

MY ROLE IN GOD'S MISSION

CASE STUDY 1

Imagine you are a 12-year-old living in a remote village in Papua New Guinea. Your main role in life is to walk the three miles to the next village to draw water into two buckets that you carry back to your own village. You do this three times until you are finished for the day. This is everyday of your life.

One day, you return from your chore only to discover that some stranger has come into your village and begun telling stories about a god, kings, and one man who is known as the King of kings. Your people are captivated as they listen to these stories day after day. They listen as though the stories are true, because for all of their lives stories like these are how information has been passed down to them from one generation to the next. They have no reason not to believe that these stories are true. But it is interesting that on a certain day, the storyteller shares that this great king died a horrible death. He was such a good man who loved everyone with whom he came in contact. How could this story be told in this way? Why would such a good person die? Your people are so caught up in the story that this terrible news literally has them weeping, crying, and wailing, as you have seen them do at the funerals of so many villagers and family members. Why should this story have such a heavy impact upon you and your people?

CASE STUDY 2

In a place called Riga, Latvia, in the former Soviet Union, a group of teenagers and adults sits in a school to hear the stories of the Bible. Unlike the tribal people of Papua New Guinea, these people are literate, and they have read the classics of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. But because of the shadow of the Soviet Union that fell over them for 50 years, they don't know the stories of the Bible. So they come every week to listen with interest. They hear about the Israelites and the Passover on the eve before they left Egypt. They find the story about the blood of the Passover lamb splattered on the three points of the doorpost very interesting. Then they listen to the details of how the Israelites were to worship in the desert, providing the unblemished sacrifice as a burnt offering to God. They have come to understand that they are sinful and that God provided the Law to show them their sin. They don't want to miss any detail about these stories, and they want to hear them all without any details left out. Then one day the storyteller speaks of one named John the Baptist who came out of the wilderness, pointed to Jesus, and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" Suddenly, the people's thoughts go all the way back to the Passover and the sacrifices in the desert, and they make the connection, and the storyteller sees tears quietly rolling down their faces.