

Autumn / Winter 2022
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SIM
Serving In Mission UK

Serving Him



Who's next

Younger and older
find their way
in mission

Case study: UK

Cross-cultural
ministry in
Glasgow

The joy of sending

Partner with us to
mobilise your church
for mission

How to contact us

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SIM
Serving In Mission UK

By the numbers

15 teachers and **12**
workers involved in children's
ministry and youth work are
sent by SIM UK to serve in
15 countries

Churches now send
166
workers through
SIM UK

250,000
youngsters are being discipled
by Sports Friends coaches in
18 countries

2,240
people pray with us each
week for global mission

201
ministries are supported
financially in
75 countries

**Will you support the
work of SIM UK?**

See back page for details

Front cover photo:
The Harrison
family (Page 16)

Welcome

Your support helps churches reach communities

In 2022, the gospel has spread across the world and the church has grown across every continent, but there are still communities where Christ is not yet known and it's likely that two in five people will go through their lives without ever hearing the gospel.

When he walked the earth, Jesus said he must bring people from all nations into his kingdom. These are people Jesus laid down his life for. He knows who they are and they recognise his voice. That's why we believe everyone needs to hear Jesus' words from faithful witnesses.

SIM works across 80 nations on every inhabited continent. We're seeing more people going out – currently 166 workers are sent by UK churches – and each one is a story of the partnership between churches, workers and SIM, standing together in one spirit for the spread of gospel amongst all peoples.

It's not one-way traffic either. The majority of Christians are now found in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

It's time for workers to go in all directions – in, to and from the UK. They already are, but there's still much more to be done. Sending people to serve amongst diverse communities is not an easy thing for churches to do. It's sacrificial and costly for each of these workers and their families. We'd love to offer what we do to more churches so that these stories keep growing.

Our vision in the UK is to mobilise workers to join multi-

ethnic teams where there is no church; to provide access to training resources for UK churches; and to help churches reach communities with the good news here and overseas.

If you're wondering about how you could serve in mission, then we'd love to hear from you.

There are teams and communities around the world praying for more workers. All of us can play our part as God enables us.

Thank you to everyone who already gives to our work. You are directly involved in more people knowing the surpassing worth of Jesus. Your support helps people reach people and churches reach communities, because you enable us to serve them in mission.

As we stride forward in this exciting but challenging vision, will you give today to support SIM and commit to helping many more know Jesus in their lifetime?

Please consider renewing your giving. Giving regularly will help us plan to serve more churches. See our back page for details of how you can give towards that work today.



Steve

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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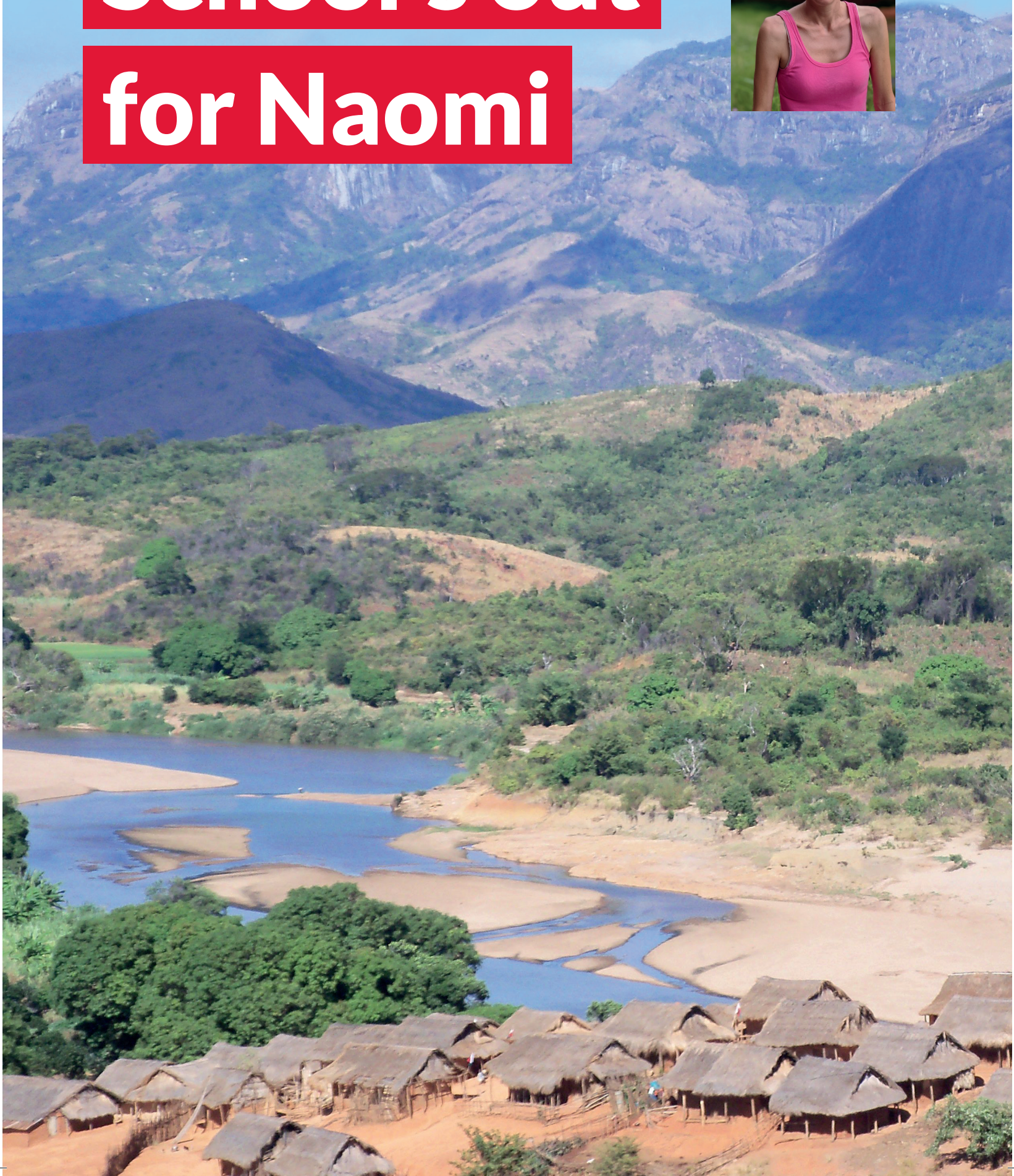
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School's out for Naomi



For the past seven years, Naomi Coleman has played a vital role in helping families to thrive on the field by teaching their children.

By Kerry Allan

After 10 years teaching in the UK, Naomi Coleman was at a crossroads professionally and looking at the next step in her career.

"I was never particularly interested in travelling, foreign foods or languages," she says. "I was also quite clear that I never wanted to work overseas."

But after reading Matthew's Gospel during the long school holidays of 2013, Naomi realised you can't place limitations on following Jesus.

"I'd handed many aspects of my life up to God, but I was really struck that you can't put conditions on where you follow Jesus. I wanted to follow him wherever, so at the end of that summer, I prayed for direction, asking God to make it really clear if he wanted to send me overseas."

Within weeks of that prayer, Naomi received an email from a mission family she'd been praying for over several years, saying how they urgently needed a teacher to support



them in their ministry with the Good News Project in Mandritsara, Madagascar.

"'Oh no,' I thought, 'this is what God is calling me to.'" she admits.

After visiting the family while they were back in the UK on home assignment, Naomi arranged to spend her next summer break in

Mandritsara to see whether this was something she could see herself doing.

