

Serving Him

SIM
Serving In Mission UK

Winter 2021

Staying focused on Christ

P20



Convinced that no one should live and die without hearing God's good news

57
MILLION
people live in poverty.
20 million of these
are children (UNICEF 2019)

23
MILLION
people in the Circle
of Silence have no
relationship with Christ

44%
of the 23 million people
in the Circle of Silence
live in poverty. Many
engage in illicit drug-
related activities

**CIRCLE OF SILENCE:
SEE PAGE 14**

Mission focused

Welcome to the latest issue of *Serving Him*, where each story highlights how SIM is a community of God's people, sent by churches committed to biblical truth and sharing the gospel worldwide.

The pandemic has changed all our lives, but we thank God that by praying, sending, donating and partnering, we stand together in responding to our times as we enable our members to work with churches both in the UK and around the world, convinced that no one should live and die without hearing God's good news.

On *Page 13*, read how our workers are dedicated to transforming an area in Mexico with almost no gospel witness and on *Page 18*, how another SIM couple use their skills to share Christ's love in a country where evangelical Christians make up only 1.23 per cent of the population.

SIM workers serve in a huge variety of career fields – from church planting and theological education, to digging for wells, running children's activities in refugee camps and translating the Bible into local languages – so why not take a look at *Page 26* to find out more about serving overseas?

Prayer is foundational to our life and ministry as we praise God, seek his direction, request resources and call upon the Holy Spirit to make us competent for the life-giving gospel ministries he gives us to do.

We love helping families learn and pray together about how God uses us in his sovereign purposes and on *Page 12*, we celebrate all that God has done through your prayers and those of our youngest supporters – a year after

launching SIMpray Kids.

To find out how you and your church can become more mission-focused, visit our website www.sim.co.uk where there are free materials to help you focus on Christ's commission locally and globally and you can sign up to receive our regular RESOURCED! church email.

And as the Christmas season approaches, please also consider buying an *Alternative Gift* to help more people hear the gospel in 2022 (full details on the back page).



Steve Smith
UK Director

**P.S. I'd love you
to sign up for our
weekly prayer
email, SIMpray.**

**Just go to sim.co.uk/
simpray or email
linda@sim.co.uk**

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Faithful mission: Spreading the fragrance

Those who respond to Christ's call to go forth and proclaim the good news are either the smell of death or the fragrance of life, says SIM UK Director Steve Smith

An Egyptian mission worker told me of a recent encounter he'd had with a migrant from North Africa in Italy. Although he'd been in Italy for some time and knew local believers, the man hadn't

heard the gospel until the mission worker spoke with him. Where were the voices of other Christians and churches?

It's a beautiful and awesome privilege to bear the message of the crucified and

risen Christ. When Jesus Christ commissioned his disciples to go among all nations and preach the good news, the church became God's instrument for gospel spread, which bore fruit and grew all over the world.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes:

'Thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.'
(2 Corinthians 2:14-15)

Speaking God's word faithfully spreads the aroma of the knowledge of Christ and the true weight of God's nature and work. To the believer, Christ's cross results in resurrection life.

But Paul wanted the early church to understand that the word of the gospel isn't

Speaking God's word faithfully spreads the aroma of the knowledge of Christ

always pleasant and depends on who's listening.

To those who turn away, the message of the cross is the smell of death: A 'fragrance' from Jesus' death that speaks only of their own death. And so, they oppose Christ's work; they attack or counter Christians in their ministry.

Living true to Christ's commission will require churches to understand and expect this mixture of pleasure and pain. It takes faithful courage to persevere through the rejection and difficulties and continue to rejoice in fellowship with new believers.

Reflecting on hearing the gospel from an Arabic-speaker in Italy, the North

It takes faithful courage to persevere through the rejection and difficulties

African migrant observed that many Europeans had 'no courage to share their faith.'

Have we become complacent in our preaching? Do we still dare to share the gospel broadly, recognising that it will bring hostility and challenges, along with the joy of seeing new believers trust in the Lord?

It is in Acts that we see the first bold step of Jewish Christians communicating their faith – not only with fellow Jews, but with the non-Jewish Greeks in their community. Among diverse cultural backgrounds, the Holy Spirit was creating a multi-ethnic church to the glory of Christ.

In our age of migration and as more of us recognise the

diversity of our communities, we're called to reflect the likeness of Christ and serve, as churches, as God's instrument for the spread of his word.

