the drinking, and let's get back to dancing." And so Christians have actually brought the dancing back into the culture.



We have three dance troupes that are invited to events – particularly weddings – three or four times a week.

We have 20 people working at the audiovisual centre, developing Christian resources that are culturally relevant. Our leader is a national pastor from a tribal background, and 18 of the workers are former students of mine, from the tribal boarding school where I taught music.

Before we attempt to transform Hindu traditions and customs into indigenous tribal Christian rituals, we very carefully examine

them to find out the meanings behind the rituals. For the funeral rituals, for example, we began by gathering all the Hindu religious leaders together and asking them, "What are your traditions and what do they mean?" Then the tribal Christians discussed each ritual and asked, "Can we keep these rituals? If not, how can we transform them so that they are Christian but still indigenous?"

In the case of the funeral rituals, almost everything had to do with superstition and therefore couldn't be kept. So, instead, the Christians created their own funeral rituals. It is so important for them to have



replacement rituals. Before that, when a Hindu who had become a Christian died, the robed Anglican priest would come, read from the prayer book, and leave. Then the family would proceed to do all the traditional Hindu rituals as well, pressured into it by their relatives, because there were no other Christian funeral rituals.

Shortly after we had finished making all these new funeral rituals, an old Christian man died. We went to the village for the funeral and after the pastor had done his thing, an uncle stood up and said, "Now we have to do this [Hindu] ritual." But the dead man's son was able to stand up and say, "We have our own ritual, a Christian one." It was wonderful that they had something they could do instead that was appropriate, and it was such an encouragement to all of us.

One of the songs that we wrote for the Christian funeral rituals – a song of hope in what is ahead for us in heaven – has proved to be so popular that it has now been translated into all the tribal languages.

### Reaching out to Muslims

Although we work mainly among the Hindus, the majority of Pakistanis are Muslim, so we have produced some resources that are geared towards reaching out to them.

Music is not something that Islam encourages, but the Sindh province is one of the more tolerant areas of

Pakistan and the Sindhis are more open to music.

One of our colleagues came up with a unique way to reach out to her Muslim neighbours. She created a pattern for a quilt, in which each square represented a different story from the Bible. She then talked about each of the stories as she was sewing the quilt with her local women friends. She asked us to write a song to go with each of the squares and the Bible story it represented – it was a wonderful way of

showing the whole scope of God's word and

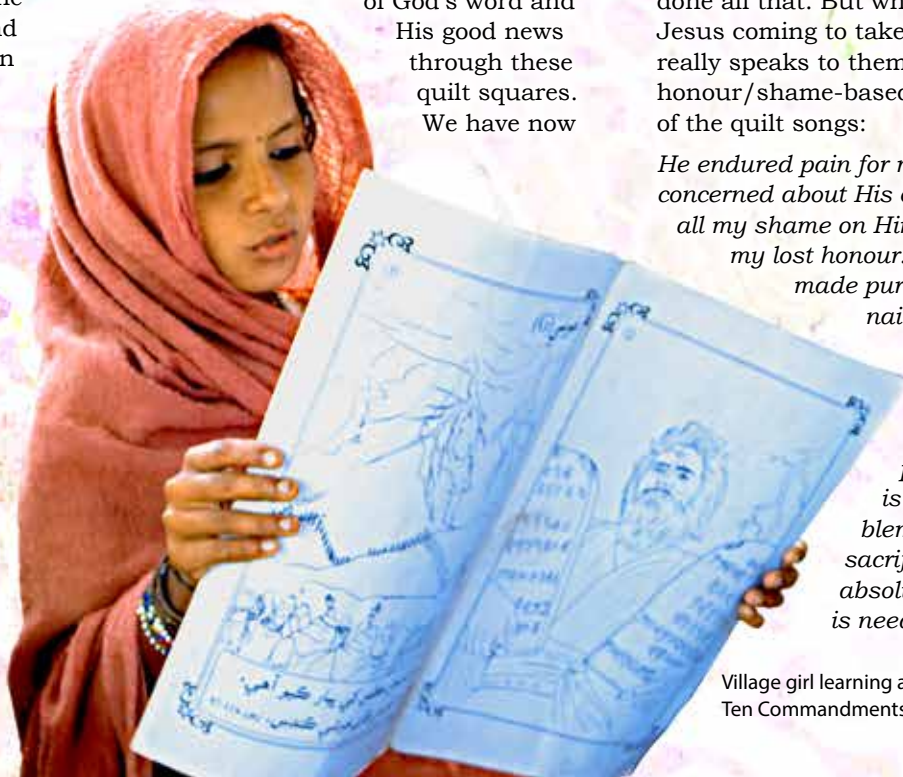
His good news through these quilt squares.