"My big concern was that I wouldn't be able to do it," she reveals. "I was quite confident in my teaching, but the idea of living somewhere different and the challenges of living in a very poor place and letting go of

everything I enjoyed in my life in the UK, made me feel unsure if I could really do this.

"When it was time to leave Madagascar, I really felt God telling me to come back, but knew I had to test that, so I talked with my family, with my church and made contact with SIM UK.

"Their combined help, support and encouragement confirmed it was the

Continued overleaf



“I'd handed many aspects of my life up to God, but I was really struck that you can't put conditions on where you follow Jesus.**”**

right thing to do.”

Sent by Cambray Baptist Church, Cheltenham, Naomi moved to Madagascar in 2015, leaving a school where she was part of a big staff team and had the help of classroom assistants, to teaching the children of three mission families in a makeshift classroom in the spare room of her house on the hospital compound.

“It was very strange to begin with. We basically had wooden desks, a fan, and a whiteboard, and I had to do everything myself, from writing the timetable to building display boards from old cardboard boxes!” she recalls.

Over the years, Naomi’s taught many children across all ages and even done babysitting in order to serve the mission team in their roles, or just enable them to catch up on things they need to at home or enjoy

“ It’s been lovely to get to know the children so well and been a privilege to pray with them and to see them grow spiritually.



some precious child-free time.

Although day-to-day life can be quite hard with little running water, power cuts and most recently, the Covid pandemic, Naomi has enjoyed seeing the ministry team diversify and expand.

Since 2015, more space has been dedicated to teaching and there are currently families from three different continents serving in the growing multicultural team.

During her time in Mandritsara, Naomi has taught a total of 18 children and relished being free to bring a biblical worldview into the classroom.

“Teaching a small number of children over a long period of time gave me the chance to really build relationships,” she adds. “I also get to know their parents and being part of the mission team means I’ll often go to church with the children, or have



“ I think now’s the right time to step back and take stock and reconnect with everyone back home in the UK.

lunch with their families etc, so it’s been lovely to get to know them so well and been a privilege to pray with them and to see them grow spiritually.”

Through her ministry, families have been able to stay on the field and continue serving. But, after seven years, Naomi now feels it’s the right time to pass on the baton to someone else.

“I’ve done seven scorching hot seasons and honestly don’t want to do another one! Emotionally, this can also be quite a tough place to be: You invest in people; you love people and then they leave, so I think now’s the right time to step back and take stock and reconnect with everyone back home in the UK.”

And after a well-earned time of rest and renewal, Naomi intends to carry on partnering with SIM UK and continue her gospel work by doing the job she loves.



➔ Impact young lives

There is a real need for someone to help with the education of the mission children in Mandritsara – you don’t necessarily need to be a trained teacher. Check out www.mandritsara.org.uk and turn to Page 30 for details of other current opportunities to serve with SIM.

➔ Pray

- Thank God for Naomi’s ministry and the impact she’s had on her pupils’ lives during the past seven years.
- For God’s guidance as she considers her future.
- For God to raise up her successor to help with the education of Third Culture Kids (TCKs) in Mandritsara.

Stepping into MISSION

We are working to reach, challenge and enable younger people to see their potential in the Great Commission.

Inspiring young people to reach the world with the good news of Jesus is one of the great challenges for any mission agency and that is why it's one of SIM UK's key goals following our recent strategic review.

One of our mobilisers, Beth Jennings, (Beth@sim.co.uk) has been working on a youth programme to engage young people with



Beth Jennings

global gospel needs, covering the following:

➔ Week 1

Why mission?

➔ Week 2

The role of the local church

➔ Week 3

The global church

➔ Week 4

Where you fit - right now

The programme includes a prayer guide that features stories (facing page) based on the lives of real young people from some of the least-reached communities across the globe.

➔ Pray

- God will guide SIM UK how best to help young people find their place in global mission.
- For seeds to be watered as Beth seeks to deepen relationships with young people.
- Give thanks the youth programme has already led one young person to enquire about serving overseas.

University ministry in Central Asia

Jing's story

In my final year at university, I made a friend, Kate, who told me about Jesus. She gave me a Bible, but I knew I couldn't take it home with me because if my family found out I was learning about Christianity, they'd disown me.

Before I left, Kate showed me a way to access the Bible online and after hours of reading together and me asking loads of questions, I realised I'd been following the wrong path and gave my life to Christ.

I'm now back home in Central Asia, but I feel lost. I don't know

of any other Christians here; the bookshops don't sell Bibles; and the government has just banned them online.

I can remember some Scriptures and know Christ commands me to be bold in my faith, but I'm scared, so please pray for me.



Photo by Sean Kong



Medical ministry in South America

Mateo's story

I was the first person to become a Christian in my community after some dentists visited our village and told us about Jesus. A lot of people rejected their teaching, but something made me want to know more.

I got talking to one of them and he told me some stories about Jesus using pictures that he left with me. The healthcare team visited the village again – it was such a joy to see them, but they are covering such a vast area, I wish they could visit more often. The Bible stories seem to come alive when they are able to spend time sharing with us and explaining God's word.

During their second visit, I gave my life to Christ. I try my best to share the picture stories with my family and friends, but I sometimes wonder whether I am doing it right.

“ I was the first person to become a Christian in my community.

Vocational ministry in South Asia

Aabir's story

I've just finished a two-year course learning skills in mechanics. Now I can set up my own business in my hometown and help my community and support my family.

I gained far more than an education though. Each day, we had lessons from the Bible. At first, I listened to be polite, but as the months rolled by, I saw by the actions of my teachers, that they not only believed what they taught, they lived their lives according to the Scriptures. They loved and respected their families and showed me great kindness too.

Jesus has transformed my life.

On graduation day, along with half of my class, I was baptised!

I want to share my love for Jesus in my community when I return and have been asked to consider starting a house church. I'm excited by this, but equally nervous – no one in my village is a Christian. Please pray for me that I will be faithful to what I have learnt; that I will read my Bible every day as I have been taught; and that my family and friends will be open to hearing about Christ's sacrifice.

Pray too, that my new business will prosper and that it will be a good place to share Jesus with others.



Photo by Ehteshamul Haque Adit

Refugee ministry in the Middle East

Rafi's story

Militants entered our village. We had no choice but to flee, but we had nowhere to go. We felt so scared and desperate. My mother-in-law remembered friends who'd fled several years before and made contact.

It was a long and gruelling journey, and when we finally arrived, we felt broken, but were welcomed by friendly faces – a whole community of them! They provided us with food, clothes, toiletries and a place to stay. It was a relief having been met with such hostility on our journey here.

I was shocked when I found out they were Christians. This is not what I'd been told Christians were like! One man, Peter, invited me to read his

holy book with him. He told me that it had only just been completed in my language.

I started reading about the life of Jesus and couldn't stop. Why had no one told me about Jesus before? I just wanted to learn more and more!

I shared the Bible with my family and they were hungry to learn more too. My mother-in-law, unlike many of the women from our country, is literate and is teaching the other women so they can read the Scriptures for themselves.

Our lives have been turned upside down – we have no permanent home or real security and yet we feel so secure and joyous in what we have found here. Praise God!



Photo by Timothy Eberly

Media ministry in West Africa

Thabo's story

I am a Muslim background believer. My people are traditionally nomads – we travel around in search of grazing land for our cattle. This was my life until recently.

It was a Sunday and I had come into town to visit the market to buy some provisions for the week ahead.

