

WHITEFIELDS

Gospel Operation International English Magazine • Vol. 2 No. 1 • Winter 2021 • John 4:35



Make Disciples

Opportunities are emerging for the local church to engage in the Great Commission.

Diaspora Church

Immigrant communities have the potential to become effective bases for cross-cultural mission.

Relief Fund Update

GOI partnered with Horizons International to make an impact in the Middle East.

Bracing for Re-Entry

Help missionaries in their transition off the field by understanding some of what they are going through.

Heart/Liver

An everyday idiom triggers re-entry grief and loss.

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“...Make disciples of all nations.” (Matthew 28:19a)

Jesus desires that all of us who have tasted how good it is to follow in His footsteps, would also go tell the world to do the same. In this issue, we explore the meaning of the Great Commission, and revisit GOI’s original calling to reach the world through reaching the Chinese diaspora. We also examine a missionary’s “re-entry” journey when the time comes for them to transition off of the mission field.

GOI is committed to inspiring churches to engage in God’s great mission, mobilizing workers for His harvest, caring for those who serve on the field, and walking with them as they transition off the field. To find out more about how you or your church can participate in global mission with us, go to <https://goimission.org>.

Chris Chu
March 2021



Wall Graffiti in the Philippines. Photo by Ham Kris on Unsplash



Basilica of Our Lady of Good Health, Nagapattinam, India. Photo by Matthew T. Rader on Unsplash

BREAKTHROUGHS IN GLOBAL AND LOCAL MISSIONS

*John Wang is the International Director
of Gospel Operation International*

This year, we live in an unsafe world. Many lives were lost during the outbreak of the novel coronavirus pandemic, and isolation and social distancing have become social norms. The Christian church is facing huge challenges as well, and important changes have taken place in the area of global missions. Many missionaries were trapped, unable to travel between the field and their country of origin, and faced difficulties when attempting to financially plan for the future of their ministries. Yet the work of missions continued despite the many obstacles and restrictions faced by faithful missionaries around the world.

Despite all these challenges, I believe that new gospel opportunities are appearing and increasing. For many years, missionaries have been talking about the global nature of mission work. In the past,

many people had become accustomed to thinking of participation in Christian missions as a "missionary action," where local churches collect financial and human resources and hand them over to mission agencies. Missions organizations became responsible for sending out, supervising, and caring for missionaries on the field, based on the organizations' expertise in cross-cultural ministries and their experience in cooperation with local churches around the world. However, within this model, the work of the local church was traditionally confined to their immediate neighborhoods, while mission agencies were more involved in the developing "overseas" ministries. "Missions" was thought of as overseas international ministries within the realm of traditional missions organizations, and outside of the responsibility of the local church. As patterns of global migration came to the attention of the church,

(Opposite) Older men pray during a footwashing ceremony in Los Andes, Chile. Photo by Jonas Canales on Unsplash.

the mission community put forward the concept of “diaspora missions,” where global migration was a God-given opportunity for local churches to interact with different immigrant groups on their own doorsteps. Local churches could effectively make cross-cultural relationships with their neighbors, and even share the gospel with their new neighbors cross-lingually. In addition, although many people doubted the effectiveness of short-term missions trips in the mission field, they became an effective way for local church members to personally participate in global missions.

Christ's Great Commission

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

The Great Commission is not just a command to spread the gospel throughout the world, but is a command to disciple all Christians. In the original Greek text, there is only one main verb,

which is “to make disciples.” The Great Commission should be understood as the command to “make disciples”, while the additional verbs of “go,” “baptize,” and “teach” are actually expressed in participles and describe how to “make disciples.” Our mission is to make disciples of all nations. The way to accomplish this responsibility is to “go,” which includes the flow of manpower and resources. But this also involves the task of “baptizing,” which means integrating into the local church. The task of “teaching” includes teaching about God, the Christian faith, the person and ministry of Jesus Christ, and how we are to live as God’s people. Through the sending of manpower and resources, we can participate in the “going” of mission. By receiving believers into the worship and life of the local church, we participate in the “baptism” of mission. By declaring what Jesus Christ taught and training believers to obey Christ in their everyday lives, we participate in the “teaching” of mission.

