



FOREWORD

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I remember exactly where I was when I read the tabloid headline: 'SODOM & GOMORRAH', it shrieked, name-checking those two infamous biblical cities, synonymous with extreme depravity.

The article went on to describe paralytic drunkenness, drug-fuelled sex, and a date-rape epidemic in and around the pubs, clubs and streets of San Antonio, Ibiza. It was heart-breaking. Thousands of young party-goers seemed to me to epitomise both the lostness and creativity of a generation, looking for fun and finding something else.

I knew that some Christians - maybe most Christians - would share the disapproving tone of the newspaper article, but hadn't Moses interceded for Sodom and Gomorrah? And Jesus told a parable about God's love for a son who partied too hard. He refused to condemn the woman caught in an act of adultery. He reached out to those in the sex trade; and wept over a generation that was lost 'like sheep without a shepherd'.

'God,' I prayed, clutching the lurid newspaper, 'please - if this is you - open a door for us in Ibiza.'

Life moved on, and a few weeks later I was at a conference talking to a lady at the end of a meeting when she said something that took my breath away: 'I want to invite you to send a team to the island where I live. There are not many Christians. We pray but we feel overwhelmed. The island is called Ibiza.' I blinked and nodded slowly. At that moment the door swung wide and I knew that God was beckoning us in.

And so we sent our first tentative team to San Antonio to 'spy out the land'. They came back with stories of creativity, beauty and opportunity mixed in with the depravity described in the newspaper article. So we sent another team: clubbers, prayer warriors and a couple of Christian DJs. They rented villas, went nocturnal, partied and prayed enjoying the music and reaching out to those who had collapsed in the street, helping them get home safely, drinking only water from bottles to protect themselves against the pervasive 'date-rape' drug, rohypnoll.

For several summers we sent 24-7 teams to 'pray, play and obey' on Ibiza. There were miraculous answers to prayer. A television documentary, 'God Bless Ibiza', was viewed by almost a million people. Rolling Stone sent

a journalist. Teams kept going. The needs kept growing. God kept answering prayers. It became clear that we needed to establish the work long term. We'd never believed in 'hit and run' evangelism. The mission urgently needed year-round presence. But who could head up such an extreme challenge? They would need to be mature, solid Christians who could still relate to young, drunk party-goers. They would have to be flinty pioneers capable of building the mission from almost nothing, and yet they would also need to be people of deep prayer. Worst of all, we had absolutely nothing to offer them. No money. No infrastructure. No home. Just an open door in a place that the tabloids called Sodom and Gomorrah.

Brian and Tracy Heasley rose to that challenge and pioneered 24-7Ibiza in ways that outstripped everything we could imagine. The story of how God sent them from a village in Norfolk, England to the club capital of Europe remains one of the most dramatic callings I've ever heard. They raised their sons, learned Spanish, led teams onto the streets night after night, reached out quietly, befriending bouncers and club owners and millionaires alike until 24-7Ibiza became trusted as the fourth emergency service on the island. Brian and Tracey also established a drop-in centre with a permanent prayer room, they opened their home continually, and planted a Boiler Room too. The Heasleys are two of the most remarkable leaders I've ever known and their story, recorded here, is a timeless testament to the power of answered prayer.

When I think of the work in Ibiza, I remember the way that the Salvation Army deployed stretcher-bearers to carry the drunks home from London's streets in the 18th century. And I think of C.T. Studd, the England cricketer who gave away his fortune and went as a missionary to China, explaining that, while

'Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell;
I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.'

I am so grateful to Brian and Tracy for their sacrifice and for taking the time to write this brilliant new book. As you journey with them through its pages you will be amazed at God's faithfulness and consequently your own faith will grow. You will also learn important principles about contextual, cross-cultural mission, not from academics on the conference circuit but from practitioners who have paid the price night after night, on their knees in the prayer room and in the gutter too. This book will also help you understand the vital

relationship between intercessory prayer and incarnational mission and the way that prayer itself can be a paradigm for evangelism.

I hope that you will be inspired to pioneer, to take some even bigger risks, to abandon yourself afresh to the Great Adventure of God for your life. Brian and Tracey's story will also provoke laughter, because the journey of faith is often hilarious, full of the happy-accidents that make life colourful.

I will never forget commissioning Brian and Tracey in a London church at the fifth birthday party of the 24-7 movement. Standing in front of a large crowd I asked why on earth they were giving up a safe life leading a growing church in an English village to go to Ibiza without any security at all. I knew that Brian had many great things he could say in answer to that question. Inspiring things. Intelligent things. Things that might be strategic in drumming up a bit more support. It was a soft pitch of a question, and all Brian needed to do was hit a home run. He opened his mouth to answer, but nothing came out. And then he began to weep. Tracey held his hand tight and he just cried.

Everyone understood the meaning of those tears.

The Heasleys maintained that soft heart through many subsequent years of quiet service, mostly away from the spotlight, being yelled at, puked on. And worse. Praying when no one was looking, late at night. Worrying about their boys as all parents do. Enduring the isolation of the long winter months.

And when eventually it was time to come home, Brian and Tracey did it well. There is no lasting success without successful succession, and the Heasleys raised up the next generation who have taken the baton and are growing the mission to a remarkable next level.

Sometimes today, when I ask Brian about Ibiza, he still weeps. No words. Only tears. All these years later. May you sense those tears as you read this book. May you feel them and even share them. May the God of all compassion break your heart, earth your prayers in the dirt, and enlarge your vision beyond the bounds of normal. And may the Lord Jesus who took on flesh two thousand years ago, invade and disrupt our lives again today, gatecrashing our complacency with tears.

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