



Serving Him

from Serving In Mission UK & Ireland

Innovating

Attempt great things for God

See, I am doing a new thing!
 Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
 I am making a way in the wilderness
 and streams in the wasteland.

Isaiah 43:19



Front-page image: A Quechua couple listen to an audio Bible on their mobile phone (Photo by Brendan Connally)

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SIM

member of
evangelical alliance
 together making Jesus known

**Global
 Connections**

An invitation to innovate

God gives us boldness, wisdom, and creativity to innovate for the sake of his global mission and to make disciples of Jesus Christ in all nations.

WELCOME to the Autumn/Winter issue of Serving Him!

'Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God,' said William Carey, one of the pioneers and innovators of the modern missions movement.

We praise God for how he's already at work in the places where we serve and that he also continues to enlarge our understanding of what it means to be missional. In SIM, we talk about crossing barriers to make Jesus known and of being responsive to the times, while holding fast to the unchanging gospel. As you read this magazine, we hope you'll get a glimpse of how SIM workers are using innovative ways to share the gospel in a rapidly changing world.

We can reach people through business and sports, who may otherwise never hear the good news; we can advocate for change

and use technology to combat human trafficking; we can be open to new ministry opportunities that God creates from unexpected circumstances; and we can find ways to share his Word with oral learners.

I hope you'll be encouraged by these examples of connecting the ever-relevant gospel with the lives of people today and consider how you can be involved in God's global mission. We'd love to hear from you if you'd like to explore this further.

Thank you for joining with us through your prayers and support to see a witness to Christ's love where he is least known.



Alex Hawke
UK Director

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Profit for the Lord

God is calling business people from all nations to go to all nations and use their professional skills for God's glory.



WITH THE AVERAGE person spending 90,000 hours at work during their lifetime, the workplace is a key environment to help God's kingdom grow. It's where every Christian can think missionally as they are a daily witness to the gospel as they interact with others and make long-lasting relationships.

But when the workplace is in a country with very few Christians, this becomes a place where mission workers have real opportunities to live out their faith.

Missional Businesses are the commercial activities of Christians who use their skills, gifts, and talents to transform communities and lead others towards Jesus through business.

Missional Business is an innovative strategy that can not only complement the efforts of other Serving In Mission workers, but can reach out where other Christian mission models can't, says JP Gradone, Serving In Mission's Global Ministry Point Person for Business Ministries.

"Business people bring their unique skills and experience to create natural avenues for work and the prospect of economic advantage," he explains. "But they also open doors to building meaningful relationships within new communities that

“Spiritual transformation does occur through missional business”



JP and Cheryl Gradone

would not normally welcome traditional mission workers.

“It’s a complex and dynamic calling in which business and missional objectives are sometimes misunderstood because they express themselves in a different form than traditional models of mission work,” he adds.

“It shouldn’t be entered into lightly and requires a long-term commitment to language, culture, and development of the business. Events can delay or overtake the best business plan, and a desired spiritual impact may be obstructed, or take an unexpected turn.

“It’s important to remember that many missional businesses are slow-growing and require patience, endurance and prayer, but we want everyone to know that spiritual transformation does occur through missional business.”

Missional Business isn’t just about launching a business that glorifies God while providing jobs in hard places; it’s also doing a basic job where workers can be ‘salt and light’ in the workplace and in the community where they live.

There are many challenges — from language barriers and government regulations, to working and living in cultures closed to Christianity — but Missional

Business creates opportunities for people who’ve always had a desire to serve God overseas, but only saw the possibility in the context of the traditional mission model.

“It may deviate from the traditional style of mission work, but we want to open people’s eyes to the many opportunities that exist in the area of business and to help Christian professionals view businesses as another tool in our toolbox to reach places where Christ is least known,” says JP.

“There are several advantages for ‘tentmakers’ using work as their ministry because it’s all relational — creating opportunities to influence the lives of those they spend so much time with.

“We’re seeing sustainable relationships develop as our workers create a testimony. It might be when a company owner becomes known for refusing bribes; or when an office worker shares God’s love with his friends outside work and they are intrigued by seeing a Christ-centred life in action.

“Missional Business is not about making money; it’s about living out biblical values in the workplace and building day-to-day connections that will help to cross barriers and reach people, even in places hostile towards Christ followers.”

There are several categories of Missional Businesses, but all are intentionally used for missions:

1. Business as Mission (BAM)

BAM refers to a business used as the actual ministry venue. It models biblical principles to employees, suppliers, clients, government workers and business associates, and is a testimony to the local community.

2. Business for Transformation (B4T)

B4T are businesses strategically placed in areas where Christ is unknown or least known. They are designed to create local jobs and bring transformation to the community, specifically through evangelism, discipleship, and church planting.

3. Business-Based Mission (BBM)

BBM refers to a business used as a way for mission workers to stay in the country as it can provide them with a partial or full salary. The primary ministry is usually outside the business.

4. Business for Mission (BFM)

BFM describes ventures with the primary intention to make profit to support missions work.

5. Micro-finance

Micro-finance programmes provide small loans to individuals or groups to help them start and run small businesses. They are most relevant in underprivileged communities, where employment opportunities are limited.

