

# 4CORINERS

SPRING 2021



ufm  
worldwide

## GOD OPENED A DOOR

Outreach to Iranians, UK

DEALING WITH  
ANGER IN  
MISSION  
Italy

'WE TREAT,  
JESUS HEALS'  
Uganda

# We're developing our work in the USA

*Michael Prest, Director, UFM Worldwide*



**In summer 2020, we reported in 4 Corners on the growth of UFM Worldwide USA. We shared that 25 of UFM's 180 long term workers are now sent from churches in the US and others are actively enquiring about partnering with UFM.**

With the US office team of Laura, Melissa and Denise ably looking after issues of finance and compliance, we've increasingly been feeling the challenge of handling other functions from this side of the pond, most notably our relationships with sending churches.

We asked you to pray with us for God's wisdom as we sought to support the growing work.

Thank you to those who prayed! Over recent months, it became our

settled conviction to appoint someone who could complement and encourage the US team, to focus on building relationships with sending churches, being a US-based first point of contact for mission workers and beginning to develop our work in the US.

It is therefore our pleasure to announce that after a lengthy process, Brandon Nelson has been appointed as Country Director for UFM Worldwide USA, a role that we hope will begin in Autumn 2021. We saw a number of kind providences in this decision. Brandon knows and affirms UFM's ethos and approach, having served on the UK home staff; he is originally from Birmingham, Alabama, where the UFM Worldwide USA office is located; and Brandon and Julia have had a

growing sense that a move to the US was the right next step for them.

We plan for this role to be financially independent from the UK after 3-5 years. About 60% of the necessary finance is already in place in the US. To fully fund the role for this period, we are planning on three things:

- tapered funding from the main UFM Worldwide office
- seeking financial support in the USA
- helping Brandon to raise personal support, around 20% of the employment cost.



If you would like more information about how to get involved in the last area, please do visit [ufm.org.uk/member/brandon-nelson](http://ufm.org.uk/member/brandon-nelson).

Please pray

- for the family as they prepare for a big move and for Julia to be successful in her green card application (they hope to move this summer)
- for God to provide financially
- for God's blessing on the growing US team.

### Praying for the next generation of mission workers

It was a joy for us to partner with Cross Conference in January, bringing the material from this US-based young adult mission conference to a UK audience. You can find many excellent videos from this at [www.youtube.com/ufmworldwide](http://www.youtube.com/ufmworldwide)

Do feel free to use these excellent resources for youth/student groups!

### Mission workers from the majority world

As we pray for new workers to be sent from

the UK and the US, we're also acutely aware that the days of mission workers simply being sent 'from the West to the rest' are long gone. Indeed, we rejoice that there are already 27 different nationalities represented in the UFM family.

Please join us in praying that God may go on raising up new workers from the places many UFM mission workers are serving in, and give thanks for those already involved in training mission workers from the majority world.

With billions around the world with little or no access to the gospel, we can see that the harvest is still plentiful and the workers are still few.

Let's keep on praying for God to raise up workers, wherever they might be from!

With grateful thanks for your partnership expressed in so many ways,

*Michael*



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# God opened a door – the Iranian church is growing!

*Nasir serves in evangelism and discipleship in the UK*

**I tried to share the Gospel with them, but it was tough – the husband mostly laughed at me. It was August 1994, we had reluctantly moved to a new address and a few months later this family from our homeland, Iran, moved next door.**

For some reason, they later moved away and we lost contact, though we kept on praying for them in our prayer group.

A few years later they came back to the same street, a few houses away from us. When I saw him he did not look well. After a short while his wife left him with his son who also had medical problems. He, himself was diagnosed with severe Muscular Dystrophy.

And then I found out, to my amazement, that he had come to know the Lord Jesus as his Lord and Saviour. He later explained to me that all the things I had shared with him years ago had come back to him and he accepted the Lord!

