

4 CORNERS

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Sierra Leone

– Province of Freedom?

Come with us to the Banta Temne tribe of 30,000 people, and not a Christian among them until five or six years ago. But the Lord was at work in the life of Philip, a young Christian who left university after two years to go and live among them. During the war Christians had shown kindness to the Chief and so Philip was able to move freely among them, even to preach Christ in the mosques – and every village has its mosque. Now there are 80 believers. Philip left to study at Bible College and we were asked to help with teaching these new Christian leaders.

So we went to the village of Mabure which has a primary school of 260 pupils in six classes, just two of the teachers have the basic teaching qualifications (40% of teachers are unqualified).

The 10 church leaders attended along with a few Muslim men whose Christian wives had persuaded them to come. The women folk had their own class. For three days they all faithfully attended, and every day there was also an opportunity to teach the 260 children. God is indeed at work there.

The Gospel arrived in Sierra Leone over 200 years ago but many have yet to hear it for the first time. The first missionaries were the freed slaves themselves. Villages were built, each with its chapel and with familiar names

– Sussex, Kent, Aberdeen, York. Foreign missionaries arrived to help and evangelise, teach and translate the scriptures. The Gospel spread slowly from the coast to the hinterland but here there was the challenge of Islam and paganism, the same challenges faced today. The work was slow. More missionaries came, new areas were reached with the Gospel, churches planted. Diamonds were found in abundance. In 1961 Sierra Leone gained independence.

In 1971 we went to Sierra Leone – to work in the iron ore mine. A Sunday School was opened and a church started – a time of training for us. After three years we left. But many missionaries (up to 200) were busy teaching God's word, encouraging, helping in schools, clinics etc.

Continued overleaf



Sierra Leone cont



Every village has its mosque.



In 1990 came the rebel war, 50% of the population were displaced, many were killed, hundreds maimed for life. Missions closed and missionaries left. Many Sierra Leoneans left also. Churches were destroyed. We returned in 1999.

In 2002 the war officially ended. Many believers recalled with joy and wonder how God had been with them as they fled the rebels, found protection and food in unexpected places. God was still at work in the destruction and mayhem.

The church leaders struggled manfully to organise, to rebuild spiritually, and physically. There were unfamiliar tasks to undertake and God was at work but very few missionaries returned.

Back to the Banta Temne.....On the way home on the final day we were stopped by the nurse at the village health clinic. A pregnant lady (deaf and mute) had a dead baby in her womb and there was no-one qualified to help. So our double cab pick-up became an ambulance, (not for the first time). Driving slowly over a very bad road, we managed to get her to the Roman Catholic Mission hospital 30-40 miles away. It brought back memories of 37 years earlier when our first child, Jennifer, was born in that same hospital, then just a one-room clinic with two maternity rooms.

Near the Guinea border are communities unreached with the Gospel. One evangelist who visited the area reports the Muslims as saying "we are only Muslims because nobody came to tell us about Jesus. Now that we have heard we want to follow Him". Indeed Islam (60-70% population) is making great strides in Sierra Leone building mosques, schools, Madrassahs, clinics. Libya, Pakistan, Egypt, Iran support and send missionaries. False teaching is rife among the churches – so attractive to the poor, but rarely pointing people to the Saviour.

The Gospel still has to reach many people, the majority of whom are poor economically and spiritually. Who will come and help the church leaders bring the glorious Gospel which gives true freedom? The spiritual needs are great, opportunities to serve are many: Church planters, Bible teachers, teacher training, doctors, (former Mission hospitals are usually run by paramedics), and many more.

Mike & Vi Webb

Every day there was an opportunity to teach the 260 children. God is indeed at work there.

Director's Desk



God is still working out his purposes for his world and there are many still to be called into his Kingdom.



Are you one of those people who makes "to do" lists? When I have a week off I sometimes make a list of all the things I hope to accomplish during the week. It can be a little discouraging at the end of the week to find how few of the items have been crossed off the list!

It is only too easy to think of the Christian life as a long "to do" list. That somehow it's all about what we do. But the truth is the very opposite. The Christian life is about what God has done and is doing. It is so refreshing and encouraging to stop in the busyness of life to reflect on this.