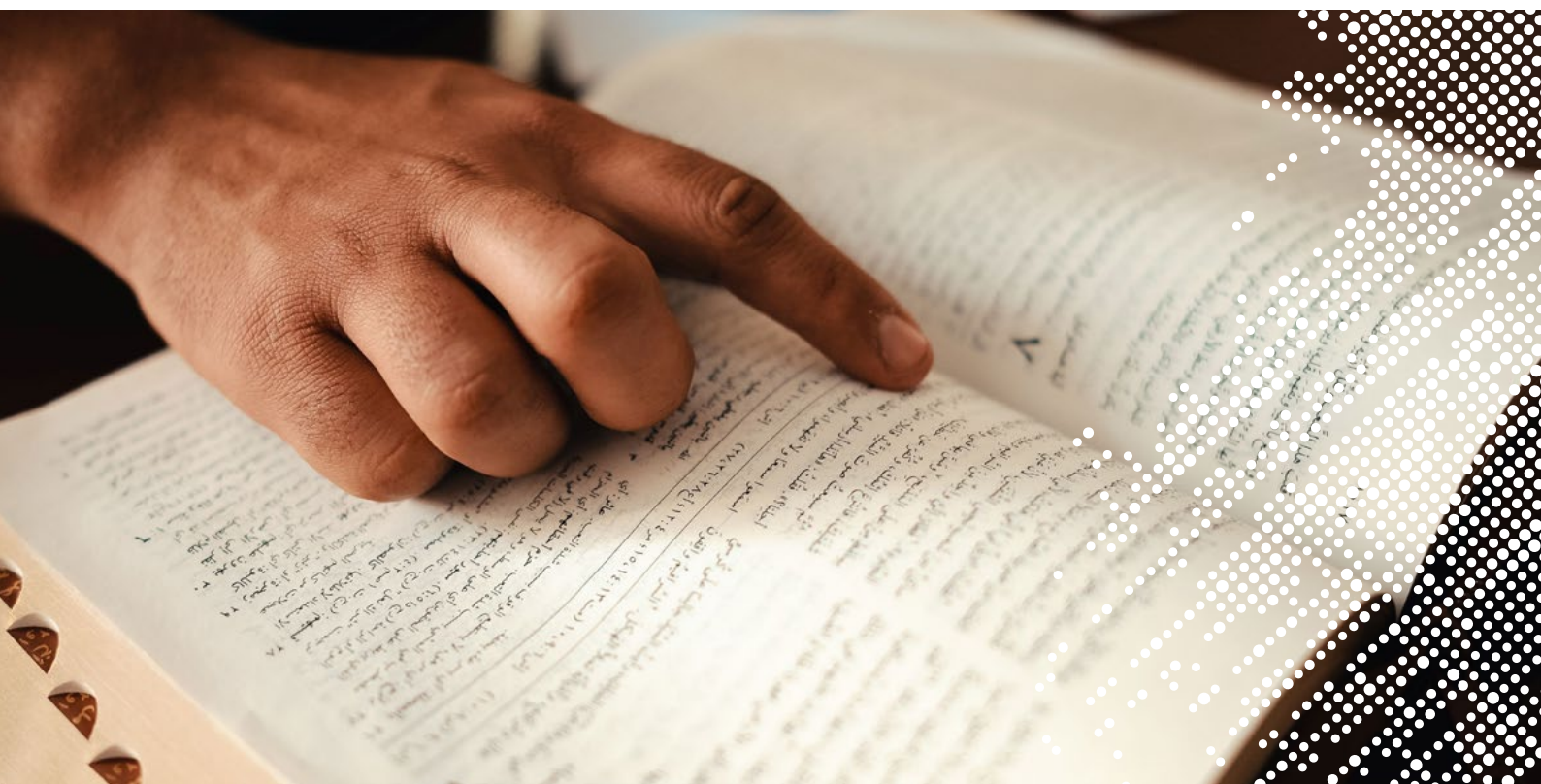
Are you interested in missional business? Turn to Page 30 to find out about opportunities to serve with SIM or to support this ministry. Or you can email mobilisation@sim.co.uk to start a conversation.

Please pray

Pray for God to raise up business people to use their God-given skills for his glory.

Pray God would use them to make a real impact and lead many towards Christ.

Pray for business owners with a gospel intention to be kept safe.



Here's how three of our workers are using missional business in separate ways to invite others into a relationship with Christ.



CASE STUDY 1

Filmmaking

PHOTOGRAPHER JOSH PRAYED

for God's leading when he first moved overseas, asking: 'Lord, I've got these skills and equipment, what do I do with them?'

At first, the answer was to build relationships, while his work allowed him to live legitimately in the north African country where he serves alongside his wife Helen.

Since then, Josh's media work has steadily grown and 18 months ago, God prompted him to launch a UK-based media agency (Kudu) that helps churches, organisations and other Christ-centred partners deliver missional content for God's glory.

"We bring in Christian cameramen, editors, directors and producers to help clients deliver their message from a place of genuine faith and understanding," says Josh, who also partners with organisations that focus on creating evangelistic media to people living in communities closed to Christianity.

"We made a film of Arab believers praying and reading the Bible here in north Africa, which was fantastic as the footage isn't currently available on any stock media sites.

"We also created an animated series of

videos inviting young women in closed countries to explore the Bible. We produced them in three different Arabic dialects and the videos were showed as targeted social media ads in different countries across north Africa, the Gulf, and the Middle East.

"It's wonderful that hundreds of people in these regions have since started conversations with us about who Jesus is."

Recently, Josh's agency has produced a 10-level discipleship course in Arabic (not dissimilar to the Alpha Course) that's written by Christians in the Middle East for new Arabic-speaking believers in countries where Jesus is least known.

