

one ambition

"It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known..." ROMANS 15:20



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Innovation at the CUSP OF CHANGE

By Mark Cassidy

One moment in history, one man's idea, one tentative venture to solve a formidable problem changed everything.

That moment was almost 600 years ago. The man was John Gutenberg. And he had a problem. A goldsmith, gem cutter and metallurgist, his business was falling deeper and deeper into debt. He had to figure out how to make money. The printing press was his solution.

Using his skills as a metal worker, he cast 290 blocks of letters. Then, using linseed and soot, he developed an "ink" ideal for printing on handmade paper. Adapting a wine press, he figured out how to slide the paper in and out and squeeze the water out after printing.

And the world changed at that moment.

That is innovation: creative minds put to practical use, producing a product, service or technology that changes the way we work.

At the very heart of our work at Pioneers, we are looking for men and women who are innovative and

engaged. Together we are working to solve one critical problem: How do we reach men and women with the message of Jesus Christ?

We are always asking: "How can we use this new thing (technology, service, product) to advance the Gospel?"

I think about the advances in technology. The internet opened so many doors for us to introduce people seeking Truth to Jesus. In my past role at Pioneers Media, I was blown away by the number of people actively searching for Truth. Using technology, we invited them into a conversation with a real person to overcome the barriers of geography. Hundreds of people made connections with real people who follow Jesus.

Last year a man from Yemen connected with our online team. They began chatting online about the gospel, messaging back and forth. The very first time they talked in person, the man accepted Christ. On their next meeting, he brought his wife who also accepted Christ. There was no church or Christian community the couple could reach out to – but online connections made the geographical barriers

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insignificant. Today, because the man initiated a search on the internet and found Pioneers Arabic outreach website, the seeds of a new church are planted.

It's a privilege to work with Christian men and women who are pioneers in emerging media and technology, who imagine how to use technological innovations to preach the Gospel in the least reached regions of the world.

This edition of One Ambition includes stories of innovative forays into mission. From harnessing technology to teaching martial arts to working with small plot farmers to using the arts, our team is building purposeful relationships with people who have never heard the amazing story of God's love. Read how one Pioneers missionary used her skill as a midwife to meet the practical needs of mothers in Africa. As she serves, she shares the message of Jesus. Incorporating our Christian witness is often most effective when we do it as we walk alongside men and

women, our neighbours and colleagues, right where we are.

The power of men and women to solve problems with innovative solutions shouldn't surprise us. After all, we are created in the image of God.

We are excited to see the doors God is opening. We are committed to Jesus Christ and, ultimately, the foundation of all we do to fulfill the Great Commission will not be the tools and techniques we innovate. It will be initiated and completed when we seek God first and love one another sacrificially.

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Cassidy". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mark Cassidy
President, Pioneers Canada





The Power of **THE INTERNET**

Nazan was searching for Truth. Quietly, in the privacy of his home, he searched the internet for answers to the deeply spiritual questions he had about Islam and the beliefs he'd been taught since childhood.

He started talking to a media responder online, asking them questions and learning more about this man called Jesus. Then he asked if he could talk to someone personally. The media team connected him to Solomon, a Christian in his community.

Nazan had many questions for Solomon. They studied the Bible together and Nazan's eyes were opened to the Truth of the gospel. "I don't believe in Islam anymore," he told Solomon. "What can I do to become a follower of Christ?" Solomon walked with him as he accepted Christ. And as he grew in Christ, he asked to be baptized. But he had one stipulation: he wanted his friend Hamd to be at the baptism. Solomon didn't mind at all but he knew the many challenges of confessing faith in Christ and leaving Islam. "Do you trust him?" Solomon asked. Nazan answered honestly, "I don't really know, but I feel the urgency to be baptized in his presence."

Solomon baptized Nazan and Hamd attended. Hamd made it clear that he did not want to abandon his Muslim faith. Solomon didn't push him but gave him some Christian books, encouraging Hamd to read them, praying that God would open his eyes to the truth of the kingdom of God.

