



CONNECTOR

#76 April 2025



Dear **POWER Team** members, may the joy, peace and presence of our resurrected Lord be yours today and always.

Amidst all the signs posted on the streets anticipating the upcoming election, we have a sign on our front lawn: "Does Easter Matter?"

1 Corinthians 15:20-22: ***"But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."***

What hope! What assurance! What a message!

What a joy to be able to speak with Jesus Christ, our High Priest day and night, to be able to continually converse with Him, frankly and plainly in all of life's circumstances.

"As for me, the nearness of God is my good."

Yes! Easter Matters!

.Warmly,

Gerald and Dorothy Hogenbirk
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Report from Global Gathering, Chiang Mai, Thailand, March 1-6, 2025

-by **POWER Team** member Miriam Charter

I write this reflection on the Global Gathering in Chiang Mai, Thailand, March 1-6, 2025, realizing it will be read by people who, like me, are fully invested in the Global Mission of the Church and have, in their lifetimes, made tangible investments in the Global Ministry of the Alliance Canada or here in Canada. I don't need to convince you that the cause of missions with which we align ourselves is a worthy cause.

I think I was the oldest person attending the Global Gathering in Chiang Mai, Thailand, March 1 - 6, 2025. **Please understand that my reflection is from the perspective of the generation who will in a decade or two have passed from the scene.** .



We pass the baton to the rising generation

When I speak of "passing the baton," the image itself sounds and feels quite 'colonial' for me — because I saw at Global Gathering that the baton itself is changing even as it is passed. The message hasn't changed — we still preach Christ as Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer and Coming King — and our focus continues to be expanding Christ's kingdom. But the vessel that embodies our Gospel message is changing. The baton I saw passing to (or already in the hands of) the rising generation (the majority of those attending the Global Gathering) is not a static tradition or missiological practice that looks like what my generation thought they would pass on. As I experienced almost all the sessions at the Global Gathering, I had the sense that the baton (or torch) that is being carried forward by the next generation is new and aspects of it are different and may even make my generation feel uncomfortable as we recognize new paradigms in mission.

On the final night, Heather Hahn (IW from Mexico) preached powerfully on the intersection of Missions and Prayer, using 2 Kings 2: 9-15 as her Scriptural base. The relationship of Elijah and Elisha is a picture of someone pouring into the life of someone in the next generation. Heather asked us, "Imagine if someone looked at your life and said, *that's great, but I want twice what you have!*" She provoked her listeners on that closing night to courageously lay aside paradigms we have always used, to let go of broken traditions, and allow God to do a new thing in the Alliance as we do missions in hard and dark places around the globe.

**Allow God to
do a new thing**

The necessity for new paradigms is embedded in a motion from General Assembly, 2024 with which delegates at the Global Gathering were well familiar. It was this motion that gave rise to the Global Gathering: ***We, the delegates to General Assembly 2024, in dependence on the Holy Spirit, to the best of our ability commit ourselves to ensure that our local churches and ministries engage in all aspects of the Strategic Plan, and commit ourselves to making the necessary sacrifices to share the love of Jesus with our broken world in efforts to double our reach by 2034.***

Doubling our reach in the coming decade.

The Global Gathering was a historic meeting, the first time gathering of almost all our Canadian International Workers (in Chiang Mai, Thailand) from around the world with the express purpose of discussing strategies that will give rise to doubling our reach in the coming decade. . . conversions, disciples, baptisms, churches established, ministries launched. . . In addition to almost all our IWs and their families, it

was a privilege to be among participants from the denomination (DSs, leadership and staff from National Ministry Centre, mission mobilizers, Canadian pastors and leaders from local churches of all sizes, constituents and a handful of special guests) who joined with our International Workers (IWs) to talk strategically about how our reach (globally) might be doubled in the coming decade. What a privilege to observe how our IWs wrestled with the complexities of doubling in a changing and turbulent world. I hope it was helpful to have representation from the Canadian churches who could dialogue with International Workers about similar discussions in the Canadian church and context. We're in this together.

On the first morning, it was a moving moment when we said in unison our Alliance prayer: ***Oh God, with all our hearts we long for you to come, transform us to be Christ-centered, Spirit-empowered, mission-focused people, multiplying disciples everywhere.*** On that first morning (March 7) in the message from President Darren Herbold, the enormity of the commitment made at Assembly 2024 (doubling our reach in the coming decade) settled over us. He reminded us that it will require 3000 new workers over the next decade, people whose calling and vocation are surrendered to Jesus, people who abide deeply in Jesus -- because fruitfulness flows from abiding in the vine. Darren spoke of the pruning process that will be necessary — yes, pruning of the dead branches but also of some fruitful branches. Such pruning is not “punishment” but preparation for greater fruitfulness. My mind went to thinking about traditions we hold dear. He suggested we ask God if there is something in our life that the Lord might want to prune. He was brandishing large garden shears as he pruned healthy branches from a larger branch on stage. The illustration with the garden shears became more vivid as Darren wondered aloud if God might be asking him if he was willing to let God prune his cell phone — followed by the crunch of garden shears cutting a large corner off his cell phone! The illustration suggested that nothing is “sacred” for the pruning process – traditions, technology, etc.