"It's a fantastic course and a free resource available for anyone serving in discipleship," says Josh. "People can sign up anonymously and then they're taken through the course that tackles all kinds of issues and questions, from 'Who wrote the Bible?' to 'How do I respond to persecution from my family?'; 'How do I conquer the fear of being arrested?'; and 'How do I build a Christian community in a closed country?'

"I'm thankful that my business knowledge has enabled me to bring other Christian creatives together so as a unit, we can produce bigger and better things for the gospel."

CASE STUDY 2

Organic Farming & Factory

YVONNE MILDRED, WHO is sent by St Silas Church, Glasgow, trains pastors and church leaders in northern Ghana to disciple their members to become 'marketplace ministers'.

“Working with the world’s resources is part of God’s plan for people, as *Genesis 2:15* says. Work is not a curse, it’s how we worship God daily, wherever we are,” she says.

The Christian population in Africa will likely reach 633 million by 2025 and there is huge potential to implement workplace ministries through churches.

The aim of Yvonne’s rural workplace ministry is to not only see economic transformation, but also to empower the local church to disciple every believer to be missional every day of the week where they work.

“I work with pastors, market leaders and through a Bible Institute, to give them the skills to encourage, testify, and disciple people living in rural, farming communities to worship God through their work,” she adds.

“I love seeing when people realise that God is present and interested in all aspects of their lives and has no sacred/ secular divide.”

Yvonne is also practising what she teaches after helping to set up a small, organic farming business.

“The leaders aim to run the business in ways that worship God; are economically sustainable; and loving and caring for both people and the environment,” she explains.

She is currently overseeing the building of a commercial food processing centre that will provide employment by producing and selling products made from crops grown by local farmers (as well as on the farm next door) to help lift people out of poverty.

“Many farming families will be helped as this missional business continues to make a kingdom impact and discipling will happen as relationships grow,” says Yvonne.





CASE STUDY 3

Software Company

GOD IS USING businessman C* (identity protected) to help lay down roots for Serving In Mission in a new country.

Sent by a church in Northern Ireland to serve in Southeast Asia, C currently works as a project manager for a BAM Christian-led software company that lives out Bible-based values.

“There’ve been many benefits and blessings that have flowed from being a worker in this setting” says C.

“Firstly, I have a clear identity in the community. One of the first questions any local will ask is what I do here? Answering that I work in a software company makes perfect sense and is highly respectable. It opens doors and builds trust.

“Secondly, we employ many graduates in their first job and this can be very impactful. Over the two years I’ve been working here, my wife and I have made wonderful friends among my colleagues and had the privilege of introducing many people to the God of creation of whom they’d never heard.

“And even though they move on, we know they’ve had a chance to hear the gospel and be under the influence of God.”

Excitingly, C plans to give up his role to help SIM launch a consulting business

and establish a base in a corner of the world where most people have never heard of Jesus.

“We’re working on the business plan and of course, things are already moving slower than expected!” he says.

“The initial idea was to start a business offering simple ‘How to’ consultations to people in whatever areas future SIM workers joining the business have skills and passions in.

“However, laws and regulations mean things might turn out differently from what we dream of, and various legal consultants advise us differently!

“We know it will be a bumpy ride and prayer is greatly appreciated for the practicalities like paperwork and future funding,” says C, “but what a privilege to be among the first ones to help lay down roots for our organisation in this corner of the world?”

**Whatever you do,
work at it with all
your heart, as working
for the Lord, not for
human masters.
*Colossians 3:23***

Let me tell you a story...

God's Word is for every 'tribe, tongue, people and nation' but how do we share the gospel with two-thirds of the world's population who can barely read or write?

MORE THAN 70 per cent of the Bible is narrative and full of stories where God teaches us about who he is and about his plan to redeem his creation.

God's Word has the power to change lives, but many people don't have the option of reading the Bible in their own language and two-thirds of the world's population are oral learners, who prefer to learn by listening and observing, rather than by reading.

For those who can barely read or write, culturally sensitive Bible storytelling is an effective way to share the gospel.



SIM UK's Jonny Anderson has developed the use of oral strategies so the Quechua people of Bolivia can learn God's truth through storytelling.

The most effective ministry strategies among oral cultures occur when communication is done in their heart language, so when Jonny and his wife Olga first moved to Bolivia in 2010, they spent three years learning Quechua — the first language for two million Bolivians.

Many Quechua are from an Andean, animistic background and their spiritual awareness means conversations open easily to gospel witness, says Jonny, who is supported by St Nicholas Church, Tooting.

"In general, the Quechua are very naturalistic about what goes on in this life, falsely believing good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people. The use of Bible stories enables people to understand who the true God is and how they can have a relationship with him through his son Jesus Christ.

"The church in Bolivia is growing, however, it's easy to start a church without any biblical grounding and people will attend as they have such a spiritual hunger," he adds.



Jonny and Olga with Quechuan pastors Ramon and Sergio visiting mountain churches

“In a culture where reading comprehension levels are low, the books of the Bible appear too dense with text for most people. This is when oral Bible teaching methods are incredibly important. My ministry focus is on training pastors and modelling oral Bible teaching methods so that people can find Christ in the whole of Scripture.”

As part of his ministry, Jonny makes regular trips to some of the remotest mountain communities in Bolivia to visit rural churches with a local Quechua pastor, where they use drama, drawing and other visual aids, to teach non-literate Quechua Christians.