We are living in difficult times yet the Lord has encouraged us in so many ways. Together with others, we are facing real financial challenges, especially with the weakness of the pound against other currencies, so it has been humbling to see the way in which the Lord has provided for us and for our missionaries. The regular gifts of those who faithfully support the work have continued to come. In recent months a number of special gifts have also been received which have come at just the right time to meet

the needs of our missionaries. These gifts have reminded us of Jesus' assurance that our heavenly Father knows what we need.

We have also been encouraged by a higher than normal number of enquiries from those who feel the Lord may be calling them to cross-cultural missionary service. Some are young people who want to spend their lives in the Lord's service. Others are mature Christians who are seriously considering leaving their secular work to serve in world mission. It is a privilege to be able to get alongside these people and to pray with them that the Lord will make clear his will for their lives. It is one sign that God is still working out his purposes for his world and that there are many still to be called into his Kingdom.

Stepping out of our daily routine can be scary! Yet some have shared with us the sense of liberation they have experienced as they have responded in obedience to God's call. The fact is that our security often arises from being in familiar circumstances rather than from our personal faith in our heavenly Father. This has been true for some short-termers who have gone on medical electives and summer teams. As they have moved outside their normal comfort zone, they have faced challenges that have made them look to the Lord in a new way for the strength they need.

Some of our missionaries are facing big challenges as they learn a new language, try to understand another

culture, undertake pioneer ministries or face discouragements. We can find ourselves stretched to the very limits of our resources. The apostle Paul must have known something of this. In his ministry he experienced a great variety of circumstances, both good and bad, but through them all he was able to affirm, "I can do everything through him who gives me strength."

This is a lesson we all need to learn as God calls us to serve him in our home church or cross-culturally in another country. The work is too big for us, but it's not too big for him. Many of the things he calls us to do are, humanly speaking, impossible, but through him even we can do it. He turns our weakness into strength and leads us by the hand to trust him more.

Whatever our situation, it is good to take to heart the Psalmist's exhortation to "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his love endures for ever."

How wonderful it is to know that God will provide for all our needs. He is on our side, he is for us. "He did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" In this confidence we can face every challenge knowing that the Lord has called us to be his fellow workers. He will accomplish it all and he will not leave one task undone.

Peter Milsom

Reaching out

What does the word *evangelism* mean to you? Tracts, surveys, door-to-door, street preaching, literature work, Bible study groups – the list is endless.

Oh yes, and English classes.

In our classes we are always focused on introducing the message of the Bible to our English students as well as giving them a good English lesson. The BBC has excellent resources on its website and we try to link a theme to a Bible passage to read and to discuss, as well as using word games, tongue twisters, poems, etc. You have to be a bit creative! Sometimes you know that God has taken matters in hand, though.

One evening Lara, a veiled Muslim from one of the Gulf States, invited us for a meal at her place. When we arrived we found that Anil and Rita from India and Anthony from Hong Kong were there too. All attend the English classes (and also Pat's French class through which the contact was first made). They invited me to give thanks, which I did in Jesus' name. The food was plentiful and delicious. "Eat, eat, why aren't you eating?" came the cry every time we stopped for breath!

As we ate, Rita looked across and said "Mister Alan, why do the innocent suffer?" I thought of the man born blind in John 9. I explained that the Bible says that in this world suffering strikes indiscriminately at the deserving and undeserving. It is not true that because someone suffers they did wrong before they were born or in a previous life. Neither were they more guilty than anyone else. In the end we are all infinitely guilty before God, but the amazing thing is that the one person who was ever truly innocent experienced the deepest suffering ever when he was crucified for us.

The next English class Lara turned up on time but everyone else was late. She said "Why did the God give us the book? My daughter keeps asking but I don't know the answer". I explained how God spoke to us and gave us the Bible because he loves us. "But did he need to?" No, he didn't need to, but he loves us anyway. "So tell me, is Jesus Son of God or sent by God?" We read John 3:16,17. "But if he is Son of God, explain that to a child and they think the God married Mary." I said that the measure of truth is not our ability to understand, and we read some more: Colossians 1, Hebrews 1, Isaiah 53. We talked about how all the prophets sinned – Abraham, Noah, Isaiah, Jonah, but only Jesus lived a perfect life, then died for our sin and rose again. Lara returns to her Gulf State this June, but we know there is a church there and we hope to keep in touch.

