

# Global Mission

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Name:

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# Welcome

In order to help AFES staff promote global mission in accordance with our national vision, these five small group studies were composed and trialed with university students and trainees in 2022. After receiving feedback from missionaries, missiologists, and various AFES staff, the studies were enhanced and prepared for sharing.

The studies are intended to aid busy AFES staff in both their formal and informal conversations about global mission with students and trainees. Each study could be run as a 1-1.5 hour stand-alone small group, but they also integrate into a course ideally flowing from 'sending' to 'going' through the topics caring, praying, giving, guidance, and suffering for global mission.

Two files are available for each of the five studies, one for leaders with extended explanation and one for handing out to participants. AFES staff should feel free to utilise whichever study and whichever parts within each study that they find useful, tailoring the studies according to their local distinctives. Notably, another study on 'pathways and destinations' is currently being developed and further feedback is always welcome.

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## Study 1

# Praying for Global Mission

1. How does prayer currently feature in your life? What would you like to see happen in your own prayer life and the prayer life of your friends/ church/ university group?
  
2. What does the Bible teach about prayer both generally and specifically for mission?

	Verse	Implications for Prayer
<b>When</b>	Luke 18:1 (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:17)	Prayer is an _____ action.
<b>Why</b>	James 5:13-18 (cf. Matthew 7:8-11)	Prayer is _____ because God _____
<b>Who</b>	James 5:16 (cf. 1 Peter 3:7, 12)	...the prayers of the _____
<b>How</b>	(1) Luke 18:1-14, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Ephesians 6:18 (2) Romans 12:12, Colossians 4:2, Acts 1:14, 2:42, 6:4 (3) Luke 22:44, Acts 12:5, Hebrews 13:19	...that are _____, _____ & _____.
<b>What - Global Mission</b>	<b><i>A model of prayer: Psalms 67</i></b>	<b>We pray mission prayers for...</b>
	Matthew 6:10 + Psalm 22:27-28	
	Colossians 4:2-3, 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2, 1 Thessalonians 5:25, Ephesians 6:18-19, Philippians 1:18	
	Matthew 9:35-38 (cf. Acts 13:3)	
	1 Timothy 2:1-7	
	Ephesians 6:18	

3. What makes praying for mission hard?

“One of the great uses of Twitter and Facebook will be to prove at the Last Day that prayerlessness was not from a lack of time.”

**John Piper**

4. How can we fuel missions prayers?

5. Reflect, Pray, Act!

## Study 1

### Appendix 1: Stories

#### **Dick McLellan: Warriors of Ethiopia**

Dick McLellan went as a pioneering missionary to Ethiopia. At the age of 21, he stood atop a mountain and looked down into a valley where he saw many tribes who had never heard about Jesus. When he returned to Australia on deputation, he wrote the names of those tribes on bookmarks which he gave to all who promised to pray. Two young girls took those bookmarks and promised to pray. Many years later, Dick returned and visited those two girls. They showed him a bookmark worn to tatters by use. And Dick had the privilege of telling them that their prayers had been heard, that every single one of those tribes now had Christians singing the praises of our Lord Jesus. If you ask Dick today, sixty years later, why those tribes were reached for Jesus, he will tell you: because two girls got down on their knees to pray.

#### **James Fraser: Mountain Rain**

James Fraser was challenged by a missions pamphlet which 'struck at the very roots of his assumptions.' As convicting now as it was then in 1906, the pamphlet reads: 'If our Master returned today to find millions of people unevangelised, and looked, as of course He would look, to us for an explanation, I cannot imagine what explanation we should have to give. Of one thing I am certain – that most of the excuses we are accustomed to make with such good conscience now, we shall be wholly ashamed of then.' Less than 50 years later, this challenge had affected not only the life of James, who left engineering for missionary service in southwest China, but also the eternities of countless Lisu. By 1950 (less than 50 years later!), as missionaries were withdrawing from Lisu regions, over 800 Lisu gathered to farewell them by singing salvation songs in praise to Jesus Christ.

