



# Serving Him

Summer 2020

**SERVING IN  
MISSION**  
SIM

## Praying a good game

P22

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

# BY THE NUMBERS

# 2060

mission workers sent by SIM in the last 21 years

# 21

different types of ministry

# 40

countries currently served by SIM UK workers

# 296

times the word disciple is used in the New Testament (CARM.org)



# Take up your cross and follow me

**I**n London's bustling Covent Garden, a lone busker plays a double bass. A cellist joins in followed by a line of violinists; joined a few moments later by a group of wind instruments all playing a very familiar classical tune to a now gathering crowd.

And then the voices cry out, 'Sing to God new songs of worship, all his deeds are marvellous.' The smiles on faces of old and young speak of that inner joy experienced by joining together in collective worship of the true and living God.

At the time of writing, those streets are eerily quiet as the UK is in lockdown, along with many countries around the world. Coronavirus is now a global disease that will bring suffering and death to many people.

Those people need the living hope that God gives through faith in his son Jesus. They need the church to be faithful to Jesus' command and call to be faithful disciples, who make disciples in the communities we serve.

In the months to come, our regular community rhythms and familiar patterns of life will be altered profoundly as Christians adjust to a more isolated life in their local communities.

How we respond matters. Needs and opportunities to serve others will evolve in this crisis and will require us to adapt creatively and take courageous action. Let's be sure to do so together with daily renewed conviction – embedded in God's Word

and enabled by his Spirit.

Please pray as you read this magazine and be encouraged by stories that show SIM's vision to see disciples of Jesus expressing God's love in their communities. I long that we will see a faithful God at work in extraordinary ways in the months to come, as we adapt to changing circumstances.

May that be true of us in his mission, through all seasons.



Steve Smith, UK Director

**P.S. Pray daily with SIMpray, our weekly prayer update. Go to [sim.co.uk/simpray](http://sim.co.uk/simpray) or email [linda@sim.co.uk](mailto:linda@sim.co.uk) to request a printed copy.**

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# Tested to despair

**What is God doing through the fallout caused by COVID-19? All endeavours are curtailed by the global health crisis and Christian mission work is no exception.**

Your heart might be crying out in anguish at the suffering you are seeing around you and at your inability to do anything about it. You may be feeling the onset of grief as the prospect of losing your mission work, mission projects and mission relationships becomes more and more likely.

But in all these circumstances, you can hang on to God and refuse to give up on faith in him. You can, like Job, cry out to God and express your anguish – even outrage – at him. But this is an act of faith, not doubt, if you express your pain to God.

You can ask God to give you supernatural strength so that you keep seeking to serve others; you can ask him to help you grow in the realisation that the only thing that matters is faith. To keep serving and to keep believing in such circumstances might make no sense whatsoever, but it will bring God glory. This is what he made you for.

While some Christians point out that revival often follows particularly calamitous events, many others feel for God to ‘use’ such a severe method to gain worshippers will repel people rather than attract. But what should Christians make of the coronavirus pandemic? asks *Tim McMahon*

Amidst all the unknowns, there is one thing we do know with absolute certainty, about God’s purposes in suffering.

It provides us with an opportunity to grow in Christlikeness.

**Can we bring ourselves to see the coronavirus pandemic as ‘a severe mercy’?**

This is, after all, our eternal destination – to share in the glory of Christ, to reflect his character. This is how we bring God glory now – by being transformed moment by moment into the likeness of his son.

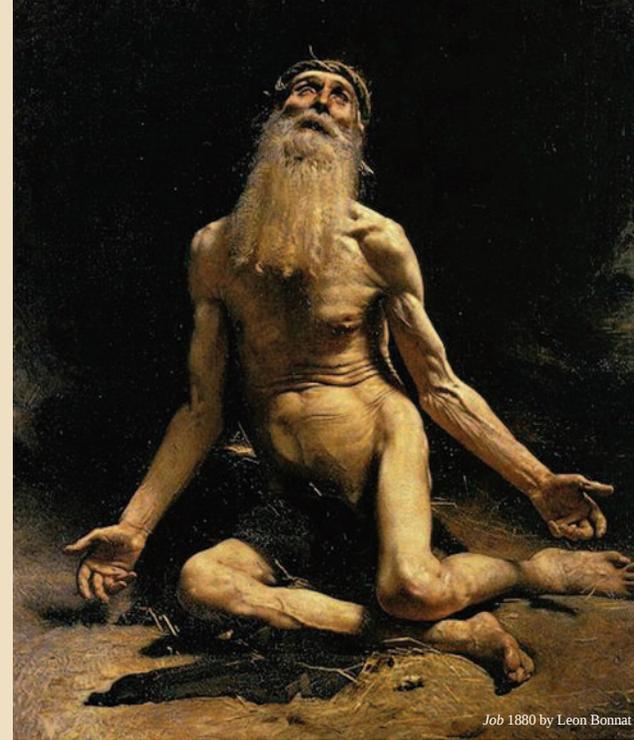
And this transformation happens in front of a watching world.

Because of instantaneous global communications, the

effectiveness of various cultures to equip their populations to cope with severe suffering and life-threatening situations is evident to all. Many cultures with no Christian heritage are far less panicked by this epidemic than the secular west. Why is this so?

Pastor Tim Keller observes that karmic cultures allow their adherents to detach from suffering and so cope with it; stoic cultures consider it a virtue for people to stand firm in the midst of suffering; and honour cultures see adversity as an opportunity to display courage and dignity, with death even being welcomed because it allows such qualities to be displayed.

Some in the secular west, on the other hand, are reacting as though the world is about



to end and there is no tomorrow.

That’s because, for the secular mind, death *does* end the world, and death *removes* the prospect of there being a tomorrow. All other worldviews value something greater than the here-and-now; everything the secular worldview offers can be destroyed by one’s own death and by worldwide devastation. No wonder the West is in a panic.