These conversations have been months in gestation, the result of the drip, drip, drip of Bible reading together. Our prayer is that faith is also in gestation, that the Spirit of God is opening the hearts of these people to hear, receive and believe the Word of God. Please pray for Lara, Anil and Rita (not their real names, but God will know exactly who you mean.) Anthony came to Bordeaux a Christian and he is being baptised in June. Please pray that the whole English class will be there to witness his profession of faith.



Leafletting in the park.



Joint mission team.

Why did the God give us the book? My daughter keeps asking but I don't know the answer.

"Oh no ! Oh no ! Man invented God and no good came of it. When you think of all the wars and conflicts, the wars of religion, the conflict in Northern Ireland, the middle east... Oh no ! Oh no !"

I thought, "Well that touched a nerve! All I did was invite him to the Calvin exhibition. He doesn't want to come, does he! O.K. O.K.", but still he was in full flow. Oh well! Here goes! (I prayed to the God of heaven.)

"I agree with you completely. People do dreadful things in the name of God, but that doesn't mean that God doesn't exist. And yes, lots of bad things are done in the name of religion, but the Bible is still true."

My new friend was still talking about the misbehaviour of certain priests and so on. I told him that I agreed that people could be dreadful hypocrites but that the Bible was still true and that he was very welcome to come and see the Calvin exhibition if he liked.

"Oh no! Oh no!"

Some minutes later I was on my way through the door of the student centre to get yet more printer cartridges!

"Oh! Hello! You came anyway!" Thinks – do I go back in with him or do I let someone else have a go and see if they get any further than me... I left, saying I'd be back in a few minutes.

And when I got back he was still there. We sat down and talked. He's typical of so many people here. They have been put off Christianity by their experience of religion, but they have never ever heard the gospel.

So he talked again about the badness of religious people. I agreed with him. Everyone is guilty before God. Everyone. But still the Bible is true and Jesus Christ lived and died so that bad people could be forgiven.

But what about... Yes, but the Bible is still true. And then... Yes, but the Bible is still true.

Do you have a Bible? Would you like a Bible ? Are you local ? Do you live nearby?

He was house-sitting for his son, but he has a Bible. Maybe he'll read it. Please pray that he does, and that he finds salvation.

Thank you so much for your prayers! We had a very encouraging joint mission week with UBM (14-21 April), with great weather and a motivated team and students to work with. The day consisted mainly of inviting people to the different events, giving out tracts and gospels and engaging people in conversation. In the mornings we went on the campus near tram stops, cafés and in the halls of residence and in the afternoons we stayed in the area near the student centre encouraging people to come into the John Calvin exhibition which was held there. We were pleasantly surprised to see around 40 people come into the exhibition which became the context for some excellent conversations. Several asked what Calvin stood for, so it was the

perfect opening to present the essence of the gospel. It's so encouraging to think of how many opportunities we had throughout the week to share the gospel for the first time with agnostics, atheists, Catholics, Jews, Jehovah's Witnesses and Muslims. In the evenings we held a conference on Calvin's life and theology (which was well attended including some unbelievers) an evangelistic film night and an English night which were however, less well-attended.

We faced some resistance during the week. A Catholic student who came to the exhibition became enraged by the thought that it was God's plan for Jesus to die on the cross. Rather surprisingly he said that man was the one responsible and guilty for it, at which he tore up

the invitation, threw it on the ground and stormed out. It was impossible to reason with him, even from Scripture. Another interesting feature of the week was getting thrown out of the park adjoining the town hall, just opposite the student centre. We'd had some of the best conversations with people in the park, when we were brusquely told that (unbeknown to us) we had no right to give out publicity there and were obliged to leave immediately. But by that time we had spoken to nearly everyone!

Praise God for the power of His wonderful cross to bring the dead to life. May many who were reached find true life in Christ. Pray for ongoing contacts and that the students and church may be inspired to continue in

evangelism. Praise God that Liz Richards, who was on the team, will be helping me in the student work for seven months from September as part of her language degree year abroad. Another mission week is planned for 2010. So if you have a good level of French and a heart for the lost we would love you to come!



Faith comes by hearing the message



More than 3 billion people, 50% of the world's population, cannot read. This represents a very significant mission challenge and one we really need to think through.