One of the market traders had a radio playing in the background. The voice on the radio was talking about Jesus, explaining that he was not a prophet, but that he was God's son. This is not what I'd been taught, so I argued with the trader about it. He gave me a little solar-powered radio and

encouraged me to listen to more.

One evening, out in the desert, I was listening to the voice on the little radio talking about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and I felt challenged. What I was hearing made sense, but it went against what

I'd been brought up to believe.

I spoke to one of my brothers about it. He was furious that I would question our faith. Things turned very nasty, very quickly, and I ran.

I found the market trader and he took me to stay with his friends. They are the Christians who record the radio programmes in my heart language. They have been very kind to me and read the Bible with me and help me to understand more each day. I know this is the right way, but it's so hard to turn my back on everything – my family, my friends, my way of life.

Please pray that others like me, especially my family, would hear and understand the message of the Bible. Pray the Lord will use me to tell my people about him. Pray for my protection as I seek to learn more and work out how to support myself.



Photo by Ben Ostrower

New resources

Use SIM's interactive culture kits to help kids engage with mission

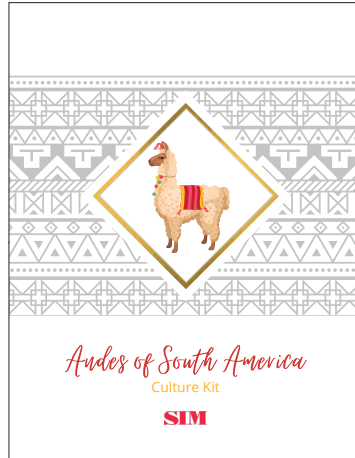
SIM's culture kits are designed to encourage children to follow Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations by praying for people who don't yet know him.

The kits, written by a SIM teacher and put together by a SIM graphic designer, cover four regions of the world – South Asia, the Middle East, East Africa and The Andes of South America. Other kits covering more regions of the world are in the pipeline.

The kits, which are produced in pdf format, give children a superb overview of the region. Featuring a wealth of great pictures, they begin by detailing the geography, the climate, the people groups, the faiths and the various cultures.

The designer says: "Of course, because the regions are vast we can't cover absolutely everything. The aim is to give children a flavour of the region, in the hope it will get them thinking a little more deeply about people in other parts of the world."

They also show children how to engage with people who may not look like them and who may

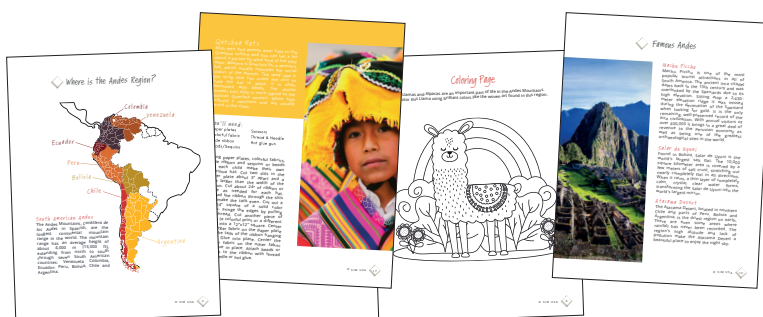


not believe what they believe.


There are prayer points, recipes from the region and even introductions to some playground games. Throughout, the aim is to show children the richness of other cultures, while also teaching them that there are large parts of the world where the name of Jesus is not known.

The kits can be used in any setting – home school, church Sunday school, or parents learning alongside their children. They are suitable for children aged from around six to early teens, or perhaps even older in some cultures.


The kits are highly interactive, with craft activities, maps, colouring pages and a wide range of activity pages for different ages and are free to download from the SIM UK website.




YouTube prayer videos

 Subscribe to SIM UK where you can watch prayer videos about Mongolia, Central Asia and other places around the world.
youtube.com/simukvideos

Visit our website for:

 Prayer resources for children and adults, PowerPoint presentations about different countries, join a prayer group, and more.

 News articles from around the world, or sign up to receive our 'Serving Him' magazine.

 Research about UK intercultural mission, global communities, and raising the next generation.

Follow us on social media



Family FOCUS



By Linda Hunt, SIM UK Prayer Coordinator

September marked two years since we launched SIMpray Kids, our monthly email written by TCKs to help primary-aged children and their families pray well for the communities they are serving.

Over the past two years, we've prayed with 27 families as they've shared the story of Jesus with people around the globe.

God has helped the children we prayed with to overcome language and cultural barriers and to settle into their new environments.

Here are just some of the ways God has answered the prayers of our youngest supporters:




In January, we prayed with Simon, Benji and Eve, for their mum's work to translate the Bible for the Monkolé people of Benin.

As well as the physical Bibles,


a digital version of the Monkolé Bible has been available since April. Praise God that in the first two months, 5,000 chapters were read online.




 In **February**, we prayed with Charis and Lois who have moved to Athens, Greece. (Read about their parents' ministry on Page 22).

Praise God, they've made friends at their new school, although they don't enjoy all their lessons yet, so let's keep praying for that!



 In **March**, we prayed for the work of Benjamin and Elliott's parents in Mexico at the Predica Vida Bible school.

Several students say the course they are studying has changed the way they read and teach the Bible. Pray for them as they take the story of Jesus to remote Latin American communities and give thanks that Ben and Elliot have made friends and their Spanish is improving.

 In **April**, we prayed with Priscilla for her parents' work in Glasgow, Scotland, where they are sharing the love of Christ with the African diaspora and with local refugees and asylum seekers (who are predominantly Muslims and Muslim background believers).


God has blessed her parents with several encouraging conversations with people who don't yet know Jesus. Some have come to church to find out more, while others are asking lots of questions.



(Read about her parents' ministry on Page 24).




Photo by Zachtleven

 We prayed that refugees would hear about Jesus and come to faith.

In **July**, workers in the Middle East ran a summer programme for the children of refugee families. Each day, they heard stories about Jesus, did activities and went on trips together.



 In **October**, we prayed with several families serving at the Good News Hospital in Madagascar.

God continues to provide people to serve on this team, which at one point was very small and struggling. Praise God there are five people from the UK currently preparing to go.

We thank God for all our families serving overseas and pray each one will have opportunities to share the love of God with someone new today.

Inspired

Our Q&A with a SIM leader, serving in South Asia, shows how God placed mission on his heart at a young age

SH: How old were you when you came to faith?

It was when I was around five. I remember being attracted to Jesus as my Sunday School teacher taught about him and refusing to leave her class (for three- to five-year-olds) until I was eight!

SH: Did it help growing up in a Christian family?

Yes. The church I grew up in had mission partners with the South American Mission Society (later Crosslinks). My dad wrote letters (by hand!) to them faithfully every few weeks. Whenever they'd visit our church on home assignment, they'd always come to our house.

SH: How did God put mission on your heart at a young age?

I went to a state school that wasn't Christian or church-connected, but because it was old, it had a chapel and a chaplain. The chaplain was also the Religious Studies teacher.

When I was 13, he did a module on World Poverty and Development that opened my eyes to life beyond the UK.

Also, each year, he and other Christian teachers would take a group of us to Spring Harvest and I remember (again aged 13) feeling God was calling me into mission somewhere very hot and dusty!

SH: How did God lead you into mission?

My first mission trip overseas was at the age of 15 to Poland— again organised by the school chaplain.

It was a very significant time in

my discipleship: learning to trust the Lord out of my comfort zone, and really enjoying daily Bible studies in Philippians. We were an unusual bunch — three of us aged 15 from school; a university student aged about 20; and two couples in their 70s and 80s. One of them (who was about to drive us across Europe in a minibus) revealed to my parents just before we left, that he'd been evacuated to my school 60 years earlier during the war.