“An old man called Genuario for about eight years has been inviting me to travel with him to the countryside to teach and evangelise,” Jonny recalls. “I’d not taken up the invitation as he’s a sporadic character, turning up from time to time in the same churches I pop up at, but when he called me up for a trip at late notice, I decided to finally accept his offer.

“He took me to his hometown of Tacobamba, which is less than 30 miles away as the condor flies but is many hours away by car, high into the mountains. I learnt so much from my trip with Genuario. Despite there being groups of believers and even church buildings in that remote mountain region, the

believers have limited abilities to listen to the Bible being taught.

“Mainly because of age, hard work and getting up before dawn they could barely keep their eyes open for a few minutes. This taught me that in these sorts of settings I need to have workshop materials to hand that are interactive, forcing people to speak to one-another and to prevent them from taking a nap!”

Olga also adopts oral teaching methods in her ministry to train Sunday School teachers. One of the SIM UK staff team, Pavitra White, put Olga in touch with her mother, who’d been a mission worker in South Asia for many years. She produced colouring pages from photos that Olga sent her, which are specifically designed for Quechua people.

The drawings depict figures with their ruddy, muscular outlines, dramatic Andean landscapes and exotic creatures — from the domesticated llama to the wild and free condor.

“It’s wonderful that there are retired mission workers out there who are willing to lend their talents to serve the Quechua church and I’m very grateful for the help of the wider SIM community that I can turn to when looking for resources,” says Olga.

Pastor Martin's story

"Felipe, who is a preacher at the local church, left me a voice message saying that he couldn't visit me that evening as he wasn't able to read the chapter of the Book of Genesis we were going to discuss," shares Jonny.

"He politely explained that he'd been at A&E all night because Pastor Martin, with whom he'd been working, had crushed his finger under a piece of machinery. Apparently when it was getting dark, they were unloading a 50kg-diesel generator from the back of a truck, crushing Pastor Martin's finger.

"He sent me a gruesome photo to make sure I understood the validity of his excuse. We'd been praying for Pastor Martin for the last four months. He is the godly pastor of the Temple of Faith church on the edge of Sucre and for financial needs, he was spending Monday to Saturday eight hours away in another region working in a mine.

"Now mining in Bolivia is a terribly unregulated industry and so far this year, already 55 men have died in various accidents. Pastor Martin knew the dangers and that's why he'd come back to Sucre to work in construction and now he was off work through a workplace injury! As soon as Olga and I heard the news of his accident, we bought a chocolate cake and some yoghurt and headed to the edge of town to visit his young family.

"We were going to visit him just in case he'd believed the accident had happened because he'd done something bad. However, we know that Pastor Martin has more solid beliefs than this and has already suffered as a child of God and knows that the way of Christ is the way of suffering.

"So, it was no surprise that when we arrived, almost the first thing he asked us was, 'So what is God teaching me through this?' I knew he wasn't asking me because he thought he'd done something bad and so deserved his accident. He was simply asking to confirm what he already knew.

"I said, 'This has happened not because God doesn't love you, but because God is training you to further patience, service and dependence upon him.

"He gave a tone of approval of my interpretation and he let us pray for him."

Jesus always used stories and illustrations like these when speaking to the crowds. In fact, he never spoke to them without using such parables.
Matthew 13:34





Nelsy's story

"I met Nelsy on one of our road trips to visit a new church in the town of Tarvita," shares Olga.

"Nelsy is an impressive teenager from a very challenging home and one of four girls given the responsibility for outreach to children in the town. Nelsy's taken on much of the responsibility of children's ministry and has been known to have visited couples with marriage issues!

"Nelsy was complaining to me saying, 'I can't get hold of good Sunday School lessons. I only have this series on Abraham,' so I asked if she wanted to make her own materials and Nelsy responded with enthusiasm. Then I asked, 'Do you want to follow on from Abraham, or go straight to Jesus?'

"'Straight to Jesus!' she responded, so I was able to help her choose the major events of the life of Jesus on earth and produce picture board stories and her own colouring pages."