Western Christians should be humble enough to acknowledge the superiority of non-western cultures in this respect. But the Christian gospel transcends all cultures.

It can equip individual Christians and believing

communities to face this pandemic with even greater engagement, peace and courage than karmic, stoic or honour cultures do.

The coronavirus crisis is a backdrop against which Christians’ love for others, faith in God, and hope for the future can be seen. Far from repelling people, Christian

communities’ responses in the midst of despair should attract at least some people to God.

While certainly severe, can we bring ourselves to see the coronavirus pandemic as ‘a severe mercy’? To see it as a global opportunity for the watching world to see faith in Christ at work – loving service, steadfast peace, and humble strength wrought in the lives of communities of God’s people? Can we give a reason for the hope we have? Is it wrong to hope that what people see and hear will cause at least some to turn to Jesus and be saved?

God will save people in and through and after this pandemic, if Christ’s people live steadfastly with faith, hope and love.

The backdrop of world cultures that cannot offer faith, hope and love in the face of despair will mean Christ’s light is seen to burn all the more brightly through his people.

Tim McMahon is a missionary with SIM UK, dedicated to ministry training.

## Please pray

**FOR OUR MISSION WORKERS** to know God’s peace and maintain hope in these uncertain times.

**FOR CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES** to be united as they respond with increased love and commitment to serve.

**FOR NON-BELIEVERS** to come to Christ because of his love shown through his people in this time of crisis.

# Searching for the lost on our doorstep

Loving your neighbour is one way to fulfil the Great Commission, but sometimes this involves stepping outside your comfort zone, *reveals Justin Agnes*

**D**o you know that feeling of letting go of the river bank and being taken with the current – the panic of realising you are not in control, but then relaxing into it and enjoying the feeling of being carried along? That’s a bit how it’s felt for me since I started the Living Room in April 2019.

I was introduced to Les by a mutual friend at church on our return from working with SIM in South Sudan in the summer of 2015. When I first met Les for coffee, he told me it was the first time he had been out of his flat for five days. His eyes were bloodshot and his hands shaky.

I was well out of my comfort zone, but with each encounter, we got to know each other better. Behind the rough exterior was an intelligent, compassionate and humorous man and Les has become one of my most valued friends.

Over the next few years, we settled into a pattern of shopping together on Mondays; housework on Thursdays and a visit on Sunday to read a few Bible verses and pray. Les said he

**THE LIVING ROOM** is an initiative of *Growing Together*, which is due to become a charity this year. If you, or your church, would like help to start a group, please get in touch with Justin via [editor@sim.co.uk](mailto:editor@sim.co.uk)



More than 40 people came to the Living Room's Christmas art exhibition

wanted to start following Jesus some time in 2017. At his 58th birthday, he introduced me to several of his friends and my eyes were opened to the hidden masses in our city, who live alone



and struggle daily with the torment of poor mental health.

At the same time, I learned about the imminent closure of a mental health drop-in centre where Les went two days a week. I couldn't help thinking, surely it wouldn't be too hard to organise a day of activities for Les and others like him?

Fast forward a year, and the Living Room is a thriving group of 12-15 people, who meet every week in a local church to enjoy board games, discussion, an art activity and an obligatory homemade soup lunch! A highlight for every-

one is putting on an exhibition of our work at the end of each term – more than 40 people came at Christmas and the group were rightly proud of what they had achieved.

At the end of each meeting, we have an optional devotion and prayer time. Each week, more people are staying and their growth in interest and faith is evident – even those who have previously declared themselves to be ‘anti-religion’. It is a thrill when someone prays for the first time or shows the first glimmers of understanding!

I feel every bit as much a missionary now as I did when working in South Sudan. It is

**A passage that has been important to Justin in this work:**

“What do you think? If a man owns 100 sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the 99 on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the 99 that did not wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.”

Matthew 18:12-14

just that in this instance, the unreached are right on our doorstep – so close, in fact, that most people don't even notice they are there.

Justin Agnes served with SIM in South Sudan from 2009 to 2015 with his wife Deborah, who is SIM UK's Personnel Director. The family now lives in Cambridge.

## Please pray

**FOR WISDOM** about whether to start a second group and how and when to proceed.

**FOR JUSTIN** to build connections with local churches and help them to better serve this neglected part of their community.

**GIVE THANKS** that each group member appreciates being part of a caring family and is being encouraged in their journey of faith.

# Agents of change

By Kerry Allan

**I**n 2016, SIM UK launched a pioneering project to help urban churches share the gospel with their multicultural communities by bringing workers from overseas to join them.

The Engage programme recognises these mission workers are best placed to help UK churches understand the cultures and religious backgrounds of the people they want to reach.

Engage coordinator Tim Barrow says overseas workers bring with them invaluable expertise and experience that both resource and motivate

UK churches to grow their cross-cultural gospel ministry among local people.

“Thanks to SIM’s long experience of working overseas, we have great relationships with churches in countries that have received mission workers from the west,” he explains. “We are now on the receiving end of what God has been doing, primarily in the global south, to raise up mission workers who come to the UK to work with the Great Commission nations on our doorstep.”

Harper Church in Glasgow is a few hundred metres from an immigrant receiving centre

and has a congregation made up of more than 25 nationalities with 50% born outside the UK.

**“We have the relevant skills and knowledge to enable us to serve as agents of change.”**

Its pastor Alan McKnight says: “Ten per cent of the UK’s asylum-seeking population is initially located within a mile of Harper Church and this is a great strategic opportunity for us to engage with people from all over the world.”



The church has been eagerly awaiting the arrival of “gifted strategic leader” Lawrence Jah, from Sierra Leone, who together with his wife Elizabeth, served in The Gambia for 24 years.

The couple have been involved in evangelism and discipleship for many years and Lawrence will be taking time away from his current role as an evangelical church pastor to partner with Harper Church.

