



Using Your Profession in Missions

Interserve Canada May - June 2016

A Letter from Candice Little
Leadership Team

Growing up as a pastor's kid my home seemed like a revolving door of missionaries as they passed through. I'd eagerly listen to all their stories and be amazed. But when asked if missions was something I was interested in doing my adamant response was, "no, I want to have a career". This, as well as a couple of missions trips for youth I went on, gave me the impression that to be a missionary you needed to be a product of bible college or seminary. I didn't realize missions and a career could be linked. I didn't realize one's passions, skills, and interests could be the basis for ministry. It wasn't until I went overseas for a few months in 2014 that I understood God isn't calling us to forsake our talents and abandon our profession to do missions, but instead He is calling us to bring these with us into missions.

This past February, I had the privilege to visit Partners working in South and Northeast Asia and experience how they are using their work as a foundation for ministry. It was amazing to see how God had called them to take their profession into the world and live a wholistic ministry, encompassing faith in their day-to-day lives. One Partner reflected on how God has used his career as a pastry chef to access a restricted area because there was a need for a bakery teacher. Now, living there for two years, he teaches and builds relationships with students that opens the door for questions about faith.

All of the workers I met are intentionally living out their faith in a culture where the vast majority of people are either Hindu or Buddhist. They live in regions where many of their coworkers, friends, neighbours, et cetera, are considered unreached people, or people, who before contact with an overseas worker, had no access to the gospel or a follower of Christ.

As Canadians, we have a unique opportunity to take our education and skills and go into countries where Christ is not known and where our skills are needed. We are being welcomed into places where we can support local communities as we live out our faith. It is amazing to think of the possibilities once we understand this new missions paradigm. Is God calling you to participate in some way – either by going, or supporting someone that has gone? If so, Interserve is here to help you fulfill your calling.

Using Your Profession in Missions

85% of Asian countries do not allow missionaries to come and freely preach the gospel.¹

Interserve responds to this by sending 'Partners' overseas to use their careers, skills and ministry gifts to share the love of Christ with the people with whom they live and work by living a wholistic ministry.

Interserve's Work in the Himalayan Region

The Himalayas encompass 8 countries in which the majority of people in this region are considered unreached. The following are a few stories of our Partners using their careers to further the Kingdom.



A Partner in South Asia using his environmental expertise

Joe and Mary* with their three children are living in a country where 98.2% of the population is considered unreached and only 0.3% profess to be Christian. Because of the nature of the country, very few Westerners are allowed in, especially none that would 'evangelize' to the local people.

Joe and Mary have felt God's call to this country since they were both teenagers and each fervently prayed for God to provide an opportunity for them to reach these people. Now, because of Joe's expertise in environmental studies and work background Joe he has gotten a job at a local university. The family now lives on the campus and has great opportunities to build relationships with students and fellow workers who they come in contact with on a daily basis. They have a great community of students who are constantly coming into their home to share a meal, play games, and have a safe place to ask questions and receive counsel. One student has commented that by watching how they parent their children, he has learned what love and care looks like and wants to show that love to his family one day.

Joe and Mary and their children are using their God given skills to go into a country that otherwise they would not have been able to reach.

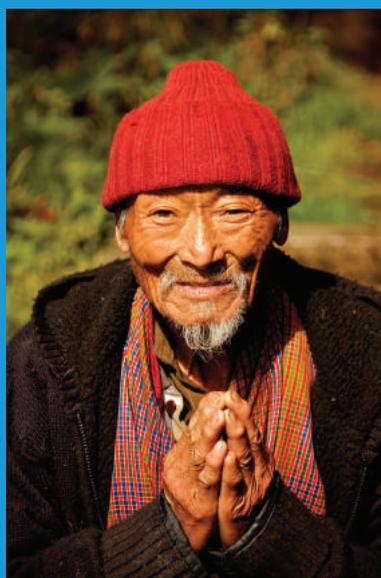
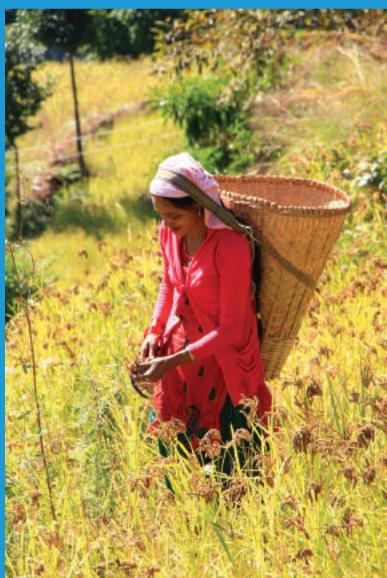
*Names have been changed to protect Partners identities

¹Cited from christianitytoday.com

A Partner in Northeast Asia using his customer service talents

*Matt works at a coffee shop, run by Christians, where 65% of the country is considered unreached and only 7.8% of the population professes to be Christian.

