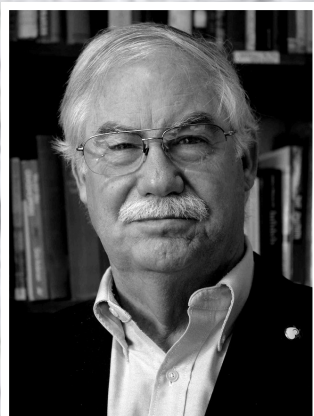


All or Nothing?



Greg Livingstone

Not long ago, leaving home to live as a missionary in Baghdad, Brunei, or Bengazi was an *'all your life' decision*. No turning back. No changing your mind. It was all or nothing. Once you made the commitment, you couldn't back out!

Then in 1963, the unthinkable happened. The airplane made short-term missions possible. One could help the cause for two years, or one, or even a summer (*Some go for a week, but I can't call that mission. Sorry*)

Open-hearted people who care deeply about lost people often confess, "I have no burden for Muslims." Of course you don't. *Who do you have a burden for that you've never met?* We tend to get fired up for people among whom we've had a meal, traded stories and laughed with. It's hard to catch God's heart for the people you've never seen, if you've known nothing but your own hometown or your own kind of people. How would you know if you're supposed to serve people in Pakistan if you haven't been

there? Good question, I think. Why not spend time among Pathans, Baluch, or Gilgitis asking God to enable you to see the people there as He does? Immersing yourself among a people without a church for even a month may lead you into an adventure of 'getting in on' what God is doing there.

Am I the Type?

But while you're testing yourself against the discomforts, or wondering how anybody could alleviate the massive poverty, beware of asking yourself the wrong question: "*Am I the missionary type?*" Do I have what it takes to be a pioneer church planter among Hindus, Muslims or Buddhists?" Most people conclude, "Probably not; I don't even talk about Jesus with non-Christians at home. I must not be the missionary type." But if you keep interrogating yourself about what gifts you lack, or how weak your vision or burden is, *you could be falling into the all-or-nothing false dichotomy after all.*

If you think that you must be willing to live in poverty like Mother Teresa, or do exploits as an evangelical "Indiana Jones," you'll likely disqualify yourself. So, don't ask yourself if you are a pioneer church planter. Ask, instead, "What might I contribute to a church planting team?" Not, "What do I lack?" but, "What might I add to a team effort?"

His Strength and Your Weakness

Why did God tell the great missionary, Paul of Tarsus, "My grace is sufficient for you. My power is perfected in weak people"? Because the *Lord has always used weak people who*

aspired to be used by an all-sufficient God! The history of missions is all about weak, barely competent people who believed the One who sent them could accomplish His purposes even through the likes of them! There are only two kinds of people in the world: the weak ones who make themselves available to God and the weak ones who don't.

Security or Significance?

Few great accomplishments have been done by individuals alone. Great things come about when average people combine what they have with others. Stretch your ambition to accomplish a God-sized project.

Pray with some of your friends for ignored peoples and overlooked cities where nothing is happening yet to honor and worship our Lord Jesus. Give up your small ambitions. Seek wisdom from other visionaries. Ask God to show you how you can be part of enacting a new chapter in history among a people who still know nothing of Jesus.

Greg Livingstone has spent over 40 years focused on bringing a saving knowledge of Christ to the Muslim peoples of Asia and Africa. He was instrumental in founding both Operation Mobilization and Frontiers, and also served as the North American Director of Arab World Ministries. Greg is a team-forming coach, seeking to deploy pioneer teams from many nations in Muslim communities.

INVOLVED IN MISSIONS? NEED INFORMATION?

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