

4 corners

SUMMER 2023



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WHEN THE EARTH SHOOK

Turkey

FACING ARREST BUT
GOD INTERVENED

South Asia

REACHING ARABS ON
LONDON'S STREETS

UK

Learning from Christians around the world: three practical suggestions

Michael Prest, Director, UFM Worldwide



I enjoyed reading Peter Rowan's recent article, 'Six Reasons We Should Listen to Christians from Around the Globe',¹ where he argued that it is essential to listen to voices from outside the West.

Rowan talked for example about how this will help us to demonstrate connection, identify blind spots, encourage humility and face realities.

Let me suggest three practical ways that you and your church could do this.

1. Listen to those who have received the mission partners you sent

It has been a joy for the staff team at UFM in recent months to hear from leaders from Iran, DR Congo and Indonesia. We were *encouraged* by stories of bold evangelism in the Middle East, *humbled* by the experiences of those serving Christ in the midst of war in Central Africa, and *challenged* by hearing about gospel needs in the midst of deep poverty on an island in SE Asia.

Could you do something similar in your church? As well as having your mission partners Zoom in to your prayer meeting,

why not invite their national partners to do the same? There is so much for us to be encouraged, humbled and challenged by!

2. Make the most of your visits

Another really helpful recent article highlighted the ways that sending churches could make the most of visits to their mission partners.² Tim Hamer's excellent suggestions focus on caring well for your mission partners. However, alongside intentional time with those you have sent, it is important to make time for the local leaders whom they are serving alongside.

On a visit to Spain recently, I found it so

1. www.billions.omf.org/six-reasons-why-we-should-listen-to-christians-from-around-the-globe/
2. www.rtim.org/5-considerations-for-the-sending-church-when-visiting-a-missionary/

helpful to meet with and listen to a Bible college Principal in Barcelona. He talked about the gospel needs in his nation and how some parts of Central Spain are still waiting for their first protestant church. Then he shared his perspectives on the best ways that believers from other countries can partner with the Spanish church to see the gospel make progress in that great country.

3. Broaden your list of visiting speakers

Perhaps your church finds itself among people from all around the world in your local community. As you pray about how to best reach out across cultures with the gospel, why not learn from those already involved in reaching those people groups in other parts of the world?

It was a joy recently to have my Egyptian colleague in UFM share in some lectures I was giving to Bible college students. His stories

of sharing the good news with thirsty people from a Muslim background really spurred us on to see how God can change hearts. His examples of hospitality, care and welcome were a wonderful encouragement to love our Muslim neighbours so that we might share Christ with them in very natural ways.

As we continue to send from the UK church, let's find every way we can to learn from our brothers and sisters around the world. We have so much to learn and so much to be encouraged by, in all that God is doing around the world today.

If we can help you and your church to connect with people from different parts of the world, then please don't hesitate to be in touch.

Michael



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When the earth shook

M & S serve in Eurasia, supporting the local church in sharing gospel hope with local people

EU's response to the earthquake in Türkiye and Syria ©European Union, 2023 (photographer: Lisa Hastert) CC BY-ND 2.0

In the early hours of Monday morning, 6th February 2023, two thunderous 7.7 and 7.6 magnitude earthquakes rocked south-eastern Turkey in rapid succession. As building after building tumbled down, the casualties spanned no fewer than ten Turkish provinces and right across northern Syria too. 56,000 killed, 120,000 injured, 400,000 buildings damaged or destroyed. One God, sovereign over it all?

The first prayer request pulsing through our prayer chain was for a Christian pastor who was unreachable along with his wife and son. After a day of anxious waiting and conflicting reports, it was confirmed that they

had tragically lost their lives as their apartment block collapsed while they lay in their beds. Their 8-year-old little boy somehow miraculously survived.

This part of the world is one of the most unreached for the gospel. Resident visas for foreign gospel workers are practically unheard of and this pastor was one of scant local ministers for miles. Yet the few tiny churches scattered around sprang into action as support hubs offering food and aid. Across the country, churches like ours started organising trucks to take supplies to these hubs.