SH: How did God lead you to SIM?

I'd been introduced to SIM by the school chaplain and my first experience was SIM running orientation for a team of young people (I was the youngest at 16) from local churches going on a short-term trip to Mozambique.

After A Levels, I joined SIM's GAP (Global Awareness Programme) and spent six months serving in Angola. It was shortly after the civil war and so again, it was a formative time — learning to rely on the Lord in all kinds of hairy situations.



SH: Did you ever have any doubts about becoming a mission worker?

I expected/planned to spend more time as a professional musician of some sort (I studied Music at Manchester University), but God moved me into full-time ministry faster — first, in student ministry, then working as a mobiliser for SIM UK and later, overseas.

I’ve wrestled with many questions and concerns about following the Lord’s calling with our kids. Of course, God knows about them when he leads us into challenging situations and places, but saying lots of goodbyes, moving from place to place, and adjusting to various cultures has its challenges.

SH: Tell us about some of the joys of your ministry?

Having the privilege of working with believers from the country where we serve and with others from around the world.



Living in more remote parts of the country where, if it were not for this calling, we’d never get the chance even to visit.

Driving into the desert with some of our students to meet people in villages, eating together and having heart-to-heart conversations.

Seeing the Lord touch hearts and change lives.

SH: What advice would you give someone considering mission?

Keep prayerfully pushing doors and see what happens.

Don’t be afraid to do hard things or go to ‘hard places’ but go with a good support team (especially lots of people who love you and will pray with you).

Recognise that you are weak and will need help along the way — that’s one of the reasons why mission agencies like SIM exist; to help us flourish and thrive rather than crash and burn. We’ve needed, and deeply appreciate that wisdom and care and support along the way.

Interested in serving short-term?

Visit sim.co.uk or get in touch at mobilisation@sim.co.uk

→ Pray

- Praise God he’s provided abundantly for the kids, and especially in recent years, answered our prayers for good friends for them.
- Whether God would have us do something to serve the many drug-dependent young people from various communities here.
- That all of us will know how high and deep and wide and broad Jesus’ love for us is — and for those around us.

Selam

no!



Meet the Harrison family, who moved from their settled, secure life in the UK, to a new exciting, but challenging, one on the mission field in Ethiopia.

By Kerry Allan

Simon Harrison and his wife Ally are serving with SIM in Ethiopia, but still find it hard to believe they are actually there.

The couple and their three children Samuel, 10, Mia Belle, seven, and Madeline, five, moved to the capital Addis Ababa in July.

“One of the reasons it’s so hard to believe that we’re finally in Ethiopia is that we’d been praying about overseas missions for over 14 years!” reveals Simon.

“Initially, we’d thought we’d go overseas immediately after getting

married, but we spoke to various mission agencies at the time, who advised me to finish my postgraduate training as a doctor. So instead of going abroad, we moved to a Muslim area of Leicester in order to gain some experience in cross-cultural ministry,” he adds.

“Eventually, three wonderful children came along, as well as some health challenges, and before we knew it, it was 12 years later and we seemed no nearer to serving the Lord in an overseas mission context!”

However, a few years ago, the couple’s good friends, who are already serving with SIM in Addis Ababa, mentioned a need for an elementary music teacher at Bingham Academy, so they began seriously praying about whether the Lord might want them to serve him out there.

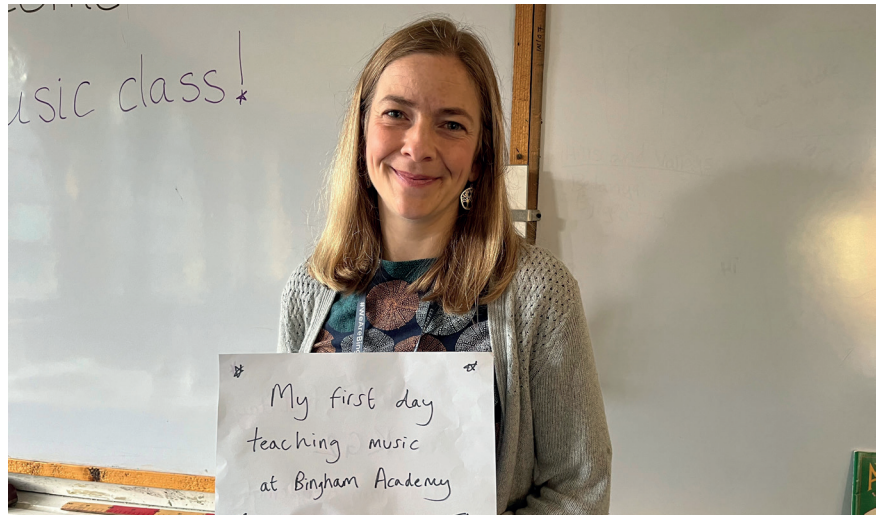
“We felt led to begin the application process and as we progressed, gradually, the Lord



Ally is working as a music teacher at Bingham Academy — a school that serves children of mission families and expats, as well as Ethiopian children — and Simon, a GP, is hoping to share the gospel through medical ministry.

Christmas this year will be a lot different for the Harrisons as it will be warm and sunny and they’ll also have two chances to celebrate – one on December 25 and then when the Ethiopians celebrate Christmas on January 7!

“ We’re just so grateful to the Lord for all the love, prayers and support that have enabled us to get to this point.



allayed our fears and broke down every barrier we thought might keep us from the mission field,” says Simon.

From support raising and health needs, to the children’s education and the reaction of family members, the couple say the Lord has helped in an amazing way and opened doors as they trusted him with each step into mission.

“We’re just an ordinary family, but we have an awesome God who can do amazing things,” adds Simon.

Parenting anywhere is hard, but parenting on the mission field is even more challenging as it involves navigating a new culture and helping your children thrive in foreign systems while learning to do the same yourself.

“The children have all settled into



school well and seem to have made a remarkably smooth transition to being in such a new and different place,” says Simon.

“They enjoy living at the school and having friends nearby to play with, but finding foods they like has been difficult because availability here is quite limited.”

With their family, friends, and their sending church behind them (see story overleaf) the family are coping well with the transition to Ethiopia and have been greatly encouraged by the help SIM can provide as families prepare to serve overseas.

“We’re just so grateful to the Lord for all the love, prayers and support that have enabled us to get to this point,” says Simon.

“However, we can’t pretend that everything is easy living here in Ethiopia and there are many things we’re missing about home,” he admits. “I’m learning Amharic, which is known to be a hard language to learn, and there are times it’s easy to feel very discouraged, but we know that investing this time is really important for our life and ministry here.”

And despite the realities of life on the overseas field, Simon and Ally remain motivated to carry on because they’re convinced they are where God wants them to be.

“One of the most common greetings here in Ethiopia is ‘Selam no?’ (which literally means, ‘Is it peace?’) and we’ve had a lot of practice responding to this phrase since arriving in Ethiopia,” says Simon.

“And although we have some homesickness, we can truly answer, ‘Selam negn, Exhabilhir Yemesken’ (‘It is peace, praise God!’).”

→ Pray

- Praise God the Harrisons are participating in God’s global mission together.
- Give thanks God’s grace is sufficient for the whole family as they adjust to ministry and life in Ethiopia.
- For the Lord to provide for all their needs.

Donate to the Harrisons

If you would like to support the Harrisons, please go to our website at sim.co.uk/support/donate/ or call the office on 01223 788288.

