DIVINE APPOINTMENT

My gaze fixated on the stained glass image of Jesus in Wesley’s Chapel, London. As I read the text inscribed beneath his feet, his words (to me) gripped my heart and soon the tears began to flow: “I chose...and appointed you that ye should go...bear fruit and that your fruit should abide” (words from John’s Gospel).

Over the previous four weeks, my dad and I had celebrated our birthdays on a trip together (my father turned 75 on the 6th of April this year and my much younger birthday celebration took place on the 12th of the same month). We had seen the sights in three different Northern Hemisphere countries and found our minds full of stories we’d heard along the way.

But nothing prepared me for that unsuspecting moment when I stood looking up at Jesus’ outstretched arms. I was reminded that God had no interest in using anyone but myself to complete His purposes for my life. I was one of a kind—not better nor worse than anyone else—but uniquely created and shaped for a destiny bringing about an outcome that no one else could fulfill.

Most certainly, it wouldn’t do to walk away from that destiny or to baulk at its challenges. Time waited for no man or woman when so much was at stake. The only unknown was my choice in all this. I needed to get with the program like never before!

NORO NEWS

Last month (May) we’ve had five men jet in from different places in the world (Maryborough, Michigan, Toowoomba, Melbourne and Christchurch). Each of them has gained a taste of the ministry and development we’re seeking to undertake here at Noro. No doubt they’ve gone back to their homes and churches with stories to tell of the challenges and opportunities here.

What remains with me, however, is the ongoing ministry of each person who comes here. While we serve our local church, we all need to catch a glimpse of God’s heart for the entire world. As John Wesley most famously said, “the world is my parish”. And I love to network.
and serve with those who have that same heart!

Slowly but surely, things are taking shape here at Noro. When I think about the five hectares of thick regrowth bush we settled in 2012, we already have a community (local church) and a set of facilities (function building, dining area, training building, public toilets, transport services, and guest and residential housing) that have truly put us on the map here in the Solomons. With our town of Noro growing in population by 10% a year and a cosmopolitan population developing drawing people here from many different ethnic groups and countries around the world, we have an enormous ministry opportunity here, to say nothing of what exists with the rest of the Solomon Islands.

Who will labour for this harvest? It will be God’s servants on their knees believing God will touch the hearts of (mostly) people here who will make themselves available to reach those geographically and socially close to them.

As I write this, one of our residents, part of a family renting one of our houses, has just turned five years of age. So we had a little birthday party for him in the hall built by a work team that visited us last year.

Little Joseph has an opportunity to be nurtured here at Noro as he’s surrounded by a community/village endeavouring to raise him in the faith. With our ministry training we offer, we seek to foster similar communities right across the Solomons, such that God’s Kingdom can come to this world as He intended.

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PRAISE

• The time I had with fellow Solomon Islanders at the Pastors and Leaders Retreat in Australia
• A memorable and spiritually uplifting trip with my father through South Korea, the United Kingdom and Ireland
• The lives changed through the courses conducted in Honiara and Rumavatu recently (9 baptisms took place at the end of the second course).
• God will give us great wisdom as we deal with operational and developmental challenges in the Solomons unlike anything we’ve ever known outside this place
• The three courses run back to back at Noro through June and July: Exegetical Preaching, Membership Matters and English Isn’t Boring
• The planning and preparation for my deputation program through Australia from Mid July to Christmas

HELLO HONIARA

The Wesleyan Vision for the fastest growing city in the South Pacific is alive and well. In February/March, I taught my third course in Honiara at the little leaf house church building in the heart of the city. With the classes commencing late afternoon, I would spend much of the early part of each day hanging out in the cafes downtown with my laptop, often striking up conversations with expats and nationals I met in those places.

At the conclusion of our course this year, the National Superintendent Rev. George Velopide decommissioned the building we were using. The church no longer has access to that site and currently meets on the property of the District Superintendent Rev. James Lapo, some ways in the suburbs spreading up the hills of the hinterland.

Where to from here? With Pastor Nelson Kikoni retiring in Noro (he now attends my church), Myrah Topo has become Honiara’s first female pastor. She is wearing the red dress at the front of the photo. Please pray for her and the Honiara Church as I believe God has them right where He wants them in one the world’s ripest harvest fields!

PRAYER

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