Background Believers (MBBS) who are immigrants in Glasgow from west Africa and other parts of the world,” says Lawrence.

“All my past ministry activities have deepened my discipleship strategies, which I’m confident will help me, in collaboration with the Harper Church leadership, to empower and raise disciples, who will further produce disciples.”

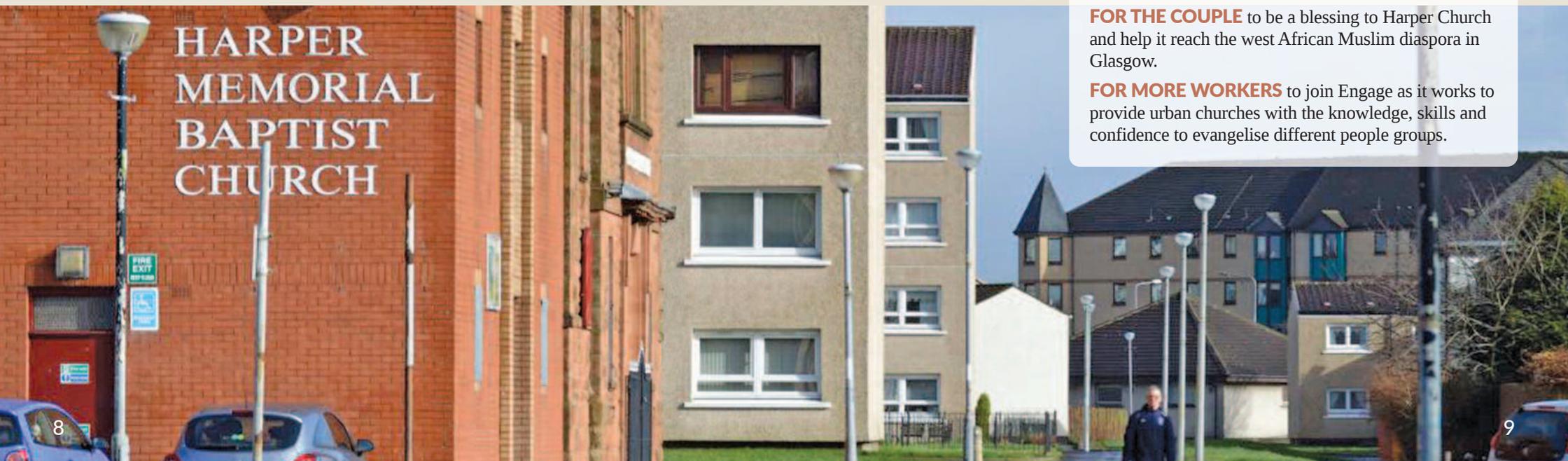
Pastor Alan adds: “Lawrence is a gifted strategic leader who, after his Glasgow assignment, plans to return to west Africa to raise up gospel workers to reach the west African diaspora in Europe.”

## Please pray

**FOR THE LORD** to provide all the funds Lawrence and Elizabeth need to begin their cross-cultural mission.

**FOR THE COUPLE** to be a blessing to Harper Church and help it reach the west African Muslim diaspora in Glasgow.

**FOR MORE WORKERS** to join Engage as it works to provide urban churches with the knowledge, skills and confidence to evangelise different people groups.





# New training centre target in sight

In 2019, SIM Pakistan launched a building project that will help create disciples in a country where Christians are in the minority

By Kerry Allan

**A**s the blistering summer sun beats down in the southern Punjabi town of Rahim Yar Khan, eight young men and their teachers are huddled over sewing machines in a tiny, low-roofed room, where temperatures can soar to 49° centigrade and power cuts are a regular occurrence, forcing the would-be tailors to stop their work.

Outside, trainee motorcycle mechanics have no choice

but to brave the elements – whatever the weather – and operate in a makeshift workshop; while just one small classroom is given over to teaching the students numeracy, literacy and a place to study the Bible.

“After they graduate, many of these lads choose to join our church-planting programme and many then go on to lead churches in their villages,” explains one of our mission workers. “But they

are learning in temporary facilities that are not adequate to the task.”

SIM Pakistan offers both a practical and spiritual lifeline



for these illiterate young men who travel from poor, rural areas, to learn a trade at the Youth Vocational Project.

SIM also runs the Allied Model School, which gives children from Muslim, Hindu and Christian backgrounds, an education in a Christian environment.

“We lost the rented building that we were using a few years ago, and so we’ve all squeezed into this local church centre. The new purpose-built facilities will help SIM’s ministry grow to impact more students,” adds the mission worker.

“Our new three-storey building will have space for our students who live and study here to play games and provide a proper motorcycle

‘This project will, by God’s grace, enable us to expand the discipleship ministry of SIM in cooperation with SIM-related churches throughout this region. The time seems right for this kind of spiritual and infrastructural investment, which we expect to continue to bear fruit for years to come.’ **Project manager Clive Barker**



workshop. The ground floor will be given over to the training project, providing three large classrooms to enable us to expand what we’re doing and to offer not only tailoring and motorcycle mechanics, but also mobile phone repairing.”

There will also be room to build a new hostel for students and Allied Model School pupils from far-flung areas to stay onsite and free up the current building so the school can open a senior girls’ section. At the moment, girls can only study up to age 14, so expanding the school means they will be able to study as long as boys, up to age 16. There will also be a missionary flat, giving the opportunity for one of the

SIM team families to live on the site.

“We began this project in faith, and we’re more than halfway there – the Lord is really providing with what we need, however, we urgently need more funds to finish this work.”

## Please pray

**GIVE THANKS** that the building project will provide more space for Christian education, vocational training and for the discipleship of young men to be effective church members.