“Pruning is not punishment but preparation for greater fruitfulness”.

Deliberations on doubling our reach did not happen in a vacuum. Morning by morning, Dr. Stanley John from Asbury Theological Seminary (formerly from Alliance Theological Seminary) laid a very solid Biblical framework with four very fine Biblical messages which came from the heart of a competent missiologist and an anointed preacher (skillfully using the Word, contemporary illustrations, humour and missiological insights). I've listed his four message titles below and beside each title I've written one quote from Dr. John's message that is still memorable for me:

1. **The Mission of the Triune God** – “Ask yourself, *Is this worthy of the incarnation?*”
2. **Mission Amidst Global Migration** – “There is so much that God is doing that we are absolutely unaware of.”
3. **Missions: Recruiting and Deploying** – “Lend your credibility and authority and position to seeing the work of God flourish. If you do this, you'll play a critical role in the birth of God's work. Where is God calling you to use your credibility, to use your voice, to make room for somebody?”
4. **Mission in the Shape of the Cross** – “I don't care what anybody says about you. . . you're not perfect. Turn and say to your neighbour, *You're no Superhero!*” Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25-31) shows us that spiritual maturity requires us to fully embrace our humanity.”

I reflected, at the end of each message, how Dr. John was preparing all participants at Global Gathering to ask profound questions about our commitment to double our reach in the coming decade. I noticed that each message provided a framework for discussions about implications for

ministry, discussions happening all over the hotel campus as ministry teams gathered to process what they were hearing.

I was moved to think about the framework within which my generation of IWs set strategy and goals. The message and the Biblical Framework has not changed. It is the same Scripture to which we turned in my generation as we sought to chart the course, the same Scripture as the current generation has in view as it develops strategy to reach a lost world with millions who may have never heard of Jesus and many people groups among whom there is still no viable church.

I noticed two **changes in terminology used at GG** that were not used when I was an IW at the strategy table:

1. “Hard” and “Dark” – Two decades ago, key decisions about deployment were made based on whether a target people group was an Unreached People Group (UPG) or a Least Reached People Group (LRPG). Today our IWs and GM staff are using the terminology of “hard” and “dark.”

Terminology Change to:
Hard & Dark

“Hard” is defined by the difficulty of placing international workers in a country based on a variety of physical factors including: visa and residency requirements, availability of medical care, infrastructure and housing, utilities (clean drinking water), quality and affordability of education, prevalence of violence, access to technology, risk of natural disasters, poverty, etc.

“Dark” speaks to the prevalence of spiritual darkness and hostility to the gospel. In a “dark” place, less than 2% of the population are believers, there are high levels of hostility to non-majority religious activity, little access to Christian resources or a national church and whether or not there are other organizations and groups present doing the work.

The concepts of “hard” and “dark” would, in my estimation, be so helpful as decisions are made about where resources (people and funding) are deployed. Such a discernment process seems prudent in a world where resources are limited and the number of people in our world who are still unreached is large. I came away very thankful for our leadership in Global Ministries who are developing such pathways for discernment and decision making.

2. A second change in terminology which I noticed was in the discussion of **strategy**. Programming for the Global Gathering, reports to those gathered and strategy sessions were organized around three distinct strategies (see below). Each IW knew which strategy their ministries fall within:

Terminology Change to:
Church Development
Relief & Development
Marketplace

- a. **Church Development** (Church Planting & Discipleship) -- Establish, grow, and strengthen reproducing faith communities among those with little or no access to the message of Jesus.
- b. **Relief and Development** – Participate in God’s mission of holistic transformation and proclaim the Gospel as we walk with the poor and vulnerable
- c. **Marketplace** – Engage people with your vocational skills as ambassadors for Christ in cross-cultural contexts, and receive care, community and coaching from Alliance teams

All three strategy groups were involved in reporting, brainstorming and strategizing about how they might double their reach in the coming decade. All three groups used the same “Mission Strategy Map” which led to the same outcomes: Disciples are made, churches are planted and nations are reached.

I close with a restatement of something said by the DS for the Western Canadian District, Matt Boda, in his own recap of Global Gathering. He reminded us that we belong to a family of 420 some

churches, with over 200 IWs serving on our behalf in 33 countries including 16 of the 50 countries where it is most difficult to be a follower of Jesus. In doing so we seek to fulfill Christ's words from Matthew 24:14: *This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a testimony and to all nations* (literally to all peoples/every ethnicity) *and then the end will come*.