Just a week later, Hamd called Solomon. He read the books and he had questions. He asked to meet personally to talk about the books. They met weekly. Solomon answered Hamd's many questions. One day, just like Nazan, Hamd asked: "What can I do to become a follower of Christ?"

Hamd prayed and gave his life to the Lord. He asked to be baptized. And, like Nazan, he had one request: "Can I be baptized in the presence of my Muslim friend, Bilal?"

And the story repeated.

Solomon gave Bilal Christian books. Bilal had many questions which he freely asked Solomon. Today Nazan, Hamd and Bilal form a small group of believers in their community. And they continue to share their story of faith with their friends. Disciples make disciples.

God is at work in miraculous ways within the hearts of Muslim men and women. As they seek the Truth, God finds them and connects them with His children. The boldness of Solomon, a local Christian, to share his faith is the beginning of the church in that community.



The Compassion of JESUS TO MOMS

There is a saying among the nomadic people of Central Africa: “A woman who is pregnant straddles the grave – one foot in and one foot out.”

The risks of pregnancy are very real. There are no local hospitals or clinics, just miles and miles of land. They are open to midwife care but they are very traditional, close-knit communities. It takes time and trust to build relationships.

Pioneers was thrilled when the community invited us to care for women during their pregnancy. It gives us a tremendous opportunity to build a relationship with the mom. We make regular visits during the pregnancy. We come to help deliver their child (if they call us in time). And we continue our relationship after the birth for several postpartum visits. We sit with the family, drink tea and visit with them even after the child is born.

God has provided a beautiful way to meet the practical needs of families and share Christ’s love all at the same time.

One day Fay* called. Living in a nearby nomad camp, she knew she was in labour and asked us to come. A midwife, nurse practitioner and I jumped in the truck and drove the 30 minutes out to the camp. Morning turned into afternoon, afternoon into evening. As we cared for Fay, we sat on a mat with Fay’s mother, mother-in-law and several aunts. During the long wait, we had the opportunity to share stories from the Bible.

Fay’s delivery was one of the most challenging deliveries I have done but by the Lord’s grace the baby boy was delivered safely.

Over the next year we continued to build relationships with this family through several visits and were so happy to see the little boy growing well.

But nomads travel several hundreds of kilometres each year, so we hadn’t seen them for a long time. Then Fay’s husband made a significant effort to contact us and tells us they returned and were camping close to us. And Fay was pregnant again.

He asked us to come and we were able to complete an 8-month and 9-month prenatal check-up. During one of these visits, we once again had the opportunity to share stories from the Bible and our testimonies of why we follow Jesus. We had a solar Bible player with us and they eagerly took it and began listening to it.

When Fay’s labour started her husband called us. By God’s grace we were able to deliver her baby girl.

Providing midwifery care for this family met many practical needs and created beautiful opportunities to show love, build trust and share Jesus. Our prayer is to glorify God as we love and proclaim the gospel among nomads.

*Fay’s name has been changed to protect the mom and community.



A child is a precious gift— but moms living in nomadic communities of Central Africa know just how vulnerable that precious little life is.



Innovative Approaches to THE GREAT COMMISSION

MARTIAL ARTS IN CENTRAL ASIA

I was in my 30s when introduced to martial arts. I was nervous going into the first class. What if people saw the new big guy and wanted to show off by breaking my arm!

Thankfully, the opposite was true.

I was met with kindness and patience by some of the most dangerous people in the world. It wasn't their weapons or their demeanor that made them dangerous, it was their ability to predict my movements and use it against me. This blew my mind! How could a smaller, weaker person constantly beat me in a fight?

A whole new world opened and I became an instructor. The skills students learn and the friendships they forge keep them coming back. In our short time of running our business we have been able to pray in Jesus' name over many students going through rough times. We have broken bread with a plethora of students, shared the story of Jesus with a handful, and even seen one student be baptized!