Helping families take a step of faith



A key part of SIM UK's work is to support and care for

our mission workers serving around the world. Cheryl Gibson (pictured) is our Family Adviser for families and TCKs (Third Culture Kids) and understands that moving your family across cultures is not easy, having served in West Africa with her family for a number of years.

Through regular debriefs with the families and a specific child-focused Family Orientation, Cheryl assists families as they prepare to go and helps them navigate their experiences and to process transitioning from one culture to another.



Thinking about serving with your family?

Why not work with us to find the best fit for you? Email mobilisation@sim.co.uk to find out more.

The gospel that saves also sends



It's a blessing for a local church to be part of God's global mission, says Richard Brewster

"If I'm honest, we never set out to be a sending church!" admits Richard Brewster, the pastor of Avenue Community Church in Leicester, which is the sending church for the Harrisons, plus two other families serving with SIM UK in East and West Africa.

"We're not a big church and we often struggle to know how to reach out to our own local community, let alone the world," he says. "But we are committed as a church to preaching our way through the Bible on Sunday mornings and to listening to, and living out, God's Word in our midweek small groups.

"It's our experience as a church that the Bible really does have the power to change us and open our eyes to God's commitment

to making disciples for Jesus of all nations.

"Over time, a number of families and individuals in our church family have felt the call to be part of God's global mission and we have had the enormous privilege of talking with them, praying with them, and more recently, sending some of them out into the mission field.

"It's hard saying goodbye to people you love and who are also some of your most faithful and committed gospel workers here at home, but I've personally been helped by the perspective of **2 Corinthians 9:7-8** – 'God loves a cheerful giver' and he is able 'to bless [us] abundantly' as we give people to his global mission.

"We want to be open-handed with all the gifts God gives to us – including the people in our church.

Sending people away to serve overseas is an act of love and an act of faith, and it's not without cost, but we are reminded again and again, that every sacrifice we make for Jesus here and now will be worth it in the end.

“Being part of God’s global mission is a blessing to us as a local church as the whole church family gets involved in praying for, loving, and supporting, the people we send. It’s such a joy to see the people we send out depending completely on God for everything they need – and then seeing God at work to provide their needs!

“I also think we’ve gained a bigger, more global vision of God and his church in recent years – particularly the children in our church, who’ve seen families with children their own age, move overseas to serve.”



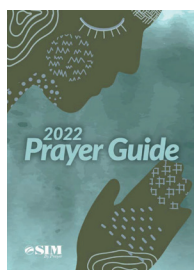
Avenue Community Church, Leicester

“Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields – along with persecutions – and in the age to come eternal life.”

Mark 10:29-30

Tips to mobilise your church for global mission

- **Pray** – for the gospel to be shared in communities where Jesus is least known and use the free resources available on the SIM UK website to help pray for specific countries and ministries where our workers operate.
- **Teach** – if God’s Word is taught faithfully and fully, you can’t miss his call to take the good news to the nations.



- **Inform** – include a ‘mission’ focus in all your regular church prayer meetings or show one of SIM UK’s mission videos as part of your church service.
- **Involve** – talk to SIM UK about opportunities for a team (of all age groups) to go on a short-term mission trip.
- **Journey** – gather those who are considering overseas mission to pray and encourage each other; meet to pray as a group or individually along the way – the journey can take

years and it’s important for the church to be aware and involved.

- **Partner** with SIM UK – we have the vision and expertise to help churches to reach out with missional vision and action, so please get in touch to start a conversation. Email info@sim.co.uk or call us on 01223 788288.





→ *Spotlight on*

Photos by Tze Hung Seeto

Potosí, Bolivia

Potosí is a city in the south of Bolivia, known for its long history of silver mining, and where the largest group of people who still haven't heard the gospel are the miners.

At the turn of the 17th Century, it produced more silver than anywhere else in the world from mines deep within the sprawling Cerro Rico (literally 'rich mountain') that towers over the city.

While many from Potosí would identify as Catholic, ancient Andean religions are often intertwined into local belief systems — most notably in the mines themselves, where the spirit El Tío ('The Uncle') is believed to rule as 'Lord of the Underworld'.

Through offerings of cocoa leaves, tobacco and alcohol, miners hope to placate El Tío as failure to keep him satisfied might exact terrible punishment, but Tío can also reward a miner with success and protection.

Working in cooperatives, the miners usually have no set salary and only earn from selling what they themselves can dig out of the hard rock. This pressure to

produce has driven miners deeper and deeper underground with little thought to health and safety.

Cerro Rico is famed for the harsh conditions faced by its miners and the average lifespan of a Cerro Rico miner is 40.

Many miners suffer from lung diseases, like asthma or silicosis, owing to the dust and strong unfiltered cigarettes they smoke. Others have physical injuries resulting from the dynamite, cramped tunnels and hard labour.

Allinta Ruwana is a Bolivian-run Christian clinic in Potosí, whose mission is to 'make known the compassionate character of God through acts of service in health and education'.

Local people pay a small fee to access a wide range of health services and Allinta Ruwana was the only clinic to stay open at the height of the Covid pandemic.

Sent by Redeemer Church, Manchester, Josh and Rachel Griffiths are serving in Potosí, where Josh is working as a doctor in the clinic and Rachel works alongside the local church, leading a women's ministry and supporting the youth group, as well as teaching English classes.



SIM UK workers Josh and Rachel Griffiths

At a glance

- Nestled in the Andes, 13,420 ft above sea level, Potosí is one of the **highest cities** in the world.

- Potosí is said to attribute its name to **potocsi**, a Quecha word meaning 'deafening noise'.



- During city festivals and parades, it's an honour for young boys to **dress as miners** and dance in teams through the streets.

- Potosí's former mint, the central **Casa Nacional de la Moneda**, is now a museum dedicated to Bolivian art and history.

- **Half of the population** in Potosí cannot meet basic needs such as nutrition, sanitation and adequate housing.



Go to our website sim.co.uk and search **Untouched by Sunlight** to watch a video by SIM Bolivia and hear from one of the workers as he describes his life and work in the mines.

Meet our new mission workers

Praise God for our latest workers being mobilised into global mission. Please keep them in your prayers and if you'd like to be a prayer partner of any of them individually, then please sign up on the SIM UK website at sim.co.uk/prayerpartners




Joanna Boxall

Sending church:
All Souls Langham Place, London.

Going to: Jos, Nigeria.

Ministry: Jo is a medical doctor, and will be primarily serving at the Andrew Stirrett Hospital, which is run by ECWA in Jos, working in A&E, paediatrics, antenatal care and in the outpatient clinics.

 **Please pray for:** Me as I study basic Hausa language and settle into a new culture and community. For safety, for flexibility with a varied workload, and particularly, for the challenge of adapting to working in a medical setting with much less resource available. Pray I'll be a witness to the love, kindness and sacrificial love of Christ as I serve.




Caitlin Faith Ng

Sending church: Euston Church, London.

Going to: Thailand

Ministry: Caitlin is working with the Faithful Witness team in Ayutthaya.

 **Please pray for:** For my visa being processed; learning Thai; finding and taking opportunities to open God's word with people and continuing to grow in love and worship of the Lord Jesus.




Amalia Dumbrava

Sending church: Life Church, Bath.

Going to: Lesvos, Greece.

Ministry: Amalia has just returned from a short-term placement working with refugees to help with their daily activities, such as showering, doing laundry and childcare.