We have now

produced a DVD of these Rilli (quilt) songs and put them on the open market, using well-known Muslim singers they know and want to hear.

These days we understand more about how many cultures are shame-based cultures. If you say Jesus has died for your sins and He has taken your debt, it doesn't mean anything to most Muslims because they aren't too concerned about sin. They are doing all these good works, they are doing the month of fasting, they don't have to worry about sins anymore once they have done all that. But when you sing about Jesus coming to take away their shame, it really speaks to them because they are an honour/shame-based society. Here is one of the quilt songs:

*He endured pain for me. He was not concerned about His own honour. He took all my shame on Himself and thus restored my lost honour. My sinful hands were made pure when they hammered nails into His hands. A spear pierced His heart to cleanse the evil thoughts of my heart. He endured pain for me. See, this is the Lamb without blemish, who has been sacrificed for us all. Now absolutely no other sacrifice is needed for us to be saved.*



Village girl learning about Moses and the Ten Commandments



I have met some of the best Muslim singers in the country through recording these songs, and it has been a wonderful opportunity to reach out to them. Not long ago we got in touch with a really popular singer and asked if he would be willing to record a Christian song with us. He asked to hear the words first. The song is taken from Psalm 51; it's a cry to Jesus, a repentance. He said, "If you take out Jesus and put in God instead, I will sing it." I told him, "I'm sorry, but I can't do that."

I was discouraged and wondering what we should do, when the studio technician said, "I know a young guy who has a really good voice; he sang in the *Indian Idol* competition and he made it right to the top." I talked with him on the phone and he agreed to do the song – and then I heard him sing! He has the most incredible voice that God just dropped into our laps!

*O Lord, inside of me is an ocean of darkness. My heart is confused and anxious; Heavenly Father, lift my burden. Look into my soul. O Lord, what wrongs have I done? Come into my heart and test it. What sins have I committed? From today, Jesus, I don't want to do my own will. I want my heart, tongue and life to be yours!*

The video of that song is on YouTube. Can you imagine how many people have watched it just because the singer has an amazing voice! God wants people to hear about Him! He wants them to repent; He wants them to come to Him. And so He helps us.

## Are you called?

When I went to college I kept thinking about what it means to be called to mission service. How will I know if I am called? Will I hear bells ringing? Then one day I heard a speaker who made a lot of sense: "Most of us are willing to go but planning to stay unless we hear that big bell ring. However, we need people who are planning to go but are willing to stay. People say, 'God, I plan to stay here, to be a doctor; if You want me to go, You have to show me.' But we need people to do the opposite, to say: 'I'm planning to serve You overseas, God, but if You don't want me to go, You close the door.'"

Only two per cent of Pakistan's population are Christian; not only do we need to communicate in a culturally appropriate manner to be effective in reaching out to the other 98%, but we also need help from non-Pakistanis to do so. Are you planning to stay but willing to go, or are you planning to go but willing to stay? How can God use your gifts to communicate His love to the 98% in Pakistan who don't yet know Him? ☞



PHOTOS FROM TOP LEFT: Ratna is a Village Outreach Programme worker; Paulous is on the AV Centre's video team; Paul and Pat Stock speaking in NZ at Interserve Day 2014; Suleman works in the AV Centre's production department.



# CONSULTANTS AS MISSION

**Every year thousands of professionals worldwide depart from their home country to go and work as consultants in other nations, many of which are located in the 10/40 window.**

In fact, as I write, 1947 consultancy jobs are being advertised on just one of the several international websites for such positions, spanning from 21 working days in length, to 650 working days, to permanent. Not only do these jobs grant entry to countries that may otherwise be difficult to access, but they also provide a high level of credibility for the “visiting experts”. What a brilliant opportunity, as a follower of Jesus, to let your professional skills open the door for service in Asia and the Arab world!