THE ARTS: IN THE MIDDLE EAST

I am a playwright, an actor and a poet; when I moved to the Middle East, I had to give all of these things up. However, seven years later, I now run open mic nights, poetry workshops and poetry-themed Bible studies with young, secular Arabs. Many people who attend are disillusioned with organized religion and traumatized by the turbulent events in their country. They would be unlikely to attend a Bible study or enter a church but are eager to attend an open mic night or a poetry workshop.

John, a rapper from a Muslim background, heard a poem that invited him to know God better. It resonated with him. "I used to be really religious," he said, "and I'm not anymore but I really want to reconnect with God." John is on a journey, but he's discovered peace and love in Jesus. At an open mic event he introduced his poem by saying: "The Lord spoke to me." His poem was based on Psalm 23 and ended with a plea for God to show love and forgiveness for his enemies.

We are created in the image of the Divine Creator. The Bible is filled with creative expressions of worship, songs, poetry, prayer and prophecy. Jesus told story after story after story. It is a joy for me to be able to introduce people to this Jesus, to this God, in creative ways that reach them where they are.



SMALL SCALE AGRICULTURE IN MID ASIA

With high unemployment, believers leave their small rural communities to find work in larger centres. Families are split and few relationships can withstand the pressure. Looking for a solution, we started working with local believing families to start small-scale agricultural businesses within their communities.

We're working with the families to identify profitable agricultural businesses and training them on business and personal financial management. We discuss finance, marriage and parenting issues, as well as ministry vision and goals through the businesses.

We've just begun our work. We're excited to see what God does with this ministry.



PRAY

Please pray that we, individually and as a ministry, continue to hear from God about how we would use our creativity to further his Kingdom.

Pray that God would give the media team the right words to direct seekers to Jesus. Pray that the content the team produces continues to glorify God and direct people to Jesus.

Pray for our innovative team as they implement new and creative ways of reaching the unreached for Jesus. Pray for the many different teams that are establishing new ways of building relationships using things like martial arts, performing arts, midwifery and farming.

GIVE

Pioneers is in a pivotal position as a gateway into Muslim communities. Our team in Egypt has equipped and trained 77 missionaries in the past year. Men and women are committed and eager to share the message of freedom in Christ to their neighbours, friends and relatives.

We want to help them financially as they grow.

Your gift, whether \$25 or \$25,000 is a gift of partnership as we work together to train and equip our team to reach unreached nations.

Because of the kind generosity of a donor, your gift will be doubled.

Visit pioneers.ca/mobilizing-from-the-arabic-world to find out more.

GO

There are a number of opportunities on teams in various regions. This is not an exhaustive list so please reach out to us if you feel God leading you in a certain area.

NORTH AFRICA

- + Football (soccer) and other sports coaching
- + English teaching
- + Adventure tourism
- + Work with disabled people
- + Surfing instructors
- + Nutrition and public health
- + Business development (i.e. thrift store management, economic empowerment, internship management, small business start-up consulting)
- + Health education (i.e. dietician/nutrition, lactation consultant, women's health)
- + Agriculture researcher (i.e. an agricultural engineer willing to come do a land/soil survey)
- + Car mechanics

CENTRAL ASIA

Specific Team Needs:

Jiu-jitsu practitioners, social media marketing personnel, anyone interested in self-defense-based martial arts, people with high tolerance for ambiguity and a bias toward action.

SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS/OCEANIA

Education:

- + Kindergarten and primary school teachers
- + Teachers focused on continuing teacher training, to work with teachers from local schools (many do not yet have academic training)
- + English teachers
- + Mathematics teachers
- + Cooking teachers

AGRICULTURE:

- + People with technical or academic training who can contribute to the growth of new crops and improve the quality and quantity of production. We have a good production of strawberries and coffee. However, there are opportunities for the development of new agricultural crops.

BUSINESS:

- + Management
- + Marketing
- + Product promotion
- + Production and control

SPORTS:

- + Sports coach or teacher



“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

2 Corinthians 5:20-21

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