



## MOVED BY OTHERS

**Presented by: Haylee Freudigmann, Young Adults Consultant, Global Interaction**

There is a legend that is told of a boy who lived in an isolated house on a hill. One thing fascinated him. Each night he would stare into the darkness and see a light. It was far away, but this sign of life gave him hope. One day he decided to go in search of the source of the light. It was a long and lonely walk, and it was already dark before he reached his destination. The light came from another small, isolated house. Tired and hungry, the boy knocked on the door, and explained his search for the mysterious light. “I know!” replied the woman who answered the door. “I have seen it too and it gives me hope as well.” She pointed back in the direction from which he had come. There on the horizon, was a shining light...a light from the boy’s own house. A sign of life in the darkness.

**God is a relational God and he created us to be in community – to learn from, share our lives with, and be inspired by others. The ‘light’ that we see in the lives of those around us can be encouraging, motivating and life-giving for us. God created us to be moved by others...**

I spend a lot of time with people who are exploring a call to cross-cultural mission. It’s amazing how often the stories of others – whether they be famous history-makers, or people living next door – are a critical motivator for mission.

Take William Carey – an impoverished shoemaker living in 18th century England, and an unlikely candidate for greatness. He grew up in poverty. He made boots for a living to support his family. However, his interest in the world was sparked when he read Captain Cook’s Voyages and he integrated this new knowledge with a biblical perspective. He became convinced that foreign mission was actually the responsibility of the church. Now this idea was revolutionary. At that time, most people believed that the Great Commission was only given to the apostles and therefore sharing Jesus with others was no concern of theirs. When Carey presented his ideas to a group of ministers, he was quickly shut down. Their actual response was: “When God pleases to convert the heathen, he will do it without your aid or mine.”<sup>1</sup>

But Carey refused to be silenced. If anything, it stirred him up even more. He managed to convince some of them to take cross-cultural mission seriously, give generously out of the little finances they had and form the first ever Baptist Mission Society. Carey’s next forty years were spent on the other side of the world doing ground-breaking translation, education and mission work. His years were filled with both success and great suffering. Carey preached, and lived out his now-famous words:

**“Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.”**

But it was not just in England where Carey’s influence was felt. He is known today as the ‘Father of Modern Missions’. One author notes: “His life profoundly illustrates the limitless potential of ordinary individuals... More than any other individual in modern history, he stirred the imagination of the Christian world and showed by his own humble example what could and should be done to bring people to Christ.”<sup>2</sup> The Baptist Mission Society that began with a few of Carey’s friends is still going strong today, and has inspired thousands of cross-cultural workers to share Jesus with people all around the globe.

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Kane, *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission*, Grand Rapids, Baker, 1978, p85.

<sup>2</sup> R. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A biographical history of Christian Missions*, Academic Books, Grand Rapids, 1983, p114.

# MOVED

Our story – the Australian Baptist story – began about 125 years ago in Adelaide. Five single women, all in their early 20s, showed a desire to serve God in the Indian Subcontinent. Church leaders of the time debated whether these women could actually do a ministry that was usually reserved for men, and they balked at the idea of women travelling unaccompanied. If these women didn't go into the homes of isolated women living in India's segregated society, then they would never have a chance to hear about Jesus. Their churches raised the 150 pounds needed for their expenses each year. And at their farewell service in 1885, a preacher told the story of Jesus feeding thousands with just a few loaves of bread. **The women became affectionately known as 'The Five Barley Loaves' and today are icons of pioneering Baptist mission. Many women, as well as men, have followed, and it has now grown to a large movement of Australians serving God around the world.**

The 'legends' of the Five Barley Loaves and others like them would not be famous if it weren't for those who followed them. Their significance lies in their influence. People reading their books and letters, hearing their testimonies from the pews, listening to their stories along the grapevine...people just like us, being moved to respond, to act, to give, and to go. Passion is contagious.

**These stories, and hundreds of others, show that God calls ordinary people to be involved in mission. It is not reserved for the super spiritual, theological greats, linguistic, professional or academic elites. Yet it is reserved for those who hear and respond to the call of God: through prayer, in discussion with friends, in reading the Scriptures and in paying attention to those niggling feelings inside.**

As Australian Baptists, mission is part of our DNA, and a heritage we can be proud of. From the highlands of Papua New Guinea, to the coastal towns of then Irian Jaya, to the teeming cities of India, rice paddies of Bangladesh, the plains of Africa and other places – we've been sending and sending and sending, praying, giving and supporting...and seeing God move in amazing ways.

There are hundreds of thousands of people who are followers of Jesus today because their grandfather, great aunt, or village elder's best friend's cousin heard the good news from an Australian mission worker. Stories are told, dramas are re-enacted and celebrations are held, remembering when the gospel was shared for the very first time, and the lives of whole communities of people were transformed. Back here, many in our community of churches today have rich memories of their role in the story – praying, giving and supporting this pioneering work.

**Every movement starts small. Right now, there are groups of thoughtful, committed Australians living the next chapter of our mission story.** Ordinary people – teachers, farmers, hairdressers, engineers, mums and dads – working as part of Global Interaction teams in a dozen cities, towns and rural villages around the world – just tiny dots on the world map. They are developing small-scale, seemingly insignificant relationships with people who don't yet know Jesus. Yet, these simple relationships are the spark of what will be the life-giving transformation of whole families and communities. It is our hope that the friends of our team members who come to know Jesus will, in turn, share with their friends and family. The ball will start to roll!

Is it possible? Can these small groups of Christians scattered among literally millions of Muslims, Buddhists and Animists really make a difference? Are we dreaming?! Yes...but we have every reason to hope: God longs for this transformation to happen, that his kingdom might truly come. Right now, in communities in Mozambique and Bangladesh and Thailand and other places...people are asking questions, coming to know Jesus and sharing him with their closest friends. It's exciting!

**As Australian Baptists, global mission is part of our story, our history...and our future, if we allow ourselves to be moved, as we take our place in the adventure of cross-cultural mission.**