

4 corners

SUMMER 2022



ufm
worldwide

DEFENDING TWO WARS IN EASTERN EUROPE

THOUSANDS ARE MEETING
JESUS ON THEIR PHONES
OneHundredFold

BUILDING THE HOUSE:
SPREADING THE GOSPEL
Italy

The West with the Rest?



Michael Prest, Director, UFM Worldwide

Mission thinking focused on a 'Christian West' going to the 'heathen rest' is not only outdated, but fails to grasp the expanding mission movement from the majority world.

Awareness of this development was helped by a study at Fuller Theological Seminary, which found that 210 mission societies had sent 3,404 mission workers in 1972.¹ Subsequent work showed that by 1988 the number had grown to 35,924 mission workers sent by 1,094 agencies.²

By 1990, research suggested that “the number of non-Western missionaries is growing more than five times faster than the number of Western missionaries.”³

There are at least two fundamental implications for Western-based mission agencies like UFM.

Dangers in our view of the Western church

The first relates to sending Western mission workers to majority world countries. There are two dangers here.

There is the danger that we carry on as if nothing has changed – expecting to lead, call the shots and take centre stage. In short, to fail to honour Christ's bride in the place where we've been called to serve.

But, equally, there's a danger that we move to the other extreme. Eddie Arthur writes:

“Many ... missionaries who have compared the growth of the Church worldwide with their home situations

have written off the contribution of the Western church. They see it as needy and moribund, with little to offer. This is as much of a mistake as seeing the West as the centre of things: in truth the body of Christ worldwide is interdependent and needs to learn how to function in this way.”⁴

Part of this learning must involve listening. What do the leaders of churches think about mission workers in their nation? In a meeting with leaders from the Evangelical Church of Papua New Guinea, it was striking to hear them ask why the West has stopped sending so many workers to them: “We want you to come and work with us, under our leadership. You've helped us see churches planted, but we want your help and support as these churches grow

in maturity – developing church leadership, establishing youth and children's ministry."

Yes, there are times when the best thing a Western mission worker can do is step aside, but also wonderful opportunities to serve side by side.

Sending workers from the majority world

The second implication relates to sending mission workers from the majority world.

What is the place of a Western agency such as UFM in this? A number of partners across UFM are grappling with this question.⁵

It's easy to work out how not to do it. Rolling out a Western structure, while planting the agency flag around the world, has often hindered the work it set out to do. Cultural, financial and linguistic challenges abound. A Western structure has made it hard for the voice of national sending churches to be heard.

But how can we move forward? Do pray for

UFM workers in East Asia, Brazil and Romania thinking through these issues. Pray for the UFM staff team as we pursue relational rather than structural answers, and build mutually encouraging relationships. Pray for wisdom, faithfulness and humility as we live out the unchanging commission in an ever-changing context.

Michael

1 Steve (Heung Chan) Kim, "A Newer Missions Paradigm and the Growth of Missions from the Majority World," in *Missions from the Majority World: Progress, Challenges and Case Studies*, ed. Enoch Wan and Michael Pocock (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2009), 12-13.

2 Kim, "A Newer Missions Paradigm," 13.

3 Larry D. Pate, "The Changing Balance in Global Mission," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 15, no. 2 (April 1991): 58-59.

4 Edwin David Arthur, "Issues in Mission: Elements of a New Paradigm," <https://www.kouya.net/?p=5477>.

5 See, e.g. Michael Prest, <https://theses.gla.ac.uk/82809/>



FEATURES

Defending two wars in Eastern Europe

4

Thousands are meeting Jesus on their phones – ten years of OneHundredFold

6

Driving home a body, taking out the gospel

10

"I've heard of God's love, but this is the first time I've seen it"

12

Building the house: spreading the gospel in Italy

14

TRICKY QUESTION

What happens when there is a crisis in your host country?

8

CHURCH RESOURCES

Supporting the children of your mission partners

16

FOCUS ON Thailand

19

WHAT'S IT LIKE .. ? Responding to an emergency ...

