

# 40 CONFERENCES

AUTUMN 2019



**ufm**  
united for mission

**SO YOU THINK  
YOU'RE READY  
– FIRST YEAR IN  
MISSION**

**Thailand**

**MEETING JESUS THROUGH TV  
– A FATHER TRANSFORMED**  
Digital Media, UK

**ARE CHURCH SUMMER TEAMS  
THE WAY FORWARD?**

**Resources**

## UFM Worldwide exists to support churches in making disciples of all nations.

Since 1931 we've had the privilege of helping churches to identify, train, send and support workers for cross-cultural mission.

We currently serve about 200 mission partners in 35 countries, sent by 90 gospel-hearted churches.

UFM workers are committed to making disciples of all nations, taking the gospel to the least reached, and supporting under-resourced churches around the world.

Please be in touch anytime – we'd love to help you or your church with your world mission involvement.

## Holding Our Nerve

*Michael Prest, UFM Worldwide Director*



**In Rico Tice's book 'Honest Evangelism,' he talks about 'the pain line', the point in the conversation where we move from topics that are socially acceptable – the sport, home improvements or our next holiday – and into territory that's much less comfortable: to speak about our faith in Jesus.**

Against the backdrop of such a strong secular agenda in our society today, that pain line is getting more painful, isn't it?

Where UFM workers are serving, the pressure not to speak about Jesus is even more acute. And it's not just from 'out there'. There's a growing temptation in the church to push evangelism down the agenda.

There are 144 evangelical mission agencies based in the UK and our friend Eddie Arthur has been doing some research about them recently\*. How many of those 144 evangelical mission

agencies do you think are involved in evangelism in some way? Just 56, less than 4 in 10! More than half of the evangelical mission agencies in the UK today see no place for evangelism in their work. For many, evangelism has become part of the package, not the focus. For some, it has been replaced altogether by a list of other important things.

As Christians we've got to hold our nerve on this one. As we serve

together in mission, we've got to see that the task of evangelism is absolutely necessary. And we see why, so clearly, in Mark 4 where Jesus tells his disciples

God's kingdom, you are either in or out. When it comes to your sin, you're either guilty or forgiven. When it comes to eternity you're either facing heaven or hell.

## More than half of the evangelical mission agencies in the UK today see no place for evangelism

that the kingdom of God is going to grow as the seed is scattered. What is that seed? Mark 4:14, "The farmer sows the word."

The kingdom of God, Jesus says, grows as the word is scattered.

Why is evangelism absolutely necessary? God's kingdom grows as God's word is spread. Lives are changed as God's word is shared.

Evangelism – proclaiming the gospel to those who are listening – is the God ordained way people are to hear the good news, and his kingdom grow.

As we go on in our mission service together, let's remember the reality that according to Jesus, there are two kinds of people in this world. When it comes to

The only thing that divides those two groups is our response to Jesus – the one who lived the sinless life we can never live; the one who cried out, "my God, my God why have you forsaken me?"; the one who took the punishment our sin deserved; the one who can give us his right standing before God; the one who sits at the right hand of the Father, who can save us from hell, for heaven.

Friends, we need to hold our nerve. To keep evangelism at the heart of our mission is not to narrow our scope, but rather to have confidence that the gospel message has power to change lives.

*Michael*

\*A Study of Mission Agencies, <https://www.kouya.net/?p=9839>

## FEATURES

**Holding Our Nerve – Director's Report**  
02

**So You Think You're Ready? – Our First Year in Mission**  
04

**"I'm Never Coming Back to Bordeaux!"**  
06

**Meeting Jesus Through TV – A Father Transformed**  
08

**Raheem Meets Jesus**  
12

**Finding God's Will When One Door After Another Shuts**  
14

**A TRICKY QUESTION**  
**Why Go Abroad With So Much Need Here?**  
10

**CHURCH RESOURCES**  
**Are Church Summer Teams the Way Forward?**  
16

**FOCUS ON**  
**Kurdistan**  
19

**WHAT'S IT LIKE .. ?**  
**A Single Mission Worker**  
21

**NEW TO UFM**  
18



# So You Think You're Ready? – Our First Year in Mission

*Tom and Nerys King work in Bible teaching and women's ministry in Thailand*

**When The Daily Mirror calls it a “modern day Sodom and Gomorrah”, you know you're not living somewhere picturesque and idyllic. Pattaya is a difficult and dark place to live.**

We knew that living in a city which estimates at least 30,000 people working in the sex industry would be a challenge, but we didn't expect everything to be so hard. It feels like we've sacrificed and surrendered so much to be here and do what we believe is God's will, so the least we deserve is a manageable day to day life, right? Surely God owes us that much?

