

Living in NZ – Working in Asia

dreadful generalisations and difficult implications for training preacher: pastors in Kiwiland

“I live in NZ and listen to the sobered and scholarly voices on the challenge of the post-Christian West.
I work in Asia and listen to the enthusiastic vibrancy of a viral post-Western Christianity.”

*If I was preparing to be a pastor-preacher in New Zealand,
I'd make time and space for regular contact with post-Western Christianity
and expect to find in that contact assistance for my calling within the post-Christian Western church.*

“I live in NZ and listen to the church speaking ‘mission, mission, mission’.
I work in Asia and listen to the church speaking ‘maturity, maturity, maturity’.”

*If I was preparing to be a pastor-preacher in New Zealand,
I'd audit regularly the energy, the vision, and the budget of our local church
in order to ensure that the New Testament mandate for both ‘mission’ and ‘maturity’ receives emphasis.*

“I live in NZ and listen to our comfortable lifestyle drain theology of any need for hope.
I work in Asia and listen to a suffering lifestyle fill theology with the significance of hope.”

*If I was preparing to be a pastor-preacher in New Zealand,
I'd tune my heart to stories of suffering for Christ's sake long before supposed stories of success in Christ's name
– and thereby work to awaken the transformative significance of hope in Christian life and witness.*

“I live in NZ and listen to the battles over the absurdity they call the new atheism.
I work in Asia and listen to the voices affirming the reality of all the old theisms.”

*If I was preparing to be a pastor-preacher in New Zealand,
I'd try to be interested in the ‘new atheism’ that receives so much press because it is an issue for some
but my mind would be distracted by the far greater challenge – all those alternative theisms in our world.*

“I live in NZ and listen to the endurance of relevance as the longing of the local church in the world.
I work in Asia and listen to the relevance of endurance as the legacy of the local church in the world.”

*If I was preparing to be a pastor-preacher in New Zealand,
I'd show far less interest in the issue of relevance and how we fit into the surrounding world
and far more interest in how to be counter-cultural, embracing a distinctive life of endurance ‘against the flow’.*

“I live in NZ and listen to self-righteous Western post-colonialism (particularly in media and university).
I work in Asia and listen to a post-colonial colonising of peoples’ minds through a global popular culture.”

*If I was preparing to be a pastor-preacher in New Zealand,
I'd be far stronger in my critique of this self-righteousness and the damage it is doing around the world
and far stronger in my support of gospel ministries, indigenous churches, impressive missionaries etc
because in finding Christ people and cultures are enabled to find who they really are.*

“I live in NZ and listen to the call for more leaders – and the suspicion of theological education for the task.
I work in Asia and listen to how theological education is the hope & means by which leaders are trained.”

*If I was preparing to be a pastor-preacher in New Zealand,
I'd make a beeline for the best option in transformative theological education as early in my life as is reasonable,
letting it frame and shade the way I look at the world (and lead in the world) – like a lens.
And then I have the rest of life to build on this foundation: learning about effective leadership and living it.*

“I live in NZ and listen to the preoccupation with stories and the call for more of them in preaching.
I work in poor, uneducated, oral societies in Asia and listen to the call for more teaching in preaching”.

*If I was preparing to be a pastor-preacher in New Zealand,
I'd remain committed to stories without seeing them to be the salvation of preaching
which seems so prevalent, particularly among the younger and emerging generations
– and I'd learn to teach the Bible systematically in a faithful, clear and relevant manner.*

“I live in NZ and listen to the infatuation with all the implications of the global village.
I work in Asia and listen to how wonderful it would be if the global village led to a village church.”

*If I was preparing to be a pastor-preacher in New Zealand,
I'd nurture a sense of our local church being part of a single global-village church ...
I'd be determined to find ways 'to suffer with those who suffer and rejoice with those who rejoice' in our village;
to treat 'those parts of the body that seem to be weaker as indispensable
and those parts we think to be less honourable with special honour'.*

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