

# Catalyst

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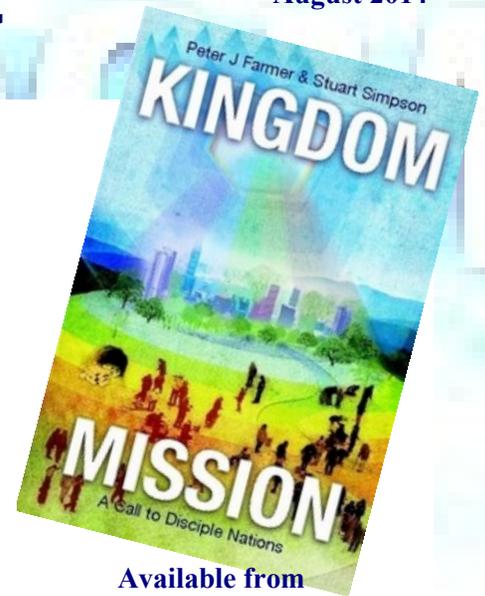
*Everywhere* Jesus went He preached the Kingdom of God. That was His assignment on Earth. The gospel (or good news) that Jesus proclaimed was a simple message: God's Kingdom had come to Earth! In addition, Jesus also became the way to enter the Kingdom through His death and resurrection. He then commissioned and empowered those who followed Him to continue the work He had begun.

The need to rediscover and re-engage with the *full* scope of Christ's *Kingdom Mission* is the subject of Stuart's latest book, co-authored with Peter Farmer. What was supposed to be simple is often lost in either a diluted form or a focus on some other theme. However, **Jesus' mission is to be our mission**. This requires us to embrace a vision of a Kingdom Gospel that applies to the whole of life, and then hear from heaven as to how to outwork this in practice.

Advancing the Kingdom does not involve the invasion of geographical territories but of human hearts. Sadly, Church history is not without blame in this regard and includes times when it failed to represent God and His Kingdom. On page 2 we refer to how the **Native American Indians** (or First Nations of North America) suffered in this way and how the people are still living with the legacy of a gospel that was *not* 'good news'. This has resulted in confusion, pain, and barriers to hearing anymore about the 'Christian' God. Sometimes the world will call for the mistakes and atrocities of the past to be put right. In God's Kingdom, such events cannot be passed over but must be put right through repentance, reconciliation, and restoration.

Part of the commission God has given us also relates to the **Chinese** people. On page 3 we state why Christ's Kingdom mission to the Chinese is far from complete, and especially highlight the vital need for Chinese followers of Jesus to be taught and understand the full scope of the Great Commission, which includes the discipling of their nation. God has spoken in the past about us 'cleaning other people's windows', not in the sense of needing to invest in some ladders, a bucket, and some chamois leathers, but to help people see more clearly. This is what Aquila and Priscilla did (Acts 18) and this is what we aim to do with Chinese believers.

God wants to **set free** and **empower** all people to be who He created them as a people to be. In Stuart and Peter's book they refer to how God entrusts to us a stewardship relating to a *people*, a *place*, and/or a life *sphere* (singular or plural). This becomes our part in God's overall mission of His Kingdom being restored on Earth. He calls us, equips us, and then sends us out. Our part then is to use what He has entrusted to us and be His **Kingdom ambassadors** to those He sends us to, proclaiming the good news, setting the captives free, healing the broken-hearted, and bringing heaven's rule and way of life (the will and interests of our King) to Earth.



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**"I welcome this well-documented, thought-provoking, vision-building, people-empowering, and action-inspiring contribution to the shaping of the church in the 21st century, such that it can have a similar transformative impact on society now as it had on the first century."**  
John Coles, national director, New Wine, UK

*Stuart & Michelle*



# Bringing faith, hope & love to a downtrodden people

**A**s tens of thousands flee their homes in northern Iraq from the systematic murder and destruction carried out by the Islamic State fighters, we watch and wait to see what our governments will do. I believe we should do all we can to protect ourselves and our fellow human beings from those so consumed with evil that their only intent is a complete take-over by genocide. What is genocide? It is: *‘The systematic destruction of all or part of a racial, ethnic, religious or national group via a) killing of the members of the group; b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; c) deliberate inflicting on the group’s conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; d) imposing of measures intended to prevent birth within the group; e) forcible transferring of children of the group to another group...’* (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genocide>)

While modern Britain’s government decides what to do to help, we can thank God that, while this country has a long history of invaders and take-overs, we were spared much of the later terrors from the Nazis by those brave enough to fight for our freedom and those nations who helped.

Some people do not have the power, strength or resources to fight for their own freedom however. And if there is no-one willing to help them, they are at the mercy of an evil which will intentionally annihilate all men, women and children in its path who do not bow to its demands. Some people fight with great courage with all they have but, with no-one to help, eventually lose to the greater power intent on their destruction.