21

NEW TO UFM:

18

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Defending two wars in Eastern Europe

A & T serve in Eastern Europe

The invasion that began in the early hours of 24th February brought devastation to millions of lives and changed Europe forever – thousands of lives lost within days, schools and hospitals bombed, regions all over the country occupied; literally no-one in the country has been left safe from attack.

The devastation brought about by bombing, shelling and missile attacks, to buildings, communities and villages, is massive in scale – whole towns have been reduced to rubble. Yet this visible physical devastation can hardly match the pain and trauma felt by millions of families who have been ripped apart by the war. “A part of everyone’s soul has been ripped away,” said a local pastor recently.

Yet strange as it may seem, military fighting is not the only war going on right now in this country. Cruise missiles and tanks are powerful, but they are not the only kind of weapon. What kind of war is this?

It is a battle over who is telling the truth, amidst all of the lies and propaganda. When confronted with accusations of war crimes by a reporter, one of the senior ambassadors for the invading country responded by quickly asserting that the evidence was made up ‘fake news.’ He then added: “This is an information war going on. Whoever wins the battle of information will win this war!” It is quite possibly the only true thing I have ever heard him say!

People are dying on both sides of this war simply because of lies

This battle for truth has been going on in society for a long time, of course. Christians have always had to fight against the prevailing resistance to truth. But in a time of war, when evil deeds are sought to be justified, carried out and then covered up, the propaganda machines go into overdrive. It is hard to see through the fog of war, to discern what is right and wrong, and Christians need to work extra hard to refuse and refute the lies that come at us daily.





I was struck recently by the incredibly dangerous consequences of believing human lies. People are dying on both sides of this war simply because of lies. A pastor friend of ours put it like this recently, "When the truth is neglected, a war becomes just a matter of time – it will inevitably happen. Therefore, it is not the absence of a war that is important, but truth. Only truth can lead us to true freedom ... propaganda does terrible things."

Those terrible things have been witnessed in the occupied areas of the invading army. The atrocities committed will keep war crimes tribunals busy for years and souls weeping for centuries. Lies always lead to darkness, as they come from the 'father of lies'.


Christians have responded incredibly to this war, to stand with the afflicted and reach out to all who are in need. So many people have given, helped, supported, taken in refugees, fed

the hungry, and lobbied for an end to the war. Thousands of gospel opportunities have opened up, which we pray every day will bring people to faith in Christ.

And every day we pray for an end to the war, so that bloodshed will cease, families will be reunited and gospel freedoms can be restored.

But there is another prayer that we must constantly pray – that the truth will prevail. That lies and propaganda will be uncovered for what they are: shrouded in darkness and malice. Pray that Christian believers who have been soaked in that propaganda will see the light and embrace the truth.

As Jesus said: "The truth shall set you free" (John 8:32). Freedom will come again to the broken lives of this broken country not simply when the bombs stop falling, but when the truth prevails. And we pray that many will see the truth of the gospel and the amazing grace of Christ.



Thousands are meeting Jesus on their phones – ten years of OneHundredFold

Ed and Kate serve with OneHundredFold in digital publishing and internet ministry

The man was very upset by the 12-minute gospel presentation and clicked on the instant chat to contact us. He was from a country closed to gospel work, where we were able to deliver this gospel film to locals on their phones.

The man used the chat function to talk to a trained Christian worker. This evangelist patiently answered the man's angry questions. In a few days, they saw the anger turn to amazement as the man came to believe in the living Jesus. He was so excited that he travelled miles to his home village to share what he had found with his family so that those he loved could meet Jesus as well.

In 2012, UFM recognised the calling the Lord had given Kate and I to start a ministry called OneHundredFold. We wanted to

redeem technology – especially mobile phones – to reach the world with the gospel and see God's kingdom grow across the globe.

From the early days of just Kate and I starting with a dream to serve the Lord, a team of ten full-time faith-supported workers and over 25 volunteers has been raised up for this digital ministry, as well as over 125 organisations with whom we partner.

As we reflect on what the Lord has done, we are humbled to be a part of his great work to seek and save the lost. We hope you will be encouraged as well.