Evangelising those who *can* read

Much of our evangelism involves literature distribution. I recently visited Operation Mobilisation's new ship "Logos Hope" which boasts the largest floating bookshop in the world. George Verwer is, rightly, a great advocate of the place of literature in world evangelisation. He encourages all Christians everywhere to engage in the ministry of distributing tracts, books and copies of the Scriptures in as many ways and situations as possible.

To some extent our emphasis on literature reflects our own culture, background and training. In the UK, the written word is central to our Christian life. We are literate and have Bibles. We encourage personal Bible reading and take Bibles to church services to follow the reading and teaching. Pastors and missionaries are trained to understand the text of the Bible in detail and to use the historical-grammatical method for accurate biblical exegesis and exposition.

The emphasis on the written word has been particularly strong in the Protestant tradition. The advent of the printing press and the extensive influence of the Reformation in the West ensured this. The printed word was one of the means by which Reformation teaching spread throughout Europe and the translation of the Bible into the daily languages of people has made the truths of God's Word accessible to ordinary Christians and others.

We have a wealth of Christian literature which builds believers up in their faith and explains the Gospel to unconverted people. In pioneer mission work around the world, missionaries feel that one of their primary tasks is to translate the Bible into the language of the people and to teach the people to read it. Hundreds of missionaries have dedicated their lives to this task.

Evangelising those who *can't* read

All this still leaves 1 in 2 people in the world untouched by the Gospel because they cannot read. It is also estimated that between 45% and 60% of Americans, many of whom are literate, do not learn mainly through reading but are mainly aural learners. That is, they learn mainly through what they *hear*, not through what they *read*. It is likely that the situation in the UK is similar. Work amongst ethnic minorities in the UK is usually amongst those who are second language English speakers. Many do not find it easy to read and write English.

People who cannot read are not necessarily less intelligent than those who do read, nor should we assume that they are less able to understand and believe Bible truth. Otherwise the most intelligent people would tend to be believers! Aural learners are often skilled in learning through listening and repeating verbal instruction and teaching. They use their ears (Latin "auris") and hearing as the chief means of learning rather than their eyes and seeing.

Behind both the Old and New Testaments stands a strong oral (& hence aural) tradition. The Word of God was spoken before it was written. It was heard before it was read. The promises of God were passed from one generation to another in spoken form and were firmly believed.

One especially important tradition for Jewish people is at Passover when the head of the family retells the story of the Exodus from Egypt and the first Passover. Over thousands of years this has helped to maintain a sense of identity and destiny for the Jewish people.

The ministry of Jesus was through the spoken word and ordinary people experienced great joy in listening to him. The Apostles' teaching, to which the Christians in Jerusalem gave their undivided attention, was a *spoken* ministry. This teaching was not written down for many years.

Around the world many people groups have their oral traditions. They tell the stories of their ancestors and pass on from generation to generation a sense of identity. The story is carefully memorised and accurately passed on.

We tend to assume that an oral tradition is vulnerable and unreliable. We liken it to the game of Chinese whispers where the story is almost always changed. But the telling of important stories to a group of people at the same time, where the collective memory comes into play, is very different. The importance of maintaining the accuracy of the oral tradition is similar to the care with which the scribes copied the sacred text.

Telling the Bible Story

If we are to bring the Gospel to those who cannot or do not read, we need to develop skills ourselves, and train others, in telling our biblical theology, the Big Story of the Bible. Many Christians in the West have not developed skills in explaining the Gospel without reference to the printed word. We can sometimes get lost in the minutiae of biblical interpretation and lose a sense of the power and authority of the biblical story.

The Bible presents God's truth in an historical narrative. The history of redemption reveals how God has acted for the salvation of his people, culminating in the incarnation. Within the overall story there are many wonderful stories of what God has done in the lives of individuals and a nation. These stories reveal the character of God and his purposes for his world. The story of the incarnation of Jesus, his life and ministry, his death and resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit are the bedrock of Christian experience and hope.

We may have lost a sense of the significance and value of an oral tradition. We find it difficult to remember Scripture accurately without referring to the actual text. Christians find it hard to explain the Bible's story to non-Christians and often prefer it to be done by an expert with theological training. This is a great barrier to effective evangelism, especially to non-readers.