 **Please pray for:** More volunteers for the coming months and for the team to show love and patience and to make each refugee feel welcomed.




Sarah Hopkins

Sending church:
St John's

Wimborne, Dorset.

Going to: Cape Town, South Africa.

Ministry: Sarah is using Creative Arts Therapy and trauma work to help people in a community full of gang crime, poverty and inequality.

 **Please pray for:** Safety as I travel around; a smooth transition to SIM and that I can raise all the funds I need to do this work and can get a new visa without any issues.




Sarah Evans

Sending church:
Woodstock Road
Baptist Church, Oxford.

Going to: Madagascar.

Ministry: Sarah will be working as part of the medical team at the Good News Hospital.

 **Please pray for:** Energy as I adapt to a new environment; ability to contribute to the physical and spiritual needs of the patients; Malagasy language learning and opportunities to build relationships both with the team, church and colleagues.




Herbie Sykes

Sending church:
St. Laurence Church, Reading.

Going to: Malawi

Ministry: Herbie is helping home school the children of one of the families already serving in Malawi and waiting on God's timing as to what other roles he can take on to help the team.

 **Please pray for:** God to guide me how I can best use my skills in Malawi for God's glory.




Sam Somers Heslam

Sending church:
Christ Church

Balham, London.

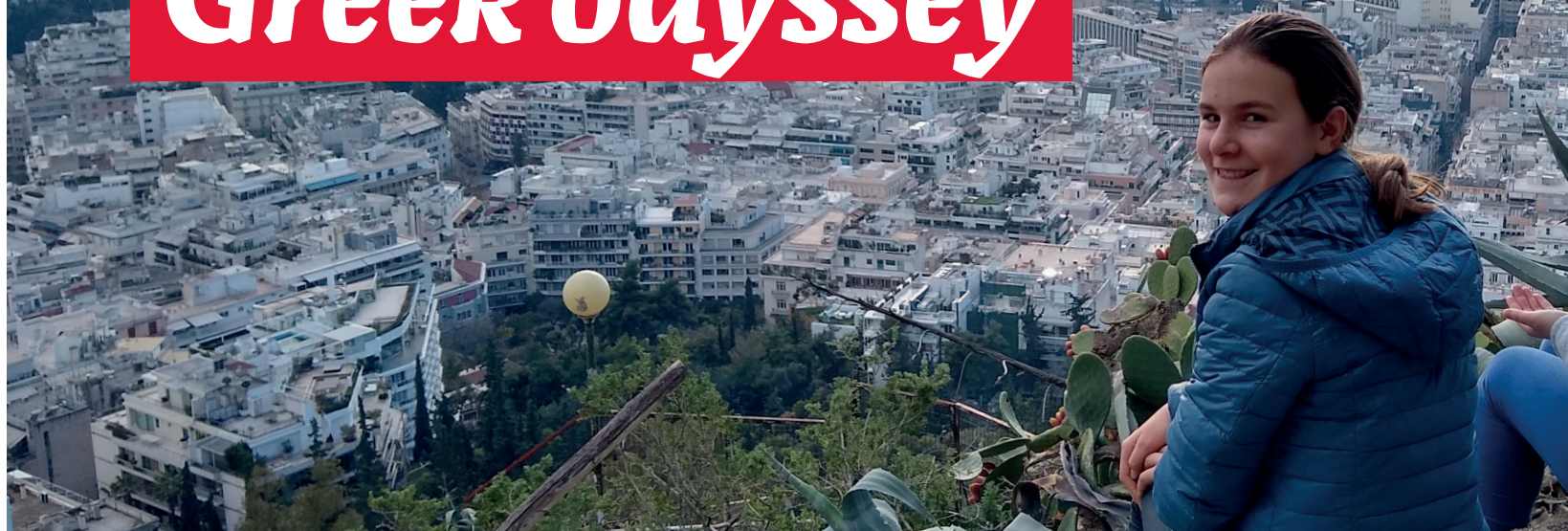
Going to: Jos, Nigeria.

Ministry: Sam is joining the medical team in a healthcare clinic.

 **Please pray for:** My visa to be granted as it has been delayed by several weeks. Pray that I'd settle quickly and integrate well and that the process of getting a medical licence would go smoothly.

The Macs'

Greek odyssey



Getting 'a bit more experience' led to many years of invaluable learning and shaping for one couple who are now serving in Europe.

By Kerry Allan

Serving overseas long-term has always been on Al and Rachel MacInnes' hearts, but it took many years for them to take the plunge and move to Greece at the end of August 2021.

While the couple had fulfilling UK ministries, they never forgot a sense God was calling them to share the gospel in places where there are far fewer believers than in the UK.

As a student at Leeds University, something Rachel heard at her Christian Union had always stuck with her – that, "If you have even just a

little bit of willingness to serve overseas, you should go [or at least explore going!] because there are far more people who stay than who go."

After spending her gap year serving in a Bible translation project in West Africa, she felt long-term mission was still something for the future, once she had some more life experience under her belt, closer to home.

A condition of getting engaged to Al three years later, was that he was also willing to consider going overseas, even though he'd always seen his future ministry in the UK.

The couple saw how cross-cultural mission positions overseas often went unfilled for years, whereas most 'full-time' Christian jobs in the UK had dozens of applicants.

"Then the Lord called Al to lead a small church-planting team just outside Cambridge and 'a bit more experience' turned into 14 years of invaluable learning and shaping,

challenges and joys as the church grew," says Rachel, "but we had no idea that we'd end up staying in the UK for as many years as we did!"

The Lord started to put Greece specifically on Al's heart after he led a short-term team to Athens in 2018 and Rachel had been engaging with ministries there through her work for HowWillTheyHear; placing and supporting gospel workers, who are serving refugees all across Europe.

Leaving their church and physically taking away their two daughters, Charis, aged 13, and Lois, aged 10, from their 'wonderful community' were always the biggest blocks to making a final decision – until the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The Covid-19 lockdowns gave us some sense of what it might be like to be away from those we love and helped us realise that life with just the four of us, plus the Lord was manageable!" recalls Rachel.

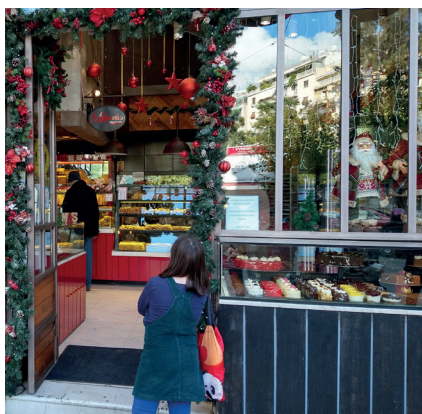


The MacInnes family in Athens

Then after a family trip to Greece, they knew it was the right time to finally take the plunge and apply, knowing the Lord would close the door if it wasn't right!

Despite a few setbacks, including battling with Greek bureaucracy, the family moved to the vibrant, multicultural capital, Athens, where they enjoy a new outdoor lifestyle (when it's not too hot!)

Al's focus is serving in partnership with European Christian Mission (ECM) as Country Coordinator,



supporting existing evangelical churches and helping them to plant new ones. Rachel continues to mobilise people to share the gospel with refugees and migrants and also helps orientate and care for new workers coming to Greece.

"Ultimately, we'd love to see a growing network of church-planting teams of Greeks and non-Greeks reaching across the whole of Greece and for many of those churches to include migrants who have met Christ since coming to Greece," says Al.

And in order to fully integrate and thrive in their life and ministries, the family are learning Greek.