For the time being, we may be restricted in the tasks of “going”, “baptizing” and “teaching” by the pandemic. Thankfully, we have also seen opportunities in these areas that further the connection between “global” and “local” mission for the local church!

make disciples



Diaspora

CHURCH AS ANTIOCH CHURCH

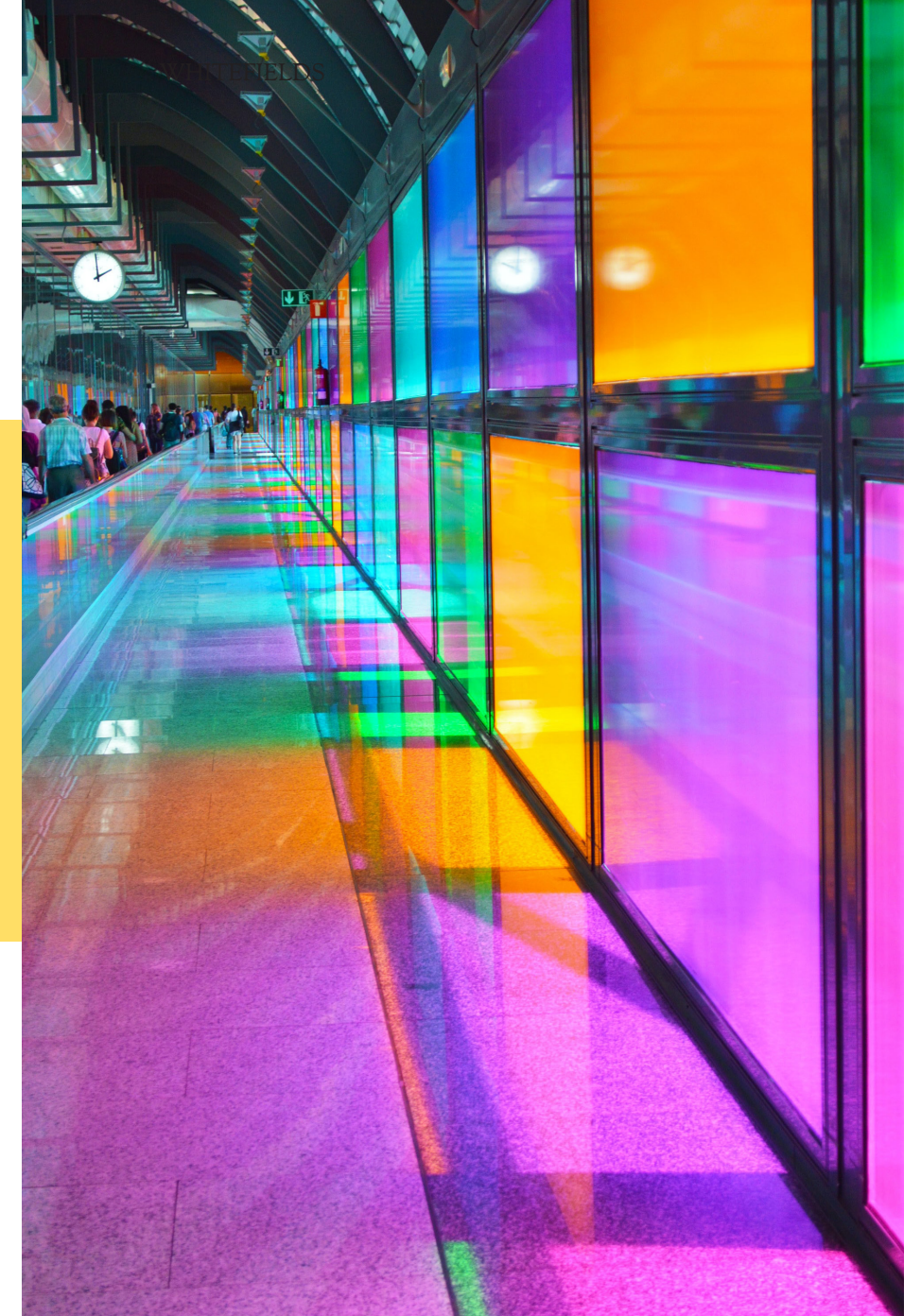
Jeanne Wu is a mission worker, mission researcher and book translator. She has ministered amongst diaspora communities on multiple continents, and is a member of the board of Gospel Operation International.