The legacy of such defeat, if there is anyone still alive, is severe, traumatic, long-lasting, painful, and continues through ensuing generations in many destructive forms. My mind goes to the Native American and First Nations people of the USA and Canada. They experienced massive reductions of their populations through disease, displacement and disruption, massacre, exploitation, war, and deliberate removal and re-education of their children as Europeans systematically destroyed their culture and took the valuable land they so wanted. There was no-one to help.

Today, many Native Americans have through opportunity and hard work, managed to climb their way out of the morass of poverty, drunkenness and depression left as a legacy of the trauma they have suffered. However, many remain ensnared by it, and it is hardly surprising. Look at these tragic results:

- Remaining First Nations land of poor quality, no use for farming; often fishing and hunting prohibited
- Poor infrastructure (electricity, phone, internet) or non-existent; insufficient traffic links
- Government rewards storage of toxic & radioactive waste on land without First Nations awareness of consequences to health and environment - toxic/radioactive traces found in water, soil, and bodies of First Nations
- Unemployment anywhere from 50-80% with lowest average income in USA
- Lack of education feeds poverty, unemployment, teenage pregnancy, crime, drug abuse, and low paid jobs
- High food costs on reservations & high rents/taxes for migrants to cities makes improving life difficult
- 25% live below poverty line; in reservations can exceed 40% of residents
- Highest rates of school dropout, child mortality, suicide, teenage pregnancy
- Lowest life expectancy at 55 years old
- Estimated 90,000 homeless or poorly housed – overcrowding promotes lack of hygiene & spread of disease
- Dying at shocking rates from diabetes, alcoholism, TB; increasing asthma, heart failure, cancer & AIDS out of proportion to inadequate health care system, plus rickets, obesity and diabetes caused by malnutrition
- Inadequate protective clothing for farm workers exposed to toxic pesticides resulting in increasing cancer & deformity-based deaths.
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders from mothers drinking
- High rates of mental illness, alcoholism & suicide as still suffer from trauma of the past, especially experience of residential/boarding schools
- Dependency on Federal welfare and food hand-outs – often cheap food with little nutrition
- Discord between tribes, encouraged and exacerbated by US policy in the past
- Discrimination & stigma
- No formal apology from the US government
- Indifference & ignorance of fellow citizens

This is an incredible list. While some people are suffering terror at the hands of those who would attempt genocide, some are suffering the terrible aftermath of it. Yet I’ve heard white people, who to many symbolise oppression, say, ‘Why don’t they just get over it?’ If only it was that easy for those who have been so oppressed, broken and down-trodden! What will our contribution be to those who are suffering such devastation, or indeed injustice of any kind? Will it be help to prevent it, or help after the fact? Both are needed in our world where we see brokenness beyond our imaginations.

Fortunately, God has a different approach. Rather than saying ‘get over it’, Jesus said, ‘The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because He has anointed *and* qualified me to preach the Gospel of good tidings to the meek, the poor, *and* afflicted; He has sent me to bind up *and* heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the [physical and spiritual] captives and the opening of the prison *and* of the eyes to those who are bound.’ (Luke 4:18, Amplified). This is our job too. May we all ask the Lord how we can allow that same Spirit to work through us to humbly bring faith, hope, love and healing to people in our world. CATALYST

Michelle Simpson

# Impacting China's Growing Influence

There are **3 key reasons** why we must engage with what God is doing in China today:

## 1. MANY PEOPLE, MANY UNREACHED

China makes up more than 20% of the world's population. Whilst estimates of the number of Christians within the country range from 70 million-150 million, this equates to less than 10% of the population. Millions await to hear the gospel for the first time, including more than 400 ethnic nationality groups, cut-off by cultural and linguistic barriers from hearing the gospel.

## 2. CHINESE DIASPORA

Wherever you live you will probably have the opportunity of reaching out to the Chinese scattered around the world. Many leave their homeland for business reasons, while every year thousands of Chinese leave to study abroad. Hundreds of these are designated future leaders purposely sent overseas to gain international exposure and to get a world-class education at the world's best universities. Most of China's future leaders will emerge from those who have studied overseas. What China becomes in the future will depend to a very large degree on what becomes of the Chinese students studying overseas today. So, why is this particularly important?

## 3. FUTURE GLOBAL INFLUENCE

China is an emerging global superpower and will increasingly play an influential role on the world stage. In less than a year, it is predicted to overtake the U.S. as the world's #1 economic power. But, unlike the U.S. and Europe (most notably Great Britain) before it, China does not have the foundation of a Judeo-Christian faith. This is significant. However, with the growth of the Church in China today (in less than a generation, China is expected to have more Christians than any country in the world), there is a tremendous window of opportunity to *disciple the nation* in the ways of God so that its growing influence worldwide is a godly one.