For many years he has been housebound, living with his disabled

son, who is solely depend on him. Yet he has been such an encouragement not only to me, but to many other people. I have never seen someone like him, who has been going through so much pain, yet still growing into the strongest Christian I know, and always praising the Lord.

I am the leader of an Iranian Christian outreach in the UK. I come from a Muslim background and was saved by the grace of God. Miraculously my whole family came to know the Lord as well.

**A few years later they came back to the same street, a few houses away from us. When I saw him he did not look well ...**

The Iranian Christian Outreach in our city began around 1995 as a prayer group formed by a small number of people from different fellowships. Around 1999, we took a step of faith to expand this work by taking a name, Noor, that means 'light' in Arabic and Persian, and by holding regular open

meetings to which we invited those who have never heard the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We want to thank God for all he has done over these years. Our open meetings now have around 150-200 people attending for worship, sharing of the gospel and teaching, with translation into Farsi. This is followed by a meal. For 15 years, we have met on Saturday every month, and now we meet every couple of months from 6pm till around 10pm.

**Later he told me that  
all the things I had  
shared with him years  
ago had come back  
to him ...**

This extraordinary growth is God's work, and we realise that we must be completely reliant on him for this to continue. Around 70% of those who attend these events have never been to any sort of Christian meeting before!

Many of those who visit us are very lonely people, who feel isolated in this foreign land, and their hearts are often touched by seeing the reality of Christian love and acceptance. These meetings enable them to hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (usually for the first time) and to have fellowship with Christians from their own culture. This is then followed by having Bible teaching in Farsi on a 10-week course to make sure they are grounded in the Scriptures.



We believe that this astonishing interest in the gospel, and the growing number of converts from those who have traditionally been some of the hardest of all men and women to reach, is a testimony to the fact that this is God's hour for these people. He has opened a door and we want to be able to walk through it.

Like many churches, last year was difficult for us, with no meetings or fellowship. Please keep on praying for the Iranian Christian Outreach and for the Lord to provide for our every need.

\*Names and identities have been changed.



# Nurturing Christ-centred relationships any way we can in pandemic times

*Huw and Alison Williams serve in church work and with Christian Unions in Ireland*

**It is so easy to focus on what we can no longer do in this period of pandemic, and not what we can do, both in ministry and other areas of life.**

There is of course, an appropriate time for that – the scriptures teach us the importance of lamenting losses as well as rejoicing in the Lord's blessings. But as we reflect on our first 18 months or so of ministry here in Ireland, more than half of which has been during the challenges of COVID-19, we have also found it helpful to reflect on what the Lord has been doing and how the spread of his goodness is subject to no restrictions!

In Alison's work with Christian Unions Ireland, we've marvelled at the energy and adaptability of staff and students in maintaining and building communities of Christian students and continuing to reach out.

In Galway, committee members met up with any new students who made contact with the CU online, to go for walks and show them around. Waterford students met with their staff worker for online baking and games nights, while in Limerick a student set up a reading group for non-Christian international students to discuss Rebecca McLaughlin's *Confronting Christianity*. This group is continuing to meet many months after they finished reading that book!

**In Dublin one student messaged 10 of his non-Christian friends to see if they would like to read the Bible with him. All 10 agreed ...**

In Dublin one student decided to make the most of the extra time in lockdown and messaged 10 of his non-Christian friends to see if they



would like to read the Bible with him. All 10 agreed to do so via a video call! He met one-to-one with each and read different passages. While only a couple decided to carry on meeting to read a Gospel, he was so encouraged by the opportunity to explain the message of Jesus to them all.

In the church here in Greystones it has been wonderful to see good numbers of the congregation engaging with Bible reading projects together during the lockdowns. They have met online to share what they have learnt and been blessed by.

These long months have highlighted to us again the truth of that conviction we have held for a long time now. The ministry of nurturing healthy, Christ-shaped *relationships* is central to the work of missions and discipleship.