In this first 'rescue' phase, immediate needs were for diggers, food, water, tents, sanitation, and emergency healthcare. The one emergency relief charity in the country that is run by



Top: EU's response to the earthquake in Türkiye and Syria ©European Union, 2023 (photographer: Begum Iman), CC BY-ND 2.0; Above: aerial view Istanbul/ shutterstock.com

Christians brought in its search-and-rescue team and eventually set up a field hospital, pharmacy, intensive care room and operating theatre. Their mobile ovens baked thousands of loaves of bread every day, even as they testified to the Bread of Life.

As we raced around our city trying to find the supplies hardest to source, survivors were being pulled out of the rubble, only to contract hypothermia in bitter snowstorms. Days later, torrential flooding then took lives in some places. A whole nation was reeling from layers of loss.

But our sovereign God was at work. These small churches were able to bring relief to villages that had yet to see anything from the authorities. One non-Christian local said, "If it hadn't been for the Turkish church, I wouldn't be here today."

As weeks passed by, we moved into the second phase: recovery. Needs included sustainable accommodation, psychological support, and medical treatment for longer-term conditions abandoned in the wake of the disaster. Teams of Christians went to provide entertainment and care to children.

Just as Jesus taught us to expect in such situations, believers have also experienced opposition. In one province that has seen severe persecution of Christians in the past, a food service was shut down simply for being run very effectively by local followers of Jesus. However, the real story must be how the name of Jesus has been adorned by the good works of his church. Many are shining testimonies to God's grace. As in life, so in death.

Just hours before meeting his Saviour that fateful morning, our friend – the pastor – was preaching, unbeknown to him, his final sermon in this world. The subject? He preached the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead! The God revealed in the cross of Christ truly is sovereign over death and disaster. And even in this earthquake disaster we can say: he is sovereign and he reigns.

M & S would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to everyone who donated to the UFM earthquake response fund. An amazing £30,000 has been raised to date, praise God! We continue to pray with, and support, M & S as they work with local churches in the recovery phase.

What does it look like to reach students in Europe?

UFM supports the IFES InterAction programme which offers placements of one-to-two years in national student movements across Europe or with international student ministry. We spoke to two individuals about their experiences serving with the InterAction training programme.

George Sewall is ministering to students in Athens, Greece

Since September 2022, I have been serving with IFES InterAction in Athens, working alongside IFES staff, equipping students in sharing the gospel with their peers.

Athens is home to around 70,000 students. Most are nominally Greek Orthodox, with less than 40 evangelical students sharing the gospel on city campuses.

During a year on the UCCF Relay programme in the UK, I became convinced that mission is a core part of God's character and that, as Christians, we should be willing to go and serve God wherever he wills. National IFES movements are always interested in having people come and help them in bringing the gospel to universities across Europe. I therefore took the leap and applied to serve cross-culturally.

Since starting, I have been getting to know the students at church and encouraging them to share their faith with their friends. Together, we have planned Bible studies and outreach events. Our desire is for every student to have the chance to hear and respond to the gospel.

It is clear that there is a longing on campus to discuss deeper topics. Students are desperately searching for hope. It is so exciting to share how the Bible speaks into these areas, and to serve God by holding out the hope given through the life-transforming gospel of Jesus.

Has this whet your appetite for serving the Lord at a European university - or could this be for someone you know? Talk to your church leaders and get in touch with us. Find out more at www.ufm.org.uk/go/short-term/student-ministry-with-ifes/

Abigail Malstead is serving international students in Turin, Italy



Pray for Helen and Katie, two new Interaction workers who are starting this autumn. Find out more on page 18.



For the past two years, I have been based in Turin, following a mission and discipleship training year with Christian Unions Ireland. With 14,000 international students here, it has been a privilege to come alongside some of them, supported by the International Church of Turin, the only evangelical English-speaking church in the city. Having been an international student myself, I empathise with those far from home.

I am regularly asked what I do for a living. It is tricky, but fun, to explain to someone who has no concept of student ministry or mission work.

The other day, a friend asked, confused, what my agenda is when I meet up with students for Bible study. It was with great joy that I

found I could honestly reply that I did not have one! I see my role as to help students explore and grow; to give them the space to question, doubt, and fall more in love with Jesus, rather than reaching a specific level of understanding, or trying to convert them. For what power do I have to do any of that?

