

Compassionate Design

by Matthew

In our recent newsletter on design thinking, Jim shared how we all have the potential to be creative since we have been formed in God's image (Genesis 1:27). We all have this trait of creativity in ourselves given to us by our Creator, and we can use it in our daily lives to impact others to the glory of God. If you are a person who may not think yourself to be creative, then this may sound a little intangible. I can relate.

In my experience, creativity and even designing can sound like something that is reserved for famous painters and high-profile engineers. Certain people may create a Mona Lisa or design a bridge, but I propose that it can also look something like a simple thermometer. We thought that you might be encouraged by joining our creative process on a recent project at ITEC.

Earlier this year, our medical team came to us with a need for a demonstration thermometer. In their experience of training overseas, one lesson which consistently requires one-on-one instruction was on how to read an analog thermometer. In the Design Thinking process, empathy is required both for identifying needs and meeting those needs. Colossians 3:12 says, "Therefore, God's chosen ones, holy and loved, put on **heartfelt compassion**, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience." Is that not what empathy is: heartfelt compassion? Compassion should not be reserved to how we feel when we see difficult situations, but compassion should also impact how we work to do good for the afflicted. From here, we can see why starting with empathy is so important in the creative process.

Together, our team sat down with this request and thought through the many different avenues we could approach in helping with this challenge. We discussed the possibility of using digital versus analog thermometers, weighing the pros and cons of each. While digital thermometers are easy to read, they do require batteries. Button cell batteries which are used in digital thermometers can be difficult to find overseas and when available are very expensive, but analog thermometers do not need batteries. We also talked through the possibility of using solar digital thermometers and are still looking into these as something to test. Our medical team put great thought into their reasons to use an analog thermometer, and they ultimately believe it is still a useful skill to teach the students.

Reading an analog thermometer is a skill that could be compared to solving a math problem. I remember every math teacher since the fourth grade uttering the phrase, "You need to learn to work this out by hand because you won't always have a calculator with you." We won't go into who gets the last laugh now that I carry a smart phone, but I

can see their point. As we live in a technology-driven world, sometimes it is hard to accept that digital is not always the best solution.



Rhonda and Trina show off the demonstration thermometer prototype.

With empathy in mind, our varied group began to creatively define what this demonstration thermometer could look like. We generated a list of ideas, settled on what we thought would be the best direction, and then created a prototype. A quick, cheap prototype to get the idea across without taking a lot of time and resources. These are commonly referred to as 'low fidelity' prototypes. A quick prototype allowed us to 'test' the functionality and gain feedback from our medical team. Overall, our prototype was close to what they had been envisioning and only needed slight modifications. We will continue to update the design as needed as we close in on the desired outcome. The final test will be with the students, verifying this demonstration thermometer helps them master the concept.

So, what significance does the empathetic development of a thermometer have to you? I think this quote from Matt Perman's book "What's Best Next" really puts our creativity (that includes yours, too!) into the right perspective. "...The things we do every day take on even greater significance because they are avenues through which we serve God and others. In fact, the gospel teaches us that the good of others is to be the main motive in all that we do and the chief criterion by which we determine 'what's best next.'" Including demonstration thermometers.

Bruce Van Fleet Visits!



Ronbo's desk had a special visit this month!

The team was excited to see Bruce Van Fleet, who was seriously injured in a plane crash in Guatemala in June of last year while visiting a potential ministry partner.

We thank you all for your prayers for Bruce and his family during his recovery. We rejoice in the knowledge that we serve a God who listens to our prayers!

"Heal me, Lord, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for you are the one I praise." Jeremiah 17:14

To hear more of Bruce's story, check out the Mission Minded episode he was on a few weeks back.

Visit www.bit.ly/bruceemm or scan the code with your phone.

New Series - Mission Minute

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted international travel, giving time for churches to reflect on the long-term impact of short-term trips. Recently we introduced the first of a video series encouraging you to consider training when international travel resumes.

Our film team has been interviewing people from all over the world, carrying out short-term mission trips that involve training. We asked them to share about personal experiences that have left a lasting impact, empowered the indigenous church, and focused on the needs of the local people.

The Mission Minute series will be short videos clips from interviews with people serving around the world. We hope their insights and principles will benefit you and the ministry you are involved with.

We will be releasing a new Mission Minute video weekly, identifying seven principles to consider in mission efforts.

This first video in the Mission Minute series features a Missions Ministry Leader who was also our first training dentist, Charlie Vittitow. The question that he poses, "What are you leaving behind?" sets the tone for this series.



To watch, visit www.bit.ly/mmcharlie or scan the code with your phone.

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