Our theology can often be primarily conceptual. We like logical development and systematic theology. We prefer Epistles to Gospels. This is not how the majority of people think. Nor is it the main emphasis in God's revelation in the Bible. God has not revealed his truth in an abstract way. The major part of his truth comes through history and story. The prophets spoke into concrete historical situations. The epistles were written to real churches facing real life challenges.

The stories of the Bible are relevant and speak powerfully to people in their daily lives. A few years ago a young Englishman, James Mawdsley, was arrested in Burma for giving out leaflets on behalf of political prisoners who were suffering under the harsh regime. While he was in prison someone gave him a Bible. As he began to read it he was struck by its relevance to his life. He read of Joseph, a man unjustly put in prison. Then he read of the Israelites enslaved in Egypt and the wonderful way God delivered them. God spoke directly to him through these Bible stories in his Burmese prison cell.

So, too, the stories of the Bible speak to the peoples of the world. They need to be told in all their breadth and depth so that they will reveal the wonder of our God who acts in real time for the good of his people. They need to be discussed and understood by ordinary people so that they may know the presence and power of God in their lives.

The breadth of redemptive history is wonderful. Some of the key stories are: Creation – Fall – Flood – Abraham and the Patriarchs – Joseph – Moses – Nation Building – Wilderness and Conquest – Prophets – Priests and Sacrifice – Kings – Messianic Promise – Jesus' Ministry – the Apostles' ministry – Church Expansion – Missionary vision – Kingdom Conflict – Second Coming.

Recently I was with a family as the father led evening devotions. After a Bible reading he asked the children detailed questions. It was striking to see how much they retained of what they had heard. Some Christians today may have lost the skill of careful listening.

We need to train people in telling the stories of the Bible in their chronological order so that those who listen can discuss each story and its significance for their lives. As each story



The story of the Bible needs to be told and to be available in spoken form to those who cannot read it.

builds on those that came before, the overarching message of the Bible becomes clear and people are able to discover their own place in God's story.

Have we unwittingly discouraged ordinary Christians from sharing their faith by an overly intellectual emphasis? Is our Bible teaching easy to remember? What does it mean to be biblically literate? Does the possession of a copy of the Bible in our own language and regularly hearing a faithful ministry of the Word ensure we are biblically literate?

The sign of real understanding is that we are able to explain truths in simple terms and are able to illustrate and apply the truth in down to earth concrete ways which speak to people's hearts and lives. Such truth is also visible in our lives – can we really say we've understood the truth if we haven't been changed by it?

The story of the Bible needs to be told and to be available in spoken form to those who cannot read it. This means that those of us who can read the text need to be prepared to recount the story of the Bible orally to those who cannot read. The process of learning to tell the Big Story orally may also bring new light and fire to our own souls.

We also have the promise of the gracious help of the Holy Spirit. Jesus told his disciples that the Holy Spirit would "teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." This relates not only to the writing of the Gospels but also to the accuracy and authority of their oral teaching as they proclaimed to the people the wonderful works of God.

Peter Milsom

Paris in springtime

While missionaries were being expelled from Morocco, a team was busy freely giving Gospels and talking to crowds of Moroccans. While Algerian Christians were living under the threat of imprisonment for evangelising, a team was freely preaching and distributing to hundreds of Algerians. That is the great privilege we have, as millions of Muslims from closed countries walk our streets daily in Western Europe. For the last 15 years teams have been going out in Paris every Easter, sharing Christ.

Door to Door Visitation

Door to door work in rough tower blocks is intimidating but also has many advantages. Once inside, it is dry and warm and walking from one door to the next is just a few steps. Many conversations were had and Gospels and Bibles given.

We went back to see a family we have known many years. The first Muslim I saw pray in front of me and also the first to introduce me to the delicacy of sheep's brain! After a general discussion, my friend spoke of his son working with a tribe in Papua New Guinea, showing pictures and explaining the changes the Gospel is making in the lives of men and women.

Market distribution

On Monday, we were at Clignancourt flea market. Street after street of stalls and shops selling anything from antiques and shotguns to second hand clothes! And many Muslims willing to stop and talk. "Come and preach to my friend, convert him!" A joke leading to a long discussion with Farid from Algeria. So Farid and several friends received Gospel material in Kabyle, one of the Algerian languages.

