

Episode 029

Interview with Ps Brendan Kirby on Missions

Ps Wilson:

Hi, welcome to wilsonlailing.com. This is our leadership podcast. Today, I'm really excited because we have the privilege of having Pastor Brendan here. Pastor Brendan Kirby is from Adelaide. He is the senior pastor, the founding and senior pastor of Hope Adelaide, which he leads with his wife. Pastor Brendan is really one of our key leaders in Hope International Ministries. Pastor Brendan, besides leading a thriving church in, he's also truly committed to the missions. He's overseeing churches, about 250 or more churches in Africa and India. So, Pastor Brendan, it's such a wonderful thing to have you join with us. I'd like to ask you some questions. You know, there's something we can see, that you've been so involved in missions.

Can you give us an example or two? What are some of the things you are currently doing in the missions field?

Ps Brendan:

Well firstly, I'd just like to say it's a real privilege to be on the leadership podcast. It's really great to be here with Pastor Wilson. We really thank God for Pastor Wilson and his wife for doing such a great job, building the movement. So, it's really my privilege to be here. We have a big heart as a movement to plant churches and preach the Gospel around the world. So, our vision really is a biblical vision. From the Book of Acts and from Matthew chapter 28, and the other passages to go into all the world and preach the Gospel.

And so, we want to get involved in missions, we want to take opportunities where opportunities arise. Over the years, we've had opportunities to build relationships with key leaders overseas. So, when I do go overseas, I engage with key leaders and build relationship, make sure that I can support them relationally, and also to train those leaders in biblical principles so that they'll be able to continue to work with God. And be able to see God move in their lives and to build strong churches.



Ps Wilson:

You know, there are a lot of people who understand the need of the Great Commission, but you have really invested, so much of your time, energy, resources to be involved in the missions field. Why is it so important to you to do that?

Ps Brendan:

Well, that's a good question. When I was a young Christian, I was born again into a church planting movement. When I would read the book of Acts, I naturally expected myself to be part of church planting. So my wife and I, after some years of marriage, we wanted to be part of church planting, and so we spoke to our elders. And Ps. James Loke suggested Adelaide. So, we moved from Melbourne to Adelaide. So that's part of the heart for church planting. Missions really is preaching the Gospel and going where we can. And so, we went from Melbourne to Adelaide and we've looked at opportunities to go overseas. It's really part of the same vision. It's not as if we have a local vision and an international vision, it's really a vision for the Gospel. And so, starting the church here is part of the vision of the Gospel and going overseas is really sort of seamless with the same vision to preach the Gospel.

Ps Wilson:

I like the way you say seamlessly. The challenge that, of course in reality, there are a lot of pastors who are just so absorbed with the local church scene. But you have integrated it. And I think that's wonderful that you're treating it that way.

Ps Brendan:

It can be a little bit of a trap where we become insular and focus only on what seems to be what I own. You know, "I own my local church". But we don't own the church, it's God's church, it's part of the movement. And so, we want to help build the whole movement. We don't want to just help build a local church. We want to be part of building the movement, part of building God's kingdom. So we don't want to solely invest just in our local church. So, we spent 10 to 12 years helping the local church in Perth. And it's been a significant investment as well, because we see ourselves serving God primarily. And then the expression of serving God is in our local church mainly, but then in other churches as well.



Ps Wilson:

How would you say, for a local church to be involved going beyond its, sort of local focus, especially going to another nation? How would, in your view, how would that help the life of a church, the heart of a church, when it's involved in such a way?

Ps Brendan:

That's a good question. In some ways it's a sacrifice for the local church when one of its leaders or more go interstate or overseas on a mission trip for some weeks or some longer period of time. It is a sacrifice, but it's a bit like doing evangelism. As you sow, you will reap. So, we do a lot of evangelism and we know that God will build the church as we give. So, we do a lot of missions, and what that does is it builds a heart for the Gospel. And so, even though it is a sacrifice on the local church, we're building a heart to reach out, a heart of love.

So, cultivating a heart of love, cultivating a heart to give, cultivating a heart to serve, and to take risks. It is a little bit risky at times, some more risky than others.