On prayer, James wrote:

- Many of us cannot reach the mission-fields on our feet, but we can reach them on our knees. Solid, lasting missionary work is accomplished by prayer, whether offered in China, India, or the United States.
- I used to think that prayer should have the first place and teaching the second. I now feel that prayer should have the first, the second, and the third.

## **David Platt: Radical**

Why do you think Jesus would look at the crowds around him, with all their deep needs, and then turn to his disciples and tell them to pray for themselves? The answer is humbling. When Jesus looked at the harassed and helpless multitudes, apparently his concern was not that the lost would not come to the Father. Instead his concern was that his followers would not go to the lost. Now think about it. What happens when you and I take these words from Jesus and put them in a world where more than a billion people have still not heard the gospel? A fundamental reality snaps into focus: we are not praying. This is the only possible explanation for how there can be such great need yet so few workers. The multitudes are waiting to hear, and our most urgent need is to pray for the Lord of the harvest to send out Christians into the harvest field...

Not long ago a friend of mine spent a couple of weeks in South Korea, a country that has seen explosive Christian growth in recent years. Over the last century, some estimate, almost half the population in that country has come to Christ. Church leaders there have been intentional about pointing to the power of God in prayer as the reason they have seen such widespread spiritual awakening. My friend was staying in a hotel, and one morning around four o'clock, he was awakened by a loud noise outside. He staggered over to the window and pulled back the curtains to see a stadium filled with people. He wondered: What kind of sports do Koreans play at four in the morning? Frustrated, he crawled back into bed and tried to sleep through the noise coming from the stadium crowd across the street. Later that morning he went down to the hotel lobby and asked the manager what kind of sporting event had been going on in the stadium. The hotel manager responded, "Oh, sir, that was not a sporting event. That was the church gathered for prayer." You and I live in a culture where we gather in stadiums and around televisions for hours at a time to watch guys run around a field with a pigskin ball in their hands as they try to cross a white line.

We express enthusiasm, emotion, and affection for football and other sports, and it begs the question, what would happen in our culture if the church prayed with such passion? What would happen if Jesus dominated our affections more than the superficial trivialities that garner our attention? What would happen if we spent hours before God praying on behalf of the church, the lost, and the poor around the world?

## Appendix 2: Resources

### (1) Missionary Newsletters

- (2) **Apps:**
- Unreached of the Day (Joshua Project):  
**[joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/app](http://joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/app)**
  - Operation World:  
**[operationworld.org/get-involved/prayer-app](http://operationworld.org/get-involved/prayer-app)**

- (3) **Websites:**
- Joshua Project:  
**[joshuaproject.net](http://joshuaproject.net)**
  - Lausanne Movement:  
**[lausanne.org/pray](http://lausanne.org/pray)**
  - PrayerCast:  
**[prayercast.com](http://prayercast.com)**

- (4) **Mission Organisation Material:** e.g., CMS prayer diary, OMF newsletter, etc





<p><b>3 John 5:5-8</b></p>	<p>Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.</p>
<p><b>Matthew 10:40</b></p>	<p>“Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”</p>
<p><b>Philippians 1:3-12</b></p>	<p>I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.</p>
<p><b>Philippians 1:27-2:2</b></p>	<p>Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have. So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.</p>
<p><b>Philippians 2:25-30</b></p>	<p>I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.</p>

