



## SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS

### MOVED by God

#### Illustration 1: Speaking My Language

In Genesis chapter 1, God speaks the world into being. He could have created in any number of ways – by simply thinking, or snapping His fingers! But from the very first page of the Bible it is made clear that our God is a God who **speaks**. He wants to reveal Himself, to make Himself known.

God speaks to Moses from the burning bush. He speaks to Elijah in a gentle whisper. He speaks to David through the prophet Nathan etc. But to each one of those people in the Old Testament, He speaks in Hebrew. Because that is the language they understand. He speaks to make Himself and His heart for them known.

I have never questioned that God speaks and understands English. I have always simply assumed it. But for many people around the world today, they do not know that God speaks to them, that He has a heart for them and wants to know them.

For many Yawo (pronounced like 'now') people in Africa, the only way to pray to and worship Allah (God) is in Arabic, a language which they do not understand. Global Interaction workers who have learned the language of the Yawo people, have been invited to teach them from the Bible. For the first time they have understood that God speaks their language. This is an important step in understanding that God loves them and wants to be in relationship with them.

#### Illustration 2: Why did Jonah run away?

You may have heard in Sunday School that Jonah ran away because he was afraid. The story of Jonah is much more than a children's lesson that warns us from running away from God. That is more like footnotes to the main story. The book of Jonah is about how God goes to great lengths to give some very unlikely people the opportunity to respond to Him.

Jonah did not want to reach out to the people of Nineveh, but he knew that God did. He knew that God's heart ached for them, no matter what they had done. **That** is why he ran away (See Jonah 4:2). Our missionary God is compassionate to all those who are far from Him, and he move us to go and share the good news.

# MOVED

## Illustration 3: Good News

Have you ever noticed how our TV news and current affairs are full of ‘bad news’ stories? Crime, political problems, financial crises, war – these are the things that make headlines. But often the very last minute of these programs contains a “feel good” story – a new baby elephant born at the zoo, an Aussie battler winning the lottery, fire-fighters rescuing a kitten trapped in a drain. These are apparently the kind of warm fuzzy experiences that make up “good news.”

Matthew 4:23 records Jesus travelling around proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God. This is so much better than a warm fuzzy feel good story. This is radical, life-changing, world-shattering, God-moving good news!

Cross-cultural workers from Africa to Asia have shared stories of telling people for the first time about Jesus and what He has done for them and having them spontaneously respond, “Wow! That is good news!” These people have not heard the phrase “good news” or “gospel” before; they are simply responding with genuine joy to hearing an amazing message. Perhaps we too need to rediscover the simple yet profound delight to be found in the phrase “good news.”

## Illustration 4: Do we all have to learn how to fish?

Peter and Andrew were fishermen. That’s what they knew. So were James and John. Jesus calls them to follow Him and become fishers of people.

I wonder

... if they had been doctors, would He have said, “Follow me and I will make you healers of broken lives?”

... if they had been carpenters, would He have said, “Follow me and I will make you builders of God’s Kingdom?”

Jesus calls each one of us. Who we are, with the gifts, skills and passions we have. We are all different, yet we are all called to the same mission. Following Him means using who we are and what we do to play our part in sharing the good news.

Global Interaction’s team members are teachers, engineers, pastors, farmers, social workers, retirees, café owners, carpenters... and even a fisherman! Our church has [list skills and interests of congregation]. How might we use our skills, as varied as they are, in sharing the message of Jesus?