Over 5 million people have been given access to the Scriptures, most of those in closed countries. Most received this on their mobile phones – some (more than 350,000) through Mustard Seed micro-SD cards* and

others (more than 450,000) through a download to their phone. The other 4 million were able to see Scripture on their phone and chat with a Christian worker in their language.

When we look back, we see that there were many thousands of those live chats. Combined with other digital gospel presentations, more than 30,000 people were offered a clear gospel message in their language. Of those who received the gospel, we know of just over a thousand people who made professions of faith.

However, our work does not stop with getting access to Scripture and the gospel, but continues with helping partners to disciple new believers and train Christian workers and pastors. So far, we know of more than 6,000 people who have been trained for the kingdom.

This training and discipling work is growing rapidly. Last week we shipped 500 Mustard Seed chips to a ministry partner who disciples new believers from a Muslim background.

There are 2,000 more chips being prepared now with resources for pastors in Mandarin Chinese, and just days ago we received a request for 500 Mustard Seeds with Arabic discipleship resources.

We invite you to join with us in this work. Firstly, please pray for us and the opportunities the Lord gives us to serve him. Secondly, you can volunteer to serve in OneHundredFold. All techies welcome and we have many roles for non-techies too. Finally, you can support the work or even sponsor a Mustard Seed through Project Seed Sower. Find out more at www.100fold.org

Thank you for faithfully praying for us and encouraging us these first ten years. We look forward to seeing what the Lord plans to do in the next ten!

*Mustard Seed micro-SD cards contain the Scripture and Bible teaching - see www.100fold.org/seedssower





What happens when there is a crisis in your host country?



What questions do you ask when you find yourself in the midst of a dangerous situation away from home? How do you balance your sense of God's calling with personal safety? What is the impact on your family?

In the first of a two-part series, we asked several UFM mission partners who have had to grapple with these very real challenges to share their experiences.

Facing Ebola in Sierra Leone

"Ebola erupted as I left Sierra Leone for a two-month home assignment. It was painful to leave knowing people were desperately suffering. Ebola was killing thousands, many of whom had never heard the gospel.

"God had every right to ask me to take some risk for the sake of the gospel"

In a crisis, God can lead some to stay and some to go; I needed to know what God required of *me*. I had a strong desire to return but also a deep conviction: God doesn't call us to be reckless, but he doesn't always call us to safety either. God had every right to ask me to take some risk for the sake

of the gospel. I had a tremendous sense of God's leading and peace, and wasn't fearful about going back.

What was a struggle, was managing the call to go, with the need for submission to those I had placed myself under, and trusting that God would make His way clear to all.

UFM graciously walked with me in my frustration and impatience, seeking God, asking the difficult questions, and acknowledging the concerns of my family and church, who supported me to do God's will even though it was painful for them.

As I returned, Ebola was increasing, many were dying and treatment beds were scarce. The fear was palpable. Our team made ourselves available to those God placed in our lives. The gospel message was at the forefront of our response, but there were also practical ways of helping: providing



food and Ebola-prevention supplies. There were daily opportunities to be God's hands, feet and voice.

We couldn't run our usual ministry activities, but just being there, standing alongside others, crying out to God, resulted in strong relationships and a deeper dependence on God. The situation might have seemed risky, but God's will was the safest place to be."

Jayne Dumbuya serves with her husband, Lamin, in children's and church ministry in Sierra Leone

Living through instability and conflict in West Africa

"Recent times are bringing the return of a high degree of uncertainty to the lives of people living in the West. Predicting which way social life, the economy, or political responses will go, feels harder than in previous years.

Such things, though, can cause us to reflect on how unusual (and perhaps unhelpful) the bubble of the modern West has been to pilgrims called to live daily by faith. Massive uncertainty, and highly precarious living conditions, are simply normality for much of the world for much of history. And compared to contemporary Western mission workers, most people have vastly fewer practical resources to turn to.

We live in an area at the forefront of the advance of Islam in West

Africa, in a country changing rapidly under this influence. Learning to respond to new and different sorts of uncertainties has been part of our life since moving to Africa in 2007. We've just been catching up with many of the believers around us here, who have much to teach us.