But life has definitely felt like one struggle

and test after another, and it's not just the city itself. It's a language you still feel useless at after a year of full-time lessons and a culture that you still have no real clue about 12 months in. It's being terrified of getting ill as you have no idea how the health system works. It's the risk of an accident every time you venture out on the roads. It's the constant negative feeling of being an outsider because you're not



Thai. It's worrying about whether you'll be allowed to stay for another 90 days because, honestly, having sold all your stuff at home, not getting a visa would be a kick in the teeth. But as God said to Job "Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty?" (Job 40:2)

### ... being terrified of getting ill as you have no idea how the health system works

For us, it comes down to how much we really rely upon God. How much are we willing to give up the driver's seat and be content about not being the director of our lives? Truly, it's taken moving to the other side of the world to open our eyes to what we actually believe about who God is.

This year has been brutal, and yet beautiful. We've been forced to surrender control and believe all the more that God has given us a hope and a purpose despite difficult circumstances. It's not that we didn't believe this back home, just that in practice it was easy to fall into the trap of believing you were self-sufficient. In all honesty, it feels like we've experienced more of God's goodness to us over the past 12 months than we have at any other time in our lives as he daily provides, cares for, encourages and sustains us.

He is the one who spoke the universe into existence, who purposed us in



Christ from before the foundation of the world and who has given us his Spirit to equip and empower us for the tasks he has for us. In the light of that, handing over what control we imagine we might have to him doesn't sound like a bad option.

As we look to the future, as we consider how he has opened doors and provided opportunities we never imagined here – reading the Bible in Thai with our language teachers; having the opportunity to use our gifts in a very different church setting; witnessing the Christ-transformed lives of ex-bar girls – we do so with excitement and rugged obedience. It is not only our duty but our delight to know and follow him.



# “I’m never coming back to Bordeaux!”

*Maxime and Demelza, with their 3 children, serve as church planters in Bordeaux.*

**I’d had enough. Endless strikes, friends who hated God and a society indifferent to him. I zipped up my last suitcase and headed to the airport.**

A year working with Friends International in the UK lay ahead of me, but beyond that the future was uncertain. Should I become a mission worker – perhaps to Africa, China or Iran?

However, when I arrived at church in Cambridge, the vicar had a strange way of welcoming this French newcomer: “You’re French! Why aren’t you serving God in France?” What? Mission to my own people?

I grew a lot as a Christian during my 5 years in the UK. But what changed me forever was catching a God’s eye view of my compatriots. The most hostile French heart can’t escape the

seeking, saving love of Christ. God changed my desperation into hope, my despising into compassion. Could God really work among my people? Could he use me?

But where? We’d completed theological studies and a church placement. I had always felt burdened for the west of France, where many travel for miles to find their nearest evangelical church. My eyes scanned the map. Brittany ... the Loire Valley ... Surely not Bordeaux, Lord?

We prayed, we visited, we asked others for wisdom. And God opened a door in Bordeaux. The international church was seeking a French pastor to help them reach the French. We’d be working alongside Alan and Pat Davey (UFM) with whom I’d stayed in touch since leaving years earlier.

So we squeezed everything into our removal van and drove south. As we



arrived in Bordeaux, the sun was shining over the city. We felt hope because God promises that the harvest is plentiful. We felt peace because God had opened the door for an unthinkable return.

And so, here I labour among my people. We speak the same language but worship different gods. Theirs, the god of the good life – of food, wine and free time; mine, the God who loves them and calls them to the better banquet in his company.

Outside, the city centre bustles with students, entrepreneurs, families and a large Muslim community. We wonder how to connect with our city. How can we serve them and bring the good news of Jesus to them? Everyone is busy and the Bordelais are notoriously unfriendly. Lord, will you lead us to the people you are preparing?

I still see Bordeaux's problems: the strikes and the indifference. But now I see my city through God's eyes. And

## **Some are responding: the Catholic student who wants to know God's word for herself, the new-age healer drawn to the Lord Jesus**

And some are responding: the Catholic student who wants to know God's word for herself, the new-age healer drawn to the Lord Jesus, the parent who wonders whether the resurrection really could be true.

We planted the church in 2018 and have grown from 8 to 28 people on Sundays, including those looking into Christianity. Our meetings are bursting with children and the café we meet in no longer has enough chairs (please pray for a new venue!).