To support Jonny and Olga's ministries, please go to sim.co.uk/respond

Please pray

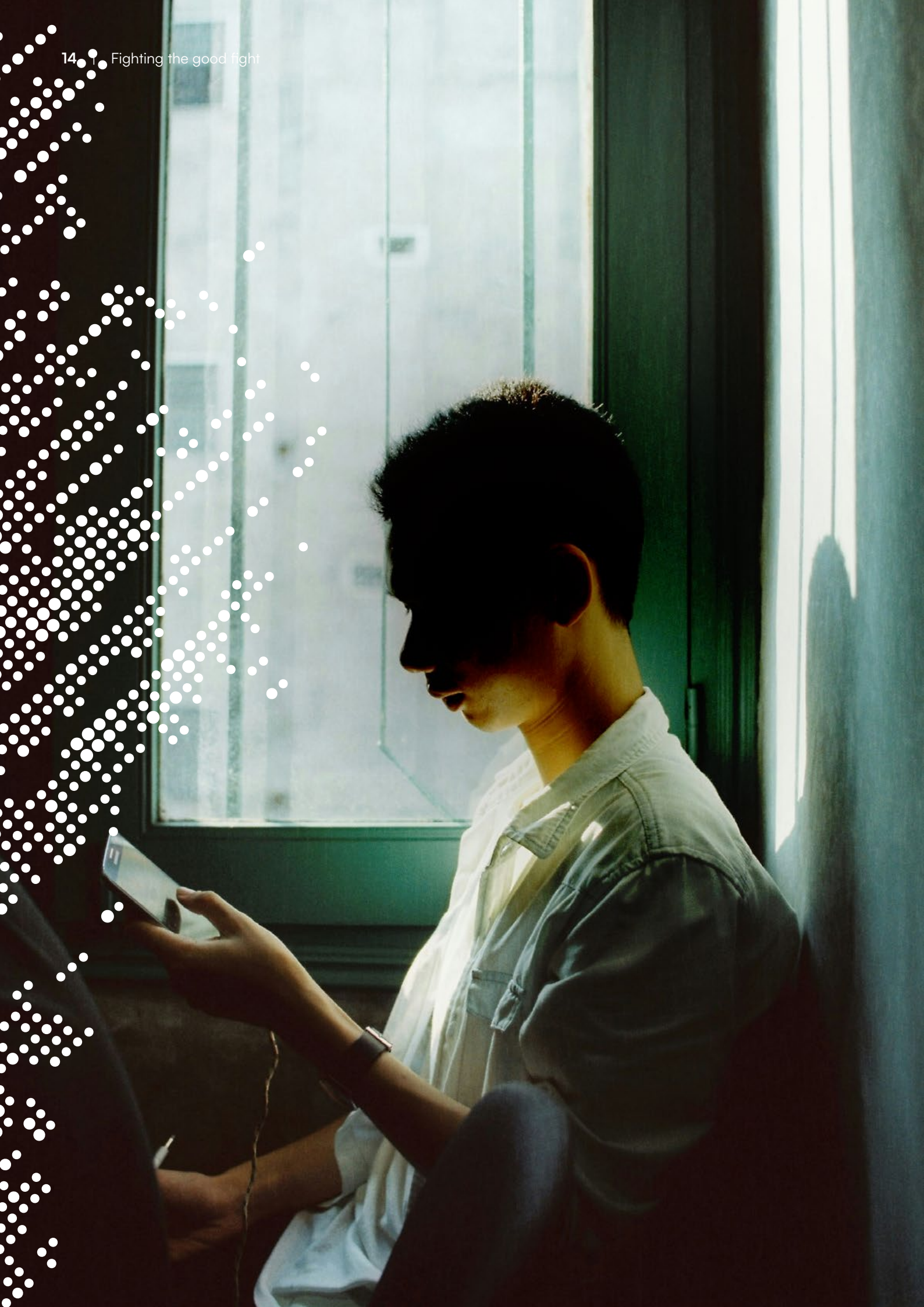
Pray for oral Bible teaching to become contagious in the Quechua church, opening up hearts and minds to the gospel.

Praise God for how he is using storytelling to help SIM workers make disciples where he is least known.

Pray for Nelsy as Olga encourages her via WhatsApp from the city.



Olga with Nelsy, left



Responding to human trafficking

The digital space is not only a means of enabling exploitation, but also an effective tool to protect the world's most vulnerable people and reach them with the gospel.

TODAY, TENS OF millions of people are trapped in human trafficking and exploitation in every country of the world. In response, SIM established *For Freedom*, our anti-trafficking and exploitation ministry.

Serving In Mission workers are currently serving in more than 70 countries and many are in communities where people are vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation.

For Freedom offers training and resources to equip our mission workers so they can conduct their ministries to address some of the risks vulnerable people face and to care for them holistically.

According to the International Labour Organisation, there are more than 49.6 million victims of trafficking worldwide — men, women and children who are exploited for labour, services, and commercial sex — and this number is increasing.

This is in part due to rapid advances in digital technology that have made it much easier for traffickers to find and exploit victims. Human traffickers are known for being innovative, and are using digital tools to amplify the reach, scale, and speed of human trafficking.

Sarah Scott Webb, Serving In Mission's *For Freedom* ministry co-lead, has just returned from attending a Global Summit on Technology and Exploitation in the USA, where more than 600 movement leaders and advocates from 15 countries, gathered together to learn more about Artificial Intelligence (AI), emerging technology and its impact on exploitation.

At the summit, Sarah heard disturbing accounts of how traffickers are using popular online platforms to groom and exploit new victims.

"It was shocking to hear that most trafficking is now occurring on social media — especially on Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook," she admits, "and it's teenage boys who are being targeted the most."

Sarah advocates some simple tips for keeping safe on social media and building a 'healthy cynicism' when online: "Make sure your privacy settings are always on, and location is always turned off — and don't engage with, like, or comment on anyone's posts unless you know them in real life."

While speakers discussed the dangers of new technologies, they also acknowledged that

this technology is our greatest weapon to fight exploitation and restore dignity to survivors.

“We heard many examples of tech companies who are developing new platforms and protections to keep us safe online,” adds Sarah. “They reinforced the need to teach our young people how to be aware of the dangers online, and how to use technology safely.”

Social messaging apps are being used by *For Freedom* workers and partners to prevent trafficking from happening in their communities.

During the opening months of the Ukraine war, *For Freedom* partners used social media channels, websites, and WhatsApp groups to share information

and help many displaced people avoid traffickers and find safe passage.

For Freedom workers in Zimbabwe also use WhatsApp groups to learn about trafficking and teach others what to watch out for. They belong to a local WhatsApp group that regularly posts stories of people who’ve been trafficked.

“This WhatsApp group is a powerful way that people are keeping safe from traffickers,” Sarah says. “People hear about where traffickers are operating and how they’re trying to trick them with false job offers. With this knowledge, they can keep safe.”

Making people aware of online dangers and sharing how to use technology safely are important ways of

According to the International Labour Organisation, there are more than 49.6 million victims of trafficking worldwide.



protecting the vulnerable and preventing trafficking and exploitation.