This discipleship in ethnically diverse communities requires a new-humanity identity within churches. In *Ephesians 4*, Paul urges his readers to exalt Christ and maintain the unity of the Spirit above all other competing identities. Where

Paul urges his readers to exalt Christ and maintain the unity of the Spirit above all other competing identities

we may be tempted to shy away from speaking truth, we must remember that Christ himself endured hostility.

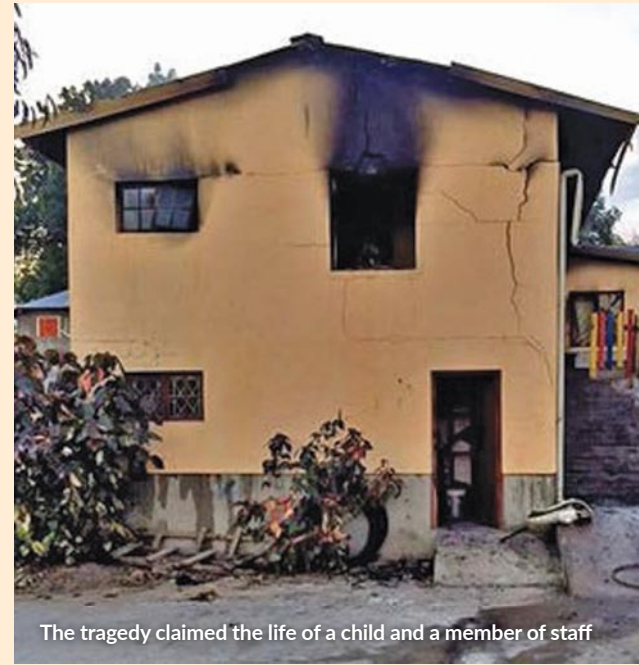
Following in his steps, we too will experience painful or awkward challenges, alongside the delight of being an aroma of life to life.



Let the children come

By Kerry Allan

Six years after tragedy struck, children are returning to Mseleni Children’s Home and are once more filling the houses.



The tragedy claimed the life of a child and a member of staff

In 2015, a devastating fire tore through a cottage at Serving In Mission’s Mseleni Children’s Home in South Africa.

Heroic efforts by care workers saved the lives of 13 of the children in the unit, but the tragedy claimed the life of a child and of a member of staff, who had gone back into the house to try to save him. Long-term SIM couple – Rachel Fredlund and her husband Victor, sent and supported by **Trinity Road Chapel, Tooting** – together with local staff, have spent much of the past five years seeking to reopen the home by raising funds from SIM supporters, making upgrades and getting authorisation from government offices.

At times it seemed the early promises had been reversed, yet the continuing persistence of the home’s trustees and the community – along with the regular reminders of the

children in need – spurred them on.

“God’s constant reminder of his concern for orphans and children and the regular and special support of SIM strengthened weak knees,” says Victor.

After many repairs, renovations and reports, and despite the impact of Covid-19, the couple’s prayers were finally answered when the home was re-registered in March.

Since it was first opened in the 1950s to care for orphaned children, the focus of Mseleni Children’s Home has turned increasingly to provide a safe and healing place for those who’ve experienced trauma and abuse, or who come from very dysfunctional families.

Today, it has a specialised play therapy unit where trained staff show the love of Christ by helping children

God’s constant reminder of his concern for orphans and children and the regular and special support of SIM strengthened weak knees.



Victor and Rachel Fredlund



deal with problems arising out of their abuse and develop a sense of self-esteem and self-worth.

“It’s a delight to see the love poured out from carers to the children and to see their responses,” adds Rachel.

The children’s home is part of Mseleni Care and Compassions Ministries. Also part of the ministry is the Ebenezer Early Childhood Development Centre and the Lulisandla Kumntwana (Reach Out To The Child) community outreach project



that started up in 2002 working with local churches to help them share the love of Christ and care for the growing number of children orphaned because of AIDS.

“The massive peak of AIDS orphaned children has passed, but many needs remain for orphans and vulnerable children in the community,” says Victor.

Lulisandla Kumntwana continues to work in the community responding to the needs of children, youth, women, and families in the community, currently caring for orphans through advocacy, psycho-social support and after-schools clubs; HIV support groups for teens; young people’s life skills programmes – including one to prevent and alleviate drug and alcohol abuse – and a

sports programme focused on developing healthy relationships and countering gender-based violence.

The ministry also runs groups to support teenage parents and a programme to help hundreds of young

‘Many needs remain for orphans and vulnerable children in the community.’

Victor Fredlund

people apply and register at higher education institutions.

