

# NOTES FOR MISSION NET UK MOBILISERS CONSULTATION



**Tuesday 21st February 2012**

WEC HQ, Bulstrode, Gerrards Cross, SL9 8SZ

## **Session One – a look at some recent research**

**Joanne Appleton and Andy Stevens**

**Andy:** presented on “A Millennial View of Mission” – asking what is attractive to 18-30s regarding cross cultural mission?

We were asked to rank the ‘five marks of mission’ as we thought they’d appeal to millennials. Andy’s (limited) research had resulted in reasonably consistent feedback rated as follows:

1. Service
2. Proclamation and teaching
3. Justice
4. Environment

These were different from what some of the people attending had come up with – there was surprise that Environment and Justice were so low.

Next, Andy asked the question of why 18-30s weren’t currently involved in mission. The results from this question were less clear than from the previous one, but generally speaking, the three top answers were that they “haven’t been called,” that it “costs too much,” and that they are “busy serving over here”. Interestingly, the answer “it hasn’t crossed my mind” was put at both the top and bottom of answers.

In conclusion:

- Emphasising service and proclamation is likely to be a more effective mobilisation message than focussing on justice and the environment.
- We need to train young people to know that they have been called,
- Waiting for supernatural revelation that we are called is *not* the answer.

**David:** following Andy, we were introduced to David, who is a student at Moorlands Bible College. He shared with us his personal story of being called to mission, and used this to illustrate four points, which, in his conversations with peers, he had found to be common among young people who were called to mission.

David’s first point was **calling**.

- David was aware of missionaries and the mission field, but thought “that’s for them, not me”. Although he thought (hoped, even) that an empty bank account would prevent him going on a mission to China, money from an unknown source was put into the account, and the visa came through! He made the point that had he just decided to go he wouldn’t have realised a calling.

The second point was **experience**.

- David went with a team to China, living off the hospitality of the people they met. The trip was a success; the team members felt they were blessing others and being blessed themselves. This experience of mission simply feeling “right” was very powerful.

Thirdly, **training**.

- On his return, David was excited, and came up with lots of unrealistic plans to live and work on the mission field! However, he was advised that training

might be beneficial, and is now at Moorlands. A degree in theology isn't necessary, but some degree of Bible learning is invaluable.

Lastly, **people and relationships**.

- For himself and the other students David spoke to, the people around them were inspirational when it comes to mission.

**Joanne:** presented on the phrase 'missional lifestyle'. What is it? What do 18-30s think it is? And does it equal 'mission' in the traditional sense? And how does this apply to marketing mission, and to mobilisation? Can we brand and market mission like we do clothes?

Much of the report was based on interviews held with 33 people at *Mission Net* in Germany. The demographics of the event resulted in most of the interviewees being young and female, and mostly from Germany or Scandinavia. The results she gave us were very provisional and inconclusive, so make of them what you will!

Roughly ¾ of the interviewees had been on a short term mission, but of those that had, ¾ had gone for less than a month.

They were also asked what their best personal example of a 'missional lifestyle' was. The overwhelming result was that it was 'personal relationships' in the community and with missionaries that were most significant. Also interesting was that relatives played a part, and that contemporary and historical 'Christian celebrities' played less of a part.

Other big influences included conferences, books about living missionally, and personal experiences of mission. Overall, however, personal contacts were the most important.

And what did they think that a missional lifestyle was? Essential elements included:

- Living out belief
- Integrity and authenticity
- Ready to do God's will
- Meeting and understanding people
- Developing trust
- Leaving your comfort zone.

Notably, very little was said about 'traditional mission'.

When asked "what does 'missional' mean?"

- Only three people mentioned 'going'
- Instead, there was a widespread opinion that it was not a profession but a lifestyle.
- It was about living like Jesus in ordinary life, and telling people about him through actions and speech
- It was very much about everyday life – and this from people most of whom had been abroad on mission.

And in answer to the question, "what is the missional lifestyle of missionaries?"

- Guidance by the holy spirit, prayer and fasting
- Living with and loving and caring for the people you're working with
- Love and trust God, and witness to him
- Live a life consumed by Christ and your calling.

The overall conclusion was that for young people, relationships are vital when it comes to mobilising for mission.

## Session Two – relational mobilisation case studies

### James Price and team

Rachel presented two case studies, both underlining the importance of relationship and calling when it comes to mobilising for mission. In the stories of Debbie and Claire the fact that they were given the opportunity of going on mission was vital. 18-30 year-olds are ripe for being led – not in a controlling manner, but in a way that exposes them to opportunities for God to make known his plan for them. Building relationships with young people and taking them on a journey – both physically and spiritually – can have amazing results.