Just as the self-giving love of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit overflows and reaches out to us in the gospel, so we long to see the Lord's people overflowing in love for one another in care and encouragement, as well as reaching out to those around them with the good news of Jesus.

It is with very good reason that the New Testament describes the church as the body of Christ. We are connected to each other in profound relationships as we live in relationship with Christ Jesus himself, the head. So while we are grateful for the technology which has kept us connected in times which would have been very lonely without it, we have

all discovered that it is not the same as meeting together in person, taking communion together, and so on.

And that is why much of our ministry has been given to encouraging the Lord's people to continue in fellowship – as best we can – in these times. This requires the creativity and enthusiasm of a people committed to each other in the self-giving love of God, as the Spirit enables us, fixing our eyes on Christ Jesus himself.

We are very grateful to live and work where we do. The East coast of Ireland is a beautiful part of the world, and the ministries we have been given have been warmly welcoming and encouraging. Our children have settled in well and made friends.

At the same time we are reminded of how much need there is of gospel witness in this, the least-reached English-speaking country in the world. Please join us in praying for the glory of Christ Jesus in the country of Ireland. 'Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.' (Matthew 6 v10)





# How do you survive financially in mission?

*Tom and Nerys serve in church work and ministering to vulnerable women in Pattaya, Thailand*

**We'd never had to ask anyone for money. Tom had been working as a teacher for 8 years. Nerys was a community mental health nurse. We were comfortable financially. We'd saved up for a mortgage and bought a house. We enjoyed being able to give to church and other ministries without having to worry, and we loved having enough to go on holiday during the summer.**

That was 2015, and if I'm honest, I felt a lot of pride about our financial security and independence.

Then, I left work to study theology in preparation for mission in Thailand. I didn't qualify for a student loan, so in addition to not having an income, we'd need to find £8000 a year in fees. It was pretty humbling asking friends and family to help. In fact, if I'm honest I absolutely hated it. But letters were written, prayers

were prayed, God provided and we managed. We made sacrifices, but we never got to the end of the month and wondered how we were going to survive.

The following year, Nerys left her job so that she had more time for her post-grad course in Integrative Counselling (again, part of our

**I felt so guilty every time ... but amazingly, people seemed to be grateful we'd come to share and actually wanted to support the work.**

preparation for Thailand). We found ourselves with less income but more fees ... and we weren't even in Thailand yet! We found part time jobs, wrote more letters, prayed more prayers, and again God graciously provided.





During my third year we started raising money for Thailand. We'd go along to a church, Nerys would share about the ministry, I'd preach (usually on Rahab) and then we'd ask a church of strangers to give us money, making as little eye contact as possible!

**A wise friend encouraged us to remember that we are asking people to partner with us in the work God has given us to do.**

I lost count of how many churches we visited. I felt so guilty every time, like we were just using them for cash. But amazingly, people seemed to be grateful we'd come to share and actually wanted to support the work.

We've been in Thailand for two years now and honestly, we still struggle to know how best to use

our allowance. We still feel guilty if we eat out on a special occasion. We find it hard to balance ministry money and funds for the occasional weekend break from Pattaya. However, we know our supporters wouldn't begrudge us from taking care of ourselves, as this ultimately energises and fuels us to carry on through the stresses of cross-cultural work.

A wise friend encouraged us to remember that we are asking people to partner with us in the work God has given us to do. We don't need to be embarrassed when we share our heart and motivate the hearts of others to give.

We want people to partner with us and know that they are giving financially so that the women we work with in Thailand might come to know and love Jesus. We're grateful that God, through our supporters, has made that possible.