Plans include opening a crisis care centre for women and children who have been abused and a day centre to

Manager Nosihle Mabika in the children’s therapy room



help people with alcohol abuse problems.

“There was great joy, praise to God and relief as the children’s home staff started to return and prepare for the arrival of the next children,” recalls Rachel, “but it’s currently only registered to take 20 children (about 50 per cent of capacity), which means that there’s a shortfall

of around 50,000 rand per month for child-care costs.”

She adds: “It has been a long wait, and we don’t know what the future will be, but God has already led us through many trials and there’s been much joy in the journey, so we trust in his provision and look forward to seeing many children and young people experiencing

Please pray

Give thanks for the long-awaited answer to prayer as the home reopens.

For an increase in the registered capacity of the home, so vulnerable children are not turned away and the home can run a balanced budget.

For more churches to respond with care to the needs around them and be fruitful and effective to the glory of God.

his love and healing and becoming rooted and grounded in him.”

‘Did you go to school on a camel?’

By Kerry Allan

TCK Olivia shares what it’s like moving to a new country while her parents serve in cross-cultural mission.

Sisters Olivia,* 12, and Emilia,* 15, are used to having a house full of people and hearing different languages as the daughters of missionary parents.

“Some of our friends think our life so far has been very different and odd, but to us it was all very normal,” explains Olivia.

Having spent their early years in Spain, where their parents shared the gospel with people arriving from countries in Africa hoping to cross into Europe, the sisters spent the next eight years living in a country in North Africa.

Then during the hot Covid summer of July 2020, they left their home once again to begin a new life in Northern Ireland after their dad took on a full-time role with SIM UK’s HowWillTheyHear refugee ministry.

While the sisters admit it was hard to leave school and friends behind, like many of their TCKs (Third Culture Kids) peers, they are happy to be a part of their parents’



cross-cultural ministry.

“We’ve always been part of what our parents do, and one highlight was visiting refugee camps in the Middle East and playing with the kids there. It helped us remember to always try to see people first as Jesus sees them,” says Olivia.

And while growing up in a country where there are few Christians and going to a secular school made it difficult for Olivia and Emilia to share the gospel every day, the

sisters took every opportunity to bring Jesus ‘into the classroom’ through projects, art, history and daily learning.

“It wasn’t easy being the only believers and having tough questions from our non-Christian friends,” says Olivia, “but it made us think about what we believe and why.

“We got to share Jesus by just being ourselves, saying grace, doing our devotions on sleepovers etc. We had to learn and are still learning now we are living in the UK how to answer our friends’ questions about the Christian faith.”

But despite the challenges, Olivia says the family saw **‘We learnt to trust God in everything’**

God “work miracles” in bringing them to the UK.

“We had no school places when we were leaving, but trusted God would provide – and he did!” she says.

“We saw him work miracles with our dad’s paperwork; getting our stuck cargo

released; finding a house to rent, which was owned by a mission supporting family, and in many other little but important ways.

“We didn’t know what was ahead, but we learnt to trust God in everything and that he’s interested in all the details of our lives.”

The sisters also know God is helping them as they continue to learn about living in a new culture.

“There are many things we haven’t yet wrapped our heads around – like needing a wetsuit if you ever want to swim in the sea – and we often need help understanding the humour,” reveals Olivia.

“We also think as a family, we’re a little bit louder than those around us and talk more with our hands, but I’m now used to people asking me funny questions like, ‘Did you live in a pyramid?’ or ‘Did you go to school on a camel?’

Please pray

Give thanks God has a plan for Olivia and Emilia to use their life overseas for his good purposes.

That God has blessed them with the chance to enjoy Christmas with their grandparents.

For the sisters to continue sharing Jesus with their new friends.

* Pseudonyms used

TCKs

Third Culture Kids



Find more articles

about growing up as a **Third Culture Kid** on our website www.sim.co.uk and read a Q&A with our **TCK coordinator Cheryl Gibson**, who is responsible for supporting and encouraging mission families.



Pray as you grow

By Linda Hunt



One year after launching SIMpray Kids, we celebrate all that God has done through the prayers of our youngest supporters.

At Serving In Mission we strive to help everyone whatever their age, to pray effectively for communities who have never heard of Jesus. That's why in September 2020, we launched SIMpray Kids, a monthly prayer email written with families serving around the globe to help primary-aged children engage with global gospel needs.

Join us in praising God for these awesome answers to prayer:

Several people from the UK have joined teams serving communities around the globe that have little access to the story of Jesus. Eighteen new workers joined our summer orientation and eight more joined our autumn course.