I'm praying for eight new churches to be planted here by 2050. People think I'm mad, but I'm just following the missionary God who loves to save the lost. He is at work wherever we are. It's great to go to Africa, China or Iran, but it's not an easy way out. Neither our hearts, nor the task of mission, will be transformed by taking a plane flight. Our heart for God's mission needs to start here and now. Are you willing to share his good news where you are?



# Meeting Jesus Through TV – a Father Transformed

*Richard and Christina work in the UK producing Christian media for the Arab world*

**“Why God? You gave us a heart for pastoral work and then, in the middle of it all, you called us to walk through another, totally different door, removed from contact with the people we longed to serve!”**

We asked this question as our ministry changed from being passionately involved with people in a pastoral role to being in front of a camera in a studio. At first it didn't make sense, nor did it come easily. Our hearts longed to be amongst the people. However, God showed us how he can speak to people through us, from behind a camera and through satellite TV programmes. One such amazing story of God's grace, and the value of ministry through media, is of a young Afghan brother called Daniel.

Like many others, Daniel sought satisfaction in drugs. His addiction brought devastation to his life: he lost his job and his wife left him, leaving their two daughters with his parents. Because of his addiction, Daniel was in despair; but there was no way out.

One day he went to his sister's home, filthy, hungry and desperate. Thoughts of ending it all were not far from his mind. His sister was fearful when Daniel came to her house because her husband didn't want anything to do with him. But she relented and offered him a shower and cooked some food for him, telling him he must go as soon as he had eaten.

As Daniel waited, he flicked through the satellite TV channels, when he heard a Farsi-speaker. The man talking was an ex-drug addict! He shared about how Jesus saved him from drugs and set him free. The man talked about repentance and of the good news of the gospel. Daniel cried, and through his sobbing he called out “Jesus help me, give me a new life!”

Just at that moment in the programme we asked those listening, who wanted to give their hearts to Jesus, to pray with us to accept Jesus. Daniel did just that. When his sister brought the food, she saw her brother crying. She asked him what was wrong, and he told her, “I have





just given my heart to Jesus, I am free from drugs.” Knowing her brother’s record of telling lies, she did not believe him.

**Because of his addiction Daniel was in despair; but there was no way out**

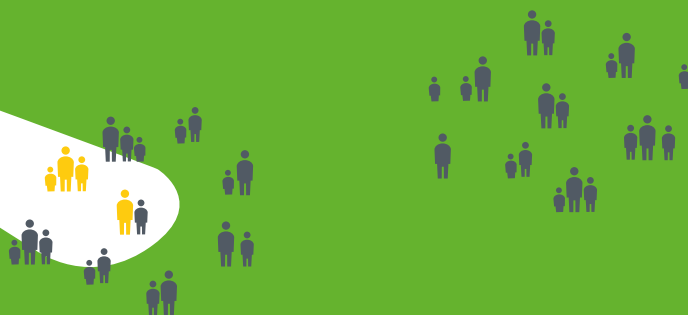
Daniel soon found a job and worked hard, going back to live with his parents, where his girls were. His parents saw an amazing change in him! He became close to his girls again and they too wanted to know Jesus, so father and daughters grew together in their faith. His parents, too, were amazed as they saw that their son really had been changed. But when the wider family heard of his conversion, they threatened him and finally took his eldest daughter, abusing her in the most awful way. They threatened to kill them.

It was during this time that Daniel called us and we were able to meet with him a few times until he moved to a safe country. We went and met him there and were able to praise God together.

Daniel is one of many who can tell of what God is doing in the lives of people living in Farsi-speaking countries. It is a blessing to meet with these brothers and sisters who come to Christ through the satellite TV programs we produce. We try to support them as much as we can. Through telephone calls we offer help and pray with new Christians, connecting them to underground churches and sending Bibles. We invite them to conferences so they can learn more about Jesus and worship with other believers. It is an incredible privilege to baptize them.

It is wonderful to see lives changed by God at just the right time. As messengers of the gospel, please pray for wisdom and fresh anointing from God for us as we produce TV and social media programmes. Pray for protection as we work in neighbouring countries, and visit those on the front line who are facing huge opposition to the gospel and to anything remotely Christian. Thank you for your prayers and support for our ministry.

