



## Training a new generation

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Brad Eggmolesse is General Manager of Global Mine Training, an organisation that, in partnership with local mining companies, is providing training and opportunities for unemployed locals to enter the mining industry. He has spent almost thirty years in and around mines himself, and is no stranger to the harsh conditions, work and lifestyle that comes with the territory, but considers it a great industry with great people, full of excellent opportunities for new recruits.

Brad grew up in the North-West Queensland mining town of Mount Isa and on leaving school took up a trade as a boiler maker. Not long after he was offered a job in the MIM underground as a 'nipper'. 'Nippering' is a character building phase of a miner's career which involves anything from running men and materials underground, to shovelling muck from conveyor belts. Hard and hot work, it requires physical and mental stamina.

Despite this, Brad actually reckons that the hardest thing about mining in his experience is maintaining good relationships, with family and with people at work. He believes that the remoteness of many mining operations means miners often leave their families behind for extended periods of time, and because of this, the culture of the workplace tends to be one in which alcohol, drugs and prostitution can play a big part, particularly for men who are lonely. For most, the compensation comes in the form of good pay and the chance to 'live it up' on their time off; the ultimate meaning in life coming from fishing and hunting trips, a new boat, a new car, maybe even a house on the coast one day. It can be difficult not to get drawn into this mindset and the lifestyle.

For Brad, his life changed dramatically one summer Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> January 1986. Although he had grown up in church, the stories never seemed personal and real to him. After a number of years in the mines though, the big questions of life begged an answer, one which money and holidays couldn't provide. This particular Sunday, his mother invited him to church and this time he said yes. Little did he expect that he would meet Jesus Christ there in Spirit, powerful, merciful, bringing him to his knees; the answer to his questions.

That day he began a lifelong journey following Christ which has recently brought him from Mount Isa to Kalgoorlie. A couple of years ago Brad had a vision to start using his skills to train new miners. An opportunity came up at the Pajingo mine in Queensland, training new underground miners for their service crews. Then about six months ago, he felt called by God to start a training programme in Kalgoorlie. With much prayer and good support from local businessmen, Brad took a step of faith, making the move west. This meant that he had to leave his family back in Mount Isa during this time, but they have recently joined him.



Brad Eggmolesse, Richard Fortune (Out of the Pit) and Peter Robertson (International Miner's Mission) in Kalgoorlie, September 2007.



Global Mine Training exists to service the growing skills shortage in the mining industry. They provide training for unemployed locals, particularly indigenous locals and many who have strayed on the wrong side of the law and have started down a destructive path in life. Brad, has a heart for the trainees and wants to offer them a chance to turn their life around. He is upfront with trainees about his faith in Jesus Christ, but leaves it to them to ask him questions and gets on with the business of training them. Brad encourages a Christian work ethic in the trainees from day one, for example: being thankful for their job and working diligently, being considerate of each other and respectful to their bosses. These qualities will often set them apart from others in the workplace.



GMT trainees underground, learning to work on a services crew.

Currently GMT have six trainees starting at Newmont's Jundee operations with Byrnescut mining contractors; Byrnescut have been very supportive of the venture and have a partnership arrangement with GMT.

There is a huge demand for GMT's services, particularly in Western Australia, and already discussions are underway with Norilsk, Newmont and Alcoa to provide similar training programmes.

Brad remains very humble about the whole venture though, and despite significant interest from government bodies to partner in the work, he has resolved to keep the organisation independent and open to God's leading. He is also cautious about the organisation growing too big quickly, and the quality of the training being compromised.

For Brad though, he knows the most important thing is that he stays prayerful, knowing that God is the ultimate director of this venture, and that He will use it to restore lives and bring the lost back to Him.

Some things that we could be praying for Brad and Global Mine Training:

- To be granted a training mine: an unused mine where trainees can learn to operate machinery and develop support skills;
- Wisdom for the organisation to know which projects to take on;
- Quality of training to always be a priority above number of trainees;
- Faithfulness for the organisation to stay within God's will;
- God's continued favour upon finances and operations;
- For God to raise up trainers – miners who may be able to teach others their skills; and
- Brad's family: his wife Valerie, four children and three grandchildren: Benjamin (24) married to Claire, Latoya (22), Regina (20) and her three children Jacinta (3), Chelsea (2) and Mikiyah (9 mths), Anna (18) and her fiancée Warren.

**If you would like to contact Brad, to either discuss engaging the services of Global Mine Training or to enquire about opportunities to help out as a trainer, please contact us via the website.**

Richard Fortune, October 2007.