God has provided:

Teachers for children whose school had closed in South Asia.

New homes to help families settle into the communities they serve.

New opportunities to serve people who aren't Christians and naturally talk about Jesus through them.

New friendships for our TCKs and their families.

In Central Africa, in a country where 500,000 people don't know the story of Jesus, people are starting to ask questions about the Christian

faith and have requested Bibles.

In the Middle East, a class has graduated from language school ready to share Jesus with people whose first language is Arabic.

Families have been able to return to the UK for times of rest and relaxation passing through all Covid restrictions without a problem.

These are just some of the answers to prayer that we know about. Please continue to pray for our TCKs and their families for more opportunities to share Jesus with the people they meet.

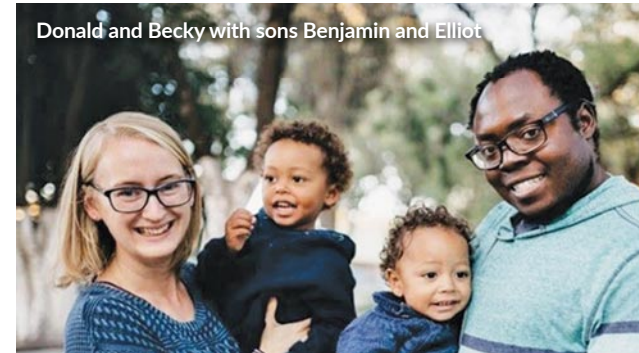
If you or your church would like to pray with our TCKs around the globe, please sign up to receive SIMpray Kids via our website.

Predica Vida

A new training centre will teach local pastors and help others plant churches in a vastly unreached area of Mexico.



Donald and Becky with sons Benjamin and Elliot



Despite having to cope with the effects of Covid during their two years of studying in the UK, Donald and Becky Kamese are ready for the next challenge of taking what they've learned back to Mexico and teaching the Bible to others.

The couple, who moved to Mexico in 2014 and founded *Vida Impact Missions* two years later, have a vision to help plant Christ-centred churches in a part of the country where many are hostile to the gospel and fewer than one in 100 know Jesus.

"We learned there is an area in Central Mexico called the Circle of Silence with the

largest concentration of unreached people in Spanish-speaking Latin America," explains Donald.

"Our goal is to see this area transformed through the gospel and bring a positive change in these under-privileged communities."

For the past few years, Donald has been making plans with a Mexican team to open a Bible training centre (*below*) that will equip local

leaders with a desire to spread the gospel in the Circle of Silence and beyond.

"Only one in ten church ministers in Mexico have any Bible training, so our focus is on training them to faithfully teach the Scriptures and mentoring them as they go out and take the gospel to the unreached areas," adds Donald.

In 2019, the couple, who are sent by **Christ Church at All Saints, Wandsworth**, left Mexico with their two young sons for the UK to start in-depth training at Cornhill Bible College.

"The past two years have been challenging and took us out of our comfort zone," admits Donald, "but it has also grown our love for the Lord and his word in so many ways. Continued overleaf >



“We’re so thankful for the opportunity to study and that we kept going, even when Covid meant everything had to go online.

“We’ve been living in a flat with our boys, so we’re also very excited to return to Mexico and live in a house with a garden where they can run around and play!”

However, Donald is most excited that God has answered prayers to provide a facility in Mexico for a two-year Bible training course called Predica Vida (Preach Life).

“We’ve been given the free use of a large ‘rancho’ with

dormitories and facilities already built, where we can open a residential centre,” he says. “It has the capacity for up to 100, but we think it’s wise to have a maximum of 20 people to begin with.

“The candidates will probably come from the theological college and mission school we’re in contact with and we’ll also promote the programme in conferences and when we’re invited to speak in churches.

“Although we should have plenty of candidates, our focus will be to train the few, who in turn, will be able to train many more and help

Please pray

For faithful biblical training of Mexican leaders.

For the family to settle well after they return to Mexico.

That God would continue to mobilise his people to serve in the Circle of Silence.

turn the Circle of Silence into a Circle of Proclamation of the transforming power of Jesus Christ.”

The Circle of Silence

The Circle of Silence is a mostly mountainous area of about 99,460 square miles in Central Mexico with a

population of more than 23 million people, who live in rural towns and villages with almost no gospel witness.

This comprises the highest concentration of unreached people in Spanish-speaking Latin America.

Locals tend to amalgamate animistic practices with the rituals of Roman Catholicism and fewer than one in 100 people knows Jesus.