But in order specifically to get involved, you can look within your local church. There might be people from overseas or from interstate, and they may have interstate connections or relationship with churches overseas. And so, you can work with them. For example, we have a lot of churches in Thailand and Malaysia. So, if you're a local church in Australia, you could look at sending mission trips to Malaysia or to Thailand for example, or to some of our churches in Africa and India.

The church in Melbourne is sending mission trips to our churches in India, and they're loving it, they're really engaged.

So, you could do what's already been done, or you can look for new relationships, new church plants. Maybe some of your people might want to plant a new church in a new location. And you can support that. Getting involved in missions is really part of stimulating the growth in your church. So, if you want to train leaders and grow your leaders. Then training them as part of being involved in missions and church planting in some way is really excellent leadership training development. So, we have grown as leaders because we've been involved in church planting. If we had just stayed in Melbourne as a leader and elder in a local church in Melbourne, our spiritual life would've stagnated many years ago.



Ps Wilson:

I think that's a very powerful observation. You know, being able to release people, and in many ways, even just like a parent with children, sooner or later we should release them. That they can grow and form their own lives, and marriages, families, and so forth. I think you are correct in that. From the local church when we have this whole perspective that we want to send forth because we are all about enlarging the Kingdom of God. So, it's exciting, it's challenging, there's a lot of cost. You said some things about situations which were risky.

Could you maybe share with us one or two of those risky challenges?

Ps Brendan:

Some of them are a little dramatic. I was flying into Pakistan because the president of our movement asked me to go to Pakistan. So, I'm on the way back from Africa and I was a bit doubtful.

Ps Wilson:

By the way, I should explain that was a previous president, not me.

Ps Brendan:

So, I'd been asked to go to Pakistan and the warning I got was when we were flying in, everyone was in white robes. And I'm the only one in Western clothing, jeans and jacket. One of the guys with his beard and white robe leaned over and said to me, "Why are you a westerner flying into Islamabad when I'm a Pakistani and I'm afraid to come to Pakistan?" I looked at him and I'm like, "that does not help". So, I looked at him and said, "to meet friends". But in my mind, I'm thinking I don't even, have never met these people before my life and I'm calling them friends.

Ps Wilson:

Oh, they are friends. Because you have already communicated with them.



Ps Brendan:

Only over the phone. So, it was a big risk. It was like 4:00 AM and I'm walking out of this airport to meet people in Islamabad who could easily kidnap me and I'd be gone, you know, totally on my own in 2009. So, it was a bit nervous, I had to really trust God. Turned out he was a real pastor overseeing a number of churches. So, he did go to a real church and we were in a real church meeting. And then that night, the same day, they blew up the Marriott Hotel and maybe 100 people died and about 100 people went to hospital. And the pastor consoled me by saying, "don't worry, they're targeting foreigners". So, I was very nervous. And we've had other mission trips where we just get into precarious situations with bogged cars and, you know, needing bodyguards and things like that.

Ps Wilson:

It does have its risks. But that's not to say every time we involve, there's just certain nations which probably had higher risk factor, isn't it?

Ps Brendan:

So, if you're prudent, you can avoid such risks and missions can be a great blessing.

Ps Wilson:

I guess it's also a challenge because we want to be prudent, we want to be wise, we want to reduce risk. But on the other hand, we got to hear what God is saying to us. And despite the challenges, being willing to take those steps of faith and step out.

Ps Brendan:

And be courageous. Pastor Wilson came to Africa with me some years ago and we were in Congo and the whole earth was shaking while he was preaching. So, you know there was an earthquake while he was preaching.

Ps Wilson:

I thought it was me.

Ps Brendan:

So yeah, there are risks involved, but that's part of having faith in God, that God protects us and leads us.



Ps Wilson:

What would be some advice you would give to some leaders who are perhaps considering getting involved or getting more involved in missions? What would be some steps you would advise them to, you know, that journey of getting involved or more involved into missions?

Ps Brendan:

I think probably “do it”. Find a church, or talk to your pastor, talk to your leaders and get involved. As you get involved, you'll find that you'll grow spiritually, you'll be challenged and you'll be stretched and you'll read the Bible more, you'll pray more, you'll give more, you'll see the people, you'll see the heart. And then, oh my goodness, these people really need financial help, they need spiritual help, I have to do something to help these people. So really, just get involved, you don't need to be super spiritual leader. I was not a super spiritual leader; I was just a guy here in Adelaide.