"We have learned to ask fewer 'why?' questions"

At one time we were withdrawn by the mission's security team and have had to adapt our ministry focus as instability increased in different parts of the country. We reviewed how we had got to the present point, what the choices were, and wondered where God was leading us. We have learned to ask fewer "why?" questions about the past: the Supreme Commander sees the whole map and knows why, and to demand what is not promised is not faith but folly.

Our privilege is to joyfully receive our marching orders for the next challenge, and leave things that are too big for us with God. Our children have had to say many sad goodbyes – but also had the blessing of meeting up with old friends in new places even years later, and being able to see that the Lord has been faithful.

There is much to be done, and we pray for the coming of more workers in all areas. Might the Lord be calling you?"

David and Liz work in Bible teaching/ training and compassion ministries in West Africa

Packing up chairs and taking out the gospel

Bosco and Heidi live in Ssenge, Uganda with their four children: Ezekiel, Eleazar, Talitha and Zebulun. Bosco is the Pastor of Emmanuel Baptist church which was planted in March 2018.

Mrs Makumbi had been feeling unwell for a few days, but she still felt the responsibility she had to attend her son-in-law's burial, a couple of hours from her home in our village of Ssenge, Uganda.

Mrs Makumbi was one of our neighbours, and she had recently started attending the local language service in our church. During this trip, her health rapidly deteriorated, and her daughters decided to hire a car with a driver to take her to the nearest hospital.

As her Pastor, I knew I had to do whatever was needed at this time

On the way to the hospital Mrs Makumbi was praying, pleading with the Lord to preserve her life. But the Lord, according to his purposes, took her life before she reached the hospital.

Not long after this, I received a phone call, "The car has broken down." The hired driver, in an act of great

kindness, had offered to bring the body back to Mrs Makumbi's home. In Ugandan culture, the body must remain in the home for a day or two for family, friends and community members to come to pay their respects to the deceased and support those in mourning. But about half an hour or so from Ssenge, the car had broken down.

As her Pastor, I knew I had to do whatever was needed at this time, so soon I found myself in our car, transporting the body back to our village.

That night, mourners gathered in and around Mrs Makumbi's home for the vigil. The family were so poor that the body was not even placed in a coffin, which is almost unheard of in Uganda. Instead, it was lying on a mattress, being covered by a simple sheet. As a church, we decided to give money to buy a coffin in time for



the body to be transported for burial. It was one way that we could tangibly show our compassion.

The following day was a Sunday, and the period of mourning was continuing at Mrs Makumbi's house. I decided that we could hold our afternoon service near

This gave us an incredible opportunity to speak to those in our community who have no hope of life with Christ after death

Mrs Makumbi's home where the mourners were gathering, so we packed up church chairs, the keyboard and the pulpit, and transported them to where the community were grieving. This gave us an incredible opportunity to speak to those in our community who have no hope of life with Christ after death; to tell them of the salvation freely offered by the loving God



whose name is feared throughout Uganda; to encourage them to seek forgiveness for their wrongdoing; to plead with them to consider their own standing before God; to excite them that there is no need to fear death if they have been reconciled with the Father through Jesus.

Praise God for this opportunity to proclaim the gospel publicly in Ssenge village. Pray that God will use Emmanuel Baptist Church to be salt and light in this community so that many may be called out of darkness into his wonderful light and that God may be glorified on the day he visits us.

"I've heard of God's love, but this is the first time I've seen it."

Gavin and Elaine Charlton run MusaweNkosi (God's Grace), caring for and sharing the gospel with orphans and rural communities in South Africa

What do you pray when things go wrong, when there is serious illness, war and natural disaster, and it seems as if evil has the upper hand?

Poverty and crime have always been a problem in South Africa. But these were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In July 2021 there were riots and looting, and in two days almost every shop in our town of Empangeni was emptied; some set alight.

Every man was out for himself. Hundreds were left without jobs – those whose lives were already hard, became even harder.