## ‘We treat, Jesus heals’

*Dr Becca Jones serves in Kiwoko Hospital in Uganda*

**‘Oh no, please not again!’ Scovia had already suffered the loss of three premature babies. ‘What if my husband gets a new wife because I failed to produce a child? Am I truly cursed as my neighbour claims? Who will care for me when I am old?’**


Scovia was 7 months pregnant and in labour. Fearfully, she went to her nearby clinic. Her little girl was born weighing 1kg (2.4 pounds). Scovia looked at her daughter, perfectly formed but so small and fragile – her skin transparent, her heartbeat and rib cage visible as she protested against her new, cold surroundings. The nurse suggested she go to Kiwoko Hospital.

Was there any point? How would she pay expensive medical bills? What

about food? The nurse encouraged her that she had heard of small babies surviving there and persuaded Scovia’s husband to pay for transport.

Alone and frightened, Scovia set off over bumpy dirt roads. It was the dry season with dust everywhere. Her daughter was strapped to her chest in what the nurse had called ‘kangaroo mother care’. Scovia did her best to keep the dust from her tiny face.

When she reached Kiwoko Hospital both Scovia and her baby were exhausted. The neonatal unit was hot and noisy with alarms sounding and babies crying. A nurse took her baby to a cot, calling her colleague to help. Her voice sounded urgent. Nurses and a doctor crowded around working on her baby.



Finally the doctor came to talk to Scovia. She explained that her baby was very small and might not survive, however such small babies had survived at Kiwoko and they would do all they could, including praying.

Unbeknown to her, the doctor was feeling the injustice of Scovia's situation. She had been able to give a much more positive outlook of 90% survival to mothers in the UK with babies this size. The doctor reminded herself that this was why she was here, and also of the hospital motto "We treat, Jesus heals."

**Was there any point?  
How would she pay  
expensive medical  
bills? What about food?**

Scovia's baby faced a tricky first week. Scovia watched as her daughter forgot to breathe and had needles inserted into her tiny veins. She expressed milk for her, initially just a few drops at a time.

After 17 days things improved! Her daughter, now called Blessing, no longer needed oxygen and began to gain weight. Scovia started to hope.

She watched how the staff clearly cared for each baby, and spoke compassionately to the mothers. 'Why?' She asked. One of the nurses explained that she was serving God by serving these families. She quoted Micah 6:8: "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Scovia was also amazed to find that

the care was heavily subsidised and her bill was very manageable.

When Blessing was well enough to go home, the staff reminded Scovia of their prayers and glorified God for answering. Scovia did not yet have saving faith, but was touched by the care Blessing received. She resolved to look further into this personal relationship with God they spoke of.

Please pray Kiwoko Hospital; for our staff, and for God to work in the lives of patients like Scovia and Blessing.





# Characteristics of a Sending Church

Bible study  
Part 2

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

**Our God is a sending God. One of the ways he does this is by sending gospel workers from local churches to the nations.**

Let's continue our study by looking at four more characteristics of a sending church, seen in the church in Antioch.

## **They prioritise worship (Acts 13:1-3).**

The church in Antioch were a worshipping church. They heard God's word proclaimed by prophets and teachers (Acts 13:1). They prayed and fasted together (Acts 13:2-3). As they worshipped, the Holy Spirit led them to send out gospel workers (Acts 13:2).

A sending church is first a worshipping church. Their heart for mission grows out of their heart for God. They see his glory and global purpose as his word is proclaimed. As they seek after God through fasting and prayer, the Holy Spirit brings them in alignment with God's purpose and leads them to act.

## **They take action (Acts 13:2-3).**

The book of Acts is full of action. It is not primarily a book about the actions of people, but the actions of God. In Acts 13, the church don't just have a moving time of worship, they act on what the Lord has led them to do. The Spirit of God uses them to send out Barnabas and Saul, to take the gospel to places that had never heard it.

The Holy Spirit is still at work today empowering the church to make Christ known to the ends of the earth. His work will be done as we obey his leading in sending and supporting those who share the gospel.

In what ways does having wrong priorities hinder our mission involvement? (See Jonah 4)

How does a heart for God lead to a heart for mission?

**Application 1**

What signs are there that we're becoming passive in our involvement in global mission?