**FOR THE LORD** to provide the funds urgently needed for the project to come to fruition. See response form.

**THAT THE CHURCH** will be a blessing to the communities of Pakistan through its witness and message.

# In the business of saving souls

By Kerry Allan

**“As in most relationships here, it doesn’t take long for religion to come up in workplace conversations,” explains Barry\*, a businessman who is sharing the good news with non-Christians in Egypt.**

“As soon as I arrived many years ago, I found sharing the gospel much easier than I thought – not only through

should become a Muslim and I, in turn, shared the hope of eternal life through faith in Jesus,” Barry recalls.

Years later and Barry still makes the most of every opportunity to share the gospel. However, he has learned there is no easy fix when it comes to discipling new believers in the community-oriented culture where he serves.

Not long after starting his business, Barry employed Amgad\*.

“Amgad grew up in a Christian home in an area where there was very palpable discrimination and violent persecution against the

my work, but also in everyday encounters with people like the grocer, barber or taxi driver and in evenings spent playing backgammon with friends.

“I often heard endless presentations about why I

church,” explains Barry. “This made it hard for him to share his faith, or even care about Muslims, who are driven to convert others to Islam.”

In spite of the threat of being discriminated against,



or becoming a victim of mob violence, Amgad has matured in his faith and today has a sense of security that means he is more confident in opening up his heart to non-Christians thanks to his and Barry’s ‘mutual discipleship’.

As Barry explains: “Every day we have lunch together, then read the Bible and discuss it. Amgad is now more mature in his faith and enjoys working with me as we look to make the most of every opportunity to show the love of Christ.”

As part of a small, multi-ethnic SIM team, Barry says it’s important that each one uses their unique gifts to serve within a broader ‘family’ of believers, which is so foundational to Middle Eastern cultures.

“For an Egyptian Muslim, the biggest obstacle to professing Jesus as Lord is the certainty of losing his or her community – the broader

‘family’ that is the air a person breathes in this inter-dependent culture,” he explains.

“The SIM Egypt team believes it’s not enough to share the good news without also being an alternative family to those who lose theirs because of their faith in Jesus.

“Our strategy is to share life together in the unity Jesus speaks of in John 17: 20-23 and to build up our witness as a group so we can serve to keep our community of believers strong in their faith and find the most effective ways of addressing the barriers to a Muslim professing Jesus as Lord.”

\*Names changed

## Please pray

**GIVE THANKS** for Barry and Amgad’s passion to share the good news through their business dealings.

**FOR THE SIM TEAM** to grow and continue building a ‘family’ for new believers.

**FOR GOD’S CONTINUED PROTECTION** for Christians from Muslim backgrounds.

# Answers to prayer

By Linda Hunt



**PRAISE GOD** there are 12,000 Sports Friends-trained coaches ministering to 290,000 young people weekly and communities are being transformed through this ministry.

**A MEDICAL TEAM** in south Asia is regularly visiting an area where there is no church, providing basic health education and telling the unfolding story of God’s Word.

**A NEW PRINCIPAL** has been appointed for Integrity High School in Nigeria giving Nicky more time to develop vocational programmes which, God willing, will be offered to local children in September.

**FIVE UK CHURCHES** are preparing to welcome workers from overseas to help them reach out to their multi-cultural communities with the gospel message.

**DESPITE** increasing security risks, the word of God continues to be broadcast across west Africa, as contracts have been signed with eight radio stations.

**THREE** Good News Clubs have started in the Kasempa area of Zambia. Give thanks for the opportunity this provides to share the gospel and disciple young people.

**GIVE THANKS** for modern technology that allows discipleship conversations to continue with refugee families, who may only have contact with churches for a short time.

**THE RECORDING** of the Sorani Kurdish Old Testament is complete and final preparations for the recording of the New Testament are well under way.

**EIGHT FAMILIES**, seven couples and 27 individuals are currently working with our mobilisation team at the enquiry stage.

**WORK HAS BEGUN** on the foundation trenches for a new surgical building at the Good News Hospital, Madagascar.

# Let's spread gospel hope

SIM UK director Steve Smith reflects on the challenge of the COVID-19 crisis to our mission through the lens of how the gospel first came to the early Christians and went out across their whole region

## MINISTRIES WILL EVOLVE

As every nation of the world responds to COVID-19, churches and mission teams also need to respond to our times with confidence and resourcefulness in faithful witness to the hope we have in Christ.

The chaos surrounding coronavirus has forced all of life – businesses, schools, families and churches – to adapt to a ‘new normal’ and varying degrees of enforced lockdown. Wherever we are in the world, the communities we serve and the ministries we undertake are in uncharted waters.

One of the striking lessons in this from Paul’s imprisonment is how he still sought to get the gospel out to people and to make the message known to people with clarity – even under house arrest.

**Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful and thankful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open a door for the word, to declare the mystery of the Christ, on account of which I am in prison – that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.**

