

What is God doing today?

Three Perspectives

Chris—Shift to teaching and mentoring

Geriatrics and Family Medicine in Asia

One of the biggest trends I've seen, and it's really exciting to see, I've seen colleagues in Africa move from being practitioners of health care to teachers and mentors. I think that is in a lot of ways, that's the burden that God has put on me so when I actually left medical school I was inspired to really consider teaching, actually being prepared as a teacher, not sort of just theoretically, but actually seeking equipping as a teacher and not just being a practitioner, which I love, but in terms of the local context, what is it about? Is it about myself or is it about empowering the local people and so one thing I've seen is this move towards less of the foreigner coming in to actually do the medical care, from that to doing sort of supporting local efforts to being behind the scenes or teaching and just imparting some skills or some knowledge.

Now there's still some power imbalances in that kind of scenario, there's still some cultural barriers that are involved in that kind of scenario, but I feel like that kind of relationship rather than sort of that top down or being, you know, for want of a better word, that white savior type person, to being someone who comes alongside. I feel like that is one trend that is very important in healthcare in missions.

Valerie—Ministering to the whole person

Public Health in East and North Africa

I think I've seen trends with, particularly with Americans. We're just very...either-or mentality, proclamation of the gospel is first and primary and important and so sometimes you feel like those skilled professions that you have, or tentmaking skills, are kind of secondary because you just want to get in there and share about Jesus, plant churches, and you kind of make it—this is one thing and this is another, so it's that idea of this division of what I'm doing which it doesn't have to feel like it's a divided thing, you know, it is integrated, incarnational,

And if you bring people into the kingdom, you can't just kind of, like, "OK, you've accepted Jesus in your heart now everything else is going to be OK." I think those integrated ministries have a very important role in really helping people to heal emotionally or physically as well as know that they're parts of communities that care about them, and that will help them in their spiritual growth and spiritual formation process and bring them to a point of being part of a thriving body that they're contributing to.

Graham—No longer the west to the rest

GP in South Sudan

Over the five years of us serving in South Sudan, I think probably initially we went as westerners often do with a sense of, we have resources, we have the gospel, we want to go and serve, we want to give. And we were humbled over those five years, I think, to see the faith of our brothers and sisters living through war, living through famine, living through genocide, and continuing to cling to the Lord. And so, we learned very quickly, to be learners, to take our place, to recognize we were stepping into a culture that we were naïve to and unfamiliar with. We needed a phase of language and culture learning, but I think more important than that, a spiritual apprenticeship of learning how to take our place with brothers and sisters of different language, different culture, different socioeconomics, and for us to learn how to be part of a multi-cultural team and serve in the name of Jesus. Previously, I think mission could have been characterized as from the West to the rest, but I think we're seeing as the church declines to a degree in the West, we're seeing what has always been there or should be there, that the Lord is calling people from every background to gather together in multi-tribal or multi-ethnic teams and find ways to serve him together in a new place or a different place. And all the resources that we have as the body of Christ and from all our different cultural or ethnic backgrounds we can pool those resources and we can be humble together and we can serve.

So, I think that particular move is really significant. We saw it in our own hospital context, our language tutor who taught us Sudanese Arabic. After a year or so we said Keziah, you have so many spiritual gifts, you're a mature woman, you love the Lord, can you come and be part of this hospital team. Can you serve as an evangelist in the hospital, can you just circulate in the wards and speak of the Lord Jesus to all of these mothers, so they hear of his good news. And she said, oh, doctor, I'm just a language tutor. And the onus was on us to esteem what was good in her life, and honor it, and rejoice in it, and so she spent several years serving in this hospital and being able to proclaim the good news of Jesus to her own people.