*Names and identities have been changed in this article*



# Why Go Abroad With So Much Need Here?

*Brandon Nelson* is UFM Worldwide's Area Director for Northern England, the Midlands and North Wales

**After weeks of praying with their church leaders, a couple were called to the front of the service to share their desire to serve as mission workers. The church were supportive, but one long-standing member wasn't sure.**

At the end of the meeting, he walked up to the them and glanced over his shoulder, "There's an unreached tribe around the corner you know!" The 'tribe' he was referring to was a rough estate a few hundred yards away. A place with massive gospel needs was on their doorstep and they were thinking of moving abroad! Could that be right?

His comments raise an important issue: should we be prioritising global

mission when the needs are so great right here at home? In many churches it isn't that world mission is viewed as unimportant – it just isn't a priority at the moment. This isn't said outright, but our practice often reflects it. Global mission is treated as a niche ministry for the interested rather than a God-given responsibility for the whole church. When we are surrounded by so many genuine needs right where we are, it is easy to see how this can happen. However, I would like to suggest a few reasons why global mission ought to be prioritised in every church.

## **The Glory of God**

Our vision for mission grows out of our vision of God. As John Stott famously said, "We must be global Christians



because our God is a global God.” Our sovereign God is the one whose glory fills the whole earth (Isaiah 6:3). Our loving Saviour is the one who died, not only for our sins, but also the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). Our risen King is the one with all authority in heaven and on earth, who commands us to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-19).

**Many places remain unreached ... not only full of people who have never heard the gospel, but there isn't even a local body of believers who can share it with them**

If we limit our concerns to our own communities or countries, then we are stopping short of giving God the glory due his name. Jesus is no local, tribal deity. He is Lord of all. Above all else, the greatness of his glory should compel us to proclaim the gospel in all the earth.

### **The Reality of the Least Reached**

The command to make disciples of all nations is clear, the task remains incomplete. Many peoples and places in the world remain unreached, that is to say, they are not only full of people who have never heard the gospel, but there isn't even a local body of believers who can share it with them.

Take the Aimaq people of Afghanistan. In a population of over one and a half

million, the percentage of evangelical Christians is currently 0.00%. They are one of 70 unreached people groups in that country alone. Looking at the global picture, there are thousands of people groups unreached with the gospel. As we address the needs of our own communities, let's not forget the least reached peoples and places and address them with the same intentionality.

### **The Joy of Pancakes**

Engaging in mission is a bit like eating pancakes. You don't line up the ingredients to eat one after the other – a couple of raw eggs, flour, and then maple syrup. The joy of eating pancakes only happens when the ingredients are taken together. Similarly, we are called to local and global mission simultaneously.

Consider the apostle Paul, who relentlessly threw himself into the work of proclaiming the gospel where Christ was not named, while also continuing in his care for churches. And dozens of mission workers and churches partnered with him in this.

Partnerships with cross-cultural mission workers continues to be one of the primary ways churches experience the joy of being part of God's global mission. However this works out in practice in your congregation, we must all recognise our collective responsibility to declare his glory among the nations. What is the next step for you?

# Raheem meets Jesus

*Arab Focus Media* is a UFM project creating websites and other digital media to share the gospel in the Arab world

**Raheem had nothing particular preying on his mind. He was a successful engineer from a well-respected, traditional religious family and felt no reproach for the way he had lived his life. Yet sleep eluded him.**

The darkness stole across the rippling sand dunes of the Sahara, and Raheem felt the exhaustion that comes from incessant, overbearing heat, despite struggling to sleep. He climbed slowly up the steps to the flat roof of his home where he lay down beneath a panoply of brilliant stars.

The gentle breeze on his face eventually lulled him to sleep and he began to dream. An imposing figure, dressed entirely in white, with a face far more dazzling than the stars above him, moved towards him with

outstretched arms. When he awoke, Raheem could not escape that awesome impression. He wanted desperately to know what his dream might signify.

Raheem began to search the internet on his phone and came across a website that seemed to speak directly to his situation. Its name was Shabibah, the website created by Arab Focus Media. Shabibah means youth in his mother-tongue language of Arabic. As he watched the programmes and read about the Gospel on the website, Raheem became convinced that the figure he had seen in his dream represented the Christ of the Bible.

He immediately wrote an email to ask for more information. Two months of intense correspondence followed before Raheem recognised his sin and his need of a Saviour. He wrote these words, "Dear Friend, I





prayed this prayer last night; O Lord, thank you that you have received me as your child and have forgiven me all my sins. Help me to obey you moment by moment and to learn to live the true faith. Do you think Jesus has accepted me?"