What an honour and privilege to have been present at the Global Gathering and to have met the rising generation of those who are taking this gospel of the kingdom to hard and dark places in our world.

Miriam Charter

Thanks to Miriam for reporting in such detail and helping **POWER Team** members to be the greatest supporters of the next generation,



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Fire does not fall on an empty altar

The fire of God, the manifest presence of God, does not fall on an empty altar; there must be a sacrifice on the altar.

Paul wrote, ***“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God”*** ([Romans 12:1](#)).



Graduands from the University of Life

now experiencing Eternal Life in God’s presenc

Linda Jean Penner March 11, 1950 – February 10, 2025



Linda was born in Cowpen Creek, Kentucky where she lived for 5 years. She was raised in Tiffin, Ohio where she discovered her love of music: piano and French horn.

Following high school, she earned a Music Degree from Canadian Bible College. It was at CBC she met Jim Penner whom she married in August of 1952.

As the ideal pastor’s wife, Linda, along with Jim, pastored churches in Invermere, Chilliwack, Tacoma, Penticton, Vancouver and Abbotsford.

In the early 90’s, Linda’s health suddenly began to fail.

In 2022 she suffered 3 strokes and had to be placed in a Care Home in Mission BC.

She transitioned to Heaven Feb. 10, 2025, and her Celebration of Life service was held March 11, 2025 at the Chilliwack Alliance Church.

Our love and prayers extend to Jim and their family.

Peggy Louise Fredlund Obituary



May 31, 1947 – Warren, Minnesota, USA

February 14, 2025 – Calgary, Alberta

Peggy Louise Johnson Fredlund was born on May 31, 1947, in Warren, Minnesota. Raised on a farm, she learned the values of hard work, compassion, and service from an early age, helping her parents and honing her skills in cooking and sewing. She shared her childhood with three brothers and a sister, growing up surrounded by love and faith.

A dedicated student, Peggy was inducted into the National Honor Society and graduated as salutatorian of her high school class in 1965. Following her passion for faith and learning, she attended Covenant Bible College in Prince Albert, SK, where she met the love of her life, Lorne Fredlund. Afterward, she pursued a career in nursing, graduating from Swedish Hospital School of Nursing in 1969.

On August 28, 1971, Peggy and Lorne were married, beginning a beautiful journey that would take them to Saskatoon, Edmonton, Regina, and Calgary. Together, they built a loving family, raising three children: Carla, Keith, and Karen.

People will remember Peggy as a wonderful pianist and seamstress. Her life was characterized by compassion, kindness, and humility, but perhaps more than any of these, she had a heart that always asked, “What can I give to others?” Many of her gifts were quilts and fabric art that she lovingly designed and crafted for her family and friends.

Deeply committed to her faith, Peggy led the women’s ministry at her church for many years, inspiring others with her dedication and leadership. Her husband, children, and church community were always her priorities, and she found joy in giving gifts and serving those around her. Above all, Peggy loved and walked faithfully with Jesus.

She and Lorne shared a love of travel, beginning with many fishing adventures, and camping excursions, and then exploring many foreign countries, often accompanied by close friends, creating cherished memories along the way.

Peggy lived her last two years in the memory care unit at The Scenic Grande, where she received excellent care from the compassionate aides and nurses who supported her with dignity and kindness.

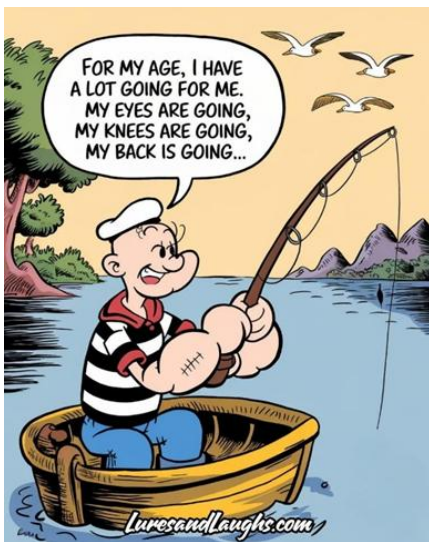


On Friday, February 14, 2025, Peggy was called home by her Savior, leaving behind a legacy of faith, love, and generosity. Her memory will live on in the hearts of all who were blessed to know her.

A Celebration of Peggy’s Life was held at RockPointe Church – Bearspaw (Calgary) Sunday, March 9, 2025.

Husband Lorne served on staff at RockPointe Church as well as many committees in the WCD and the National Office.

A Smile or two after the sorrow and rejoicing of those whom God has called to Himself.



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Your contributions to the CONNECTOR are appreciated.
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