Thursday we went to a new market near the church. It was nearly 100% North African. Muslim Imams were out in force, collecting money for a new Mosque. 'He who builds a house

for Allah on earth, Allah will build him a house in paradise.' So read the posters. We were able to install our literature trolleys in an excellent spot in the market. Much literature was given out and even asked for.

The mint tea counter proved worth visiting. One team member who worked in North Africa got talking to a Moroccan couple. On learning where they were from, he asked if they knew a missionary doctor who had worked there. Remarkably, they had and a conversation followed. Praise the Lord for faithful believers whose lives still speak many years later.

The Lord at Work

What were some of the greatest encouragements? Maybe the regular contact who took literature and CDs again and said that he takes them back to Algeria and gives them to the family as presents. Or the Moroccan who wanted to talk more and then revealed that he knows Algerian Christians and is close to trusting the Lord. Or the Algerian who said that he had trusted the Lord a few months ago. God is working in North Africa and that blessing is spilling over into France. We sowed and pray that God will give the increase.

For the last 15 years teams have been going out in Paris every Easter, sharing Christ.



Meeting people at the market.





Notes from a commuting missionary

5 a.m. Groggily I awake. Oh, no... another early morning low-cost flight. But hey, this means direct first hand-involvement in ministry on the 'field' can continue. OK, it's great then! A few hours' flight and here I am, back 'home' in Italy!

Once there, on the way, I catch up with news. Lots of pastoral issues: the missionary struggling financially, difficulties with the church, tensions between missionaries, personal issues, general fatigue, marriage issues, questions relating to strategic development and direction...

Increasingly we seek to think and act beyond maintenance. To think vision and development, action and change.....

Then straight into a crucial session between the local church leadership and the new, incoming pastor-teacher. How can both sides be helped to process through issues now, so that later things might run more smoothly, more clearly? Lots of questions to ask, seeking to tease out where they sense things should be going, how they intend to operate, what their mutual expectations are... This is really useful and lots of 'sticky' issues are discussed and thought through. Maybe this will help reverse some of the awful Italian-mission statistics, with up to 90% of missionaries 'lasting' no more than one term!

On now to one of the many 'live' committee meetings. Yippee! Really. Part of our time is spent building each other up. This is not just a committee. It's family, it's friends, it's fellowship. Lots of 'business' to look at. Lots of events to organize, budgets to twiddle with, and giant steps of faith to be taken ('is it sensible to plan on a shortfall, but by His grace, of several thousand euro?'). But above all it's moving forward in building up those involved in ministry.

It's far more than managing a structured organization. Here we're thinking of people we know and love. The anguish of the missionary who is seeing his family break-up. What to do? How to support and counsel? The young couple asking for prayer and counsel as to the next 'move' in ministry. The exhaustion faced by many in ministry. Sabbatical? Break? Holiday? What are they? Accountability issues: who to? How should it occur?

How reassuring to know that we come together not to advance an organization, but to respond to the greater kingdom-opportunities lying there before us.

And increasingly we seek to think and act beyond maintenance. To think vision and development, action and change...

Sunday, time to share in a church. A challenge to lift up our eyes and look to the immediacy and immensity of the harvest. A global perspective. Enriching to be able to share something of the UK mission challenge, to identify trans-cultural needs which need to be faced with cultural and contextual relevancy and to remind hearers that *'tutto il mondo è paese'* (the world over is the same). The need to live holy lives in the midst of proverbial Italian corruption. Being missional in a pagan context. Living faith out with passion and consistency...

Later on, more to think, talk and pray about. Strategic developing projects: the new centre for alcoholics, the urban and regional evangelism in and around Milan, new ground-breaking initiatives in youth-work...

Back home. Still involved. Today, three lessons. On-line, live, webcam enabled leadership-training. Great sessions. Some heavy theology comes out: what about free-will? Does God change His plans based on man's actions? Should women be involved in church leadership? And then the questions: how should I help other team members be more committed? What about counselling and handling someone with obsessive disorders? This is quality time spent one-to-one, face to face, though separated by thousands of miles! What an opportunity, that of being able to invest in shaping leadership in the Italian church!

And then there are the emails. Pointed questions regarding developing ministries and projects, new avenues of opportunity and partnership to explore. Phone calls to be made: hours spent listening to and dealing with personal situations, family conflicts, ministry-related problems...