From tequila to truth

About 10 years ago, God transformed the life of a Mexican Tequila factory owner called C.

“He used to have a ranch where he and his associates held wild parties with ‘ladies of the night’ and sold famous tequila,” says Donald.

“Upon becoming a Christian, C renounced all activity associated with his past life. He paid off his business associates; closed

the tequila factory; and began to focus on a more ethical business.

“We met C six years ago through a missionary friend who suggested we might be able to use the old ranch for gospel-related activities.

“Since then, Vida has used the ranch several times for retreats, respite, and Bible conferences. In early 2019, we shared our vision with C and he joined the team to help



plan and advise the best way to take care of the business side of operating the ranch.

“He agreed to cover initial costs for the first five years, during which time, we will work to make the ranch self-sustaining.”

Another SIM family to join team



David and Maribel Easton, sent by **Thornton Heath Evangelical Church, Croydon**, are in the process of going to Mexico to support the work of Predica Vida.

David explains “Since 2013, after several visits to Mexico, the Lord planted a seed of burden for Mexico heavy on my heart.

“The burden consisted of seeing the lack of faithful Bible teaching; the need of reaching the lost with the gospel, and the warning

against false teachers who have infiltrated the churches.

“In 2020, I met Donald at Cornhill and discovered he had the same vision and burden as Maribel and I have. After much prayer and discussion, we decided it’s right for us to go to Mexico and to start ministering in the Circle of Silence, where there is a great need for people to hear the gospel.

“Donald recommended SIM UK, which is a mission

organisation that loves the word of God and God willing, we’ll be joining the team in October 2022.”

Partner with our workers

Find out more at www.kasesesinmexico.co.uk/index and go to our website to find out how you can support the **Kameses** or the **Eastons**.



44% of the 23 million people in the Circle of Silence live in poverty



Opportunity knocks

Amidst deep-rooted barriers to Christianity, God has begun to stir the hearts of Central Asians, breathing a young but vibrant indigenous church into existence.

Central Asia is home to nearly 73 million people, within a wide diversity of cultures and lifestyles.

Fast-growing cities are filled with high rise apartments, luxurious shopping malls, expanding universities, and bustling tourist attractions. Outside these cities, smaller rural towns depend on farming and raising animals for their livelihood. Further still,

in the deserts and high mountains, nomadic shepherds follow ancient migration routes, sheltering in yurts.

Within Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and

Uzbekistan, are dozens of people groups, where less than 0.5 per cent of the population know the Lord.

As some people hang onto atheism – owing to the widespread propaganda of the Soviet years – Islam has become the dominant and fastest-growing religion in the region since the collapse of the USSR.

More workers are needed to reach those who have not heard the gospel – from the Muslim scholars, to the



travelling urban merchants, to the rural farmers high in the Pamir mountains – yet amidst deep-rooted barriers to Christianity, God has begun to stir the hearts of Central Asians, breathing a young but vibrant indigenous church into existence.

Amazingly, each country has received Bibles in their

mother tongue and new indigenous congregations have been established, blossoming in the face of opposition from their communities and governments.

The Holy Spirit is working powerfully in the region to raise up the next generation of workers and new Central Asian believers are themselves being sent out, taking the gospel locally and globally.

God has begun to stir the hearts of Central Asians

With such a ripe harvest, God is calling servants from all nations to partner with his work through this growing, vibrant member of the kingdom. Convinced that no one should live and die without hearing God's good news, SIM is sending workers

to all parts of Central Asia, especially to the remote and isolated villages in the harsh desert and mountain climates.

Please pray

For doors to keep opening for the gospel to take hold in Central Asia.

Give thanks for several students who started at Bible college this year, in preparation for service in Central Asia

Give thanks for the new online platform enabling more to receive teaching, support, mentorship and practical assignments as they minister in least-reached communities.

Convinced that no one should live and die without hearing God's good news



Seeing the gospel grow in France

By Kerry Allan

Claire-Lise, Naomi, Peter and Keziah

Peter and Claire-Lise Judkins have served in three very different settings over the past decade and the latest stage of their ministry is in a new town near the Disneyland Paris resort.

Two years ago, the Judkins family left the rural French countryside to begin a new ministry near Paris, where Peter helps lead a local church and his wife Claire-Lise works as a midwife.

Sent by **Christ Church Balham**, they both have a passion for sharing the gospel through their work and with the people they meet in their daily lives.