**Application 2**

Think of specific ways to be more active in our involvement?

**They give sacrificially (Acts 13:3).**

Saul and Barnabas had been such a blessing to their church and you can well imagine some in the church thinking, "Not them, Lord! We need them here!" Sending is a costly thing to do. It is costly for those who go and those who send. One of the costs is the reality that the people we send from our church will be people who are faithfully serving right here. They will leave a gap when they go. They will be people we love and would love to keep around.

As we consider this and ask ourselves whether it is worth it, we need to remember the worthiness of Jesus. He is worthy of our best. We also need to remember the coming harvest. "Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy" (Psalm 126:5). As difficult as it is to let go of the precious people we are holding on to, we do so knowing that God is bringing about a wonderful harvest of glad worshippers from every tribe, tongue and nation (Revelation 5:9).

**Application 3**

What are some of the costs that come with sending and supporting mission workers today?

How does the gospel enable us to embrace the cost of sending? (John 12:24)

The next few editions of 4 Corners will include a series of Bible studies looking at some characteristics of sending and supporting churches. If you are a church leader, feel free to use these in your church!

**They maintain care (Acts 14:24-28).**

Sending Barnabas and Saul out wasn't the end of their involvement with them. At the end of Acts 14, the church welcomed them back. When they arrived, the church gathered together to hear about what they had seen God do since they last met together.

We see churches elsewhere in the New Testament being encouraged to continue in prayer and support of their mission partners in a manner "worthy of the Lord" (3 John 6). May we, by God's grace, do the same.

**Application 4**

What are some of the challenges cross-cultural workers face in their work and in their personal lives?

What are some practical ways we can maintain our interest and support of them and their work?

*Next time we look at what the Bible says on being a supporting church.*



A yellow smiley face cutout is mounted on a red brick wall. The cutout has two dark circular eyes and a wide, open mouth. The background is a textured red brick wall with some mortar visible between the bricks.

# Dealing with anger when serving in mission

*Paul Chatfield serves as a pastor in Italy*

**Someone once said that serving in mission brings out the worst in you. It has and it did. 15 years ago, my anger was so great and unprocessed after serving in mission, that not only did I leave, but I was diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. I spent a lot of time flat out on my bed wondering if this was it for my calling and my life, as I realised that 95% of people never fully recover.**

Well, God was kind. Two years later I came through it to recover fully, but aware like never before that my anger management had to change.

And so, I worked on it. I realised that you can sin not only by exploding but also by imploding. An emotionally healthy spirituality will seek to recognise the anger inside, understand it and then look to express it carefully and sensitively.

I felt (and still feel!) poor at conflict management, but I was getting


better, grateful for a second bite at the cherry of life.

Fast forward a decade and here I am this morning wondering what to write about, and I think about yesterday evening when I had two calls. The first, was a pastor asking for advice with his anger and the second, another leader elsewhere asking if I would do a course on conflict management amongst some of their leaders because they don't know how to be reconciled.

**... you can sin not only by exploding but also by imploding. An emotionally healthy spirituality will seek to recognise the anger inside**

All this when I couldn't feel more broken in this area of anger management. But then 2 Corinthians 1:4 smiles at me over my shoulder, "God comforts us so we can then comfort others". Well, I can certainly share from my mistakes





So, let me share three principles that I've found helpful, taken from a secular management book (Crucial Conversations – Patterson et al)

### **Make it safe.**

No conflict goes well if both parties aren't feeling safe. If I'm not, I can say, "I don't feel safe to express my feelings – I'm afraid it's going to come across wrongly". If I suspect the other person isn't, I can try to create that space. "I'm sorry, I've spoken a lot and I've not heard you out," or "I can see I've hurt you and I hate doing that. I do want to get better at communicating with you. Can you help me see what happened?"