A wonderful thing I am learning here is my need to cling to the Lord. I am constantly faced with situations that overwhelm me or people I do not know how to love well. I am encouraged daily by reminding myself that I do not need to know, or have, the solution. It is all Christ's work and mine is to hold fast to him by faith.



Join us in prayer for gospel progress

11-15 September 2023, online

**“In this manner, therefore, pray:
‘Our Father in heaven, Hallowed
be Your name. Your kingdom
come. Your will be done on
earth as it is in heaven. Give
us this day our daily bread.’”
(Matthew 6:9-11)**

This well-known passage, Matthew 6:9-13, gives us our Lord’s wonderful pattern for prayer. In the first three verses we see an example of three key principles that should govern our Christian lives. These are 1) a love for the Lord (“*Hallowed be Your name*”) 2) a love for each other (“*Give us this day*” – the “us” shows the needs of others as well as our own), and 3) a love for the lost (“*Your kingdom come*”).

God’s kingdom bookends the prayer (vv10&13) and “Your kingdom come” is a great evangelistic and missional

prayer. It teaches us that we can pray expectantly (since there will be a “*great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages*”) and expansively (globally).

To this end, we are delighted to be planning a UFM week of prayer on 11th to 15th September. We will be thinking about – and praying for – gospel progress in the many varied areas of ministry in which UFM mission partners serve around the world, whether it be in church planting, amongst least-reached peoples, using the opportunities of the digital age, amongst students and young people, or in the midst of suffering. There will be opportunities to join us each day on Zoom to hear stories from mission partners and to pray into these situations.



Do join us during the week and maybe you could arrange a physical UFM prayer meeting where you are based! For more details, check out www.ufm.org.uk/weekofprayer and discover more about how you can get involved. We'll keep this page updated as our plans progress.

In the meantime, if you don't receive our regular Prayer Calendar, then

please get in touch and we can send you one. The Prayer Calendar is also available through a really helpful app called PrayerMate. You can download this app to organise your own prayer diary and subscribe to a whole host of organisations, including UFM. Why not try out this tool and encourage others to do the same? See <http://praynow4.org/ufm>

Thank you and update on the Development Fund

Back in February, we shared about our new Development Fund. We are delighted that, at the time of writing in early May, the appeal has raised over £28,000.

Every donation is helping to facilitate new gospel initiatives across UFM. One key example is the support of mission sending movements from parts of the world church that have

traditionally only *received* mission partners. In recent weeks, UFM staff and mission partners have been involved in visits and conversations exploring partnerships in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Singapore.

We're so thankful for everyone who has donated to the Development Fund. If you haven't given but feel called to do so, please visit www.ufm.org.uk/developmentfund Thank you so much for your partnership in the gospel.

Left: Rogéria, from Brazil, currently serving in East Timor with the support of UFM Worldwide





Reaching Arabs on London's streets

Yosry ministers to the Arab community in London and the Middle East

He was shaking as he approached our book table in central London. I took him to one side and he explained that he had travelled here from Mecca to visit a friend. It was Ramadan and, after they had broken the fast, his friend was planning to sleep with a prostitute – a young girl no older than his own daughters. He was horrified and ran away, leaving his belongings.

He wanted to get to the embassy so they could help him return, having lost his credit card. We sat on the street together, talking. Whilst sharing the gospel, I explained that our sin is like the dirty spot on the inside of a window in the building behind us. We think we can rely on the outward appearances, like prayer and fasting, but we actually need to

be cleansed from the inside, in our hearts, and only Jesus can do this.

I gave him food and let him sleep in my office overnight, giving him my book to read. I called him the next day to ask if he was going to fast or whether he would like my wife to prepare breakfast for us to share together. He replied, "I will never fast again. I was reading your book and the Bible all night. I didn't sleep!"

After organising a meeting for him at the embassy, they were able to arrange a return flight for him. He called me from Heathrow airport to say, "Never again will I read the Quran. I will read the Bible. The spot is on the inside, but you prayed and now Jesus cleans the spot".

Street evangelism is one of many kinds of outreach to Arabs that I am involved in, including one-to-one discipleship, prayer meetings, conferences,

hospitality and social action. However, I have found that open air outreach is one of the most effective ways to reach and witness to Arabs.

Not all encounters are like this one, but whoever we meet, it is a great joy to join with Christians from many Arab countries, as well as other evangelistic organisations, to share the message of the gospel.

