

Training Mission Workers on Computers

One thing that stuns me when I attend the conference like the one in Chiang Mai, or meet workers here at home is how little preparation, training and support they have for using computers on the field. Here they are, moving to a foreign land, sometimes one with low levels of infrastructure, speaking a foreign language, and they usually have had no training on how to select and manage a computer system for their needs.

Consider what happens when you have a computer problem, or you need to do something different. You probably seek out a friend to help or maybe you head to google if you are a bit of techy. Well, now put several thousand kilometres between you and that friend, and maybe an unreliable, slow internet connection. Maybe even an expensive satellite phone link.

How do you fix your problem? Could you reconfigure your own email? Could you restore your own computer from backups? Could you install your own data encryption?

Every western missionary I know has a computer, and most have laptops. They are deemed essential for communication. Often they are essential for ministry, being used in translation, material development etc.

Yet I know of only one organisation (Wycliffe) that

provides computer training to their field workers. Most have very limited IT support capabilities for their workers. Everybody is on their own. Whoever knows the most becomes the local IT expert.

Why is this the case? I think there are two reasons: The leadership of missions haven't recognised the need. And there are a lack of IT workers prepared to go into missions.



Why haven't the leadership of missions recognised the need? After all, they use PCs? Well, they are probably of a generation which didn't have such tools on the field and they haven't realised the need there. The widespread use of laptops has occurred in the last 15 years or less. It seems this is changing as the leadership changes generation, but it needs to be raised in profile.

Secondly, workers need to be encouraged to get sufficient training on PCs BEFORE they leave, so they are relatively

competent. And they need to be trained in issues relevant to their field and advised on suitable equipment. (I worked on a 3 year old computer that a young couple were taking on their first term into a major Asian country. It was dying. They should have been advised to upgrade before they left home.)

The reason they often aren't trained, and why there is no field IT support is that there aren't many IT workers in missions. Why? They often don't see their skills as useful in God's work. They aren't preachers, so how can they be of use? This is why we are running the Christian IT seminar. to challenge their core understanding of Christian ministry. and work This is why ICTA is challenging IT workers to consider the Spirit Lead Technology Principles (see www.SLTyCommunity.net).

How can Crosscape help? Someone who has recently returned from PNG is considering joining Crosscape to work in this area. If this happens we will seek to provide some basic IT training for Aussie missionaries, and to develop some volunteer remote IT support.

How can you help? Pray. Talk to IT folk you know about the need. Give. To us, or to an IT worker who will be struggling to raise their support.

Prayer support Team:

We have several prayer email lists for ourselves and ministry on weekly and monthly basis as well as the monthly prayer meeting! To join up visit www.crosscape.com.au and select the Prayer Team link in the About Us menu item.

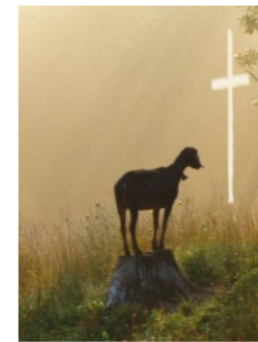
Financial Support Team:

To give to the work of Crosscape send cheques made to Crosscape Technology Ltd to PO Box 4124 Werrington NSW 2747 and specify for Miller Support, Miller Travel or a specific project. Direct payments to our bank account are also possible, or you can use PayPal.

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On the Goat Track

David & Katrina Miller

Report on Asia Trip

I (David) spent all of February and a few days of March in Asia, on the longest trip I've done in years. There were multiple aims for the trip:

to visit workers associated with our church at 2 locations and gather video footage to help communicate their work,
to fix computers and run an IT security seminar at a mission workers conference,
to organise and attend the first ICCM Asia conference.
As you read you'll notice I am



being deliberately vague. Most of the people I met with work in situations where they have to be careful not to embarrass the local officials, or they want to fly low and fast. Hopefully you will follow.

After my first overnight stay in Singapore I flew to Jakarta on Jetstar. A pastor who is chairman for Lifewords in Jakarta travelled 4.5 hours through floods to bring my tickets to the airport! I then had my first Indonesian discount flight. Prayer is always required! I flew Adamair to Pontianak. Sitting in the waiting area it was a case of guessing what was going on and hoping the few English signs were correct. Am I really on the flight to Pontianak?