"It's a very hard language!" admits Rachel, "but learning it well is crucial – not just so we can all feel more comfortable here, but also, because good communication is key to building relationships and building relationships is key to sharing real life and gospel truths with people."

And while Christmas is much less important than Easter in the Greek Orthodox Church tradition, the family are looking forward to their second Christmas and the gospel opportunities it provides.

"Last year, our church went out carol singing and it was a great witness, especially as you can stand outside one apartment block and be heard by dozens of households at once!" says Rachel.

"By coming to people in their community, we're doing something Greeks don't expect from 'church' and we hope to have opportunities to talk about why we all bother with these celebrations? We might even introduce homemade mince pies to some local friends!"

➔ Pray

- For God to use the couple's gifts and experience to reach others for Christ.
- Give thanks the family are making good progress with the huge challenge of learning a new language.
- For opportunities to deepen relationships at their local church.

Choir hits all the right notes

A key achievement of cross-cultural worker Lawrence Jah's ministry is launching the first African choir in a church that's 50 % white Scots and 50 % from the rest of the world.

By Kerry Allan



They say never work with children or animals, but this won't deter Lawrence Jah's plans for a community fun day at Harper this Christmas, including a nativity scene planned by the leadership of the church, featuring live rabbits, a guinea pig, a goat and a donkey!

"Nothing will go wrong and it's one of many things we've planned in order to reach more people with the

gospel this Christmas!" he insists.

Lawrence, originally from Sierra Leone, has taken time away from his role as a pastor in The Gambia to help Harper Church, Glasgow, grow its cross-cultural gospel ministry.

Together with his wife Elizabeth and their daughter Priscilla, he moved to Scotland in 2021 to join SIM UK's ENGAGE programme, which recruits and places gospel workers from around the world in local UK churches that want to share the gospel with their multicultural communities.

As well as his ministry among the many refugees and asylum seekers living locally, Lawrence coordinates the African diaspora fellowship at Harper Church.

The couple have experienced many

joys in their first year of ministry, including hosting the church's first Nigerian community meal, attended by more than 70 people from different nations in October.

"It was a great opportunity for friendship and relationship-building, with the recently arrived international students from Nigeria," says Lawrence.

Another was helping to set up the Harper African Voice Choir — an initiative by the church's pastor Alan Knight.

"The opportunity for an African choir as part of Harper's Sunday service once a month, is a true reflection of a multicultural church comprising of over 30 nations and is intentionally open to other nations and ethnicities in the church," says Lawrence.

"By the grace of God, through a weekly street ministry and interactions with other charitable organisations in the Glasgow



Harper Church pastor Alan Knight and his wife and Pamela, with Lawrence, Elizabeth and Priscilla Jah

“ By the grace of God, through a weekly street ministry and interactions with other charitable organisations in the Glasgow community, I’ve been privileged to engage with people, not only from African backgrounds, but from all nations, ethnicities and cultures.

community, I’ve been privileged to engage with people, not only from African backgrounds, but from all nations, ethnicities and cultures,” he continues, “but those among them who have been coming to church at Harper, now need to be properly integrated into the wider Harper family life to reflect a multicultural and multi-lingual church.”

The couple’s involvement in the life of the church is not only limited to reaching the adults in the multicultural community, but also their children.

When the family first arrived, Priscilla was the only African child in the children’s church on Sundays, and the weekly evening king’s club on Mondays, but this has now grown to 13 (eight primary school-aged and five pre-school children) thanks to the relationships Lawrence and Elizabeth have built up with a number of international students from Nigeria and asylum seekers from West Africa, who’ve joined the church.

“It’s so encouraging to engage with Africans from various cultural

backgrounds, including people from my country of origin, and on top of that, Elizabeth is able to get various African dishes, which means we don’t miss home too much!” says Lawrence.

And as the Christmas season approaches, Lawrence and Elizabeth are keen to make the most of the opportunity to show God’s practical love to the people they are trying to reach, and to have conversations that may have been closed at other times of the year.

“We’re organising a family get-together and inviting various asylum seekers and international students to come to our home with their children for fun and fellowship,” he says.

“The programme is also designed in such a way that it gives room for the various nations represented at Harper to celebrate their unique festive traditions.

“The aim is to use Christmas as a way to strengthen relationships with those people the Lord has brought along our path, in the past year.”

And while the family will not be celebrating Christmas in true

Gambian style, with street parties and time on the beach, Lawrence says they feel very much at home in the UK, and are keen to embrace one particular festive tradition...

“Last Christmas, I felt like the odd one out because I hadn’t purchased a Christmas jumper; but God willing, I’ll definitely get a matching jumper for all three of us, this time!” he says.

→ Pray

- That God will work powerfully in the lives of people through Christmas outreaches at Harper Church.
- That the Africans at Harper will be well integrated into the wider church family life.
- For God’s guidance regarding the next steps to be taken, before the couple’s visa ends.

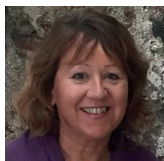


To find out more about how SIM UK can help to give your church the knowledge, skills and confidence to share the gospel with different people groups, contact engage@sim.co.uk



GET IN THE GAME

Sport is a major part of many cultures, providing the perfect platform to cross barriers and share the gospel, but is it right for a UK context?



By Kerry Allan

Serving In Mission's Sports Friends ministry is built around more than 12,000 godly coaches who pour their lives into the young people on their teams.

They love them, pray for them, get to know their families, share with them the truths of God's Word, and connect them to the local church.

More than 250,000 youngsters are being disciplined by thousands of

coaches all around the world, since the ministry began 20 years ago.

Cat Tongkao started with SIM UK in 2010 and moved to Thailand, where the ministry had launched a couple of years earlier. Together, Cat and her husband, Somchai, served with Sports Friends for eight years in Thailand before moving to the UK in 2018.

Cat currently leads the communications team, while

Somchai is pioneering the Sports Friends ministry in the UK.

“We’ve seen Sports Friends flourish globally, but when we first moved to Manchester, we weren’t sure whether this ministry was right for a UK context,” admits Cat.

“There are so many opportunities in the UK for young people to play sport with academies and after-school clubs, but we saw a niche here for non-competitive, inclusive, church-centred sport ministry.

“Somchai and our church pastor piloted a weekly football team, welcoming kids who may not be the greatest at sport and don’t play at school, or who may not have the financial means to join an academy team, but who want to have fun and build their confidence.

“We now have between 30–40 young people coming down to the park for training twice a week. We can’t keep them away! It’s become a safe place just to have a go, maybe score some goals for the first time in their life and, of course, hear about the life-changing love of Jesus.”

Encouraged by this success, Somchai ran the first UK Sports Friends training course to equip other

Christian leaders who are interested in starting their own church-centred sport ministries. Since then, two more churches in Manchester have launched teams.

“It was encouraging to look together at what the Bible says about sport, how the church can use it to break down barriers, and how coaches can be intentional about opening the Scriptures and building authentic, loving relationships with their players,” he says.

The couple, who are sent by Holcombe Brook Methodist Church, Bury, and serve with Bridge Community Church, Radcliffe, are now praying God will continue to open doors for more UK churches to develop fruitful, church-centred sport ministries.

Sports Friends Deputy Global Leader and South East Asia Regional Co-ordinator, Jill Ireland, who is sent by St Andrew’s Church, Oxford, says: “Like music, sport is often spoken of as a universal language that can cross barriers of race, religion, culture, language, politics and socio-economic barriers.