And the online committee meetings. Sometimes transcontinental in participation. At times facing a situation which requires attention, assessing progress made, evaluating how to move forward with existing opportunities. At other times we focus for several hours on the details of a conference to be organized – content, logistics, follow-up...

A glimpse into the life of a commuter missionary...

This summer, as you consider Italy, one of many tourist destinations, remember to pray for the Gospel opportunities. Pray for churches and teams reaching out during months of opportunity. Consider how best YOU could be involved in Italy. Why not plan a trip during the next 12 months to be encouraged and to encourage, to connect with ongoing ministry. To take part, to be a commuting-missionary...

Jonathan Gilmore



Corsica calling

My name is Amy and I have recently returned from Corsica. Please don't be beguiled into thinking that the decision to give up a teaching job that I loved and move abroad was an easy decision. Much prayer and thought went into taking this step. Not long before I chose to resign I heard a minister say that faith could be spelt in a different way - R I S K - and I knew that the time to act had arrived. I began to put out feelers regarding what to do. I had been involved and interested in European missions for some time. I contacted the British Council to enquire about teaching posts abroad. Although I had missed the deadline for France I was encouraged to apply. Within a few days I had been offered a teaching job in Corsica (which had been my first regional choice.) I knew that I would want to have opportunities to serve God whilst there and so I met with Peter Milsom to discuss the possibility of linking with UFM - a vocational role with a gospel intention. I cannot overstate how encouraging that meeting proved to be and how blessed I was to have the prayer support of the UFM family whilst abroad. Philippians 1v.19 tells us that through prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to Paul will turn out for his deliverance. All the divine opportunities in Corsica were a result of prayer and the Holy Spirit's enabling and prompting.

I ended up in Ajaccio, the capital, along with 10 other language assistants. We were to become a close group of friends, one of whom just happened to be a born again Christian with whom I prayed and studied the Bible each week. Amazingly, the only reformed evangelical church on the island of 240,000 was in Ajaccio and I ended up living in the studio above the church. The Minister and his wife have much responsibility and need our prayers. Time and time again I saw the Lord's hand providing for our every need. It was a journey of faith and growth. I am about to start a teaching job at a school back in Hereford for a 10 month maternity cover. It is tremendous provision to have found a job that starts in May. I can serve at the little chapel I used to attend and have the money to go on a UBM mission as I usually do. However, I must keep asking myself, am I ever ready to take a risk for the Lord? Who knows what is next but for the present time, in our waiting periods, those moments of uncertainty and silence, are we not to pray and to wait and to do all we can to serve the Lord just where we are?

Amy Gregg



I ended up in Ajaccio, the capital, along with 10 other language assistants. We were to become a close group of friends with whom I prayed and studied the Bible each week.



Big lies

A 'big lie' is one so huge that no-one believes the truth could be so distorted. And when it gets repeated over and over again, it becomes easier to believe.

We find something akin to this in our work with Muslims. I regularly hear Muslims boldly stating things like "the Bible is corrupted", "Jesus never said he was the Son of God", "Jesus wasn't crucified" and "Mohammad is foretold in the Bible". They've been taught these things and repeat them regularly so that they are believed without question. Often they have little idea why they are "true" but they just know that they are – 'big lies' at work. Usually the best they can manage if challenged is to misquote and misinterpret some verses.

All this can seem very daunting to Christians. How can you talk to someone who makes and believes wild claims without any evidence at all or with plainly unconvincing evidence? We may want to share the gospel with Muslim friends, neighbours and colleagues but these confidently held falsehoods seem a formidable barrier. And then there is our natural fear of rejection or causing offence. So how are we to deal with people who believe the Big Lie?

The best antidote is for ordinary Christians to live and tell the truth with the Muslims around them. The "Big Truth" is that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. But since Muslims vigorously contest this, we can lack the confidence to confront the lies and explain this "Big Truth" in appropriate ways.

Working with ReachAcross (ex Red Sea Mission Team), UFM have devised a training evening for churches to help equip them to confront these false claims. It isn't about making people experts but giving ordinary Christians the confidence to confront and answer the lies. Right now we have amazing opportunities to reach Muslims in the UK but we often don't know how to use them. Only the Lord knows how long we will continue to have those opportunities so we must take them now.