I notice a deep hunger in the hearts of Arab people to know more about Christianity

Over 1.5 million Arab people live in London, the third-largest Arab community in Europe, with an additional 500,000 visitors every year from Middle Eastern and North African countries. The turmoil in many countries in the Middle East has brought numerous Arab people to London as refugees and asylum seekers. Others come for tourism, business, study or medical reasons.

In accordance with the Great Commission, every Christian is commanded to make Jesus known to everyone, to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19), and to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). There is a great opportunity to share the good news with many Arabs and Muslims in London. It is a big task; it is not always easy and it is sometimes risky. We pray every day, not only for

a fruitful time of sharing, but for the power of God’s protection.

Another great privilege is to provide the Bible in different languages, including Arabic. I believe in the power of God through his Word to change hearts, changing sinners into saints in Christ Jesus. I notice a deep hunger in the hearts of Arab people to know more about Christianity. I have written an evangelistic book to explain our beliefs as Christians, which we give away in seven languages.

Another part of my ministry involves teaching God’s word at a weekly meeting on Zoom for Arabic church leaders and Christians worldwide. As we share our testimonies, pray, and encourage each other, we see the Lord answering prayer and equipping us to serve him better.

The Lord has opened doors to teach God’s word in many churches, in London and in the Arab world. Please pray for the UK church to catch the vision for evangelism to Arab people.

Having been called to leave my country, with my family, to serve the Lord here, I now look back on 36 years ministry to Arabic-speakers in London and see what a great God we have. I can say with Paul, “my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness... That is why for Christ’s sake, I delight in weakness, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

Taking an intentional path to mission

We spoke to a friend of UFM Worldwide, *Julie-Anne*, at our recent 'Called to Serve' conference about her journey so far in cross-cultural mission and her continued passion to serve.

Tell us about yourself and your church ...

I come from Northern Ireland, but moved to England for university. I currently teach French and Spanish at a secondary school in London and God has blessed me with a wonderful local church. Recently I've joined the mission support team, which has given me a great opportunity to learn about what God is doing through UFM mission partners overseas.

How has your interest in the Muslim world developed?

It was during my time at university that I began to develop an interest in the Muslim worldview. I had quite a few Muslim friends and I started to read up about the differences between Christianity and Islam.


Over time, I felt God increasingly

lay that burden on my heart. Opportunities came for outreach, such as teaching English to Syrian refugees in Belfast one summer and, back at university, a group of us started a world mission prayer group with a focus on the Muslim world.

Last summer, you undertook a short-term mission trip to work alongside one of our long-term mission partners in a Muslim majority country. What was that experience like?

I'm so grateful that I could be D's shadow for two weeks! We spent the first week in a major city. I helped at an English-teaching club, which has proven to be a really fruitful way of gently sowing seeds with individuals who might otherwise not have the opportunity to hear the gospel.

I spent a few days in the office of the Bible Correspondence Course, seeing how the team responds to enquiries for Bible literature from across Eurasia.



We also had the opportunity to get alongside a creative street outreach by visiting teams from South America. In what is quite a closed country, it was amazing to see how they drew people into gospel conversations through telling stories and playing music on the streets.

The highlight for me was a trip to the eastern part of the country. D is partnering with a local church in a Kurdish-majority area as part of a long-term vision to encourage believers and raise up new churches there. I helped at a three day English-teaching camp. It was so encouraging to have the opportunity to share the gospel quite openly with young people in this setting.

How have you kept in touch with D and her work in that country?

D really modelled what it is like to invest long-term in cross-cultural mission work. She gave me a realistic portrait of both the highlights and the challenges, and I am thankful for our ongoing friendship. She joined the mission group prayer meeting at our church recently. It was great for my church to build that connection with her following their faithful prayers for me last summer. I pray we can continue to build links.

What are your next steps and how can we pray for you?

Please pray that God would help me to be a faithful witness where he has placed me at the present time. My time in Eurasia challenged me to make the most of the relative freedom we have in the UK to witness openly. But please also pray that God would help me to be obedient to whatever plan he has for me in the future, wherever that may be.