Raheem, which means mercy in Arabic, had himself received mercy and been accepted into God's family. He decided to ask for a new name to be given to him, as he knew that he was a new creation in Christ. He now needs grace and wisdom to live out his Christian faith in a hostile environment.

**Raheem became convinced that the figure he had seen in his dream represented the Christ of the Bible**

Raheem and many more like him are the reason we have dedicated ourselves to the ministry of proclaiming the gospel through media. Fifty years ago, a North African might have been listening to a Christian message on his portable transistor radio. Today, Raheem can download the entire Bible on his mobile phone. In time, it should also be possible to link him up digitally



with other believers in his locality. As well as evangelism, there is a pressing need for discipleship of new believers in the Arab world. We are currently preparing for a new television production about some of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, as advocated by early church leaders from North Africa such as Augustine and Tertullian.

God willing, this autumn we will move into a new media centre for outreach. We aim to build an onsite audio recording studio and editing suite. The location is ideal for filming and there are always opportunities for people to join a film crew for a shoot. We appreciate all kinds of helpers, from cooks and drivers to videographers and make-up artists!

We have faced a lot of challenges and obstacles with this project. How we treasure your prayers for us and for all those across the Arab World who seek to reflect the glory of Christ, and to shine like stars in their own generation. Find out more at [www.afmedia.org](http://www.afmedia.org)



# Finding God's Will When One Door After Another Shuts

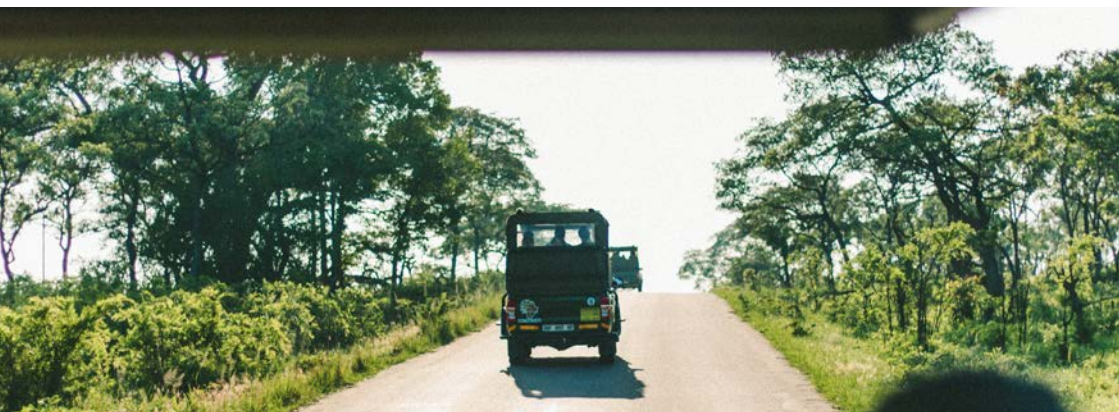
*David and Liz work in Bible ministry in West Africa*

**I had just reached the stage of being able to have primitive conversations and the language was starting to make sense. Then all mission workers were withdrawn, with danger from Islamic militants growing ever closer and more severe.**

We live in an area at the forefront of the advance of Islam in West Africa, in a country changing rapidly under this influence. More recently, foreigners have been targets of kidnapping and violence.

We'd only moved to this town six months previously. It was a town with a small handful of other mission workers. The dominant people group included Christians – there was an explosion of growth in the 1970s. However that generation are now either elderly or have gone to be with the Lord, and pastoral training has not continued. So there was a great need to come alongside national pastors to help strengthen them.

I had begun work on learning the local tribal language and culture, alongside other parts of our lives – home-schooling and tent-making.



It had not been easy for the children to move to this more rural town, but they were adapting, and enjoying the opportunities to meet up again in the

young group of churches amongst a people reached only 15 years ago, greatly in need of workers and teaching.

## **Leaving behind friendships that had begun, and the people we had set our hearts on serving, was painful**

home-schooling co-op weeks back in the capital. Everybody enjoyed the growing family farm and the open air; living in Africa has many blessings. My teacher, a hard-working 72-year old, was a great character, and a key evangelist in the early congregations.

But now, we were uprooting the family and moving again. It was painful leaving behind friendships that had begun, and the people we had set our hearts on serving.

We were withdrawn by the mission's security team from that side of the country for a period that became indefinite. The language group I had set out to work with is only a tiny minority elsewhere and so my language studies ceased. We decided to use our months in the capital before home assignment with me doing the home-schooling, and Liz studying the national language full-time. We then went on home assignment, having been here a couple of years. The greatest highlight of this was the birth of our youngest daughter, who is now walking.