### **Search for mutual purpose.**

Instead of tackling a problem as enemies, I try to come at it together as friends. Last year this point saved a marriage in Turin. One wanted to move to another country, the other didn't. The argument was so bad that only one agreed to meet. Having listened, it seemed they both wanted the marriage to work but just put priorities on different values. I urged the spouse to underline that they both wanted the same thing

– a healthy family – and then talk about why each wanted what they did. Friends not enemies. That was revolutionary for them.

### **Get the facts clear.**

Separate the facts from the story, I tell myself. For example, Mario is late to meet me. I've got so many things to do it's just not fair for him to do this. How can he not be considerate towards me?! Alternatively, Mario is late. Well, he does so much. He's probably listening to someone pouring out their heart. He's so loving.

Same facts, different story. And if he is regularly late, I still just state the facts, "Hey Mario, I've noticed you were late the last two times as well." And I let him reply. It could be cultural, it could be the timing doesn't suit him, it could be that he's normally late – in which case, I adjust my timing in future!

I wish I always reacted in these ways! I don't but I keep working on it. And perhaps it's not by chance that this last year in church, we've started attracting a number of new, young couples. Perhaps they can easily identify with these battles too? May God give us all grace to be angry and not sin.



# An inconvenient conversation

*Elizabeth works in evangelism in France*

**I pushed our driveway gate open and groaned inwardly as I saw our elderly neighbour approaching. He is new to the area, has time on his hands and likes to talk, but I was already running late.**

Smiling politely, I hoisted my toddler into his car seat and promised apologetically that I would drop by when I returned from the school run.

Twenty minutes later, I put on a mask, took my toddler by the hand and knocked on the man's door. The elderly couple welcomed us warmly. It was the first time I had met his wife. Although they had only lived in the house for a couple of weeks, it was already perfectly organised and spotlessly clean. I hoped my toddler wouldn't break anything.

We talked about insulation and their former employment, then the conversation turned to my husband's work as a pastor and they asked a question that we often hear in France: "What is the difference between Catholic and Protestant?" They knew we didn't worship Mary

and told me that they had read in the Bible that she had other children after Jesus – unusual for Catholics.

I explained a bit about the Reformation and Luther's discovery of the simple gospel message. They nodded in agreement as I talked



about salvation through faith in Jesus' death for sinners.

The lady excused herself for a moment (telling me all about her various medical ailments with typical French frankness on the subject) and while she was out of the room,

Monsieur said that he had always sought to live a good life and not harm anyone. 'I never harbour hard feelings towards someone after a disagreement.' I agreed that it was a good way to live but added that even those of us who seek to live good lives have done things wrong and need the Saviour. The lady returned as Monsieur was telling me that he didn't think he was a sinner.

I thought about the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector that we had read as a family the night before. *"Lord, should I share it? It's our first proper meeting. I don't want to offend them!"* Their enthusiasm for

tax collector ended up right with God, I explained the gospel again and asked if they had ever asked God to forgive them. Madame exclaimed, "Jamais de ma vie! (never in my life!)" as if I had suggested the unthinkable! She spoke of her good life and how hard she had worked to bring up her children well.

**Lord, should I share it?  
It's only our first proper  
meeting. I don't want  
to offend them!"**

I decided to say one last thing. "I don't mean to be difficult, but the Bible is very clear that we cannot be saved through our own goodness. It's important to come humbly to God, confess the wrong things we have done and trust in Jesus for forgiveness."

They nodded and said "oui, oui!" but I wasn't sure if they had really understood. The conversation turned to other matters. They seemed sorry when I left, which was reassuring – it's always hard to know how direct to be!

A week later I took them an English Christmas cake and the French Carol Service DVD our church had made.

Please pray for the many French Catholics in our village who are like this kind elderly couple: moral people, who have sadly never understood their sin or what it means to be born again. "I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:32) May the Holy Spirit open eyes to see that we are all in the latter category!



the conversation encouraged me to take the plunge. My toddler was lying on the floor, pulling himself in circles around chair legs.