If Julie-Anne's story has sparked your interest, please talk to your church leaders and get in touch with us. Or perhaps you are a church leader and you can think of someone showing an interest in cross-cultural mission in your congregation. We'd love to support you and your church in exploring gifts for cross-cultural mission, either partnering alongside our long-term mission partners, or facilitating a flexible placement.





Facing arrest but God intervened

M and K serve in Bible ministry and leadership training in South Asia and the UK

The work is slow in the South Wales valleys – a real spiritual battle in a very deprived area. But it is progressing, especially among the youth. Praise God, we have seen several conversions and are endeavouring to disciple them in Christ.

Having to leave India in 2020 due to the pandemic, I have been called to pastor a small mission hall near Aberdare, and I have joined an open-air mission team for the valleys. In the meantime, we have continued our South Asia ministry online and had hoped to make short trips back.

We have had difficulty, however, getting a visa to re-enter our host country in South Asia. We were able to visit a neighbouring country several times to train pastors. But at last, in January 2023, and despite only applying for a one-month visa, I was granted a one-year visa – a miracle!

So in February and March we were finally able to reconnect face to face.

We held four training conferences for pastors, in two countries. It was a joy to share fellowship with dear servants of God, who have become so precious to us over the years.

Over ten years ago God guided us to concentrate on training pastors. We were led to this area of ministry firstly, because it is biblical; secondly, because there is a great need in the majority world for sound pastoral training of grass roots pastors; and finally, because we could see that persecution was just around the corner and we did not want to cause more problems for national believers by doing evangelism. Our trip this year proved this wisdom in many ways.

...a video of us teaching had been uploaded to the internet and an officer had come to arrest us

In recent times, there has been intense persecution and harassment of visible church congregations.



In October 2022, a group of pastors whom I have regularly taught on Zoom were arrested at a prayer meeting. Of the 13 men there, only three have obtained bail. As a result, although we visited the church we used to help pastor, they were very nervous of having foreigners meeting with them and rescinded an invitation for me to preach. This also happened at one of our church plants.

On the last day of our trip, we were both about to give our testimony and speak at an evening church service when a police jeep arrived. Unbeknown to us, at our previous conference, a video of us teaching had been uploaded to the internet and an officer had come to arrest us. However, the Lord kept that information from us, so much so that we invited him to the service. He declined and said that he would speak with us later.

That afternoon, we had been with the family of the local retired police chief, who are strong believers. The son and

daughter, as well as another police officer who had recently become a believer, had attended our training conference. Our gracious, mighty Lord had already lined up His angels to protect us!

After the service had finished, the police officer who had come to arrest us began to interview us, but while doing so, the new police inspector phoned. He told the officer to do nothing until he arrived. When he got there, he sent the officer away, smiled, and said: "No need to be alarmed, I am a believer. This should not have happened and I will make sure it does not happen again. And I will arrange your paperwork for next time."

Praise the Lord that, throughout all this, we knew His peace which passes understanding. We left South Asia quickly, but plan to return in the autumn. Please pray for our ongoing ministry and for the believers we seek to equip, undergoing persecution here.

Biblical books bring transformation in Italy

Andrea and Emanuela Artioli serve in church ministry and Christian publishing in Mantova, Italy

It all started when Andrea had the privilege of studying with many excellent professors at London Theological Seminary, 30 years ago. Our calling was already clear after our first year of study: we would return to Italy to preach the gospel, but also to translate, publish and distribute theological books, by any means we could.

This was back in the age of fax, without internet, emails, or social media. We did not have a computer and could not even afford to buy one. Returning to Italy was not an easy experience either. We had no money and no supporters, either in Italy or outside. We also grappled with a wider problem: the transition back to a fragmented church environment without good, biblical preaching.

But as always, God had a plan. In 1993, as soon as we returned from our honeymoon, we started translating: reading and re-reading what we had written. We learned more about

publishing than we ever imagined was involved.

The important thing was not just to translate and print the books, but to be able to put them into the hands of believers, to engage with readers, and to go into communities to educate young and old to read the Bible and study good, biblical books.

This was the hard part, and we were met with opposition at times, but praise God that he has enabled us – through our publishing house, Coram Deo (www.CoramDeo.it) – to distribute so much material and to interest so many believers in sound biblical doctrine and expository preaching.