Charmaine shared the experience of South Asian Concern (SAC) with Café Desi, their network for young adults. It builds relationships with young South Asian Christians, and allows them to meet others like themselves. Although its aim of 'friendship evangelism' was not particularly successful, it has been engaging young people with the work of SAC. It has been using Facebook to expand its circle of friends and followers, and it has helped build relationships. SAC is about to embark on a mentoring programme for select young people – again reflecting the importance of relationships.

James then talked about ways of connecting with people. For someone who's only 20, talking about long term objectives, or spending seven years in the field isn't relevant – they're not operating on that scale. Instead, we need to go back to basics – all the way back to Abraham! James also talked about a few resources:

- *Crossing Cultures* – a one day workshop. Marketed best by personal recommendations.
- *Kairos Course* (see below)
- *Pause and Pray* – there is a passion for prayer as seen in the 24/7 prayer movement. *Pause and Pray* seeks to harness this.
- The Internet – shouldn't just be for self-promotion, but as a way of keeping and building relationships.

He also emphasised the importance of the people we connect with being able to connect with others who we would never influence otherwise.

Nick Cole talked about mission agencies – how we're a bit like a National Trust staff member standing in a single room of a stately home. How can we possibly keep track of the whole building? In other words, when someone comes enquiring about mission, how can we help them make connections? In a large agency this can be a problem internally, let alone between other agencies.

If an enquirer knows where they want to go and what they want to do it's not so much of an issue, but how do we help people explore options?

We've talked about relational mobilisation, but one of the major problems is that of numbers – it's very hard to maintain meaningful and continuing relationships with large numbers of people. One way to combat this is to use field workers to form relationships with enquirers. OMF has developed an online tool to act as a hub for all communication with enquirers, so if a new staff member needs to contact them they can easily see a history of communications. This makes it possible to share a continuing relationship between multiple people. It puts the enquirer in contact with a large and dispersed contact team.

We split into groups to discuss this, thinking about what impact having 10 key individuals with whom we formed relationships would have. Some feedback:

- 10 key individuals would make a big difference. Mobilisation would be much more active and intentional.
- How do you go about making the initial connection? What is the relationship in this between agencies and churches? *Momentum* is a good place to go.
- 10 people would work well for short-term missions, as even after the mission you'd be left with a supporter base with whom you had a relationship.
- Giving millennials space to learn, grown and make mistakes is risky, but important.
- Mobilisers should involve themselves in short-term mission.
- The multiplication effect is important – if you're going to pour your energy into a few people then you *need* them to invest in others in turn.
- There is a danger of 'me and my 10 people' mentality – you need to be open and engage others in mission and churches.
- 10 is an arbitrary figure – it's about the ethos not the numbers.
- What is a 'calling' and how do you feel it? Does it matter in this context? Abraham was called – we are called.
- These relationships – how exactly do you go about it? And how do you partner with churches?
- What if your 10 were youth / church leaders? As 'gatekeepers' they could have a huge spin off and wider influence.
- The problem with linking with field workers is that while they're the most motivated, knowledgeable and passionate, they're often too busy! How can we solve this problem?

### **Session Three**

#### **Prayer – led by Rachel Issitt**

Proverbs 11:25 - *A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.* We spent time in small groups praying both for 18-30s and mobilisation in general, and then for each other in specifics.

### **Session Four – update on partnership events**

#### **Various**

Martin Lee explained briefly what *Global Connections* was – 'like a jelly on a wall' – hard to pin down. He emphasised that they're not precious about the GC name – feel free to use it. As a network organisation, their members *are* the network. They provide lots of opportunities for network members. There also facilitate regional representatives groups – they're there to help you, and we want to help them!

Steve talked briefly about the Central Regional Representatives Group, which he and others have relaunched. It's been going well – they're attending mission fairs at CUs, and even set up a day conference that attracted 350 people! Karen in the north of England also reported encouragements with CUs through the regional group there.

James talked about the *Kairos* course, also described as a 'journey'. It's a mission discipleship course, covering biblical, historical, strategic and cultural aspects of mission. It can be an intensive five-days-straight affair, or can be spread out over multiple weekends and evenings.

Nick talked about *GO 2012* which matches well with what we've learnt about millennials wanting to be loved and related to personally, but also getting lots out of the energy of a large conference. At the very least it's a chance for mobilisers to get in touch with people, or even come along and man exhibition stands with young people. A small group of volunteers is also needed for the event as well as more 'Champions' to help with promotion.