**Philippians  
4:10-19**

I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

4. What can we learn from the Bible about partnership and caring for missionaries?

5. What ideas do you have/can we come up with for caring for missionaries?

6. What ideas do you have/can we come up with for caring for missionaries?

<p>Start by asking your missionary partner how you can care for them.</p>	<p>Share something encouraging with your missionary. A verse, a sermon, a podcast, a book, etc.</p>	<p>Ask your missionaries' agency if your skills or labour could be of service.</p>
<p>Reply (consistently) to your missionaries' updates. Pray for them. Then tell them you're praying.</p>	<p>Give sacrificially, regularly, and cheerfully.</p>	<p>Send resources to help with their work. Ask them first!</p>
<p>Advocate for your missionary. Pray for them with friends. Adopt them as a small group. Promote them at church.</p>	<p>Whenever your missionary returns: welcome them. Be at the airport, send a gift, visit/ invite.</p>	<p><i>Your idea:</i></p>
<p>Ask your missionary if there is a structure set up to care for them (prayer group, home support group). Join and participate.</p>	<p>When your missionary returns for a short time: Could you meet a need – small (groceries/meals) or big (lend a car)? Ask first!</p>	<p><i>Your idea:</i></p>
<p>Remember special events. Celebrate their birthdays. Include them in church events.</p>	<p>When your missionary returns for a long time: How could you help them resettle?</p>	<p><i>Your idea:</i></p>

## **Study 2**

### **Appendix 1: Further Resources**

**(1) CMS** (The Church Missionary Society)

a. Caring & Security:

**[cms.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Security-A-Communications-Guide-for-CMS-Supporters-2016.pdf](https://cms.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Security-A-Communications-Guide-for-CMS-Supporters-2016.pdf)**

b. Get Involved/ care: **[cms.org.au/get-involved/care](https://cms.org.au/get-involved/care)**

c. Caring from afar: **[cms.org.au/blog-nswact/how-to-care-for-your-missionaries-from-afar](https://cms.org.au/blog-nswact/how-to-care-for-your-missionaries-from-afar)**

**(2) Missions Interlink**

Caring as a church:

**[missionsinterlink.org.au/resources/guide-for-local-churches-on-caring-for-missionaries-on-the-job](https://missionsinterlink.org.au/resources/guide-for-local-churches-on-caring-for-missionaries-on-the-job)**

**(3) Missions Interlink**

Caring as a church:

**[resonateglobalmission.org/stories-more/8-ways-your-congregation-can-care-missionaries](https://resonateglobalmission.org/stories-more/8-ways-your-congregation-can-care-missionaries)**

**(4) IMB** (International Mission Board)

Caring- “The 3C’s”:

**[imb.org/2019/08/07/caring-missionaries-connection-three-cs](https://imb.org/2019/08/07/caring-missionaries-connection-three-cs)**

**(5) Serge** (International Mission Board)

Ways to care:

**[serge.org/blog/10-unique-ways-to-care-for-your-missionary](https://serge.org/blog/10-unique-ways-to-care-for-your-missionary)**

### Study 3

## Giving for Global Mission

1. Do you think Christians are good at giving financially to missions?

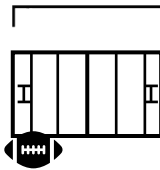
How do you react to these claims:

“Christians make up 33% of the world’s population, receive 53% of the world’s annual income, and spend 98% of it on themselves.”



#### Height of 4 Mt. Kosciuszko

Money Christians Earn  
(AUD\$63 Trillion annual income)



#### Length of a Rugby Field

Money Christians Give  
(1.8% to all Christian Causes)



#### Basketball Goal Height

Money Going to Foreign Missions  
(only 5% of what is given)



#### Diameter of a Golf ball

To Reach the Unreached  
(only 1% of Missions Giving)

**\*Not to Scale**

Adapted from The Travelling Team ([thetravelingteam.org/articles/practical-steps-to-grow-in-giving-to-missions](http://thetravelingteam.org/articles/practical-steps-to-grow-in-giving-to-missions))

2. What makes giving financially for global mission difficult?

3. How competently do you manage money? Because, far from a merely 'secular skill,' managing money matters for mission. Where do you invest your money? Because 'where your treasure is, there your heart will be also' (Matthew 6:21). Money both measures and moves the desires of our heart. Rate your money-management:

### Managing Money for Global Mission

<b>Rate from 1 - 10</b> Strongly Disagree – Strongly Agree	
I manage money well	
I have a budget	
I have godly financial role models	
I am content with what I have	
I waste money	
I invest thoughtfully	
I want to be rich	
I spend selfishly	
My accountant could tell I'm a Christian	
I invest in caring for my family	
I spend short-sightedly	
I invest in caring for my church community	
I know how much my church gives to mission	
I know who my church supports financially	
I repay those who work to teach me the gospel	
I invest in gospel proclamation	
I invest in reaching the Less Reached	
I invest in resourcing the Less Resourced	
My accountant could tell that I care about global mission.	