I spent 5 days with Marty & Poppy and their daughters from

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Kate's Korner

Dear Friends,

Firstly, the medication seems to be going well although the last Liver Function Test (LFT) showed some changes. We pray that these will moderate and don't become more serious and cause the medication to be stopped. I think it has been helping although I still get puffed. I definitely feel I can do a little more than before. Pray for good results for LFTs and that we can find out who to petition for it to be put on the PBS, (Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme).

Praise God for seeing to all my needs when David was o/s. I had a very full and busy month. Thank you for all who prayed during this time. It was challenging having David away for so long. It was good having Sally here and I walked her a lot more than I usually do, but have since slacked off because David is home but I still walk twice, sometimes three times a week.

David and I seem to have readjusted to each other again after a month of separation.

Still going to Bible Studies Fellowship and this year we are studying Romans. It is very interesting so far. I was asked to be a Children's Supervisor Assistant towards the end of last year but decided against it, (I had just started the medication and wasn't sure what would happen), however this year they asked me to be Treasurer (ahhhh.... maths was never one of my strong points) as I had been helping with the counting and I said yes. So far so good. I am terrified I will do something wrong, but everyone has been very kind and helpful. Miracle Education is going well and the Breakfasts that have been happening around the metropolitan area have been well attended and inspiring. Ours was small but intimate. Two in Penrith in August and October. (www.mired.com.au)

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April 2007

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Upcoming Events

- Christian IT - Connecting Gospel, Life and Information Technology. May 12
- ICCM in USA 8-12 June
- Long Service Leave - sometime in 07
- Go! (Melb) August 10-12
- Reachout August 17-19

Kenaniah the head Levite was in charge of the singing; that was his responsibility because he was skillful at it.

1 Chron 15:22

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our church and Grace & Johannes who are church supports. One of the main tasks in which they are involved is training Christians to reach people from the majority religion. It was quite amazing to hear how fluent Marty is in Indonesian so that he can take part in the teaching. It was very helpful to meet them all and see their ministry first hand, and they enjoyed having visitors. There are very few westerners in the city. Leaving Pontianak I again flew another discount airline (my initial flight was cancelled). I then caught my Jetstar flight to Singapore and had another overnight stay there. Next day it was off to Chiang Mai, Thailand. After a day or so sorting out some things for the ICCM conference, I headed out of town to the Suan Bua resort for the first workers conference. These folk (about 250) all work in a large country, but are from different organisations. Unfortunately 170 or so of us got sick, including the Thais. There was something at the venue or region causing the problem, because it affected conference before and after ours. In all I help about 15 people, some with major problems, many wanting to set-up data encryption. One young lady's laptop was in a bad way and

Kate's Korner Cont'd

My new hobby - patchwork, is coming along slowly since I have only been to one class so far but I love it so am looking forward to my next class after Easter. Only twice a month so that is why it is so slow. My main interest is crazy patchwork. Very colourful. Like stained glass only in fabric. If you have any small amounts of scrap material and you want to get rid of it you can send it my way. All donations gratefully received. We had a lovely time away at Dalmeny mid March, thanks to the Oggs. We rested, read and relaxed. I was able to get over a

physically died while I was working on it after the conference (not a good feeling!). I was again amazed at how little computer training and preparations are made for new workers going to the field. I'll discuss this in another article.

After that conference I had a bit over a week to prepare for the ICCM Asia conference, take a bit of a break, and catch up with the other workers associated with our church. Bee is visiting there



short term from our church. David & Karen run a ministry that Bee is serving with. They show love to ethnic groups from Burma who are being displaced by that government's military. I attended the final celebrations for the 80 hours of prayer for Burma, together with another couple from our church who were visiting. Trying to meet with

cold and David didn't get it which was good. It is lovely there and at nearby Narooma. Visited Central Tilba and bought some fudge. Yummm. Had a couple of walks with Sally on the beach which she enjoyed but will not go near the water. Such fun.

Thank you for all your prayers and generosity and may Easter be a reminder of what Christ has done for us all and may it be a time of blessing.