According to an article published in *The Economist* in 2019, the third most spoken language in the U.S. is Chinese, and the second, which goes without saying, is Spanish.¹ As a cross-cultural practitioner and diaspora missiology researcher, I immediately noticed an interesting coincidence—our previous mission team on the field is composed of American citizens with Hispanic and Chinese ethnicity. As for my husband and I, most of our partnering congregations—including our sending congregation—are Chinese

churches in the U.S. and Canada. As for our previous teammates, they are Hispanic and grew up bilingually, and all their partnering churches are Hispanic churches in the US. In other words, our team is the fruit of the Chinese and Hispanic diaspora church in the U.S.

One year ago (before COVID-19 pandemic) when visiting Taiwan for a meeting, I heard a veteran British missionary preach in Mandarin to a group of Taiwanese seminary students. He encouraged them with the vision of

(Left photo) Madrid Airport, Madrid, Spain. Photo by Christelle Haye on Unsplash



building up Taiwanese churches with the DNA of the Antioch Church in the Book of Acts, which means to build up a missional church that is eager to send and support missionaries. I was inspired by this idea. When I went back to do a bit more study on the Antioch church—the sending church of Paul and Barnabas—I found that the DNA of the Antioch Church might be more naturally built into the diaspora church. The church in Antioch was planted after the persecution in connection with Stephen’s martyrdom

(Acts 11:19). Those believers who had been ‘scattered’ (the root meaning of diaspora) started this church. The Antioch church was multicultural and multi-lingual (Acts 13:1-3)—just like the diaspora church. Most—if not everyone—in my sending church speaks two languages, some speak three. Being first/second-generation immigrants themselves, they are familiar with two different cultures. All the characteristics I mentioned above can apply to my former teammates’ Hispanic

"their bilingual
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American churches as well. As I serve with my Hispanic American colleagues on the mission field, I have noticed that they have many advantages. Their bilingual and bicultural backgrounds help them to adjust well to new culture, and there are even many similarities between their culture and Middle Eastern culture where we currently serve.

In the past decades, Chinese churches in the US have mostly focused on reaching out to our own kinsmen. According to my research in 2013, 72.5% of Chinese American churches consider "Missions to Chinese" as the top priority of their ministry,² and nearly 60% of Chinese American churches have all or most of

their supported missionaries serving ethnic Chinese in China or overseas.³ Nevertheless, things have slowly changed in the last several years, seen by the fact that of our fourteen partnering churches, nine of them are Chinese American and one is Chinese Canadian. We are encouraged to see Chinese diaspora churches slowly growing into Antioch churches! These diaspora churches are ideal partners for us in many ways: they understand the challenging of living in a foreign country, learning new language, and adjusting to a new culture. They tend to be more empathic and supportive to our overseas work and sensitive about our needs. Since many of them have been involved in mission in

NOTES

¹<https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2019/10/17/why-do-so-many-australians-speak-arabic>

² Wu, Jeanne. *Mission through Diaspora: The Case of the Chinese Church in the USA*. UK, Langham Partnership, 2016, pp. 84