## Study 4

# Guidance for Global Mission

1. How do you make small decisions? How do you decide on a restaurant?  
How do you make big decisions? How did you decide  
what to study? Why did you join today?

2. What are some ways Christians speak about God guiding us?  
How do you think Christians should make decisions?

3. How significantly do  
your life plans differ  
from your non-  
Christian friends?







5. Choose and discuss two or three of the following statements:

- a. *Love God and do whatever you please.*
- b. *Play to your strengths/ gifts.*
- c. *I have freedom to make decisions in Jesus.*
- d. *The missional priority is reaching the unreached.*
- e. *Everyone called to Christ is commissioned for the sake of all nations.*
- f. *What the heart loves, the will chooses, and the mind justifies.*
- g. *If you don't have a plan for your life, that vacuum will get filled.*
- h. *I could change my plans to meet needs of people with less gospel access or resources.*
- i. *God's priorities are my priorities. I share his heart, his mind, his hands for mission.*
- j. *Mission should be the default. Why wouldn't I go!?*
- k. *I could change my plans so that more people hear about Jesus.*
- l. *We must not rob God of his glory with too small a vision.*
- m. *If you're not willing to go, you're not qualified to stay.*
- n. *I've chosen the hardest + wisest course for sustainable sacrifice.*
- o. *I don't feel called.*
- p. *I have a noble desire for global mission...*
- q. *I can't go because of (insert reason here)*
- r. *... but I'm not qualified for global mission.*
- s. *If you can't go, you must send.*
- t. *Guilt is not a good reason to make decisions.*

6. Decide: What needs to change about your plans? What's your next step for global mission?

## Study 5

# (Our) Suffering for (His) Global Mission

1. What sufferings might the average Aussie experience?

2. What sufferings might missionaries experience?

Amy Carmichael wrote about missionary sufferings including “the mundane of life, the total lack of privacy, strange foods, and the general loss of creature comforts...she spoke with stark candour about the challenges of ministry, including language barriers, disinterested hearers, and fruitless labours. She also pulled back the curtain on the reality of emotional anguish, the piercing loneliness of being a single missionary, sickness, corruption, and the dreadful effects of idolatry and sexual exploitation. But Amy Carmichael didn't record her struggles as a kind of holy grumbling. Nor was she pleading for sympathy. She simply thought people back home should know the truth. And she preferred to recruit new workers to the field with realism rather than romanticism.”<sup>1</sup>

One of the forgotten and rarely understood sufferings of a missionary is that of constantly being on the move. Our paths are regularly redirected. Our lives are endlessly uprooted. We start out for one city only to end up in another. We feel led to one country only to be supplied a different assignment. We pray about reaching one people group only to be denied residency among them. We learn one language only to need a different dialect. We start a local business only to lose permits. We find the perfect apartment only to have our lease expire. We finally settle into effective ministry only to contract a virus. We plan our ways only to have God direct our steps.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpts from book | Elliot Clark: *Mission Affirmed*

3. What motivates missionaries to suffer? Why would we encourage others to make choices for mission that could cost them and increase their suffering?
  
4. What stops you from taking risks for, sacrificing, and even suffering for Jesus now? What makes it hard for you to consider going?
  
5. What does 2 Timothy teach us about our suffering for God's global mission?
  - a. Who suffers?
  
  - b. What types of suffering are there?
  
  - c. Why does Paul suffer? Is it worth it?
  
  - d. What empowers Paul's sufferings?