We felt powerless – what do you pray when confronted with the sinfulness of man? When the scale of suffering is beyond our ability to fix; the hunger and desperation not an abstract idea but a face and a name? We prayed that God would glorify his name.

And he did. God moved Christians to act. Several churches in town provided food parcels to organisations working with people in need and, for three





months here at MusaweNkosi, we were able to provide 60 homesteads with food. These were distributed by staff from the children's home, who shared the gospel as they visited, leaving tracts containing gospel messages with the supplies.

We prayed that God would glorify his name. And he did.

After dropping these off at one homestead, the reply came back, "I have often heard of God's love, but this is the first time that I have seen it." It was a reminder that our actions speak loudly, and people are watching to see what we do, not just to hear what we say.

Then Baba Jobe, a member of our staff, received a call from someone he had visited with aid. The man wanted to talk. The tract that he had read was different from the teaching at his church. Baba Jobe went to visit, along with his Zulu Bible.

They met several times and after a few visits, the man was converted. He invited two of his sisters, one of whom was converted as well. A weekly Bible

study was arranged which grew to 20 people. Children started coming too!

At the last count, there are about 30 people coming to the Bible study and 40 children to "Friday School". Ten people have been converted. Some of these people come from false churches – this is a strong Shemba area, a religion with a "Black Messiah" that mixes Shemba with ancestor worship – and some are unchurched. Praise God that so many are coming to hear his Word.

From the devastation of the looting, God paved the way for a possible church plant in a predominantly unchurched area. He opened doors in the time of disaster and people are responding, praise God.

We are overwhelmed with opportunities to share the gospel. Several communities are open to us to run feeding schemes, homework clubs, school assemblies and holiday clubs. The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. We need a person or couple to commit to long-term service here, getting to know people, sharing God's love and the good news. Pray for Christians willing to take up the opportunities.



Building the house: spreading the gospel in Italy

Jonathan and Annette Gilmore serve in a church planting ministry and Jonathan leads Impatto (Acts 29 Italy) in Palermo, Italy

When I was (much!) younger, I used to enjoy building model aeroplanes and ships. You know, the plastic ones which you then paint and show off to all.

My problem was that I was so eager to have the finished product that I tended to ignore the instructions, do things quickly and in my way. Invariably, by the end there were a few extra pieces of plastic which I hadn't factored into my grand improvisation.

As I consider gospel work, I tend to face the same temptation: to want to reach the final product quickly. If I do it my way, I think it will work and be better. There are, however, no shortcuts or neat formulas. "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain." (Psalm 127:1)

Gospel work in Italy is all about 'building the house': to see healthy churches planted which multiply and where disciples are made, equipped and built-up. There, too, there are no shortcuts.

Building his churches in Italy

We are grateful for Impatto (Acts 29 in Italy), the growing family of churches and church plants in Italy. There are now 18 localities where a strong gospel-centred witness is present and growing. A true sense of family, connectedness and a common vision for multiplying churches continues to develop. Pray for more new church plants to emerge, church planters to be raised up, and existing churches and plants to stabilise and multiply!

Building LifeHope

Locally here in Palermo, we have, humanly speaking, been limited in moving forward in the consolidation of the LifeHope church plant. The last few years have taken us on a different path than we anticipated. Our original 'my way' building plans were rather neat and quick: a public meeting space, lots of pre-existing friends and contacts, relevant events and activities and hey presto, surely, certain 'success'! But in reality church-planting is ultimately God's job. We must learn to trust God, enjoy him,



and carefully progress as we have opportunities.

The list of people who are in touch with LifeHope totals up to 40 people. Online connections during the pandemic have significantly connected us with places as far removed as Ghana and Portugal.

Since last autumn, we have been able to gather again in-person and continue to faithfully work hard, following his way. But, ultimately, any results in discipleship, pastoral care, transformed lives and the facilitation of significant community around the gospel of Jesus are God's work. He must build. If we do, it's in vain. Pray with us for a continued work of grace in people's lives and for evidence of growth and construction!