Matt told a story of a man named *Ian who came into the coffee shop asking after an Interserve Partner who had worked there around five years earlier. Ian told Matt that while he lived in the area he regularly frequented the coffee shop and always noticed this one workers overwhelming joy. He was intrigued by how one could be so content. After years of observing the worker, without making contact or talking, Ian decided that he wanted to know that same joy and set out to find it. Five years later, and now a Christian, Ian came back to thank the Partner for planting the seed in him to go and find the joy of Christ. Matt remembers a well known quote, "Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary, use words" and is encouraged that God has and will use his everyday contact with customers to further His Kingdom.



A Partner living in South Asia using her teacher's education

*Christina works in a country where 99.1% of the population is considered unreached and only 0.9% of the population professes to be Christian.

Christina left her home country after feeling God was calling her to use her teachers training to support and build into local teachers in South Asia. After learning about the local education system, Christina began a training center for teachers with the desire to improve the quality of primary school teaching. Christina and her team teach age appropriate approaches on how best to prepare the students for further education. One school which enrolled in Christina's training course said:

"This training has changed the overall environment of the school. Our teachers who have received the training are more confident and friendly towards children. They have set and arranged the classroom very nicely and the materials are well managed and organized. The teachers have started doing group work. This change has brought more children to our school and children are very happy to come to school and they are very secure and confident to share their opinions."

After 14 years on the field, Christina's training has now been accredited by a European university. Christina is well integrated in the community and continues to disciple and answer questions her friends have about her faith.

What's New

Please welcome two new Partner units into the Interserve fellowship!



N&S are joining our work in North Africa

In the past, N&S have worked in North Africa and the Middle East reaching out to the majority faith people. In the last two years, God has called N&S to move back to their home country in North Africa to continue their ministry there.

S's (the wife) vision is to translate the Bible into colloquial Arabic. The written and oral forms of the Arabic language vary greatly where the written form still follows rules from the 6th century. Arabic speakers have a very hard time reading this and often do not understand what they have read. S believes Christians in this area have been deprived the chance to read and understand the Bible. Now S dedicates her time to translating the Bible into the majority's heart language, or the language they speak everyday.

N (the husband) also works in full-time ministry using his knowledge of social media to reach the majority faith people on the internet. Through platforms like Facebook and Youtube, N engages and asks questions that challenges their conventional thinking and worldview and helps them discover what others believe. N interacts with people at the early stage of their spiritual journey and prays that one day their communication will help lead them to Jesus.

N launches monthly campaigns where he advertises Christian content and invites people to engage with a post or video. One social media platform has almost 500,000 followers from 11 different countries in the Middle East and North Africa. On average, 10,000 people interact with the platform on a daily basis. Recently, one follower commented, "I am eager to have a Christian friend; I have many questions and I need to learn from him." N is constantly replying to people who have reached out over email, text, private messages, etc.

N&S are using their God-given skills and passions to reach the lost, and are seeing God at work in this context.



Frank and Sue will be joining our work in Thailand

Frank and Sue, and their children, grew up and lived in Thailand. In 2002, God called them to Canada through a dream. Canada was a country they had never visited and the family did not speak the language. Soon after arriving in Canada, Sue began taking English lessons with migrants from all over the world and realized they were all lonely. Sue started inviting people over for a bible study, which was well received and grew rapidly from 30 to 70 people.

After a while, the pastor of Frank and Sue's church suggested they start a Thai Christian Church – an absurd idea as they did not know any Thai people. Sue prayed to the Lord and said that if He truly wanted them to plant a Thai church He would have to bring Thai people into her life. Later that afternoon she went grocery shopping and heard the Thai language being spoken and went to introduce herself. The man she met was well connected to the Thai community. Sue knew this chance meeting was from God. Through that interaction, Sue and Frank started the first and only Thai Christian Church in Canada. Since the early years the church has matured enough that Frank and Sue have been able to hand it off to the local leadership.



After 14 years in Canada, God is calling Frank and Sue back to Thailand. Frank and Sue have a calling to Bangkok where they will plant a church in an area that does not have a church and reach out to the nonbelievers there. As God has blessed their ministry here in Canada we are trusting that He will do the same as they return to Thailand and continue to serve Him there.

Pray for N&S, as well as Frank and Sue, that each of their ministries will bear much fruit and the Kingdom of God will be advanced. These Partner units need support, both prayerfully and financially. If you'd like to hear more about their ministries, and/or support them, please contact the office or click on the 'Donate Now' option in this email to give.