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## IMPARTING A KINGDOM GOSPEL

Evangelization alone will not achieve this. The African continent is a case in point and illustrates this is insufficient. Despite being the most evangelized continent in the world with some 80% of the sub-Saharan population calling themselves Christians, little transformation has occurred with Africa still very much dependent on the Developed World, and with no significant leadership role globally. What has been referred to as 'Africa's enigma' is because the gospel has often not penetrated more than skin deep and has failed to transform Africa's traditional worldview. The gospel of salvation has been planted there, but not the *gospel of the Kingdom*.

It is possible a similar experience could take place in China. **As the Chinese Church continues to grow numerically, it must embrace the full scope of Christ's Kingdom Commission by learning how to disciple its nation, which in turn will impact its growing influence globally.** This goes beyond normal evangelical discipleship that often focuses solely on personal spiritual disciplines. To penetrate beneath the surface and to transform a nation and culture's worldview across all spheres of society, a Kingdom gospel must be imparted.

Chinese scholars, tasked with discovering the secret to the West's 'success' and pre-eminence in the world, have already concluded that this was due to the Christian moral foundation of social and cultural life. It was the biblical foundation that raised Great Britain, and later the U.S., to greatness. This was not created solely by the transformation of individual lives. It started here but continued as **transformed individuals began to also disciple their communities, cities, spheres of influence and nation with the gospel of the Kingdom.** In Britain we can cite many examples of nation disciplers such as John Wesley, William Wilberforce, Lord Shaftesbury, William Booth, and Elizabeth Fry, whose faith and actions impacted and created a lasting Kingdom legacy. Although the West is rejecting its biblical heritage and the blessings that resulted, **if China is to become a 'great' nation (see Gen. 18:18), individuals who have been transformed by Jesus need to catch a vision of God's Kingdom and be empowered to bring about godly transformation.** CATALYST

# Next Steps and Plans...

Jesus' commission has been passed on to His disciples to continue until He returns. While it applies to all who follow Him, He gives to each of us a unique assignment and stewardship to be carried out on His behalf.

As outlined in Stuart's book, the full scope of this commission involves 3 dimensions: People, Places, and Spheres. For us, over the past 20 years we've had a *People* focus - the *Chinese*. At times this has also involved a focus on a particular Place, such as when we pioneered in a specific Chinese city. While in Canada, God also put on our hearts the *First Nations people of North America* (native American Indians).

It has become natural for us to work cross-culturally. This is how we have lived for so many years and life seems like something is missing when we are not living in that context. In returning to the UK it was never intended to be permanent but for a period of time. We are now taking proactive steps to raise our support base in order to return overseas.

To work with the Chinese and the First Nations peoples would mean being in North America. We sense that the right location during this season would be to return to Canada where we have maintained close links with YWAM Vancouver for this very reason, and also have established links with both Chinese churches and ministries to First Nations. Once our son, David, obtains his U.S. citizenship, this would also open up an opportunity to be in the States (the USA is a drive over the border from Vancouver). Certainly, we have missed seeing our children...being in North America would at least mean we will be on the same land mass!

## FIRST NATIONS MINISTRY

In Canada we already have some contacts with native and non-native believers reaching out to the First Nations peoples. Our plan would be to partner with them where possible. We want to be first and foremost listeners and learners, both vital aspects of missionary work as we learn about their culture, communities, beliefs, families and experiences.

We hope that as the Lord gives us opportunity, we will be able to make friends and, with a spirit of humility, bring a message of hope, healing, and restoration, as well as supporting those who are believers already to live and enjoy their relationship with God through the uniqueness of their own culture. The First Nations/Native Americans have so much to give and we have so much to learn from them. We would love to be able to bring encouragement and see them empowered to pass on their God-given gifts.



## China's Nation Builders?

In noting the amazing growth of the Church in China, the question remains:

- Where are the nation disciplers and nation builders in China?
- Where are the Chinese Tyndales, Wesleys, Wilberforces, Shaftesburys, Frys, Booths, and Barnados, who will represent God and His Kingdom across all the areas of life?
- Where are the Kingdom Citizens He will use at this time to make China a great and godly nation and a blessing to the world?

Having a growing number of Christian believers will not cause this to happen automatically. The experience of Africa bears this out. The Church has to be instructed in having a Kingdom mentality and in how to bring God's ways to every sphere of society and part of life.



## Heaven's Ambassadors on Earth

Jesus came to restore and re-introduce the Kingdom to Earth. **We want to see Chinese men and women trained and empowered to become influential ambassadors and agents for God's Kingdom.** This will require imparting to them the Gospel of the Kingdom, Kingdom thinking and a Kingdom Vision, which should be a driving force in each of our lives as we obey our King's Great Commission to disciple all nations and bring His Kingdom to Earth.

*"Your Kingdom come, your will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven."* (Matthew 6:10)