³Ibid, pp.89

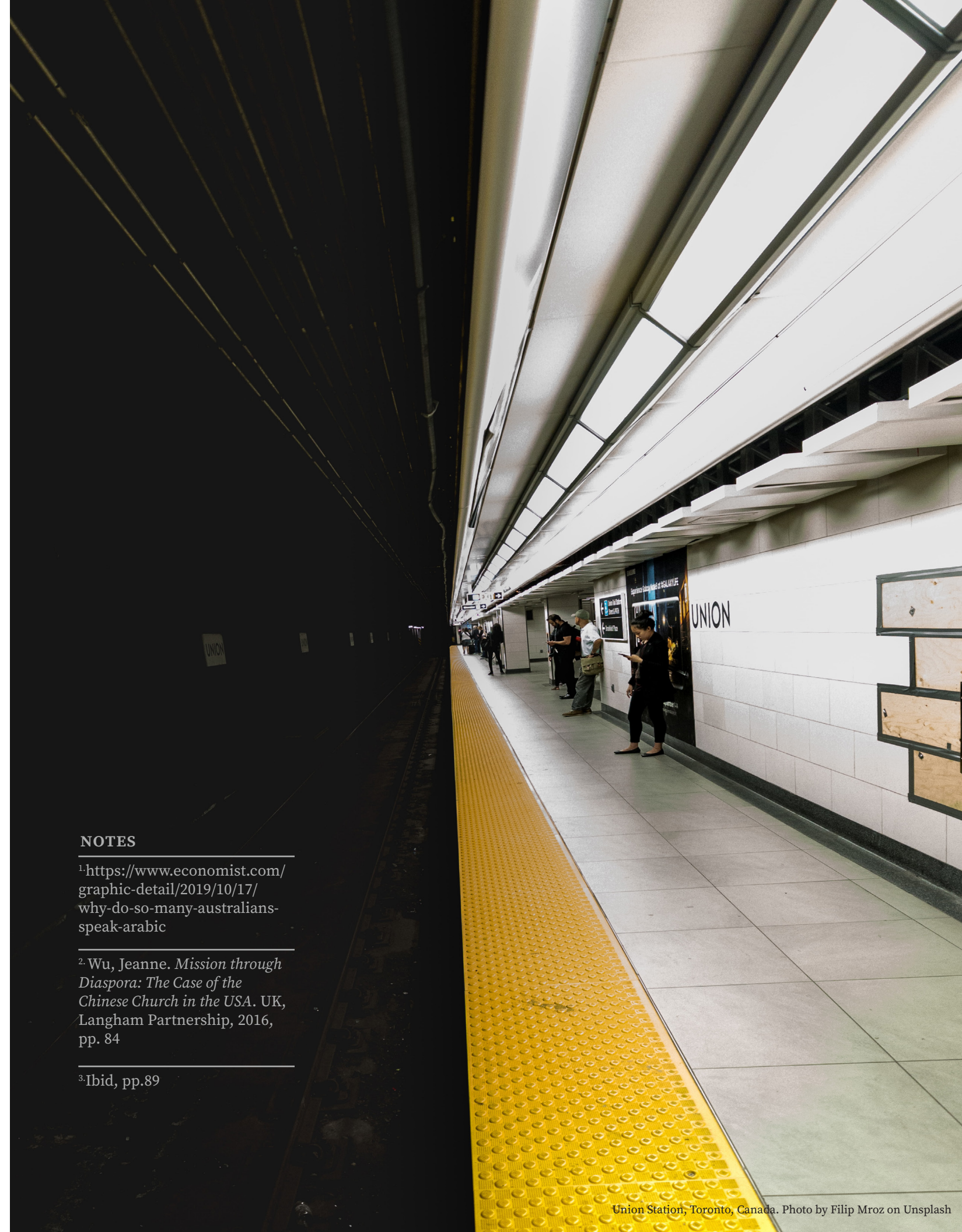




Photo by Jake Weirick on Unsplash

China, they also understand well security issues on the field. These partners have been a wonderful blessing in our ministry.

In the past, China was the top destination for various kinds of Kingdom works from Chinese churches in the diaspora. However, the physical door to China has been shut gradually in recent years since the new Regulation on Religious Affairs began to be enforced in February

2018. Thus, many Chinese churches in the diaspora, including our home church in the U.S., are looking for new fields to continue their Kingdom work. We are encouraged to see many of them started to send field workers or short-term teams to the Middle East. I hope and pray soon that more and more diaspora churches, not only Chinese but also Hispanic, Korean, Indian, Arab, etc., will become strong sending bases for His kingdom.

Top 9 COUNTRIES OF RESIDENCE FOR OVERSEAS CHINESE

1. Thailand - 11,458,800 (2015)
2. Malaysia - 6,642,000 (2015)
3. Indonesia - Estimated 6,500,000 (2010)
4. USA - 5,025,817 (2017)
5. Singapore - 2,571,000 (2015)
6. Canada - 1,769,195 (2016)
7. Myanmar - 1,637,540 (2012)
8. Philippines - Estimated 1,400,000 (2013)
9. Australia - 1,213,903 (2016)

Source: "Overseas Chinese" Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 2 March 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overseas_Chinese.