If you would like to host a training evening for your church or a group of local churches, please make contact through the Swindon office.

P – a UFM worker among Muslims in England

New Council Chairman

At our recent Council meeting Richard Myerscough was appointed Chairman for the coming 3 years. Colin Tamplin will be Vice Chairman of Council. Colin has been invited to become the Chairman of the FIEC Council from 2010. We are grateful to Colin for his leadership over the past 4 years and wish him well in his new responsibilities with the FIEC. Please remember Richard in your prayers as he becomes Council Chairman.

Summer Teams DVD

A free DVD about going on a UFM summer team is available from any of our offices or by emailing jonathan@ufm.org.uk

News Bites

Summer Teams 2009

This year we are hoping to send Summer Teams to:

Ireland

2-12 July

Hungary

2-6 July

France

4-18 July

Brazil

24 July - 15 August

Moldova

August

Events

Family Conference

27-31 July

Hothorpe Hall,
Leicestershire

Bible Ministry: Ray
Evans, of Grace
Community Church,
Bedford.

Family Conference is
open to all who are
interested in knowing
more about UFM.

Please contact the
Swindon Office for
more information.

AGM 30 July

Hothorpe Hall,
Leicestershire.

Glasgow Rally

2 October

Sandyford Henderson
Memorial Church,
Glasgow.

For more details,
contact Iain Cameron at
our Glasgow Office.

E-mail:
iain@ufm.org.uk

Comings and Goings

July

David & Bertha Barnes to UK from Peru
Andy and Tatyana Ball to UK

August

Mark & Gill Newham to UK from Mongolia
Steve and Rhonda Morris to India
Maureen Sharratt to Brazil

October

Mark and Gill Newham to Mongolia

4 Corners magazine

is available on Audio tape and the Prayer Calendar is available in large print format. Please contact the office for details.

The last revival in Wales

Visiting a church recently, my host told me that his grandfather had moved to the old farmhouse in 1904. 'A significant year for Wales,' I said. 'Why?' asked our Romanian companion. 'It was the last Revival in Wales,' I replied. I was stunned by his rather dismissive, yet insightful comment, 'That long ago!'

It is easy to become complacent, allowing our understanding to become blurred. It made me wonder what we may have missed and also how great the need has become on our doorstep.

Joshua, the great Old Testament hero of faith, and his friend Caleb stood against the tide of popular understanding. His faith lasted 40 years, suffering with God's people, the judgement caused by their lack of faith. Following that, with faith unabated, he led Israel to conquer and inherit the land that God had prepared for them. Before his death, the people declared their faith in God yet, almost immediately we read,

'all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD ...' (Judges 2:10)

That can be said of our generation, but what are we doing about it? The last '4 Corners' stated

'...some serious study of the local culture is a necessity and ... will need to be begun at once – and dare I say it – continued indefinitely! There is much to learn.'

Written about Central Europe, it has relevance for 'darkest Britain'? Many recognise the missionary opportunities in the diverse cultures that now form British society, but what about the 'local' people who, like my host, trace generations in the same village?



Watch programmes like 'The Weakest Link'; how few people have the most basic Bible knowledge. Do a demographic study of your area and understand the number of people who know nothing about the security of the 'nuclear' family, let alone the 'extended family.' Discover how many church buildings in your county/city are either shut or are used. Does that sound unspiritual? The Lord Jesus surveyed the crowds (Mt. 9), Paul assessed the locality (Acts 17) and both responded accordingly.

For whatever reason, we live at a time in the UK when few really know the Lord. What action, like Joshua, are we to take? As many are, we must continue to pray, but like Paul and Christ I suggest that we need to consider applying principles of missionary work to our ministries. Missionaries are commended for spending years learning a language, but do our un-churched neighbours understand us? Many contribute to keeping a family in a tribal village, but are we ready to support those working in struggling churches in rural Wales or suburban Macclesfield? We accept that missionaries struggle in doctrinally confused situations, but many distance themselves locally, for fear of guilt by association.

Pray that God will bring people in, but cross the road to meet them. Believe that Christ alone can save, but ensure that you are not guilty of disobedience by not telling! Remain faithful to our heritage, but keep in step with the Spirit as he works in us to fulfil his purpose in our generation? To obey is better than...

Bernard Lewis

all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD' (Judges 2:10)



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