Consultants as Mission is a stream within Interserve’s On Track options, catering for professionals who, for various reasons, are unable to commit to serving long term in-country, but who still want to offer their expertise to help in the Interserve world.

This employment/service pattern provides a threefold advantage: visa, credibility and financial support. Sitting behind the pattern of CAM is the same theology that has driven mission since William Carey: “My job is my ministry and my ministry is my job.” Work is part of God’s redemptive creation and is

part of who we are. I am not a missionary – I am a consultant who is a follower of Jesus, with a passion to see other people come to know Him too. My repeated visits to the same projects over the last few years have given me the privilege of building lasting friendships with those I work with. So as we work we talk about health, about retirement, about parents, about children, and most of all about God, answered prayer, visions and, ultimately, who Jesus is and what He has provided for us.

Someone committed to CAM is different from a typical consultant who, most of the time, just “blows in” and “blows out” (the seven-day-in-country wonder); once the report is written the project is over. Such consultants do not take the time to build the relationship of equals; they practise the top-down, I-will-tell-you mode of consulting. However, CAM consultants come with a servant heart, willing to build relationships with those they work with and serve, and with the in-country team and the local believers. They understand how CAM adds value to the Kingdom; that it is a commitment to building local relationships and developing an ongoing input to projects from both in and out of the country, while living out the claims of Jesus in doing so.

As I write, I am excited about my upcoming

trip to my chosen country of service. I will be in-country and working with my clients during Ramadan – something I deliberately planned. The reason is simple: at the end of the day when we are ‘breaking the fast’ there is opportunity to talk and ask questions like: “What are you specially praying for during the time of the fast?” and “What has Allah been talking to you about during the fast?” Each of these questions can lead into an in-depth conversation, and I am able to talk about who Jesus is.

The key, for someone who wants to be engaged in CAM, is to always keep in mind the reason you are in-country, and to be deliberately proactive in engaging people. Every morning as I start my day, I pray for the openings to share, and for the conversations I will be having at the end of the day’s fast.

Having promoted the advantages that CAM offers in being able to share about Jesus, I also want to stress the very real need for the expertise that professional consultants can offer. The Interserve website last night was advertising 17 CAM vacancies. In my country of service I am aware of at least 20 positions that need to be filled. Each assignment is different and the time frame reflects the project need, but there are various options for the pattern of service: a one-month locum every year to give those on the ground a break; or one month’s input every year to cover a professional gap; or one month’s training input every year to lift the capacity of those in-country; or 10 working days’ service in-country every month; or 30 working days’ input four times a year.



The actual delivery possibilities are endless but the real driver is: what is the Kingdom goal and how is it continued when the consultant is not in-country? I use email, Skype and Viber to stay in almost-daily contact while I am not physically in-country.

Currently on our books we have twelve people from round the globe who have gone through the screening process and are available to serve as consultants across the Interserve world. Their skill sets cover a wide range, for example, mechanical engineers, IT Systems experts, legal and mediation experts, educational experts, teacher trainers, hospital accreditation quality experts, sociologists, business-start-up mentors and accountants.

The CAM model provides consultants with an accountability and support structure within Interserve, a valued connection with the in-country team and a wide prayer-support base. This is the difference between being a freelance maverick (the real danger for consultants) and being part of a team. I myself have been operating within the Interserve fold for eight years, and in that time have started a tentmaking movement that has trained over 1000 people, with 450 of those engaged in active service. This has come about through more than 40 trips to the country, thousands of emails and Skype conversations, and a commitment to developing missional relationships. The project's success is due to the training being routed through the local networks, the appointment of a local national coordinator, and Interserve's commitment to



mentoring the local church to empower it to reach its own people.

In conclusion, CAM is just one pattern among many whereby we can respond to and fulfil the Great Commission, carrying with it both advantages and dangers. However, when played out in a missional context with a missional heart, CAM provides the Interserve family with another pair of hands in places where the labourers are few. Done properly with long-term commitment this pattern of input can add real value to the Kingdom.