## Suffering in 2 Timothy (Excerpts)

<b>1:4</b>	As I remember your tears, I long to see you.
<b>1:7-8</b>	God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God.
<b>1:11-12</b>	I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.
<b>1:15-16</b>	You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains.
<b>2:1-3</b>	You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
<b>2:8-13</b>	Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself.
<b>3:1</b>	But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty.
<b>3:10-12</b>	You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
<b>4:5-8</b>	As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry. For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.
<b>4:10-13</b>	Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica...Luke alone is with me...when you come, bring the cloak that I left.
<b>4:14-15</b>	Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message.
<b>4:16-18</b>	At my first defence no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them. But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the nations might hear it. So I was delivered from the lion's mouth. The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom.

## Study 2

### Appendix 1: Resources

- (1) **Book:** Elliot Clark: *Mission Affirmed*
- (2) **Article:** S. Thomas (Gospel Coalition): *If I am happy in Jesus, why am I so sad?*  
[au.thegospelcoalition.org/article/if-i-am-happy-in-jesus-why-am-i-so-sad](http://au.thegospelcoalition.org/article/if-i-am-happy-in-jesus-why-am-i-so-sad)
- (3) **Further Suggestions - Any missionary biography):** e.g., Gates of Splendour, Hudson Taylor, Warriors of Ethiopia, When the Lights Go Out, Mountain Rain, etc
- (4) **Quotes and Excerpts:** (see below, pg. 6 & 7)

In the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, the only word used in connection with the entire span of Jesus' life is "suffered." "Born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried." Who, today, notices how extraordinary this is? What a way to describe the life and ministry of a man so famous for his teachings, parables, healings, exorcisms, and other works! None of these things are even mentioned in the creeds, and very little is said of them in the various New Testament epistles.

– **The Crucifixion by Fleming Rutledge**

"If Jesus is the perfect embodiment of the image of God—what God intends humanity to be—and Jesus' life was oriented toward a cross, and this cross was necessary for him and necessary for us, then it's a provocative question: what does the cross of Jesus have to tell us about what it means to be human? What does the cross tell us about the art of living?"

– **Union with Christ by Rankin Wilbourne**

We are often astonished at the heroism of the early missionaries who went so bravely, suffered in many ways and often died early. But life in 17th century England was also "poor, brutish and short". Britain's early missionaries did not have the average life expectancy of 85+ years we have today. It seems our Western culture is no longer able to face the prospect of dying: neither in the young, nor the old. Many of us do all we can to avoid pain, suffering and loss.

– **Janet Quarry**

I will never forget the day I said farewell to a mission worker in the late 1990s. "Take care," I said. "I don't take care," he said. "I take risks."

– **ibid**



## Excerpt from Mission Affirmed by Elliot Clark

Western missionaries themselves—even the best of them—carry the virus of prosperity theology latent within them. And we easily transmit it to others wherever we serve. This can happen simply by our observable lifestyle, as we instinctively gravitate toward comfort and ease in seemingly innocuous decisions about housing and entertainment, education and healthcare. Like it or not, local believers will interpret from us a Christian perspective of suffering and glory whether we overtly teach it or not. I've known Western missionaries, working in countries with moderate persecution, who were sometimes mystified by the inability of new believers to endure hardship. Expat workers expressed frustration with locals who shied away from suffering or ran away from pain. They also wondered why those who claimed to follow Jesus would prefer to remain secret, never telling their family members or friends about the Saviour. But the sad irony I observed was that sometimes—-in those very circumstances—the missionaries themselves had modelled the same secretive identity, the same avoidance of suffering, and the same inability to endure. Sadly, their new disciples weren't diverting from the path. They were simply following their lead. As a result, I've come to consider some of the ways Western missionary colonization still happens. Sure, we're no longer exporting pews and pipe organs. We're beyond that. But we do import our comforts and our fears. We implicitly inculcate others with our timidity, secrecy, contingency and luxury. The great danger of cultural colonization isn't gone; it's only changed. We're still making disciples in our image. Anna Hampton, an American who's spent nearly a decade living and working in Afghanistan, sees this as a real problem for the West. Her book *Facing Danger: A Guide through Risk* discusses the challenges for cross-cultural workers who leave comfortable, affluent, and "safe" countries to go to difficult regions. She notes how Westerners come from risk-averse and litigious societies with insurance policies and contingencies for everything. But Christian missionaries must be those who demonstrate courage and resilience in times of distress and danger. They must portray the cross, not only by witnessing to the sufferings of Christ, but also by their willingness to suffer with him. According to Scott Sunquist, "Much is communicated about the gospel of salvation through a weak, poor, and suffering servant. Less is communicated about the gospel through a comfortable and wealthy short-term visitor. The call to missionary service is a call to come and die."