Now, years later, we see Italian churches being transformed in line with apostolic teaching. We see the rise of a new generation of young pastors who are passionate about the gospel and biblical training, and wish to establish or reform congregations to be rooted in scripture. What a great privilege and blessing to see what the Word of God accomplishes!

We also see a new need: for believers across Italy to come together to live out their biblical faith. After Andrea shared the idea to a team of leaders, *Soli Deo Gloria Churches* (www.ChieseSoliDeoGloria.it) was born in 2022, a fellowship of free churches adhering to the same confession of faith, with a similar church structure and practice of life.

We planned to start slowly and only advertised the network to a handful of churches. However, at the first conference in August 2022, 100 people arrived in the beautiful town of Chiaciano Terme and, in April 2023, 30 pastors attended the



first pastoral meeting in Florence. These beginnings are immensely encouraging. Through strong bonds and quality fellowship, the network is proving worthwhile and stimulating.

Only time will tell what the needs of this group will be, but we continue to pray for a stronger body of believers in Italy supporting each other.

Looking back at all that has happened in 30 years here, we are amazed at how God has worked. We continue to pray that all believers in Italy may have the opportunity and courage to rely on the faithful word of Christ in order to live a more authentic Christian life, to the glory of God.

Top, right: The pastoral network, Florence; Bottom, right: The Board of Soli Deo Gloria Churches



Welcome!



Ephraim Kironji will be serving in Nairobi, Kenya, alongside current mission partners, Kip and Rachel Chelashaw. His role will be children's and youth worker. Originally from Kenya, Ephraim is currently an international intern at St Andrew the Great, Cambridge, and studying with Cornhill.



Katie Boukley recently completed her Relay year in Glasgow and will serve with IFES InterAction in Turin with the Italian student movement, GBU, from September. She is sent by Emmanuel Church, Leftwich.



David & Olwyn Gordon have joined as Associate Mission partners. Based in Northern Ireland, they serve part-time for ACTS (African Christian Textbooks), working alongside African theologians and pastors to provide good theological books which are culturally grounded. From Stranmillis Evangelical Presbyterian Church, they are currently serving believers in Nigeria, Kenya and Cameroon.



Helen Seavers is studying German at Lancaster University and will spend her year abroad with IFES InterAction in Austria serving with the student movement ÖSM. She is sent by King's Community Church, Lancaster.



Phoebe Troughton is studying French and English at Oxford University and, as part of her year abroad, will be an i:Witness trainee in Bordeaux Church. She is sent by St Ebbe's, Oxford.

FOCUS ON ...

Slovenia

Lydia Adams works with ZVEsh, the Slovenian Christian student movement, seeking to equip and disciple local and international students

Slovenia is a small country with a population of around 2.1 million people. Nestled in the heart of Central Europe, it has diverse landscapes ranging from snow-capped peaks to sparkling coastlines.

Slovenia's cultural heritage is a fascinating blend of influences from neighbouring Italy, Austria, Hungary, and the Balkans, as well as its own unique traditions. Slovenia's coffee culture reflects the country's emphasis on connection and community. Spending time in coffee shops plays a vital role in building and maintaining relationships, prioritising quality over quantity, and engaging in hours-long conversations with friends instead of rushing off.

The majority of the population is Roman Catholic, with around 57% of the population identifying as such. Other religious groups include Orthodox



Please pray for ...

- New national leaders in the church and the necessary funds to be able to free them up to do the work
- The health of current leaders and pastors
- Unity between churches and Christian organisations
- New believers to be disciplined well and to become lifelong followers of Jesus



Slovenia is...



... home to one of the largest underground canyons in the world in **Škocjan Caves**

a coffee culture that reflects the country's emphasis on **connection & community**



a vineyard for every 70 people (it is claimed) and over 50% protected forest



around **500** castles



+ one of the largest number of **religious monuments and buildings** in Europe

>1% Other religions

0.1% Evangelical Christians

42% Non-religious

57% Roman Catholic



(joshua-project.net)



Christians, Muslims, and Protestants. Slovenia has a rich cultural and religious heritage, with a long history of coexistence and tolerance among different faiths. It also has a strong tradition of secular humanism, which emphasises the importance of reason, ethics and individual freedom. This worldview is reflected in Slovenia's emphasis on social welfare and environmental protection, as well as its commitment to democracy and human rights.