LEBANON UPDATE

Relief Fund

Thanks to extraordinary support to the GOI Relief Fund, Gospel Operation International was able to financially partner in December 2020 with Horizons International, a missions organization to the Muslim world that has a strong presence in Lebanon. Here are some of the things the Lord has been recently doing with our Relief Fund support through Horizons International:

Pastor Imad Aubrey, a Horizons staff member in Lebanon, has recently established a new ministry in his hometown of Zahle, Lebanon. Inspired by Horizons' reports of Muslims coming to Christ, the testimony of a former ISIS member, and encouragement from friends and churches, he is now serving to equip, mobilize, and plant local churches to impact the surrounding community. In early 2020, Pastor Imad started an online church service that now regularly serves up to 1,800 attendees. With economic struggles and food shortages in Lebanon worsening after the August 4th explosion, Zahle Ministry launched a mercy

ministry to provide food, medicine, and heating fuel to those who are suffering under extreme poverty. Staff members are developing strong relationships with the 74 families they currently serve, as they take time to share the gospel and pray with them on each visit.



(Top) Our Lady of Lebanon. Harissa, Lebanon. Photo by Nabih El Boustani on Unsplash



(Middle 4) Horizons International workers make house visits to elderly residents in the city of Zahle. Stratospheric inflation, political instability, the lingering effects of the 2021 Beirut explosion and restrictions imposed to limit the outbreak of COVID-19 have created economic conditions that have crippled the earning potential and wiped out the savings of many of Lebanon's residents. Some elderly Lebanese who were middle-class just a year ago have found themselves suddenly struggling to meet basic daily subsistence needs. Photos courtesy of Horizons International.



(Bottom) Retired Beirut men play Dama silently in Sessine Square in Beirut, Lebanon. Photo by Christelle Hayek on Unsplash



(Left) A Syrian refugee wanders the streets of Lebanon trying to sell packets of gum. Photo by Radwan Skeiky on Unsplash

(Center) The Mohammad al-Amin mosque in Beirut is reflected in a puddle in the street. Photo by Marten Bjork on Unsplash

(Right) Elderly Lebanese man. Photo by Nathan McBride on Unsplash

The *light* shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:5

The School of Hope, located in Beirut, has continued to provide education for K-5 Syrian refugee children by adapting classroom schedules to fit national pandemic restrictions. Each day, half of the school's 140 students meet in person with social distancing, while the other half joins virtually from home. Many of the Muslim parents have expressed awe and deep gratitude for the level of care shown by School of Hope teachers and staff members for their children's education, and observed a stark contrast with nearby public schools. An unexpected blessing is that, because they are helping their children learn to study online, Muslim parents have now been reading and memorizing Bible verses along with their children!

In addition to the immediate disaster response, Horizons is also launching the Agricultural Development Project to establish a missional community that provides long-term sustainable employment, food, and gospel impact. We are seeing God use these projects to help bring about a gospel revival in Lebanon and beyond

Please continue to pray for our various partners in Lebanon through all the challenges they are facing. Between a 50% pay cut, an 80% reduction of the value of the Lebanese lira, and a 100% increase in price for many basic goods, hundreds of thousands of people have seen their buying power reduced to 5% of what it was just a year ago. The income that once lasted a month, now lasts barely two days.

Most of all, people are living and dying every day without knowing the hope of Jesus Christ. God gave His own life so that "whosoever believes in Him might have everlasting life." (John 3:16) God is calling His people to bring the gospel to everyone who needs to hear it, no matter where they are.

It is for this very reason that GOI exists, supported by churches and individuals like you, and serving alongside others in the global community of Great Commission workers. Let's stand together through prayers, the sharing of financial resources, and the mobilizing of people to go into God's great harvest of souls. To learn more about how to participate in the Great Commission with GOI, go to <https://goimission.org>.

BRACING FOR *Re-entry*

By Editorial Staff

Missionaries can find it hard to communicate how they are feeling and what they need. Here are a few things that missionaries may wish they could communicate with family, friends, churches and loved ones as they transition back from the mission field.

1. WHAT IS “HOME”?

I just spent a lot of time trying to understand who I was and how I fit into the cultures, values, societies and people I was living amongst. Now that I’m transitioning back to a place I once knew as “home,” I’m having to re-understand and re-engage with the world around me. I may feel lost, frustrated, critical, confused, or in a daze. On top of everything, it can be difficult to deal with expectations of how I should feel or act

now that I’m “back home.” For some of us, we may not have even wanted to come “back home.” Home may actually be back on the mission field, and the circumstances for transition may have been difficult, traumatic, or complex. Please be gentle with us, and don’t be offended if we’re having a hard time.