For many years, the family were based in Madagascar, where both Peter and Claire-

Lise served at the SIM-supported Good News Hospital in Mandritsara and Peter co-led the missionary team.

Evangelical Christians make up only 1.23% of the population in France

The Joshua Project

In 2018, they moved with their two daughters Naomi and Keziah, to the south-west of France to help a budding multicultural church in Castres.

“Few French churches are able to support their own pastors, especially small and newly-planted ones,” explains Peter, who helped the Castres church proclaim the gospel in an area with only three evangelical churches.

“There is a huge need for more gospel-driven churches to be planted in France and

for existing churches to be revitalised,” he adds.

In 2020, the family began the latest leg of their ministry journey after moving to a town specifically built in conjunction with The Walt Disney Company, which wanted to create a town near the Disneyland Paris resort.

Peter is once again leading a relatively new church plant (started six years ago) and seeking to engage the local community and see the gospel grow.

Every week, he also volunteers to teach French to students from many different countries.

“Because of Disney, there is a large international population who live in the area and struggle to integrate due to language difficulties,” he explains.

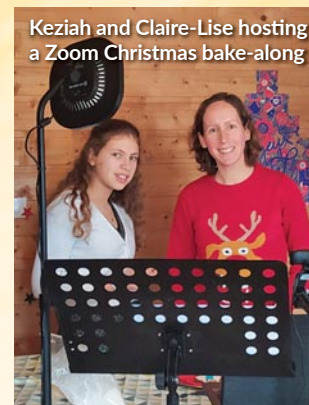
And despite the challenges of Covid over the past 18 months, the Val d’Europe church is back in full swing and looking forward to holding a Christmas event that last year had to be held via Zoom.

Plans include:

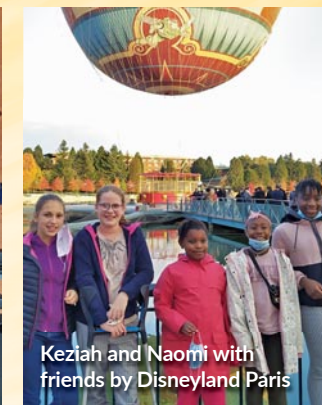
- An English-speaking carol service for the anglophones and anglophiles of the area.
- Potentially leading a Christmas service in the local prison.
- A Christmas party for the youth group, followed up by a Christianity Explored course in the New Year.



Celebrating Christmas



Keziah and Claire-Lise hosting a Zoom Christmas bake-along



Keziah and Naomi with friends by Disneyland Paris

The church will also hold a short Christmas Eve church service (as the French celebrate Christmas on the 24th) and then the Judkins will host Christmas Day at home with people from the church who don’t have family to go to.

“We enjoy the best of both worlds when it comes to celebrating Christmas,” says Peter. “On Christmas Eve, we celebrate the Réveillon with a short service, then go home to nice food and drink, games, singing carols, and spending time with friends.

“Then on Christmas Day, we celebrate the British way – introducing a traditional Christmas roast (with crackers!) to our French

friends. What a great way to celebrate our Saviour’s birth together!”

Please pray

For ongoing relationships and for increased understanding of the community that the Judkins seek to serve.

Give thanks Claire-Lise can share Christ’s love through her work as a community midwife.

That many people will discover Jesus – the Light of the World – during the Christmas season.

Is it worth it?

Cat Tongkao reflects on the moment she questioned whether she had taken the right path in life after being called into sports ministry.

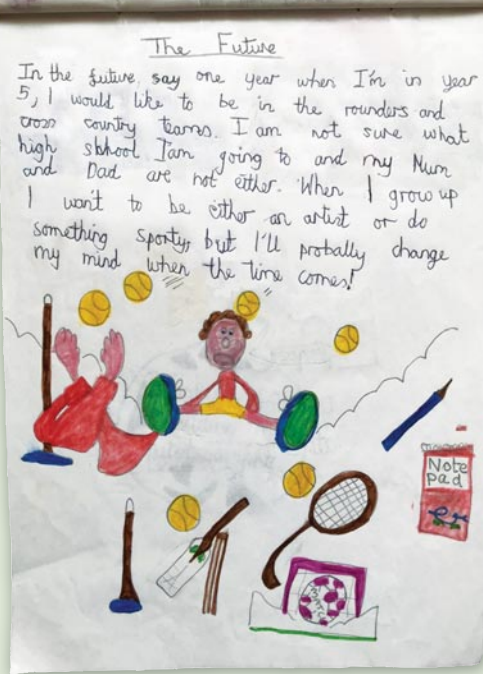
When I was ten, I wrote an autobiography (I must have thought I'd had a pretty exciting life for a ten-year-old!)