When it comes to evangelical Christians, it is estimated that there are at least 2,000 believers in Slovenia (0.1%) in around 40-50 evangelical churches. Most of these churches are small; many have under 20 people and very few have more than 50. Around 85% of the population does not have access to a local evangelical church.

A network of around 20 small groups – known as the Disciple Making Movement – are seeking to plant new churches in different towns around the country. Despite encouraging signs of church planting, there is a great need for leaders. The current health condition of leaders in churches and other Christian organisations is concerning, with many suffering from burnout.

There are a few Christian organisations working in Slovenia, focusing mostly on youth work. We have seen many children and young people come to faith during Christian camps over the summer months. However, it is sad to see many struggle when they transition to university and the professional world, where they often fall away. There is a great need for discipleship within the church.

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

What's it like ... serving for the long haul?

Rosie Crowter has served in Papua New Guinea for 26 years. She works with the national church to provide Bible training and teaching resources.

What's like serving overseas as a mission worker for many years? There are so many ways to answer that question!

Surprising

Let's start with *surprising* or unexpected! It was surprising to me when I was called 26 years ago to serve in Papua New Guinea – the land of the unexpected. I went as a community doctor seeking to improve the holistic health of the rural communities.

Now I train nationals to teach Bible courses in the communities and write easy English resources to help others to grow in following Jesus – not at all what I expected to do!

The need for doctors where I am remains. Yet, as health is a spiritual issue – most are convinced that sickness and death are because of sorcery or spirits – the appropriate response is to meet that belief with

God, and what God says about sickness and death.

It is not always easy to act differently from what others expect and to be sure of God's leading. Whilst it was a surprise for me to end up a writer and teacher, it is something I love doing and believe God prepared me to do.

Challenging

There have been so many goodbyes as people come and go. Rumginae, where I serve, had many missionary families when I arrived in 1997; now I am the last expatriate.

There has been so much change, in so many ways. Change in resources – from one shared phone and no internet, to almost everyone having a phone. Change in attitude – an increase in alcohol and marijuana use, and an expectation to be paid for everything. Challenges in

relationships in a culture that is indirect and non-confrontational.

Sometimes it has been lonely and difficult – but that takes me closer to God, who is always with us. And there is always an opportunity in every challenge!

Humbling

I'm humbled as I recognise my mistakes and see how much more I still have to learn. I'm chastened as I realise more and more how much I need God and others to help me, and learn that without Christ I truly can do nothing. As I look back, I realise how much selfishness, pride and irritability remains in me after so many years of walking with him yet, by his grace, God continues to patiently mould and shape me.

Thankful ...

... for so much and in so many ways! I am thankful for God's amazing

faithfulness, and all I am learning about who he is and about trusting him, the one who is in control of *all* things.

Thankful for the faithfulness of my supporters, some of whom pray for me every day!

Thankful for all I am learning from another culture – for different ways to look at situations, and at the Bible.

Thankful for more understanding of God's character and his grace.

Thankful as I see more of his creative ability in the different people and cultures (PNG has 850 tribes), the intricate colourful flowers, varied birds, trees, mountains, and rivers.

Thankful for the richness of knowing each one who has touched my life in some way or another.

What's it like serving for the long haul? It is such a privilege.



Upcoming Events

Considering your role in mission, or supporting others? Join us for Bible teaching and a chance to chat at our events.

Find out more at ufm.org.uk/events

Summer Conference

24-28 July

UFM Annual General Meeting

26 July, 5pm

Week of Prayer

11-15 September

Scottish Thanksgiving Evening

6 October at 7.30pm, Trinity Possil
Henry Drummond Church, Glasgow

Scottish Prayer Day

11 November at 10am,
11 Newton Place, Glasgow

Irish Autumn Conferences

21-23 November, various locations

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Summer Conference

24 - 28 July 2023

The annual conference of the UFM family of mission workers, churches and supporters.

Last places remaining, churches and supporters welcome.

The Hayes Christian Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire
Book your place at ufm.org.uk/summer-conference



Week of prayer for gospel progress

11-15 September 2023, online

Join us as we hear stories from mission partners and pray into these situations, praying for gospel progress. www.ufm.org.uk/weekofprayer



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Supporting churches in
making disciples of all nations