All of a sudden, amidst the perplexities of building, God shines a light and touches individual lives, building his presence into their hearts and minds. We are grateful for Carlo*

who has been with us for over a year now. A fervent Catholic, he came into contact with some of our group and responded gladly to the message of true life in Christ alone. He continues to delight in the gospel of grace and patiently eagerly prays for the rest of his family to experience the joy of salvation. We are praying for more Carlos. Please pray with us.

Will you build with us?

But we're also praying (earnestly) for additional workers to come and stand with us, to join us, to be part of the building core-team, to bring life and hope to the city of Palermo and throughout this country.

We need people, called by God, committed to build according to his plan; committed, in fact, to enjoying watching the Lord build the house. Pray with us for people like this. Maybe you are a builder who could come and work with us as we enjoy the Builder who is building his church?


Inspired? Scan this QR code to watch Jonathan's video.





Supporting the children of your mission partners

Taking children overseas is like repotting a young tender plant




When mission partners go overseas, they uproot their children from relationships and networks that have been key influences in their lives. They take their children out of the education and healthcare systems and, depending on location, may take full responsibility for these while abroad.

Thankfully, wider family relationships continue, albeit from a distance. Mission partners are also very much part of the body of believers in their sending church, even while physically absent.

For the children of our mission partners, the support from the sending church can be crucial for a number of reasons. Situations vary widely but, in our observation, sometimes there are language and cultural barriers, and the host church may be young, so the children of mission partners may lack nourishing soil in the form of age-related teaching and friendship within the host church family.

Ephesians 6: 4 reminds us that the primary responsibility for spiritual teaching of children rests with parents, but it can feel a lonely task overseas without the support of the local church that they enjoyed in their home culture. The sending church can play a vital role in providing ongoing support for mission partners as they raise their children to know and love Jesus Christ.


Uproot gently, taking some soil with the roots


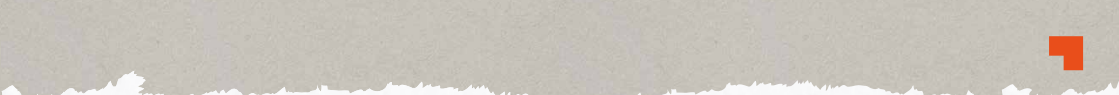


The support and ongoing contact with the sending church can be part of the 'soil' that goes with the roots.

Remember that 'good goodbyes' are important for children as well as their parents. Allow children to name what they will miss and not have to hide their fears and stay positive all the time! Some roots will be torn as they move and it is healthy to acknowledge this.

Designate a link person to keep in touch – this is not to say that other





members of the church family won't stay in touch, but it does mean that there can be organised, consistent contact that can be relied on, on behalf of the church, and that all children of mission partners are equally cared for!

Pray for children specifically, by name, as well as the family in general and ask for updates.



Handle with care! Repotted plants are sensitive.

Maintain contact with the Sunday School or youth group through video calls, letters, Sunday School prizes and resources.

Remember mission partners' children on special occasions such as Christmas. For example, provide a refillable advent calendar and send small items to fill it, including encouraging notes for the children.

Keep in touch with teenagers, even if it is all one way! It is especially important as they reach the age when they are finding their own identity and are tempted to disengage from church.

Maintaining consistent, informed contact that doesn't cost much financially is better than random generous bursts! Don't start anything that can't be maintained.




Water the young plant ... with prayer

Pray for:

- Their salvation, growth in grace, and protection against the enemy
- Relationships in the family and beyond
- Adjustment to all that is new
- Safety and health
- Education
- Ask for specific prayer requests from the children



Watch for signs of growth



Ultimately, the ability of children to adjust to transitions and cope well has a lot to do with the health of family relationships. The nuclear family is the only constant through all moves, and relationships with one another and God are key. Ask mission partners not just *what* but *how* they are doing as a family, asking about each child by name.

We want to see our mission partners' children thrive spiritually, emotionally and physically: "Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving." (Colossians 2: 6 - 7)

Rosalind Brown is TCK Coordinator for UFM Worldwide



Welcome!