Almost 20 years later, I stumbled across it while sorting through some old boxes. I was approaching my 30th birthday and found myself in a season of comparing my life with that of my peers – many of whom were married, had mortgages, and were climbing career ladders to 'high and mighty' places.

I, on the other hand, was raising financial support to continue serving in South East Asia as a

mission worker with SIM; no rich husband, no mortgage, no career ladder...not even a dog!

I remember questioning whether I'd made a mistake by going down the missionary path: Should I have joined a graduate programme after university? Wouldn't I have more money, comfort and



security if I'd stayed in the UK and got a 'proper' job?

I picked up my childhood autobiography and began to read. At the end, there was a section entitled 'The Future', with the following written underneath:

When I grow up I either want to be an artist or do something sporty, but I'll probably change my mind when the time comes!

I've no recollection of writing these words and in fact, I went in a different direction altogether – studying Modern European Languages and Linguistics at university, with a year teaching English in Austria – before two years' sailing the high seas as a cruise ship photographer.

Yet, 20 years later, there I was doing perhaps one of the

few jobs in the world that perfectly combines both art and sport in the role of the Communications Director for SIM's sports ministry, Sports Friends.

Whether you're ready to engage in long-term ministry, or want to test the water with an internship or short-term ministry trip, SIM can help you use your passions, gifts and skills for God's glory. See Page 26.

I felt God confirming to me that I had indeed made the right choice and that his hand had been on my life to bring me to this very point – with no mistakes and no need for comparisons.

He had worked through my own attempts to find meaning in a 'dream' job travelling the world at sea; through the life and death of my mum; to the



realisation it was time to use the gifts and talents God had given me for something greater than myself.

I reflected on my life at the time – dodging through traffic on my moped ride to work; the bustling markets full of friendly people and incredible food; meaningful work shared with colleagues spread across

five continents; a Bible study group with eight women from seven different countries...

Life was rich – I was rich – but in ways contrary to what the world tells us.

Perhaps you're like I was and questioning whether the challenges and sacrifices of following God's call into missions are worth it? As missionary doctor Helen Roseveare once said: Don't ask, 'Is it worth it?' but rather 'Is he worthy?' and I promise you, you'll find that the answer is a resounding YES!



Cat currently leads the Sports Friends communications team and is sent by Holcombe Brook Methodist Church.

Please pray

Give thanks for 13,000 Sports Friends-trained coaches who are bringing hope, peace and Christ's love to many.

That God will open doors for Sports Friends to move into new areas that are least reached with the gospel.

That the Lord will add more workers for his harvest and fill the many openings we have to serve around the world.





Fruits of the harvest

By Kerry Allan

The commitment to see God’s word spread in a remote part of Niger is the hallmark of Jonathan and Elaine Burts’ ministry as they retire to the UK after 42 years in the field.



Jonathan and Elaine Burt joined SIM in 1979 and moved to Niger in 1987 with the goal of seeing the gospel spread through translation and radio ministry, outreach events and working with evangelists living amongst the Hausa people.

“One of the greatest blessings of long-term service in one area is to work aside young pastors and evangelist

whom you taught when they were children,” says Jonathan. “Now as adults they are co-workers and the future. They are Nigerien believers and will stay as we leave. It is early days yet and the work of sowing the precious seed takes time, but there will be a harvest and we are seeing the first fruits.”

Supported by **Storrington Community Church, West**

Sussex, Jonathan and Elaine’s prayer letters tell of amazing stories about their faithfulness and God’s goodness amidst the ups and downs of rural life in Niger.

The following are a few highlights from the Burts’ many years of faithful service. Visit our website www.sim.co.uk to read this story in full, by clicking on **News/Latest News**.

2015 Jonathan and Elaine build houses for local evangelists



2021 The Burts’ farewell service



1995 Jonathan teaches Bozari to catch guinea fowl, while Elaine gives literacy and Bible lessons.

1998 Issa walks with a single crutch after all medical hope seems gone and he sees his brother come to faith, too!

2000 Jonathan edits an Ajami version of Luke’s Gospel and a Bible correspondence course is translated into Hausa.

2004 The Burts write about the eternally changed lives that result from Nigeriens’ desire to read and listen to the story of Jesus.

2005 Jonathan and Elaine seek to strengthen believers scattered across a wide area by coordinating TEE (Theological Education by Extension).