“We’ve seen this to be true in the 18 countries in which Sports



SIM UK workers Somchai and Cat Tongkao

Friends is working and more recently, here in the UK.

“In the diverse community in which Somchai and Cat are working, their sports programme in the park welcomes young people and families from all backgrounds with a loving, welcoming, and inclusive embrace. It’s free, it’s in their local park, it doesn’t matter where they come from, what language they speak, how good they are at football, they make new friends as they play together and we hope have their hearts opened to the love of God.”

For more information, go to www.sports-friends.org or contact Somchai directly at somchai.tongkao@sim.org



Somchai, centre, with Ben Wildman (Sports Friends Director of Training) and coaches Matt Thorne, from St John’s Church, Flixton and David Oluleye, right, from Trinity Baptist Church, Gorton

➔ Pray

- Give thanks that sport can be used to cross cultures with the gospel.
- For several Manchester churches considering beginning their own sports ministry after attending the Sports Friends training.
- That God would raise up like-minded people to join us in his exciting work in the UK.

Stephen and Heather are using their skills for mission at an age when many might be thinking of retiring.

By Kerry Allan



‘Finishing’ well

When Stephen and Heather moved from the church, where they’d worshipped for 21 years, to a large city-centre church, they discovered many people in the congregation had been missionaries themselves or had a heart for mission.

Soon after joining, they attended the first New Word Alive conference in Wales and heard John Piper speak about ‘finishers’ – people in their mid-50s and beyond, who are empty-nesters, still fit and healthy, and who may be able to retire on a good pension.

“He challenged the audience to think about this and we both felt a tingle up our spines and knew that

God was speaking to us,” recalls Stephen, a GP, now retired.

Their daughter and son-in-law then invited the couple on a trip to East Africa, to support a mission partner in a hospital, where there was also a hospice.

“The founder of the hospice was very keen to meet Stephen knowing he’d an interest in palliative care,” says Heather.

At the time, Stephen was studying for a distance learning Diploma in Palliative Medicine with Cardiff University, which he subsequently took on to a Masters.

“Little did we know that the hospice founder was already lining us up to help with the rollout of a teaching programme in the



Stephen and Heather have been Christians for more than 44 years

area, so we subsequently went for three months at the beginning of 2010,” says Stephen.

A couple of years later, Stephen was working part-time in two hospices, when he got chatting with a colleague, who was excited to learn that not only did the couple have



experience of palliative care training in Africa, but that Heather, a former administrator in Christian education, spoke fluent French!

This was the start of the couple's ministry to equip French-speaking African health care professionals with the skills and confidence to start affordable and appropriate palliative care in their countries.

Since then, the couple regularly travel within both East and West Africa, to work with others to improve palliative care services and the production and safe distribution of morphine for pain relief.

"There's also intentional provision within palliative care for spiritual care and we are excited by the prospect of helping local Christians to develop their own

skills in communication and care, as they come alongside people in the community who are nearing the end of life," explains Heather.

"It's also very satisfying to help in a small way in the development of national cancer plans and to see local health professionals begin to train their colleagues within their own settings and culture.

"Each visit confirms to us how important it is for Christians to be involved in this type of care, to bring the light of Christ to those working in this setting, as well as, of course, to those at the end of life."

However, no matter your experience, there are always challenges to overcome when you're in your mid-60s.

“ Each visit confirms to us how important it is for Christians to be involved in this type of care.

"We've sometimes asked ourselves, 'What are we doing here?!' " admits Heather. "Then we reflect on a morning visiting patients with colleagues who are providing care

without access to the medicines they need to adequately treat their patients' pain... or we feel moved when after a five-day training with health professionals, we receive the following feedback from a colleague on skills they've acquired:

'I can assess the palliative care patients in our facility'

'I know how to give bad news'

'I am not afraid of death anymore.'

The couple value the support of their home church, SIM UK and the ministry team where they serve and say they have grown in their faith since embarking on their medical ministry.

"It's a privilege and deeply satisfying to be serving with a supportive SIM team around us of all ages and a number of nationalities and it's great as a couple to be using the gifts and life experience God has given us together in our retirement," says Stephen.

"Even when it's so hot and humid and everyday life is full of challenges. Even when everything is done so differently in a different culture and in another language. Even when we miss family and friends back home so much, we realise we are in the right place."



➔ Pray

- Praise God for the progress the couple have made in their medical ministry.
- Give thanks that SIM values experience, maturity and spiritual insight as retired people seek to use their abilities and time for mission.
- Give thanks that age is no barrier when you're following God's path.

Come and serve

Whatever your passion and talents, there's a place to use your skills for mission

*He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." **Luke 10:2***



Thailand

Teaching Third Culture Kids

There are several opportunities in Thailand to help the children of cross-cultural workers receive quality education, enabling their parents to serve as full-time workers. Whether you are willing to teach at a school, as a home school educator, or would like to serve as a dorm parent, you will have the opportunity to help the children grow in knowledge, but also spiritually, socially, and emotionally.

North Africa

Serving Refugees and Migrants

Work with the local church serving the children and youth in refugee communities. As part of a multicultural team, you will strive to model a unity in Christ, which is a powerful witness to local believers and the wider community.



Photo by Adrian Butcher

Kenya

Sports Ministry

Identify and train volunteer coaches from the local church to minister to young people in their communities. Teach these Christian leaders how to develop church-centred sports ministries that will make disciples of Jesus Christ among young people, their families, and their communities.



Photo by Sarah K

Tanzania

Outreach to teenage girls

Do you have experience in women’s or student ministry? Could you present the gospel to teenage girls through Bible studies, helping them to apply what they read to their everyday lives? There is also the opportunity to train local Christian women to lead this effort and connect new believers to local churches.

Germany

Children’s and youth ministry

In an area of Germany where a number of migrants and refugees are living in difficult conditions, precarious conditions for children and women exist. Alcoholism and hopelessness are widespread. Could you share the hope you have in Jesus by working with local churches to develop children’s and youth ministries in this area, providing a safe space to explore life’s bigger questions?



Bolivia

Youth ministry

There are a number of ministry opportunities in Bolivia that focus on reaching the youngest members of the family for Christ, thus impacting families and communities. Whether you have skills in teaching, sports, puppet ministry or discipleship, the team would love to hear from you.



Ecuador

El Sendero Youth Ministry

Within El Sendero Youth ministry, there are opportunities to train and equip youth leaders, lead sports and arts ministries, share life through English language ministries and partake in university campus ministry. There are also vacancies in media and communications. Join the team in their vision to see young people (ages 15–25) equipped to make disciples of Jesus in communities where he is least known.

Canada

Friendship evangelism

SIM Canada has an opportunity for a family or a single person willing to commit long-term in order to impact a multicultural Islamic community for eternity. Could you commit to learn a new language and walk alongside the current ministry leader with a view to leading long term? Workers need to be servant-hearted, flexible, patient, have gentle boldness, a listening ear, the gift of hospitality, and endurance.



➔ Take the next step

Contact us at mobilisation@sim.co.uk to talk to our team, or go to our website sim.co.uk/serve/ministries/ to look at the many opportunities to serve in SIM ministries worldwide.



Give a gospel gift this Christmas



Giving to SIM UK helps churches reach out amongst communities where Christ is least known. Your gift is part of that partnership that supports people as they serve alongside people who have little or no access to the gospel hope we have at Christmas. Please give today and become part of that story.



Go to sim.co.uk/support/donate/ or scan the QR code to make a one-off gift or set up a regular giving method.

Email info@sim.co.uk or call 01223 788288

Thank you!