Before home assignment, we made an exploratory visit to the other side of the country – a situation that seemed ideal for all of us, with a

Sadly, the security situation has deteriorated there too. It now only makes sense to live in the capital, until things stabilise one way or the other – another shut door.

So, since returning from home assignment, Liz has been finding ways, together with the older children, to join existing compassion ministries to use her gifts, particularly in healthcare work.

I have been looking for opportunities to teach in Bible schools, using the national language, taking Bible studies and preaching as invites arise. Next week we begin teaching English through a programme that has introduced many people to the Bible and the Lord over recent years. The uncertain situation has deterred new mission workers. Hence, I now carry a substantial responsibility in eldership and preaching in the shrunken English-speaking church.

In times of uncertainty, our prayer and desire is that God will lead us into the relationships and ministries that will bless the national church, and our ever-growing children. May they all be established in the love of Jesus Christ, of his truth, and of his sheep.

# Are Church Summer Te

Why are we encouraging local churches to partner with those overseas?

## SENDING

**The flight on the tiny bombardier aircraft to the West of Ireland took less than an hour and a half, but church life in County Mayo is very different from that in Wiltshire. So what is the link?**

The mission committee in Emmanuel Church Chippenham has been thinking about how to invest strategically in short and long term cross-cultural ministry. We don't want to merely send individuals, but to forge a link as a church that will encourage ongoing prayer and interest in God's work. So we were excited to hear that UFM had launched a new initiative to encourage churches to send teams.

Last Autumn, Stephen Childs, a UFM mission partner working in Castlebar, Co Mayo, shared at our World Mission Sunday and painted a vivid picture of

the gospel needs that still exist in the Republic of Ireland. He challenged us by reminding us that Ireland is the least evangelised country in the English speaking world, with Biblical Christians making up less than 1% of the population, and 50 towns with no evangelical church.

Calvary Church in Castlebar is a young church, and although it has great premises right in the centre of the town, and regular contact with lots of children, it lacks the manpower to run a Holiday Bible Club.

Emmanuel Church Chippenham has many able and willing people who are keen to serve. So we asked those who were interested to 'sign up' and very quickly we were oversubscribed! Our team covered a range of ages and gifts, all needed in Castlebar.

UFM took care of the administration, including applications, references, DBS checks, booking flights and travel insurance. Stephen provided some orientation so that we could be well prepared for some of the cultural differences between the British and the Irish! ... And eight of us arrived in Castlebar on 17th August.

*William Brown, Summer Team leader, Emmanuel Church Chippenham*





# Teams the Way Forward?

## RECEIVING

**Short-term mission teams are a staple of Irish church life, streaming in from the USA and Northern Ireland to knock on doors, run beach missions, and hand out literature. However, I have been reluctant until recently to invite them to Castlebar.**

They're often hard work practically; cultural and theological differences can prevent outsiders from "getting" what we're doing; team members who've never met before can be too diverse to work together; and very often you never see them again.

But I've recently learned to love teams. My experience with well-run church-based teams like Emmanuel Church Chippenham is that all these areas were addressed: UFM helped with practical details, their approach to ministry fitted with ours, and the team already knew each other and worked well together. On a couple of visits to Chippenham, their pastor Spencer went out of his way to take an interest, and I was encouraged by the potential for lasting partnership. So this August, I was looking forward to welcoming them. And my expectations were exceeded. A very

wet week meant constant changes of plan, but the team adapted. Morning devotions were a joy (such an encouragement to a tiny church). Team members threw themselves into the kids club, hamming it up as "Rob the Builder", or taking our 2-year-old on their knee so we could focus on the club. I particularly valued the fact that the team included "normal" Christians in secular jobs yet serving in ministry – a great thing when most of the role models here are in full-time ministry.

My aim is to enable us to do more than we could on our own, to enthuse our church about service, and equip those visiting to serve in a different context. Working with UFM makes all that so much easier.

*Stephen Childs, Calvary Church, Castlebar*



See our current needs for teams at  
[www.ufm.org.uk/go/summer-teams](http://www.ufm.org.uk/go/summer-teams)

# Welcome!


**INTERACTION**

UFM has enjoyed a partnership with UCCF and IFES since 2011, supporting long term mission workers serving in cross-cultural student ministry across Europe.

This partnership has now been expanded. From September 2019, short term workers coming out of UCCF's Relay programme to serve around Europe with IFES Interaction are becoming part of the UFM family. We hope to provide additional pastoral and administrative support,

as well as strengthening links with sending churches.