Colossians 4:2-4

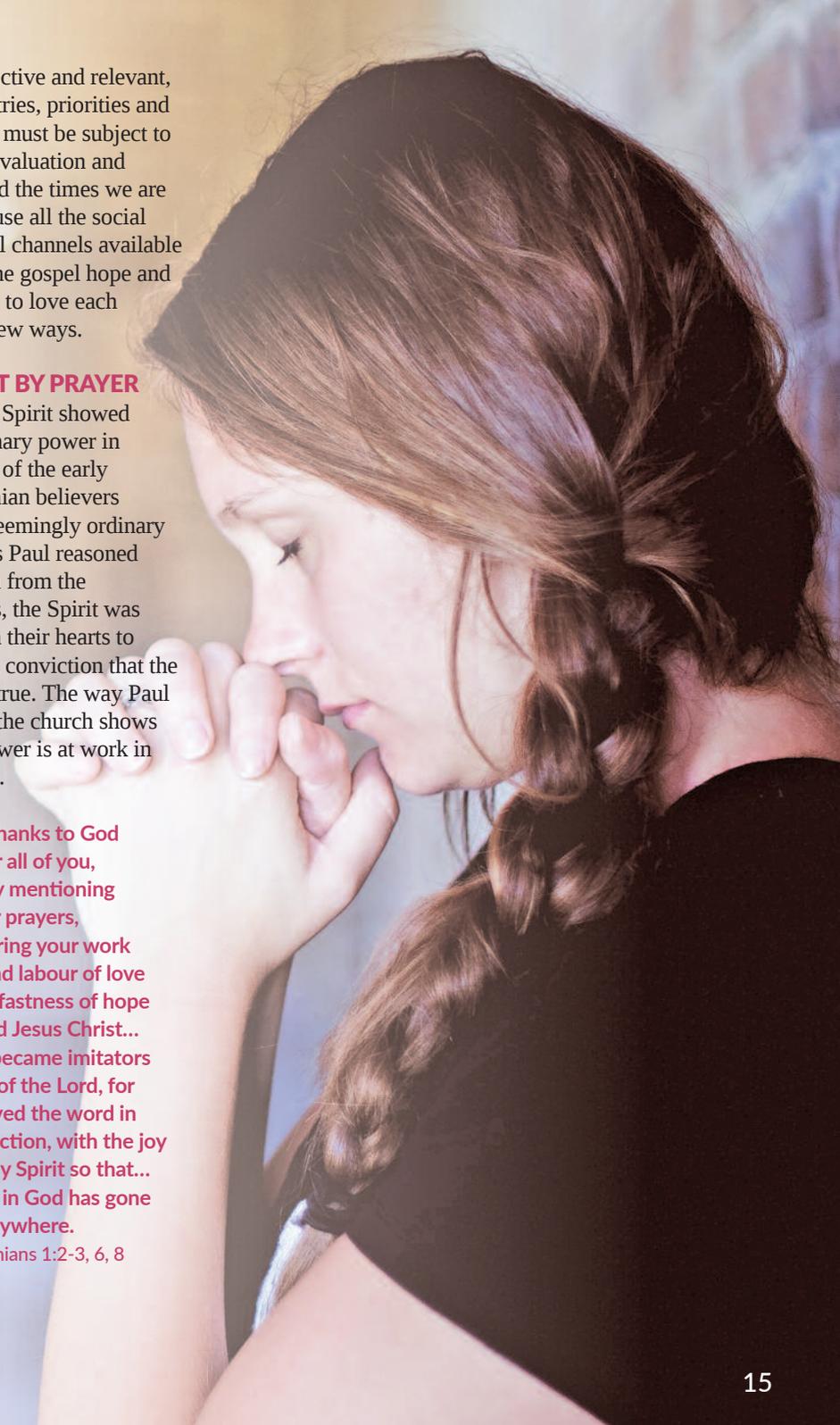
To be effective and relevant, our ministries, priorities and structures must be subject to ongoing evaluation and understand the times we are in – let’s use all the social and digital channels available to share the gospel hope and learn how to love each other in new ways.

## PRESENT BY PRAYER

The Holy Spirit showed extraordinary power in the hearts of the early Thessalonian believers through seemingly ordinary means. As Paul reasoned with them from the Scriptures, the Spirit was at work in their hearts to give them conviction that the gospel is true. The way Paul prays for the church shows whose power is at work in their lives.

**We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ... And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit so that... your faith in God has gone forth everywhere.**

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, 6, 8





Fill a heart with Christ's teaching and passion for the lost, it will beat to a different drum to the world around us. This requires God to be essentially present, but not necessarily us.

Even from prison Paul persevered in prayer for believers and unbelievers alike and worked with renewed energy for the spread of the gospel and the strengthening of the church. He was convinced God is at work when people receive the gospel and when the message of faith goes out from them.

We don't have to be physically present for this to take place – all it takes is the work of God's Spirit through the message of the gospel.

While we are wrenched from each other, let us give

ourselves to prayer and expect great things from God.

### TOGETHER IN CHRIST

Many individuals and families will be self-isolating together or alone during the peak of the pandemic. This provides a unique opportunity to stay close online or in-house – to build family identity and team togetherness in Christ and invest spiritually in our children, as well as in people around us.

**For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.**  
Colossians 2:5

There is nowhere that God is not present, and the eternal

purposes that he has realised in Christ continue to come about – even through the gravest of trials.

### HEARTS OF HOPE

How we approach Christ in our hearts will shape how respond to our times.

Jesus' promises about his enduring presence go hand-in-hand with our involvement in the global spread of the gospel. He remains trustworthy in the eye of the storm, as much as by the calm of still waters.

In testing times, we need to give time to intentionally honour Christ in our homes, prepare ourselves to share gospel hope across barriers newly drawn, and learn to love people according to their changing needs.

**But in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to give an answer for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience.**

1 Peter 3:15

This calls for great ingenuity. It's important we do our best to minimise the spread of the virus and protect ourselves, our families and our communities. We also want to maximise the spread of gospel hope at this time of hopelessness for many who face real danger of disaster and death.

### STRENGTH THROUGH WEAKNESS

In such a time as this, we are made more aware of our

weaknesses than ever. This is just as true for a church-centred mission organisation as it is true of a local church on mission.

God's word is not in self-isolation. Jesus' face radiates the light of the knowledge of God. Giving ourselves in sacrificial service – fragile as we are – this is the way of life Christ calls us to.

**We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.**

2 Corinthians 4:7-9

I pray that the love we show for the people around us will increase with knowledge and discernment – evaluating

ministry priorities to best respond to our times with creativity and courage.

Offering fellowship online. Volunteering our help for those in particular peril. Repositioning resources to best serve people's greatest need.

In these and other ways, we must adapt not just what we do, but the way we do it, so that we take the best course of action to remain fruitful in Christ's service.

**I can do all things through him who gives me strength.**

Philippians 4:13

# Not only on a Sunday

By Kerry Allan

How can we do discipleship within the context of a small church plant?