“Because SIM is serving in so many communities — in many practical ministries, including health, sports, church planting and education to name a few — we’re in a prime position to share this information, put some practical protective measures in place and keep our communities safe,” she adds.

“Sharing God’s love in this practical way opens doors to be able to share the good news of Jesus.”

For Freedom ministry co-lead Karine Woldhuis was made aware of a trafficking case in the town she was serving in with her family, Loja, Ecuador. Despite the whole town immediately responding and searching for the young girl who’d been taken, sadly she was killed by her traffickers.

“I could see the need for us to grapple with it as Serving In Mission — no matter where we serve — whether it was in southern Ecuador or somewhere in Africa or Asia,” she shares. “Everywhere we work, we can be responding to people who are at risk of being trafficked as part of our mission call.

“Since *For Freedom* began, there’s been a steady increase of understanding of how modern slavery exists in the places where we serve and we do have an opportunity to take simple, yet effective measures, to prevent human trafficking across many different ministries.”

What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking is the illegal process of trapping people by deception, coercion or use of violence, and exploiting them for financial or personal gain. Perpetrators lure victims by promising a better life with the chance of earning money or receiving an education, or by offering a way to help their families. They trick, deceive, and sometimes force them into situations of exploitation, abuse, and slavery, from which they can’t escape.

Human trafficking can take various forms and may involve sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery, domestic servitude, organ trafficking, begging and forced criminality. Research has shown that people are at particular risk of human trafficking if they experience the following: Trauma, conflict, violence, or natural disasters; discrimination; loss of income and livelihoods; family violence; and people who lack caring, supportive relationships.

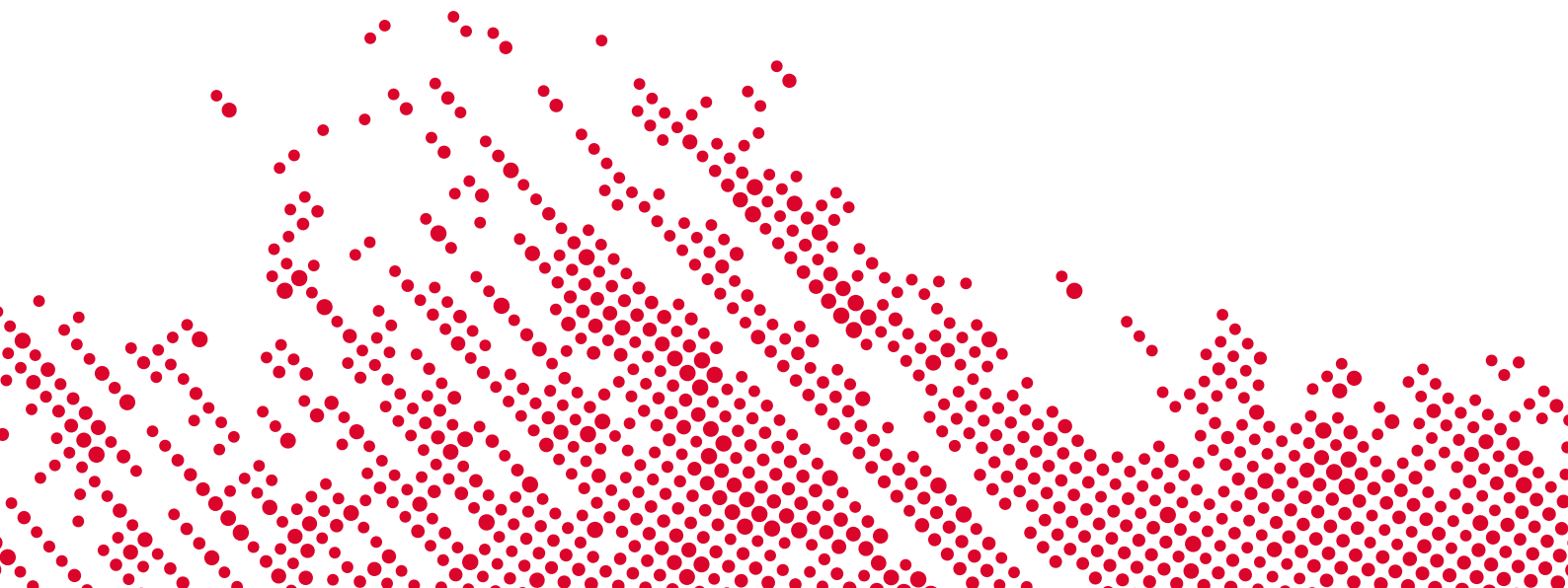
Visit sim.org/fr/-/for-freed-1 for more information, support and help.

Please pray

Please pray that Sarah and Karen may know the Lord’s direction and leading as they finalise a new five-year *For Freedom* strategic plan.

Pray that the Lord will reveal himself to the millions of human trafficking victims in the midst of their suffering.

For the Lord to give SIM workers wisdom about how to keep vulnerable and desperate people safe in the communities they serve.





Taking it to the next level

Training coaches is an integral and expanding part of SIM's Sports Friends ministry and now hundreds of coaches across the globe can be trained at the click of a button.

MORE THAN 20 years ago, Serving In Mission knew that in most countries they served, populations were very young, and they didn't have many youth-focused ministries; nor did their local church partners.