Each worker is serving with a national student movement around Europe for 1-2 years and we're delighted to be partnering together!

**Austria** – Gareth Evans, Tim Jackson

**Eurasia** – Peter, Tom, Ben

**Italy** – Hope Garnish, Alice Larke

**Romania** – Heidi Reger

**South East Europe** – Alicia, Matthew



**Catrin Davey**, from North Wales, grew up in Bordeaux with UFM parents. She returns to Bordeaux with i:Witness, UFM's cross-cultural ministry training scheme, to serve women in a new church plant.



**Ben Griffin** has served in ministry in Bordeaux, Burkina Faso, and the UK. He joins his wife, Liz, with 100Fold, UFM's digital technology ministry. Based in Stoke on Trent, Ben will be raising support for 100Fold.



**Ellie Caballero** is married to Daniel (a UFM member). They are mission workers in Cork, Ireland. Originally from Warwick, Ellie works in a hotel and will support Daniel, serving in their church.

FOCUS ON ...

# Kurdistan



**The Autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) is not the dangerous, war-torn, desert region that many people assume. Rather, it is a beautiful mountainous fertile land that is green and lush and full of people picnicking and dancing, especially in spring time.**

Although many Kurds have died fighting wars on and beyond its borders, the region has been an island of peace and safety for the last 20 years, providing a land of refuge in a troubled region.

However, the peace is fragile. With an economy still in tatters following a massive crash in 2014, a history of oppression by neighbours who remain hostile, and many false dawns, most people's hope is now in escaping to the West.

## ▲ Challenges

In contrast to the physical land, the spiritual landscape is pretty barren. The majority of the small historic Orthodox/Catholic Christian community in the region give Christ a bad name – being known for their lax morals, immodest dress, and drinking alcohol.

Islam permeates every aspect of life, and although it may be true that Kurds are often Kurdish first and Muslim second, families

## Please pray for ...

- more long term workers, who will learn the language
- the seed of God's word to go out (the KRI has two main languages – the Sorani Bible was published in 2017 and the Behdini NT is due late 2019)
- that just as the spring rains bring the dry land to life, God would pour out his Spirit on this people and cause the seed to produce a great harvest
- believers to desire fellowship with others and grow in confidence to speak of Jesus and not be silenced by fear of their own families.



# Kurdistan is...



(twice  
Wales)

40,000 km<sup>2</sup>



**7 million people**

including 1.5 million displaced



Data from [www.AboutTheKurds.wordpress.com](http://www.AboutTheKurds.wordpress.com)

95% Muslim  
5% minorities  
including historic  
Assyrian/Chaldean  
Christians and  
Yazidis



maintain a strong grip on people's beliefs. Those who are more nominal in their faith often move towards a philosophy of western secularism, but tend to keep the cultural identity of Islam.

**With only a few local believers there is next to no opportunity for Kurds to hear the gospel from people of their own (or even a near) culture**

Currently the greatest openness to the Gospel seems to be among displaced peoples, and particularly those from a Yazidi background. Their arrival at the handful of evangelical Arabic speaking churches is challenging those churches to consider catering for Kurdish language speakers.

The work of developing a Kurdish speaking church – as in many pioneering situations – tends to be slow, with many ups and downs. With only a few local believers, there is next to no opportunity for Kurds to hear the gospel from people of their own (or even a near) culture. Many who do come to Christ, end up fleeing the region; and those who don't, often end up living out their faith in secret and isolation.

However, while the work may seem weak and fragile, we trust that, "a bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out" (Isaiah 42:3). We dare not "despise the day of small things" (Zechariah 4:10) for we have a God "who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine ... To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." (Ephesians 3:20-21).

< Cut here, pop in your Bible, and pray for Kurdistan



# What's it Like ... as a Single Mission Worker?

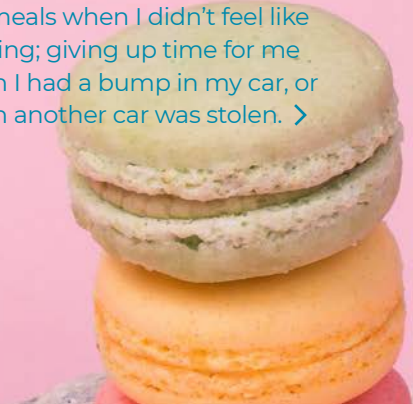
*Deborah Prisk serves in women's ministry at Connexion Church, Paris*

I have recently been enjoying reading the testimony of Lilius Trotter, a 19th Century, single missionary who devoted her life to serving God in Algeria\*. Such stories of single people serving the gospel in cross-cultural settings are so inspiring, but are not just a thing of the past. Paul's missional exhortations in 1 Corinthians 7 still apply. Life, ministry and personal cultural adaptation are simpler when you don't have to worry about the pressure it will put on your marriage, your children, or their grandparents.