**W**hen SIM workers Peter and Claire-Lise Judkins first arrived in Castres, in the south west of France, they quickly set to work to be more intentional about applying the gospel to people's lives.

"The church plant had started four years previously and had become a mixture of people at different stages of their faith – from those discovering the gospel and very new Christians, to

followers who had been disconnected from church for a while (and were often emotionally damaged), plus a few mature Christians," explains Peter, sent by Christ Church Balham.

"We were therefore keen to do more than meet up on Sundays and disciple this varied group of people making up the congregation," he adds.



"Since then, it's been a huge encouragement seeing people's responses when their previous beliefs are confronted by the Bible and we've been amazed to see God at work in people's lives."

One of them is Anne\*, a teenager who was in her final year at high school and now studies English and Chinese in Lyon, with ambitions to become an interpreter.

"Coming from a Christian family, she already had many biblical notions, but struggled to understand God's grace," Peter recalls. "But after a few months meeting together (one-to-one and as a couple with her) we had the joy of baptising her last June – the church's first baptism!"

Within weeks of beginning their ministry, Peter also started meeting up with François\*, whose first question was: "Can you explain to me the Trinity?" And then: "I don't understand prayer!"



discipleship for a wider evangelistic purpose," says Peter.

"He enjoyed reading the Bible so much that he suggested others might benefit from a smaller group interaction. So seeking to reach those on the fringe of church, we invited anyone who wanted to examine the claims of the gospel. This led to six of us reading through Mark's Gospel and then a course, looking at the Bible's big story.

"In particular, Maria\*, who was from a Roman Catholic background and very defensive of her heritage, began to notice how some things she learnt as a child were not biblical, and that the gospel of grace was more beautiful than she realised."

Looking to the future, the church plans to multiply its discipleship groups so Peter and others can walk alongside people at different stages in their faith, in a way they are

not able to on a Sunday gathering.

"After many administrative hoops to jump through, we were finally told that we can open up our building as a public meeting place.

"This means that we can now fully use the building for our activities and fulfil our aim of making the gospel known in Castres."

\*Names changed

## Please pray

**PRAISE GOD** for the work of the gospel in various people's lives.

**FOR WISDOM** as the leadership team works out a longer-term vision for strengthening the church in Castres.

**FOR THE TEAM'S** intentional discipleship vision to help build each other up.

The pair spent time together as François showed Peter around Castres and they read John's Gospel together.

"François had always believed there was a creator God ('a distant bearded old man') but came to realise that God became man so that we could know him," says Peter. "Over time, he recognised he needed to trust in Jesus' death and resurrection to be made



right with God. From not understanding prayer, he now prays out loud at church and encourages others to pray through our Facebook group!

"François is an example of how God uses intentional



**J**oe Mooney felt called to missionary work as a result of a talk in a Boys Brigade Bible class in Oldpark Presbyterian Church, Belfast.

In 1937, he applied to the Bible Training Institute in Glasgow and became a student – travelling back and forth on the boat for two years – where he had many an adventure, including losing his pyjamas to a fellow traveller who thought they were supplied free by the steamship company!

By the time he had been accepted by the Sudan Interior Mission, war had broken out and Joe celebrated his 23rd birthday in 1940, on board ship to Nigeria.

Joe began his missionary work by ‘trekking’ – going out into the bush on a bicycle for two weeks at a time with a local boy and staying in mud huts in various villages. He tried to teach the children to read and write,

# Memoirs of a missionary in Nigeria

By Mike Ewan  
SIM Ireland Director

Joe Mooney, who went to be with the Lord in February, aged 102, is among the many Serving In Mission men and women who journeyed to difficult places to share the gospel



and treated villagers’ ailments with Epsom salts and soda bicarbonate, using the idea of a physician to tell how Jesus could help them.

On a return visit from an Easter conference, Joe’s canoe was rowed out to the wrong steamer and he ended up on a boat belonging to the manager of the River Canteens

along the Niger River. He was given a full bacon and egg breakfast the next morning – something he’d not tasted for some years!

Joe’s 18-month courtship of his wife Margaret was conducted completely by correspondence, after an initial meeting at Bible college many years earlier. How the first letter reached

her is a miracle in itself. Eventually, Joe sent money for Margaret to buy an engagement ring and after completing her nursing training, she joined SIM and came to Nigeria.

The newly-weds were assigned to church-planting at Angwa Takwa, an isolated outpost with the nearest mission 50 miles away. They were there for over seven years, with Joe preaching the gospel and Margaret nursing and pulling teeth. (Actually, Joe often pulled the teeth!)

When their son Gordon was born, it was the first time the locals had seen a white baby and two years later, daughter

missionary station in a town with a church seating more than 1,000 people. A year later, Joe was elected District Superintendent, which involved the support and supervision of 33 missionaries in their various stations scattered throughout the area.

After 20 years of service, the family returned to Northern Ireland and Joe trained as a Presbyterian minister, serving Grange Church in Co Antrim for the next 21 years until he retired and returned to Belfast, where he joined St John’s as pastoral assistant.

Joe’s original application to SIM speaks of his ‘sanctified Irish humour’ and of ‘one who keeps the vision undimmed.’ How true this was throughout his life. Even in later years, Joe was always



Eileen entered the world.



After 15 years in Nigeria, the couple were transferred to Kaltongo, an established

encouraging missionaries serving with SIM from Ireland through his emails and prayer.



SIM is planning to produce a small booklet based on Joe’s

anecdotes of his time in Nigeria, from 1940-1960.