SIM needed to develop ideas that worked on the ground, and God provided the answer in the shape of two men, from opposite corners of the world. He gave them the vision to start a global movement of churches using sport to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Sports Friends began in Ethiopia in 2002 and today, more than 14,000 godly volunteer coaches serve more than 280,00 young people in 19 countries.

In some places where Sports Friends works, churches and coaches are frequently threatened, cheated, or attacked. Yet, despite this persecution, God's church is growing and our teams in these areas draw strength from God's faithfulness and from knowing other Christians are praying for them and standing with them from afar.

Here in the UK, SIM workers Somchai and Cat Tongkao — who are sent by Holcombe Brook Methodist Church, Bury — are training and equipping churches across Manchester to replicate the Sports Friends model in their local communities.





One of those is Bridge Community Church in Radcliffe — a town grappling with the weight of fractured families, poverty, and crime. As their pastor, Tom King, observes, “Jesus shared life with people where they are. And if you want to know where people are in Manchester, they’re in sport; they’re in football.”



When asked what they loved most about the church’s football coaching (pictured above) the kids responded: “Some adults can be a bit mad and scream at you when you do something wrong, but Tom tells you in a really kind way.”

“I like that Somchai is always in a happy mood and is very welcoming. When people start messing around, he just tells them, ‘Come on, let’s keep going’ and they just do it.”

“Every time when we’re playing football and we do training, we always have a talk and Tom tells us about Jesus.”

“I’m really grateful they spend all their free time with us being kind when they could be on their phones or laptops.”

This year, the ministry has launched a new online training programme to help coaches as they invest in their team technically, physically, socially, psychologically, and spiritually. Here, *Communications Intern DK Roy*, shares her conversation with SIM UK’s Ben Wildman, who works to enhance the training and equipping of Sports Friends coaches.

BEN WILDMAN IS full of energy, an insightful communicator, and a bold bringer of new ideas. I had the chance to chat with him about how he's implementing innovation in the training of Sports Friends' coaches — what he calls the “bread and butter” of the ministry.

Innovation is starting with something you already have and improving it. For more than 20 years, coaches from local churches have been trained to use sports as the platform to share the gospel with young people in their communities.

In his role as Sports Friends Director of Training, Ben (pictured below) is using new technology to take this to the next level. What was previously done through manuals is now communicated online and available to coaches anywhere in the world.

The online training platform has various levels and types of training: Level One is all about the coach and how to start a church-centred sports ministry and the new Level Two is directed toward the player, with a deeper focus on ministry.

Ben, who is sent by Holy Trinity Jesmond Church in Newcastle Upon Tyne, is hoping to initiate Level Three soon, which will focus on the community and the local church.

One positive of this plunge deeper into the digital world is that language becomes less of a barrier. Ben

shares that at a recent global conference, a Sports Friend's worker told him, “Because of this online translation option, you have saved me nine months of translation work!” and he can now share this training with coaches in their heart language.

While Ben reminds me that face-to-face training will always play a vital part in the Sports Friends ministry, he says it must also make the most of the online tools and platforms at its disposal.

“We're excited about what the future holds. The world is ever-changing with AI and various other developments. We're open to seeing how we can, through the leading of the Holy Spirit, leverage the ever-changing world of technology to continue to make disciples and advance God's kingdom.” he adds.

Please pray

Praise God for how he has moved powerfully through the Sports Friends ministry for more than 20 years.

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

Pray for coaches where sharing the gospel message could mean putting their lives, homes, and families at risk.

Turn over to read how Sports Friends began.



How Sports Friends began

RIGHT AROUND THE time God was turning the century, he was turning Brian Davidson's and Tripp Johnston's lives upside down. The upset would cause a ripple effect intended to span continents and generations and impact the lives of more than a million people, writes *Mary Fichtinger, Sports Friends International*.

For Tripp, the shift started slowly. He was in his mid-30s, was happily married to his high-school sweetheart Alison, and had three children. He had rapidly advanced in his career as an investment banker and was Chief Operating Officer in a large financial services firm in the USA.

Then the Holy Spirit began nudging him toward investing in such a way that would change the destinies of young people and plant the kingdom of God right into their families, communities, and nations.

Over time, Tripp realised God had transformed his priorities and desires. He resigned from his job in finance and told the Lord he was ready for whatever he had in store.

Soon, Tripp was on a plane to Ethiopia with his friend Brian, a talented football coach and sports minister. Over two weeks in Africa, the two men were continually struck by the age of the people — there were kids everywhere!



In a country where more than 65% of the population was under 25, these young people had little opportunity for education or employment and with nothing to do, were drifting forward with an impoverished mindset about the future.

However, whenever Tripp and Brian rolled a football onto the ground, the kids flocked to them, eager to play and to connect.



Before they got back to the USA, God had filled them with a vision to help Ethiopian churches reach youngsters through sport and where there wasn't a church, to use sport as the avenue to introduce communities to the love and Word of God.

Brian had been doing sport ministry for decades and was zealous and adventurous. He knew how to coach and disciple youth and Tripp knew how to organise, form partnerships, develop leaders, and raise funds.

They joined SIM and moved their families to Ethiopia where God provided connections with several national churches and a truly essential partner: Berhanu, an Ethiopian man filled with passion for God and for making him known.