## **Loneliness (Chapter 34 of 'When the Lights go out' by Ruth Myors)**

As I meditated, my mind drifted to Jesus' time on earth, and I began to think about how lonely he would have been. It was not until after the resurrection and Pentecost that his closest friends really began to understand who he was and the inner meaning of his message. I let my mind dwell on those 33 years - how he must have longed for his Father and the fellowship he had enjoyed through all eternity. Jesus regarded his body as given to him in order to carry out his Father's will. How painful it must have been for him when his closest companions argued over who would have the best places in the coming Kingdom. Even the three in the inner circle were unable to stay awake in the Garden of Gethsemane. I realised how pathetic my grumbling was in the light of his experience.

I was also reminded in one of my devotional books that it is only in this life that we have the privilege of suffering with Jesus. In heaven we will serve him more perfectly and will have unbroken fellowship with him, but we won't be called to suffer with him. We will never be lonely; we will be surrounded by love. As I contemplated these things, I prayed that I would not waste this precious opportunity and that I would learn all he wanted to teach me. In an act of worship, like the woman with the alabaster jar (Mark 14:3), I offered my loneliness to God and accepted his will for me at that time. There were other times when I really longed for a companion, but the bitter struggle was over. On another occasion I was struck by Ephesians 1:11-12, which reminded me, with fresh impact, that our appointment is to live to the praise of God's glory.

## Excerpt from a sermon on suffering

Jeremy Bentham, a 16<sup>th</sup> century philosopher who helped invent the ethical theory of utilitarianism, wrote that “Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do.” Hedonism has been around a long time.

But David Williams, who heads up the missionary training for CMS, he’s quite convincing when he argues that pain and pleasure have become the dominant way our Aussie culture makes its decisions. It used to be that Westerners had an inner lawyer who said: “Do that, that’s right. Don’t do that, that’s wrong.” Those of Asian descent had, maybe, an inner Confucius who said: “do that, it will bring honour on you and your family.” Or, an inner Mushu from Mulan: “don’t do that! Dishonour on your whole family, dishonour on you.” But now, modern Australian culture has an inner therapist who says: “Do that, it’ll make you feel good. Don’t do that, it’ll make you feel bad.” Should I eat ice-cream? Obviously, yes. What about porn? The lawyer says no, Confucius definitely says no, but the therapist...well, it doesn’t bring anyone else pain, does it? And it brings you pleasure. Should I abort this baby? It could avoid a whole lot of pain. Should I spend as much time as I can playing video games? No brainer. It’s the message of almost every ad, it is the driving force of our culture’s decisions. Avoid pain, pursue pleasure and whatever makes you happy. Now, do you reckon this pain/pleasure worldview might make it hard to make difficult decisions, to take painful, costly actions? I’m not sure if hedonist snowflakes make the best missionaries.

I wonder if you’ve heard Christians you know using pain/pleasure language in their decision making? I’ve heard it come out in the language of calling. I’ve heard people say: I don’t feel called. Now, using the word ‘feeling’ there wasn’t a good start, but then what follows isn’t much better. I don’t feel called to ‘inset painful, hard thing that I don’t really want to do’. Instead, I’m called to ‘insert pleasurable, easier thing that I or my parents do want me to do.’ Maybe I’m being a little cynical, but sometimes I wonder whether the language of calling is used to justify doing what we want, taking God’s name in vain to justify us seeking our kingdom first.



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