Are you a teacher, an engineer, a technician, a doctor, or do you have a set of portable professional skills that can be used anywhere in the world, along with the ability to relate cross-culturally? Do you have a passion to share Jesus in the Interserve world but your commitments prevent you from doing so full time? Then perhaps CAM is the right option for you – contact Interserve today to learn more. ☺

*The author has a long track record in the business sector as well as in mission.*



# THE journey TO life

**One day in late 2008 I was sitting with a group of ministry and church leaders working out what we believed to be the most significant hurdles for the national church. During a coffee break a fellow at our table commented, "I've been working with the church in 'City X' for six years now and have yet to work with a national believer who was not sexually abused as a child."**

His comment shocked me as I knew he worked with many people and that his discipleship work was exclusively with men. But then a national believer from a much larger city said, "You know, I've had the exact same experience." And while I was reeling from these two revelations a national woman from a third and yet larger city said, "Neither of you surprises me but you'll never hear this from one of our pastors because it's much too shameful ever to talk about."

That began my journey of exploration into the seamy underbelly of our local culture. One of the things I knew about childhood sexual abuse was that it seriously damages a person's ability to trust others. I also knew that one of the challenges facing the local church was trust; a local saying is "don't even trust your father", and that lack of trust makes community nearly impossible to build. Most of the Muslim Background Believer churches in the country are built around one or perhaps two families with outsiders too often being rejected. I wondered if a shockingly high incidence of childhood sexual abuse might be a significant contributor to the problems facing the growth of the church.

So I began to do informal research, talking to national church leaders and long-term foreign workers. Consistently I was told that the problem was even bigger than I had heard, that it was endemic in the church and in society and that very little was being done to address it. Next I started asking

what could be done to help, talking to the few counsellors I knew in the country as well as to some experts I could visit during our summer home assignment. Friends and I started searching the internet for articles on sexual abuse in Muslim communities. All of our findings reinforced my belief that this was a profoundly important issue to address.

In early 2010 my wife and I invited everyone we knew in the country who was trained as a counsellor, mostly foreigners but including a few nationals, and spent a full day talking through and sharing experiences related to sexual abuse. One of the most powerful speakers was the pastor of a church in a more rural part of the country. He spoke of regularly having to counsel people who had been abused in some way, often young girls or married women, but even more commonly men and boys who had been abused. At that first meeting we agreed to expand our group to a larger ministry and agreed to the following thesis:

1. Childhood sexual abuse (CSA) is shockingly common in our country.
2. CSA leads to an inability to trust; the people who should love you most either hurt you or failed to protect you.
3. Lack of trust is a key barrier to healthy churches. We must trust or be willing to be hurt to have healthy community.



4. Helping the wounded is a priority for God's kingdom. If the church does not provide healing, it will be stunted in its growth.

*...article continued over page*



## restoration

**Yazmira\* is a 24-year-old university student who recently completed one of the Journey to Life groups.**

I turned 24 a few weeks ago, and while undergoing the annual "look back and see what you've done with one year of your life" process, I realized that last year was my year of restoration. It was quite painful at times, but even the glimpses of what has been changing in my life are worth that pain.

In the last three months, I've been part of intense counselling with a group of amazing ladies, and we've helped each other to look back at stories of our childhoods and discover how they affected who we are today and what we believe about ourselves. Have you ever thought, "If only people knew about my past or what kind of a person I really am, they would all run away from me"? That was my fear when we started this group, but to my surprise, every individual there had the same fear. Apparently, we all have secrets that bring us down, that we hide behind to escape our freedom to be truly unique individuals.

I won't sugarcoat the process: what we did was hard, sometimes so hard that I simply wanted to hide in my room for a year, without seeing anyone. The first time I shared my story of neglect, abuse, rejection and depression, I felt beaten. Being exposed after so many years and shedding light on the darkest areas of my life woke up all the awful creatures sheltering in those dark places. As I was going home after that session, I was frightened, because

experiencing such sorrow is painful – but slowly, my heart came back to life. The group was very gracious to me and breathed truth into my story: they told me that I wasn't to blame for every horrible bit of my life; they taught me how to be more compassionate toward that little girl. In time, the feeling of exposure started to fade away, and the feeling of being accepted for who I truly am took its place. I finally started to let go of the huge clunking chains I had kept carrying around with me, and I can't begin to tell you how unbelievably serene that sense of emotional freedom is.

We did this in a group setting instead of individual counselling sessions because hurts, heartbreaks and disappointments happen in relationships – and so does the healing. Everyone needs that safe environment that welcomes you as you are, doesn't judge you for what has happened or what you have done in the past, and tells you that you are a precious being who is worth more and deserves better. Even the conflicts we experienced as a group were resolved in this atmosphere, openheartedly, kindly and honestly. Seeing how deep relationships can actually be and that I can trust people and be vulnerable with them changed my whole perspective on life and human interactions.