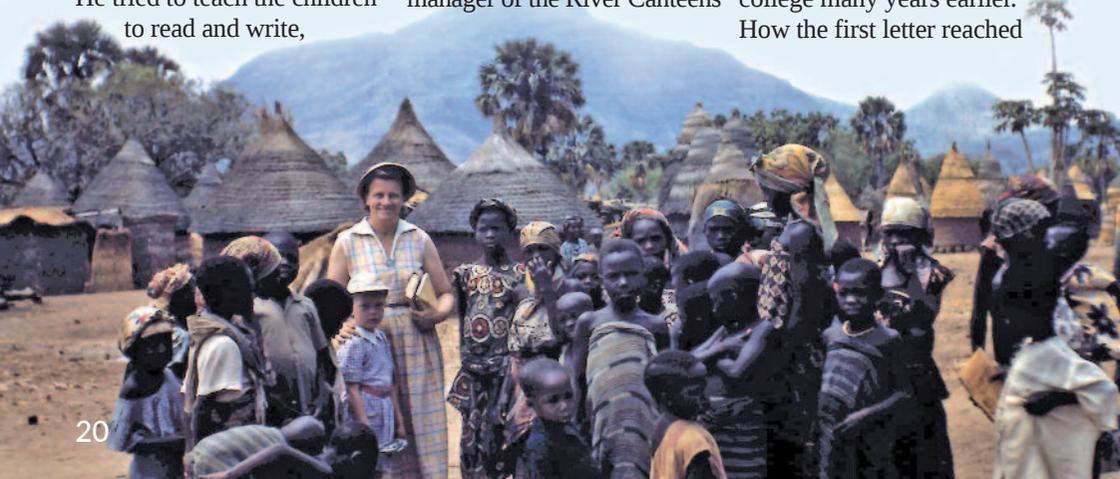
He celebrated his 100th birthday in 2017. His kindness and warm sense of humour together with his devotion and faithfulness to Christ will long be remembered.

## Please pray

**GIVE THANKS** for the vision of our founding fathers who wanted to share the gospel with those who had never heard of Jesus.

**GIVE THANKS** for the steady growth of mission work in Nigeria through most of the 20th Century.

**FOR MORE WORKERS** to respond to Christ’s gospel call so that all may come to faith in Jesus.





# Praying a good game



Sports Friends is working in 19 countries across five continents and at the heart of this flourishing ministry is prayer, says *Cat Tongkao*

**I**t is mind-boggling to think that the all-sovereign, all-knowing God should choose to run his world in response to our prayers. And yet, throughout Scripture, we witness the great and glorious mystery that God hears and answers the prayers of his people.



*By Prayer* is SIM's motto. As SIM International Director Joshua Bogunjoko says: "By prayer we view our calling. By prayer we respond to new and existing open doors to proclaim the crucified and risen Christ. Prayer reveals barriers and, by prayer alone, we cross them."

As a ministry of Serving In Mission, prayer is also at the very heart of the Sports

Friends ministry as we seek to make disciples through sport.

Prayer often begins on the football pitch or volleyball court before and after a practice, but it doesn't end there. It is *by prayer* our coaches love the young people on their teams; get to know their families; share with them the truths of God's word and connect them to the fellowship of the local church.

**'Praise awaits you, our God, in Zion; to you our vows will be fulfilled. You who answer prayer, to you all people will come.'** Psalm 65:1-2

Becoming a disciple of Jesus is a lifelong journey of following him, being changed by him, and being committed to his mission of making other disciples. It's certainly not instant, and it must be immersed in prayer.

For those of us who are thousands of miles away from the frontlines of ministry, praying is a call to action, emphasising important work to be done. We must intercede – for the football coach ministering deep in a Kenyan refugee camp; for the netball coach in northern Nigeria, who faces persecution for her faith; or for the fatherless young girl on a volleyball team in Peru, who has never heard the name of Jesus.

Let us not underestimate the incredible privilege we have to influence hearts and minds and to help make disciples of Christ from afar *by prayer*.

Cat Tongkao serves as the Sports Friends International Communications Director

**Please pray**

**GOD WOULD PREPARE** many young people's hearts to hear the gospel.

**FOR SPORTS FRIENDS** coaches to be bold and make disciples of the young people on their teams.

**FOR CHURCH LEADERS** and pastors working with the Sports Friends ministry around the world.



# Meet the workers

By Kevin Keegan

Here are Serving In Mission's latest workers who are ready to head off round the world, and serve in the UK as well

## Sarah Allen (& son, Edson)



**Sending Church:** Strandtown Baptist Church

**Where will you be serving?** Cochabamba, Bolivia

**What are you doing?**

Reaching out to the disabled in the community, and helping their families.

**Pray:** for good opportunities to serve the disabled in Cochabamba, and to share the gospel in an accessible way.

## Jenny Clarke



**Sending Church:** Newbridge Baptist Church, Birmingham

**Where are you serving?** Jos, Nigeria

**What are you doing?**

Joining the Engage internship programme and serving in Open Doors, a special school.

**How can we pray for you?** To settle well into life here in Nigeria and build good relationships with those around me. Also to find the best way to serve effectively in my ministry.

## Grace Kingston



**Sending Church:** Drimoleague Methodist Church, Ireland

**Where are you serving?** Mandritsara, Madagascar

**What are you doing?**

Childminding for SIM staff (the Watts' family), English teaching in the Good News school and helping out wherever I can.

**Pray:** that it would be a time of real spiritual growth and that I would fully trust in God in every task or challenge that I undertake.

## Christiane Fox



**Sending Church:** Fall River Chapel, Nova Scotia & Gentle Shepherd Community Church, Fredericton New Brunswick (Canada)

**Where are you serving?** SIM UK HQ, Cambridge

**What are you doing?** Developing orientation for incoming mission workers.

**How can we pray for you?** It's our first placement as a family of 5 (after serving 9 years in South Sudan, I married Tyler and gained 3 children 2 years ago); prayer as our family transitions is greatly appreciated.

## Donald & Ruth Garvie



**Sending Church:** Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church, Bangor

**Where will you be serving?** Jos, Nigeria

**What will you be doing?** Donald will be teaching and helping the library development at ECWA Theological Seminary. Ruth will be supporting local primary school education.