Phil and Elspeth have joined UFM as associate mission partners. Having previously served in Africa, they are now based in Wales and travel regularly, at the invitation of African churches, to train church leaders and mission workers. Their sending church is Christ Church, Bromley.



Alex and Miri Stephenson

Alex is from Northern Ireland and Miri is from Germany. They met whilst serving God in South Africa in 2018 and are getting married in August 2022. They will be serving at the River of Life church in Frankfurt for the next three years, preparing for future long-term cross-cultural ministry. Their sending church is Bethany Baptist, Bangor.



Stephen and Grace Stonelake

Stephen is a surgical registrar in the last few years of his training and is currently working in a hospital in Birmingham. Together with his wife, Grace, and their children, Stephen will be serving in Kiwoko Hospital, Uganda from October 2022 for 10-11 months. Their sending church is Ebenezer Baptist in Old Hill, Birmingham.



Sophie Schellingerhout will be spending a year with the International Church in Bordeaux from September 2022 as part of UFM's i:Witness ministry training programme. She is sent by Cornerstone Church Bristol.

FOCUS ON ...

Thailand

Ann McClean serves with her husband, Johnny, with the local church in Bangkok

Thailand means 'Land of the Free' and Thai people are proud to boast of being the only country in South East Asia never to be colonised by the West. However, with social inequality, corruption and people trafficking hiding behind the famous Thai smile, many people feel hopeless.

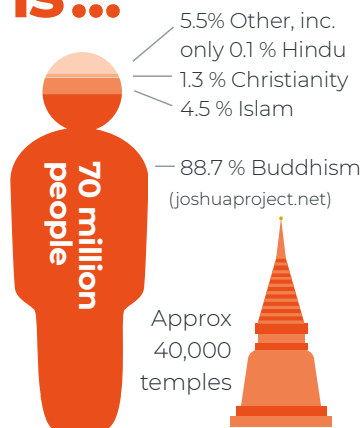
The last two years of pandemic have deepened the divide between rich and poor and there are currently many tensions in both national politics and local communities. Many people involved in the sex industry and bars in tourist cities like Pattaya saw their livelihoods taken away as borders closed in 2020. However many also experienced love and practical support from Christians. As the country slowly reopens to the rest of the world, there is an urgent need for more Christians to be salt and light to these communities.



Please pray for ...

- Thai pastors to be equipped and encouraged as they minister to small congregations. Pray for Langham Partnership, City to City, Pastor Training International and others working alongside them.
- A new generation of young Christian leaders willing to leave large modern cities to serve in rural areas. Pray for *Thai Christian Students* (IFES) as they challenge and support young graduates.
- Vulnerable young women trafficked into the sex industry with the promise of wealth and security. Pray for organisations like *Tamar Centre* ministering to them.
- The faithful and clear witness of believing Thais, and for many more to turn to Christ.

Thailand is...



Bangkok's real name is

Krungthepmahanakhon
Amonrattanakosin
Mahinthalayutthaya
Mahadilokphop
Noppharatchathaniburirom
Udomratchaniwetmahasathan
Amonphimanawatansathit
Sakkathattiyawitsanukamprasit

meaning, City of Angels,
Great City of Immortals,
Magnificent City of the
Nine Gems, Seat of the
King, City of Royal Palaces,
Home of Gods Incarnate,
Erected by Visvakarman
at Indra's Behest.



Most Buddhist Thai boys under 20 years serve a temporary period as monks for one rainy season.

Bangkok, the capital, is a cosmopolitan city where people from many nations live side by side. Tolerance, diversity and a materialistic worldview are the norm here. However, outside of this mega-city, nearly 50% of the population live in rural areas where life moves slowly and traditional Thai values of family, community and Buddhism are much more evident.

Buddhism is the 'national religion' but there is religious freedom for all. However, with more than 95% of Thai people claiming to be Buddhist, its influence is seen in many aspects of daily life, from Buddhist chants before school to monks collecting alms on the streets and temple ceremonies for almost every occasion.

Since 2020, a new generation of young, educated Bangkokians have been regularly seen protesting on the streets of the capital. They long to see a democratic government, free speech, equality for all. Sadly those who currently hold power are reluctant to listen and violent clashes are increasingly common.