Am I a completely new person after only three months? The answer would be both yes and no. I'm renewed in the sense that it's easier to be myself and to put aside all the other 'roles' I've been playing. I took the hardest step of all – I reclaimed my childhood and learned how to appreciate myself and trust others – but I know I still have a long way to go, many more steps to take. But I'm no longer afraid, and that makes all the difference. ☺

\* Name has been changed



We chose to call ourselves The Journey To Life and set this vision for our new ministry: That the church in our country may be a place of safety, healing and hope for the wounded of this land.

Recognising that there would never be enough professional counsellors to address the problems we face, we determined to look for a methodology that would support lay counsellors throughout the church. We set as a goal that the local church would accept issues of emotional health as a normal part of discipleship.

We faced an important challenge in not shaming the church or pastors in this. We needed to communicate in a way that let people know this is serious and widespread but did not lead people to think that our country is “Pervertistan”. We have been blessed to have two nationals on our steering committee, one of whom is a widely respected pastor. This has given us legitimacy in the church, opened doors for communication and kept us from making fatal errors in our message. One response to this has been to broaden our charter to address emotional health and wounding and not to speak so much about CSA except when explaining our history. All of us are wounded and the church must provide help.

A Swiss supporter of ours introduced us to Open Hearts Ministries, an American organisation that has developed a group methodology using principles found in the book *The Wounded Heart* by Dan Allender. After contacting OHM and meeting with a woman in Jordan who had been using their materials there, we set up an initial training in November 2012. Twenty-four people, most of whom were trained counsellors and five of whom were nationals, participated in three groups.

At our debriefing session at the end of this initial training, the participants gave the

following messages:

1. The groups provided the most intense experience of community any of the participants had experienced and are designed to bring healing through godly community;
2. We must translate this into our language and spread it through the churches (three of the nationals volunteered immediately to start the translation);
3. We must continue groups in English and spread them through the foreign community. “You have all disciplined us incorrectly!” said one participant. “You don’t ask us the hard questions. But in our groups we went deep.”

Since that time we have been running groups and expanding the number of people prepared to lead groups. A group consists of 12 sessions and that makes the expansion slow. We have also finished the translation of the materials and are preparing for our first local language group later this year. It has been a challenge to get men involved, but that has been a key focus so that this doesn’t get labelled as a women’s issue. The progress is slow, but all those who have been through have found it a blessing. 🌿

*The author is an Interserve Country Team Leader in Western Asia, where he has lived for nearly 25 years.*





# HARD PLACE teams

## arab world JANUARY 2015

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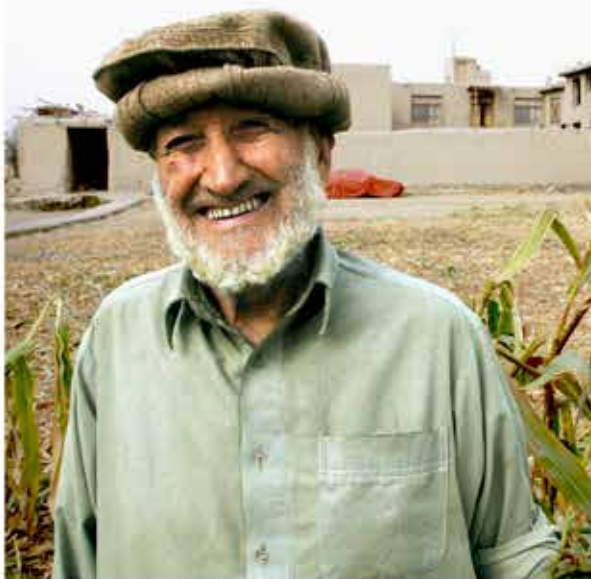


## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

**Dr Cathy Hine** is our  
current International  
Director of Ministries.

She has been with  
Interserve for more than  
25 years and is now  
focusing on research,  
writing and advocacy for  
women living  
under Islam.

# INTERSERVE DAY 2015



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**COST** EARLYBIRD \$30 (\$20 for students and unwaged)  
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**RSVP** by 28 April. Registration is needed for catering purposes.