As I recounted the story in Luke 18:9-14, I could see they identified with the Pharisee! At their confusion that the



# Welcome!



**Ténébou & Bethan Manga (Lilia, Joseph & Naomi)** have a burden for the unreached in the Casamance region of southern Senegal, especially Ténébou's people group. Having served previously in Senegal, they feel called to return and share the Good News through medical work by planting a clinic in an area with little or no access to healthcare. Initially Ténébou will be involved with literally building the clinic itself whilst Bethan looks after the needs of their children. Their sending church is Long Crendon Baptist Church. They are currently in the process of raising support and plan to return to Sengal in Summer 2021.



**Giuseppe and Viviana Fortuna** are both from Italy. Giuseppe is pastor of a small congregation in Catania, Sicily, where both he and Viviana are active in outreach and church work, and have been for 2 decades. They have joined UFM as associates. Their sending church is Crosspointe Church, Arnold, Maryland, USA.



**M and S** are from the South of England and hope to move to Eurasia in Spring 2021. Their long term aim is to serve as part of a local church, reaching out to the community through apologetics, evangelism, and psychological support. They are sent by Carey Baptist Church in Reading.



FOCUS ON ...

# France

*Christopher (Del) de la Hoyde serves in church planting in France*

**France, the birthplace of John Calvin, saw a glorious revival in the mid-16th century with Calvin and others in Geneva training and sending thousands of pastors to evangelise and plant churches in France, and hundreds of thousands being converted.**

After this, however, the wars of religion and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes under Louis XIV, led to Protestants being hounded out of the country, and the believing church dwindling and being marginalised for hundreds of years.

Until 1905, Catholicism was still the official religion and about 60% of French people would still claim to be Catholic (including lapsed Catholics and 'Catholic atheists!'). But church attendance is at an all-time low, and for many their experiences of the Catholic church only serve to inoculate them against Christian teachings, believing that they've heard enough already.



## Please pray ...

- Thank God for growth in the church with many churches planted in the last 50 years
- Thank God for the growing number of establishments and resources for training – pray that the Lord would raise up many to lead and reach unreached areas
- Pray for a work of God among traditional, secular-Catholic people, who remain an almost unreached people-group
- Pray for God to give his church a heart for Islamic neighbourhoods
- Pray for sound teaching and an increasing conviction about the sufficiency and power of the gospel for justification and sanctification



# France is...

**65% Catholic**  
(including  
'Catholic  
atheists'!)

**9% Muslim**

**23% None**

**2% Other**

**1% Christian<sup>1</sup>**

**64 million**  
people



**320**  
**baguettes**  
**eaten per**  
**second**



**1/2 a baguette**  
**per person**  
**per day<sup>1</sup>**



**400-4000**  
**different**  
**cheeses<sup>3</sup>,**  
**no one is sure**



**... a place where**  
**whole counties have**  
**just 1 or 2 struggling**  
**evangelical churches**  
**to reach hundreds**  
**of thousands of**  
**people.**

<sup>1</sup>[www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com)  
<sup>2</sup>[www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/](http://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/)  
<sup>3</sup><http://www.socheese.fr/>



In reality, secularism is the creed of the French republic, with religious discourse and symbols either banned or strenuously kept out of educational establishments and public life. France is also the birthplace of Cartesian rationalism and existentialism, exalting the reason and will of human beings and sneering. And yet many are attracted by new age spiritualities occultism.

**France is also the birthplace of Cartesian rationalism and existentialism ... And yet many are attracted by new age spiritualities occultism.**

France is home to an estimated 5.7 Muslims, with immigrants and refugees moving from majority-Muslim ex-colonies in Africa. On the surface there is integration; in reality there is a deep-seated sense of marginalisation on the part of the Islamic community, and an increasing fear of Islam among the non-Muslim population. All this has made France a particular target for Islamic terrorism, and the government is now passing laws which will surely only lead to a greater sense of division.