Many young people leave the rural areas to study in the big cities of Bangkok or Chiangmai, but sadly few return, leaving small local churches with ageing populations. There is a real need for humble, faithful believers to be willing to return on completing their education.

We praise God for the growth of the church, particularly over the past 25 years. However, just 1% of 70 million Thai people are believers after more than 150 years of mission witness. As more gain access to the internet, false teaching and cults have become an increasing challenge. There is an urgent need for Thai church leaders to be equipped, the word of God to be taught and the gospel clearly proclaimed.

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

What's it like ... responding to an emergency on your doorstep

Andy and Anca Worsop work in mission training in Suceava, Romania

When I woke up on 24th February 2022 and read about the Russian invasion of Ukraine, I immediately contacted the president of our association and said that I felt that Kairos Mission School here in Suceava, Romania, some 20 miles from the border, should get ready to receive refugees. I never knew how true that would be.

That Thursday morning we had our last class and, by the evening, the Mission House started to receive refugees. A couple of families at first, more the next day, and, within a couple of days, we were receiving more than 200 daily. They came confused and scared, often not having made any plans beyond getting out of the country. We fed them, found accommodation and, when they knew where they wanted

to go next, we would arrange their onward transportation and accommodation. Often families had no one to host them in their final destination and we built up a network of hosts all over Europe and even further afield.

After six weeks, the numbers reduced, with the weekly average being closer to 40 a day. I vowed right at the beginning that I would not turn anyone away. In total, we have helped more than 4,000 people in various ways. Through volunteers and partnerships with churches in Ukraine, we also continue to send humanitarian aid and medical supplies to Ukraine with drivers being willing to drive to areas most affected by the war.

Now we are getting more complicated cases. Even the fire brigade brings us people that others do not want to take. We are housing cancer patients, disabled





people, the elderly and infirm, and people with major mental health issues.

Whilst the Lord has supplied us with a small team of medical personnel, we do not have the ideal facilities to manage this situation and trying to find long term accommodation for them remains a challenge. Long-term refugees in Suceava benefit from their own housing, to provide a relative amount of privacy as family units. We have therefore rented three apartments for three families and are seeking accommodation for 13 more.

We have rented a building in the city in order to provide a base for our refugee work. We have named it the *Friends from Romania Centre*. Here we receive refugees who are in transit and provide rooms for volunteers. We also use the building to help refugees who have settled in the Suceava area, through social assistance, food distribution, household items, post-trauma counselling, educational programmes for children, and Romanian and English language courses for children and adults. Expanding our efforts in this way has allowed the Mission School to reopen

classes at the beginning of May. Every Friday, all the students provide practical help at the refugee centre.

In recent days, our response to this trauma has moved from a sprint to a marathon. Although the number of new arrivals has decreased, we know that this will be a long-term ministry, especially with the refugees who have decided to stay in Suceava until the war ends and they can return home, however long this takes. Pray with us for stamina and vision to continue sharing the love of Jesus to those whom he sends our way.

Please pray ...

- for the ongoing war situation and that a peace can be found
- that thousands we have helped will see the love of God in the help they received and read the New Testaments given to them
- that we can find accommodation for refugees wishing to stay in Suceava long-term and a Ukrainian pastor willing to stay and start a church in their language
- for a new director for the ministry with refugees and a steady long-term funding stream
- for suitable accommodation for refugees with health issues
- for volunteers willing to serve in whatever way they can, especially Ukrainian or Russian speakers

Upcoming Events

Summer Conference

1st-5th August
The Hayes Conference Centre,
Swanwick, Derbyshire

UFM Worldwide AGM

Wednesday 3rd August, 5-6pm

Scottish Thanksgiving Evening

Friday 7th October

Scottish Prayer Day

Saturday 12th November

Irish Autumn Conferences

Tuesday 22nd November, 8pm
Ballymena Baptist Church
Wednesday 23rd November, 8pm
Emmanuel Baptist Church, Lisburn

Also live streamed on YouTube
to local churches across Ireland

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