Whether singleness for the Lord is a choice or, as in my case, a simple fact, the freedom it brings is not without challenges: loneliness, no immediate accountability, and having to face practicalities and paperwork on your own. I had excellent advice and support

as I prepared to move to France 13 years ago and was forewarned about some of these particular challenges. But there is one aspect that I don't believe anyone ever mentioned that has ended up being absolutely crucial for me: the need for family in France.

In my last church, where I was based for over seven years, I had the privilege of being included in the lives of a couple of families. They did this in endless ways: invitations to special family birthday meals; gifts of home-harvested honey and home-made jam; organizing a 30-guest birthday party for me in their home; giving me discreet but generous gifts at financially tough times; cooking me meals when I didn't feel like cooking; giving up time for me when I had a bump in my car, or when another car was stolen. >





Psalm 68:6a says: "God sets the lonely in families." I can testify to this. It has been his particular grace to me to help me to persevere in times I might otherwise have given up. My friendships with other single people in France have also been a rich blessing; but having a relationship with a whole family, with all of its members – wife, husband, teenagers, kids, toddlers, babies – has meant a richness that no one person could provide on their own. As I join a new church in Central Paris, my prayer is that here God will, once again, set me in families. Please pray that with and for me.

I hope this testimony will be an encouragement to all readers of 4 Corners, whatever their situation. And so here are some questions to ask yourself:

For single mission workers – do I have these kind of relationships? Can I pray for them and seek them out?

For married mission workers – do we have single people in our team who would benefit from being included

in our family life, or the life of a local Christian family?

For supporters of single missionaries – can I ask them if they have such families around them, and if they don't, pray that the God who sets the lonely in families would do so? Can I be that family to them when they are on home assignment?

And as we see God provide, what a joy it will be to praise Him for His abundant loving kindness, just as David did:

*Sing to God, sing in praise of  
his name,  
extol him who rides on the clouds;  
rejoice before him – his name is  
the Lord.  
A father to the fatherless, a  
defender of widows,  
is God in his holy dwelling.  
God sets the lonely in families,  
he leads out the prisoners with  
singing;  
but the rebellious live in a sun-  
scorched land.*

(Psalm 68.4-6)

\*A Passion for the Impossible, Miriam Huffman Rockness, 1999, 2003, Grand Rapids, Discovery House



## Upcoming Events

**Considering your role in mission, or supporting others? Come along!**

### **Called to Serve**

7th March 2020, Emmanuel Church,  
Chippenham, Wiltshire

### **UFM Summer Conference**

27th - 31st July 2020, Hothorpe Hall,  
Market Harborough, Leicestershire

Find out more at

**[www.ufm.org.uk/events](http://www.ufm.org.uk/events)**

## Christmas Cards

Once again this year we shall benefit from the sale of Christmas cards and other cards and gifts available from *Gospel Cards etc.* 20% of their Christmas card sales and 5% of the sale of other items will be given to 27 Christian missions including UFM.

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# i:Witness

Cross-Cultural Ministry  
Training Opportunities 2020-21

## France

- Bordeaux Church
- Eglise Connexions, Paris

## Germany

Leipzig English Church

## Republic of Ireland

Calvary Church, Castlebar

## Italy

- International Church of Torino (Turin)
- Church planting ministry, Palermo, Sicily

## Malawi

Blantyre Community Church

## Middle East

Working among the least reached

## Romania

Administration at Kairos Mission School

## Thailand

- International student ministry, Bangkok
- New City Church, Bangkok

## Uganda

Evangelism, discipleship and medical ministry at Kiwoko Hospital

It was great to live alongside people serving in overseas ministry; It was a privilege to experience so much.

Aled

See [www.ufm.org.uk/iwitness](http://www.ufm.org.uk/iwitness)

Book at [www.ufm.org.uk/called2serve](http://www.ufm.org.uk/called2serve)



**7th March 2020** Emmanuel Church Chippenham

A day conference for anyone considering mission for the first time, praying for God's leading, or making final preparations to go.



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