2014 The Burts work on audio ministry, translating The Way of Righteousness series into Hausa.

2015 Jonathan and Elaine build houses for local evangelists – and the bricks must be made from scratch.

2016 The FM radio station is back (off and on) with some

Christian programmes. There is a court case over plans to build a church.

2017 230 students go through the Read and Live literacy classes and a number come to faith. Rainy seasons are taking their toll on gardens, church buildings and the evangelists’ houses.

2018 Students graduate from the Bible School where Jonathan has taught.

2019 Jonathan visits a man who first heard the gospel 25 years earlier and he puts his faith in God.

2020 A taste of practical challenges the Burts face: Mains power fails; FM radio transmitter broken; several car problems; residence permit issues; a rise of terrorism; and a road accident! On the other hand, there is a literacy class with two new Christians.

2021 The Burts prepare to leave Niger and many say at their farewell service that they feel like orphans, showing the deep impact they have had.

Compiled by Angus Reid, SIM UK Mobiliser for South-East England

Jonathan’s message to Serving Him readers



While we have passed on the baton, fellowship in prayer and communication remains and I guess the title of this publication says it all:

- **Do get involved**
- **Know what your mission worker is up to**
- **Ask for prayer updates**
- **Share what is going on in your life as fellowship needs to be two-way**

It is Jesus’ ardent desire to see his church grow:

The church is his bride and he tells us that ethnic diversity is one of the things that makes her beautiful. In all this, the Lord has chosen to work in partnership with you and I as his witnesses and prayer warriors. *Isn’t that amazing!?*

Please pray

Give thanks for the ways God has used Jonathan and Elaine to make Jesus known in some of the least-reached communities.

Give thanks that in pointing to God and not themselves, they have been a blessing to countless numbers in Niger and beyond.

Remote believers will stand strong in their faith.

Opportunities to serve

Do you have a heart to serve on the mission field?



Regional Communications Coordinators

Ministry ID 8625

Do you have the right skills to provide stories from workers in each of SIM's ten regions to SIM websites, social media and magazines and inform, inspire and invite others to join in God's global mission?



Hospital Director in Niger

Ministry ID 1412

Since 1950, the SIM Galmi Hospital has been an oasis in the desert. Guide a large, multicultural team, which is demonstrating God's love through physical and spiritual healing, to hundreds of men, women and children daily.



Youth and children's discipleship in South Asia

Ministry ID 2106

As we become increasingly convicted of the importance of discipling children and young people, walk side by side with the next generation of mission workers to help them stay rooted in the teachings of Christ.



Missional business opportunities in Central Asia

Ministry ID 8103

Could you bless a Central Asian country through encouraging local business people and developing relationships that lead to spiritual conversations and opportunities for discipleship?

Find out today how you can use your skillset and experiences for mission by contacting enquiries@sim.co.uk

Details of other current ministries are available at <https://sim.co.uk/support/ministries/>

SIM
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Media lead in Ecuador

Ministry ID 1304

Social media provides a great opportunity to reach young people with the gospel and to encourage and edify believers. Could you help workers develop media content for their ministry strategies?



Medical opportunity in the Middle East

Ministry ID 8301

Serve the community with your medical skills at a hospital with a clear Christian ethos and strong medical reputation. There may also be opportunities to sensitively share truth with colleagues, patients and visitors.



Outreach to vulnerable people in West Africa

Ministry ID 9405

The number of people at risk of trafficking has increased significantly with the economic consequences of the pandemic. Do you have the skills to manage a centre seeking to protect the vulnerable, prevent exploitation and bring freedom to victims of human trafficking?



Refugee ministry in Europe

Ministry ID 9103

Millions of refugees have arrived in Europe from countries and contexts that have been considered difficult to reach with the gospel. They are now in countries where religious freedom exists and we seek people to join discipleship and trauma-healing ministries.

I'd like to support...

with an **ALTERNATIVE GIFT** this Christmas (see back page)



'Reach out to the child'

South Africa (P6)

Your gift provides one month's support for an orphan through the Lulisandla Kumntwana community programme.

Outreach events

Mexico (P13)

At the height of harvest, there are between 500-1,200 migrant workers per farm. Your gift would host an event that features a gospel talk or showing of a Christian film.



Sports Friends ball (P20)

£12 provides a coach with a ball for his or her sports ministry team.

Pastor book set

West Africa (P22)

Your gift would cover the cost of these books, specifically, a copy of the New Testament in a local language.



Give a general gift: Donate to the General Fund (for use where needed most) at www.sim.co.uk/support/donate

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