We had a little church and we had some Africans in our church, and they said, “Look the pastor in Africa wants to join the movement. What do you want to do?” So, eventually I just like, “all right, I'll go over there.” And so, we just go from there. So, we just go little by little and it's not a matter of reaching a certain level before you go. We just need to get involved, and you know pray, get involved and get the feet wet, so to speak, and go from there.

Ps Wilson:**And we can all take baby steps, can't we?**

For example, you could volunteer to go with Pastor Brendan on some of his trips. And that'd be wonderful. Go in there, you know just get there, feel the atmosphere, sense what's happening, eat the local foods, feel the challenges, stretch out in faith, perhaps pray for the sick, step on prophesy and different things that you have opportunity to get involved. And we all start with those little steps.

Ps Brendan:

It is very exciting actually; it's amazing the miracles we see overseas on the mission field. It's a little bit more tricky to see them in a conventional setting back here in Western church. But overseas it's almost as if God accelerates the miracle working. And so, we see some very fast miracles happening and it's very exciting to see God move spiritually and healing people.



Ps Wilson:

And I would put it this way, when you're put out there into those sorts of unknown sort of situations, it really challenges you to stretch forth your faith. I think it's a tremendous way, you'll find opportunities to do things you'll never otherwise get to do in your local context.

Ps Brendan:

Well, just give a quick example. I recently went to Fiji in July just to investigate relationship with the pastor there. God was really confirming the word with many healings. And we were in one meeting with a family. A number of the family members said that the pain had left, that God was healing them. And so, the faith in the whole room was going up and I spoke to the wife and I said, "Where's your husband?" She said her husband's got a sore back. So, I said "Where is he?" He's out in the field working and we just had such a faith at that time. I said "Let's pray for him now."

So, everyone in the room prayed and we rebuked the back pain. I said to the wife, "Ring him now, ask him how his back's feeling." And so, she rang the husband, and the husband said, "I was just about to ring you. The pain in my back is gone." And so, we're like, wow God, that's just amazing. And that does not normally happen you know. Pray for someone out in the paddock, you know. God knows where they are.

Ps Wilson:

And you were not a bunch of pastors or leaders praying. You just with some people who just got saved here.

Ps Brendan:

Just random people, just a family in Fiji. It was really exciting.

Ps Wilson:

You know, one of the key benefits, the things that you experience, the things that you learn out there, you can often bring it back to your local centre.

Ps Brendan:

So, we had more confidence praying for the sick back here and does require a bit of fasting. But that's good for the waistline.



Ps Wilson:

Well, Brendan, it's really good to hear some of your experiences and some of your insights. It's really been a blessing. I trust that our listeners will really be blessed by all of this. So, thank you very much, Brendan, for your time.

Ps Brendan:

Yeah, no worries. If I could just encourage people to give financially, there is a massive need. There's so many hungry people, so many needy people, so many church buildings that are half finished that we really need financials for. So, if we can provide some gift to HMA, Hope Ministries Australia, that will be so appreciated. We'd appreciate that very much.

Ps Wilson:

Thank you very much, Brendan. God bless all of you.

Ps Brendan:

No problem. Thank you.

Discussion Questions

These questions could be done personally or as part of a group discussion.

1. Ps. Brendan made the statement "...starting the church here is part of the vision of the Gospel and going overseas is really sort of seamless with the same vision to preach the Gospel." What are your thoughts about that statement connecting local and overseas missions? Discuss.
2. What were you inspired about Ps. Brendan's heart for missions? Discuss why.



Actionable Steps

Following questions are to prompt us on suitable actions. Importantly, come up with steps you will take to make progress. Give them datelines and priority.

1. What specific steps can you take to make the Great Commission both seamlessly a local and overseas mission?
 - Consider how it can fully become your perspective.
 - Consider how you may make this happen in your own life and ministry.
2. Consider how you can help make missions be part of the plan to develop your faith and ministry.
 - Are there some specific areas that missions can stretch you to grow spiritually?
 - What are some steps you can take to get involved in missions?
3. Consider how you can help make missions be part of the plan to develop the leaders and ministries in your life group or local church.
 - Perhaps consider it as part of the ministry exposure, the training pathway, the challenge to stretch the leaders, etc?
 - Develop a simple plan to implement it.





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