Yet God the Father has been doing a wonderful work for the glory of his Son over the past 50 years in France, inciting a global prayer movement for the country, tripling the number of churches since 1970 and growing the church from 150,000 to some 650,000, almost 1% of the population. Many have been saved and many trained for gospel ministry.

And yet there remains a great gospel need among Muslim populations; under-privileged parts of cities; and in huge rural counties with very few gospel-believing churches.

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



# What's it like starting a church from scratch?

*Seth and Jessica Lewis serve in church planting in Ireland*

I remember the day last year when I realised that the ongoing pandemic restrictions would end up scrapping every one of our carefully crafted plans for outreach events in our community, where we have been working for the last three years towards starting a new church.

That's obviously not a good feeling, but I have to say that it also wasn't devastating. It was just another (admittedly extreme) example of a dynamic we have lived with ever since we moved here: Things hardly ever go to plan.

When we arrived, we knew of only one other Christian family in the town. We made plans, got involved in the community, knocked on doors, and never knew what would come of any of it. By God's grace, a group of believers has come together for a local Bible study, including

Christians we found in the town, Christians who moved to the town, and Christians who weren't Christians when they first started coming.

Together, we've planned outreaches. We planned a Christmas Carol service, which we then had to change because the Catholic Church decided at the last minute to do the same thing on the same weekend. There was no way a small group like ours could compete. Instead, we made our event into a "Christmas Café," with an international flavour, including food, stories, and songs from around the world, and the unchanging message of Christmas.

It wasn't our original plan, but it hit a nerve, and the room was full of local faces, including a few from a refugee centre where we wanted to build a connection.

Our plans to build on this connection then didn't seem to work out, and yet, God made it happen – when the pandemic hit we were able to start providing some lockdown supplies.

**We've seen God work, and one of the reasons we knew it had to be him was because it didn't happen the way we planned it.**

One of the residents asked for a Bible, then more requests came in. Now we've given away more than twenty Bibles there, a women has become a Christian, and we've started a remote Bible study. We hadn't planned for that.

Looking back, most of the best things that have happened here have happened outside of our original plans. We are still making plans, of course, but we're holding them loosely. One reason for that is that things can change fast and we're not in control. One summer we lost five key members from our little group because they all had to move away for work or education.

The other reason we're holding our plans loosely, though, is that God's plans are better. We've already seen that proven time and time again.

I can't tell you what will happen here long term, or how. All I know is we've seen God work, and one of the reasons we knew it had to be him was because it didn't happen the way we planned it.



## Upcoming Events

All our events are currently being held online. Please register your attendance via our website.

### Called to Serve

Considering your role in mission or supporting others? Join us for *Called to Serve* where we will be focusing on the least reached. Saturday 13th March 2021, 10am-12 noon  
[www.ufm.org.uk/called2serve](http://www.ufm.org.uk/called2serve)

### Spring Conference in Northern Ireland

Thursday 18th March 2021, 7.30pm–8.30pm and Saturday 20th March 2021, 3pm–4pm

For more information and booking, visit [www.ufm.org.uk/ireland](http://www.ufm.org.uk/ireland)

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To receive prayer letters from any of the mission workers in this magazine, please contact our offices or email [info@ufm.org.uk](mailto:info@ufm.org.uk)



### Scottish Spring Mini-Conference

A Heart for Mission

Saturday 24th April 2021, 11am-12 noon

For more information and booking, visit [www.ufm.org.uk/scotland](http://www.ufm.org.uk/scotland)

### Summer Conference

Please check our website for updates.



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## Gearing up for mission

### How will they hear? Reaching the least reached

**Saturday 13th March 2021** 10am to 12pm (online via Zoom)

Bible teaching, interviews with mission partners, questions and discussion times. Please book at [www.ufm.org.uk/called2serve](http://www.ufm.org.uk/called2serve)

### 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 and your church with your world mission involvement.



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