2. GRIEF AND DEPRESSION

As missionaries transitioning off the field, we have just lost something meaningful to us. We’re undergoing lots of changes and we have had to say goodbye in a multitude of ways. For some of us, the change may have been sudden and unwanted. Grief often looks different when undergone by different people, and can be experienced differently from one instance to the next, so it’s hard to

Gold Coast, Australia. Photo by
Leio McLaren on Unsplash

predict. One moment we can be fine, and the next moment we can feel like we’re having a meltdown. Some of us want to process with others, while others may want to withdraw within ourselves. We’ve lost intangible things too: hopes, dreams, innocence, time, missed opportunities. If we’re open to it and you’re willing to listen without judgment, you may be able to help us process. Sometimes the transition may even lead to valleys of depression, and often the process is far longer than anybody wants or expects. Grief and depression can be exhausting, and we can come across as lethargic or lazy when we are just overwhelmed. Some of us have sustained mental, emotional, spiritual and/or physical





Hong Kong, China. Photo by
Nick Jones on Unsplash

wounds on the field that take time to uncover, much less heal. Some of us have had our weaknesses and dark sides revealed, and struggle to process our shame with the grace of God. Sometimes, the grief can last for years. People willing to treat us with love, patience and grace, and encourage us by gently reminding us of who we are in Christ without making us feel condemned, are a godsend.

3. I DON'T ALWAYS KNOW WHAT I WANT

Coming home can be bewildering. Everything from driving on the highways, to registering for classes and paying for taxes, to finding work or ministering in a church, to shopping for children's clothes can be a new and jarring experience. Some days we just want to fit in; other days, it bothers us that others don't seem to acknowledge us for the extraordinary experiences we had and are having. Some days I may desperately want to be back on the field; other days, I may be grateful I'm off the field. I may even be struggling with guilt for not being back on the field even as we're happy to be off. In a missionary family, different family members may have different responses, and it can be

difficult to know how to talk about our experience publicly. I know that many of you love me and want to know how to care, but I don't always know how to respond, and sometimes I just want to hide. Please be patient—you mean far more than you may realize, though I don't always know how to express it. Thank you for being willing to love us and walk with us.

"If we're open to it
and you're willing
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Heart / Liver



Tel Aviv, Israel. Photo by
Daniel Lerman on Unsplash

Many ministry organizations rooted in Chinese culture are beginning to learn how to care for and walk with missionaries transitioning off of the mission field. "Calvin," a GOI missionary, shares a story from his own experience of missionary "re-entry." This essay is translated and redacted from an article first published in the Nov-Dec 2020 issue of the Chinese language GOI magazine.

It's not easy for a culturally-Chinese missionary transitioning off the field to walk with those who want to care for them. Though some information exists in English, there are not many Chinese-language resources that discuss missionary care for missionaries who are transitioning off the field. It can be even more difficult to find counselors who are willing to be sincere and active in caring for the missionary, and learning how to do so.

God prepared an experienced counselor who cared for me during my own transition away from full-time mission field service. Still, it could be difficult to share deeply with her, though we've been acquainted with each other for many years. How can a missionary returnee with no experience in re-entry walk together with a similarly inexperienced counselor? As I think back on my journey, I found that my counselor did in fact sincerely empathize with me, listen patiently and express loving

"Like grief, re-entry can wash over you at unexpected times and can be triggered by unexpected things."

support. As a returnee, I continued to learn from and reflect upon the re-entry experience of Western missionaries who had transitioned before me. I learned to take risks, share my experiences, and honestly confront the reality of my own deficiencies and weaknesses. I am learning to face the transition journey with an open, teachable heart to move steadfastly forward.