God bless,
Love Katrina.

Right: A windy day at Dalmeny

David & Karen was harder, and I ended up attending their team meeting for half a day. It was fascinating. Their work is passionate, risky and radical. They do stuff many others won't, and in the process show God's love to people in very hard situations, sometimes under fire and on the run. God is honouring them and they see God moving in their work. If you want to know more talk to me, or google *love burma idp* and visit the first site.

Finally, the weekend before ICCM-Asia saw people begin to arrive for the conference on IT and missions in Asia. 22 people attended the inaugural ICCM-Asia conference for the whole conference, with another 8 or so visiting for the odd session. We had 13 speakers present a number of topics. We managed to balance between technical and 'management' topics. Unfortunately we did not get many national IT workers, although we did have workers attending from Sri Lanka, India and Singapore, as well as cross-cultural workers from various locations, we had no Thai IT workers attend the conference. A committee has been formed to manage the next conference in 12-18 months, again in Chiang Mai.



On the Goat Track

Christian IT Seminar - May 12

Together with Macquarie Christian Studies Institute (MCSI) we are running a one day conference called *Christian IT - Connecting Gospel, Life and Information Technology*. Please pass this information on to Christian IT workers you know and encourage them to come. It will be a very interesting and thought provoking day. We will be exploring the connections between working

with IT and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Speakers include Gordon Preece (MCSI), Ian Packer (MCSI), Roger Lawrence (Microsoft), Grayden Colville (Global Recording Network), David Miller (Crosscape Technology), John Thompson (Wycliffe Bible Translators)

Topics include: Work and Faith, Faith and Technology, Technology and Mission.

Christian-I.T. Conference & Information Technology
 Saturday May 12 9:30am-5:00pm
 Cost: \$50 (Early bird \$40 by April 16, Non-waged \$30)
 Speakers in theology, mission and I.T.
 Register now
 Trinity Chapel, Robert Menzies College, 136 Herring Road, North Ryde
 Ph: 02 9850 6133, Fx: 02 9850 6144
 integrating@mcsi.edu.au, www.mcsi.edu.au

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? **Matt 6:26**

How do you Live?

A question I am often asked is "How are you financially supported?" The short answer is "God provides".

The longer answer is:

- We have been blessed with funds to own our own house.
- Katrina receives the disability pension due to her heart condition.
- David received a small inheritance that earns some income which tops up our funds.
- Crosscape asks ministries that we help to pay what they can afford (in general). They pay somewhere between the market price and \$0. These funds tend to provide for the expenses of ministry.
- A small amount from commissions for broadband sales.
- We have a small team of dedicated supporters who provide funds on a regular basis. These

essentially cover David's minimal salary.

We welcome ministries paying for services when they can, however our priority is to provide assistance regardless of their ability to pay. This is only possible by the generous support of people like yourself. Ministry trips are also expensive and depend on donations. Mobilisation brings no income either.

We need to increase our level of support by at least \$200 per month, that is 4 donors at \$50 per month. Would you consider such a regular donation to our work?

For ministry trips it would be helpful to have a base support level of at least \$3000 a year. That may be from 6 supporters at \$500 a year. Would you consider joining our support team in this way?

Prayer

- Praise God for the Asian trip, for connections and safety.
- Praise God for Katrina's continuing health after 40 years. Pray for her body to adjust to the new drug, for good LFT's and for the drug to be available via the PBS by the end of the year.
- Pray for the Christian IT conference on May 12, that many will attend, that good relationships will develop, and that workers will be sent out from the conference!
- Pray that the people, resources will be available to train and support mission workers in the use of PCs for their work. Pray that mission leaders will recognise the need for training and support.

What's Next

- GRN are installing a second server for managing their digital audio files in Australia (David also assists with the US servers). The Australian and US server provide backup facilities for the other.
- I am investigating the use of Ruby of Rails to develop the FEBC broadcast management system in a reasonable time.
- There will be an amount of followup after the Christian IT seminar. such as small groups and the MIC course.
- A trip in June to the US ICCM, ICTA (to meet with leadership) and GRN in the US is under consideration if funds permit (about \$3500).
- David expects to take long service leave sometime during the year.
- A momentous 40th!