**How can we pray for you?** For a strong group of supporters to partner with us in prayer and finance; for good farewells to UK family and friends; that we establish good relationships with the SIM team and Nigerian colleagues; for our children as they move between cultures once again.

## Ella McCorquodale



**Sending Church:** St Paul's Church, Cambridge and Central Church, Edinburgh

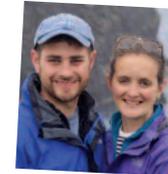
**Where are you serving?** SIM UK HQ, Cambridge

**What are you doing?**

My role is Mission Support Assistant, which entails supporting the mission of SIM in any way I can. Specifically, it encompasses assisting in finance, communication, and operations – and I am in the process of learning how each of these three areas work within SIM.

**How can we pray for you?** For effective and efficient learning of new tasks during the Covid-19 situation.

## Mark & Helen Azzopardi



**Sending Church:** Carrubbers Christian Centre, Edinburgh

**Where will you be serving?** Loja, Ecuador

**What will you be doing?**

Teaching in the mission school and working with the "El Sendero" (The Way) youth ministry.

**How can we pray for you?** For our preparations to raise prayer, friendship and financial support and that we would find trustworthy people to rent our flat to. Also for our spiritual preparation as we look to grow in hope, faith and love.

## Stephen & Heather Miller



**Sending Church:** Cornerstone Church, Nottingham

**Where will you be serving?** Dakar, Senegal

**What will you be doing?**

Working at an NGO to support palliative care training, and with SIM in English teaching and medical mentoring.

**Pray:** For practical preparations for moving to Senegal; for our family; and for our commitments to other palliative care training later this year.

# Do you want to serve?

By Kevin Keegan

## Grace International School Principal & Teachers

**Bangladesh 1-2 Years**

You have a rare opportunity to influence the lives of children at Grace International School. This is a 'handle with care' responsibility with unlimited potential for discipling children in the Word.



## Church Planter

**Chile 2+ Years**

Come and work as part of a team seeking to reach the professional classes of Santiago who continue to be an unreached people group.



## Aircraft Maintenance Specialist

**South Sudan 2+ Years  
Shorter Term OK**

As the maintenance specialist, you'll serve a vital role in implementing Sudan's rebuilding strategy by providing transportation service to those in various ministries in South Sudan – serving those who serve.



## Evangelism of Unreached People Group

**Mozambique 2+ Years**

The unreached people groups in Mozambique are traditionally hard to reach with the gospel. If pioneer mission work has been a dream for you, maybe God is nudging you into this ministry.



## Mosaic Alliance Ministry Assistant

**Canada 2+ Years**

Would you like to use your experience and skills to reach out to diaspora communities from various countries? Come join the Canada Christian Mosaic Alliance team.



## Anthropology Researcher

**Asia 2+ Years**

You would be involved in graduate level research on an unreached people-group, helping others to better understand their culture.



## Refugee Worker – Aktion Integration

**Germany 2+ Years**

Migrant/refugee ministry in Germany is a unique ministry opportunity, being able to show Christ's love in practical ways to many people who have never heard the gospel. It is an opportunity to reach out and assist people who are traumatised.



## Medical & Support Staff

**Middle East 2+ Years**

Work at a sanatorium, treating tuberculosis and other chest infections, and building relationships with long-term patients. Understanding of Arabic needed, or a commitment to spend two years learning it commencing medical work.



We have hundreds of opportunities and these are just a few. Go to [sim.co.uk/opportunities](http://sim.co.uk/opportunities) to find more, or contact [info@sim.co.uk](mailto:info@sim.co.uk) to talk to our team

# I'd like to support...

Please tick box:

- General Fund (for use where needed most)
- COVID-19 Immediate Response (99753)
- ENGAGE – Page 8 (090278)
- Project Centre Pakistan – Page 10 (98175)
- Other – *please give details:*

Complete payment details below, or standing order form overleaf, and the Gift Aid section if you qualify.

I have enclosed a cheque, payable to **Serving In Mission**, for:

£ \_\_\_\_\_ (amount)

Please debit my:

*Please use a debit card if possible (credit cards incur a 2.65% charge).*

-  Mastercard
-  Visa
-  Electron
-  Maestro

Extra digits for Switch/Maestro

Three-digit security code on back of card

Start date  /  Expiry date  /

Total to be charged £ \_\_\_\_\_

Name on card \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

You can also give online at: [www.sim.co.uk/donate](http://www.sim.co.uk/donate)

## Gift Aid

If you are a UK taxpayer, please Gift Aid any gifts to SIM.

*giftaid it*

Please tick all that apply:

I would like to Gift Aid this and all future donations until further notice

*I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.*

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please complete your contact details overleaf...**

# Standing order mandate *or visit [www.sim.co.uk/standingorder](http://www.sim.co.uk/standingorder)*

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To The Manager

Bank name

Bank address

Postcode

Please pay to SIM the sum of £

Every:  Month  Quarter  Year

Starting on 15th of \_\_\_\_\_ (month) \_\_\_\_\_ (year)

Account number

Bank sort code  -  -

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print name \_\_\_\_\_

Please pay to the account of:

SIM International (UK), Barclays Bank plc, West Norwood. Sort Code 20-94-67 Account number 70885754

## For office use only

Please quote this reference on all transfers

Please designate the above gifts to:

General Fund

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Be sure to complete the *Gift Aid* section overleaf if you qualify!** *giftaid it*

## Your contact details

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me your weekly *SIMpray* email

**Thank you!**

When completed, please return this form to:

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GLOBAL  
APPEAL**

# Help us raise funds in response to COVID-19

**SIM International is  
launching an appeal to  
raise money for the 21  
SIM entities that have  
health ministries**

**Help buy** equipment,  
including ventilators, tents,  
soap, gloves, gowns, masks

**Help train** health workers  
and assist with overtime  
pay for staff

Please contact  
[www.sim.co.uk/donate](http://www.sim.co.uk/donate)  
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