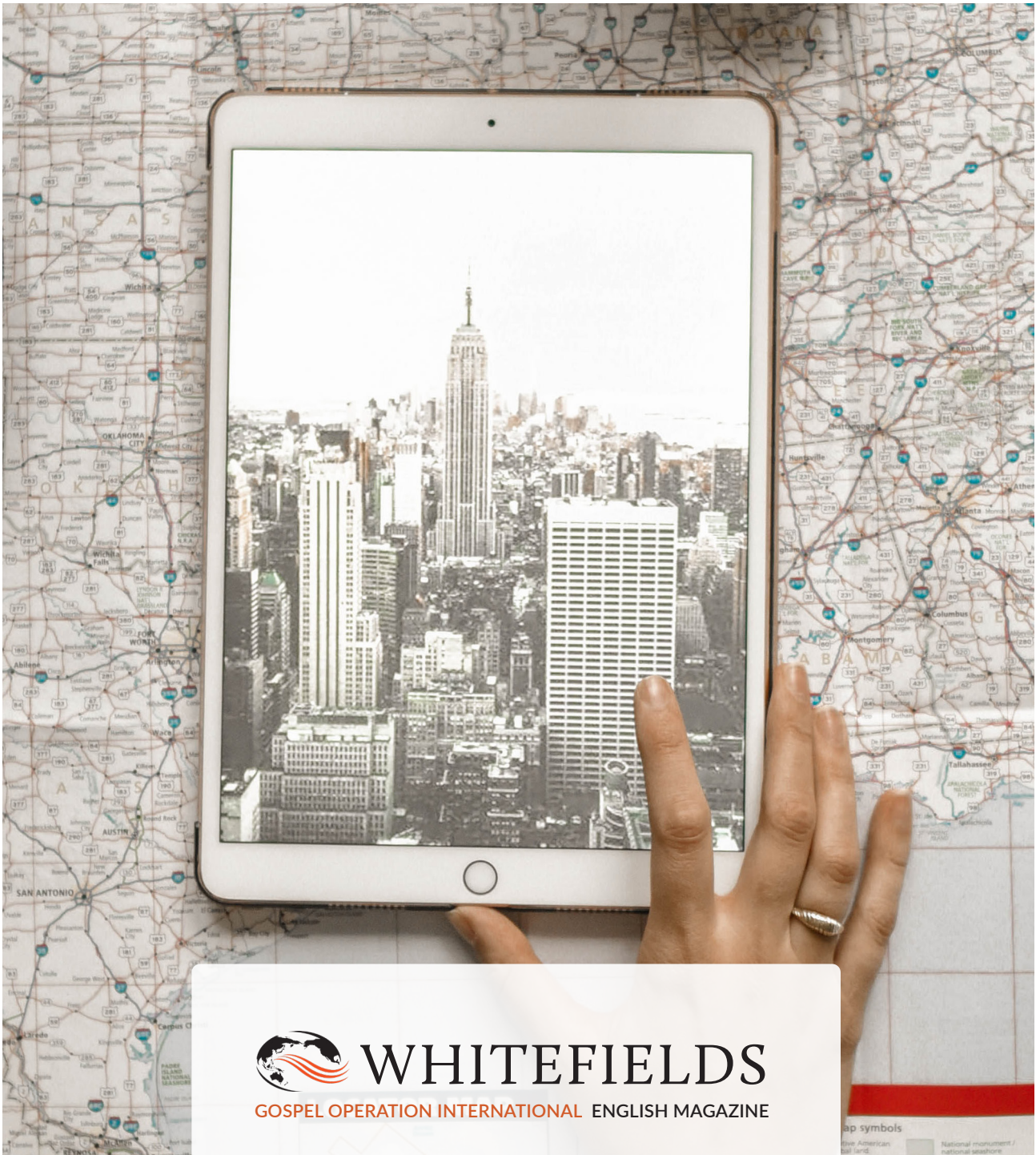
Recently, when the counselor and I were chatting together and laughing as usual, the counselor teased me with an idiom in Cantonese that translates as: "You have no heart and liver." [你都係無心肝] (Editor's note: The idiom is commonly used in Cantonese to mean, "You're so forgetful!" In Chinese medicine, the liver is where emotions are located.) A sudden awkward silence fell upon the room as soon as the words were spoken. The counselor was confused as to what had happened, while

I was similarly at a loss as to why I was reacting the way I was. Later, I came to realize that the idiom "no heart and liver" touched on deep feelings of loss and guilt I still held regarding leaving the mission field. I remembered the testimony of another missionary going through re-entry: "Like grief, re-entry can wash over you at unexpected times and can be triggered by unexpected things."

It has been two years since I left the mission field, and I have been serving in ministry in my hometown for more than a year. I thought I had completely "left" the mission field, but a single unintentional sentence could still strike a nerve associated with re-entry and elicit an emotional reaction. Perhaps hearing about my experience can be an opportunity for others to learn more about the nuances of the missionary re-entry process!



Minneapolis, United States.
Photo by White Field Photo
on Unsplash



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