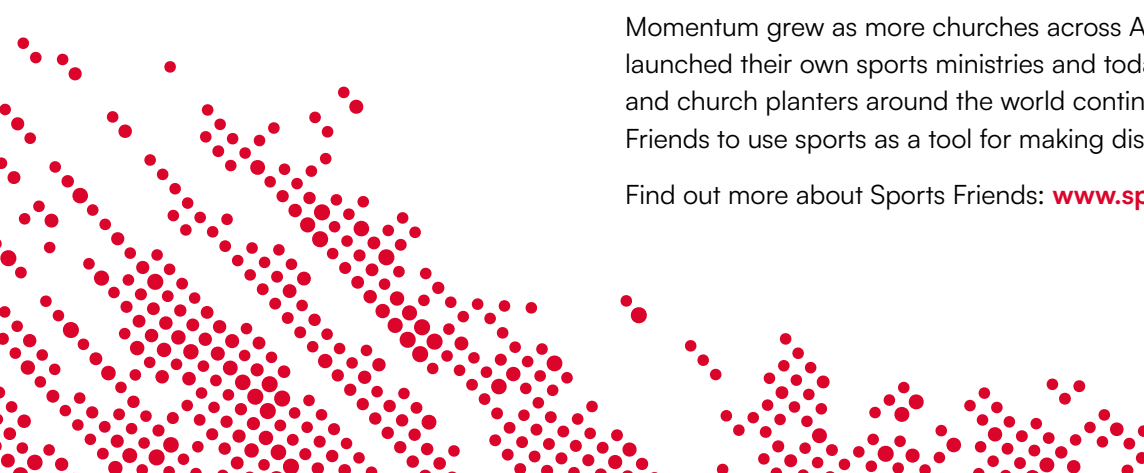
In the summer of 2002, Sports Friends was born.

God raised up a few leaders to train as coaches who invited the local youth to join the church football team. Not only did the kids come to play, they also started coming to faith. Their families came to faith too and new churches were born in places where evangelists had been chased away for decades.

A coach could arrive carrying a ball in their hand and the Bible in their heart, and entire communities would embrace them, grow to love and respect them for their good-hearted work among the young people, then listen to what they had to say.

Momentum grew as more churches across Africa, Asia, and the Americas launched their own sports ministries and today, thousands of churches and church planters around the world continue to be equipped by Sports Friends to use sports as a tool for making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Find out more about Sports Friends: www.sports-friends.org



Creative prayer for mission

As the world around us evolves and innovative ideas help us reach out to the communities who've not yet heard the name of Jesus, prayer remains at our foundation. Inspired by this liturgy from our friends at Anglican Global Mission, join us in prayer to our amazing God who remains the same, yesterday, today, and forever.



By SIM's Prayer
Coordinator
Linda Hunt

O GOD, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

LORD JESUS CHRIST, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honour of your name. *Amen.*

Father God,

Creator of the universe, we thank you for each person so **fearfully and wonderfully made** in your image.

Thank you that you have made the gift of salvation available to everyone, no matter their tribe or their tongue.

Father, we cry out to you for those who don't yet know you.

Thank you, that you say to **whoever knocks, that the door will be opened.**

We lift to you the communities around the globe where there are still so many that have never heard the name of Jesus.

We lift to you the communities whose eyes are blinded to the **treasures of your eternal kingdom.**

Father, thank you that you invite us to collaborate with you to change this.

Lord, give our workers eyes to see where you are at work in the lives of the people you have placed around them.

By your Holy Spirit, **give them the words to speak truth, life, and freedom.**

Help them to be open to your promptings to make your name known across the globe.

Lord, where there is much darkness and opposition, please go ahead, break down barriers, build bridges, help us to water barren lands with springs of eternal life.

We thank you that nothing is impossible for you. You can move mountains. You only ask us to have faith.

Lord, we know the task is still unfinished and we ask that you move the hearts of your people to respond, sacrificially. Help us, each one to hear your still, small voice and know the part that we each have to play in your Great Commission.

Thank you that you are sovereign over all nations, over all kingdoms, over the movements of peoples.

Help us to be effective in sharing your message of gospel hope wherever we are placed.

Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.



Crisis creates opportunity

God used challenging circumstances to create a new ministry that will build his kingdom in a spiritually needy and politically turbulent part of the world, writes a member of our Central Asia team.

God delights to bring life and salvation out of situations that look like they'll bring only death and destruction.

“YOU INTENDED TO harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives” (Genesis 50:20) — so said Joseph to his brothers in Egypt about their evil actions through which God worked great good. Through them, he established his people in a foreign land and brought famine relief to many.

God delights to bring life and salvation out of situations that look like they'll bring only death and destruction. So has been the case with two recent destructive events: the war in Ukraine, and the Covid pandemic.

Together, these two tragic events changed the political environment and a cultural mindset. These, in turn, have enabled an important development that will surely lead to the saving of many lives — national-language ministry training for Central Asian Christian leaders and mission workers, accessible online.

Until recently, non-Russian-speaking Central Asian church members had little in the way of ministry training programmes or resources available to them. But now, there's a drive to provide such training across the region in their own national languages.

There are at least a dozen different language-groups in the Central Asia region, and the Bible has been translated into the national languages of all the major states. However, Christian ministry training resources have typically only been available in Russian.

This is understandable given the recent history of the region and the cultural background of Central Asian people groups. Thirty years ago,

Central Asian states took the opportunity afforded by the collapse of the Soviet Union to become independent nations.

The newly-independent states wrote their constitutions in their national languages rather than in Russian. Governance and legal matters were required to be conducted in the indigenous language, but on the ground, Russian continued to be used for normal business and even for many local matters, as it is readily understood across the region — at least by the educated.

In this context, churches were established — many amidst severe persecution.



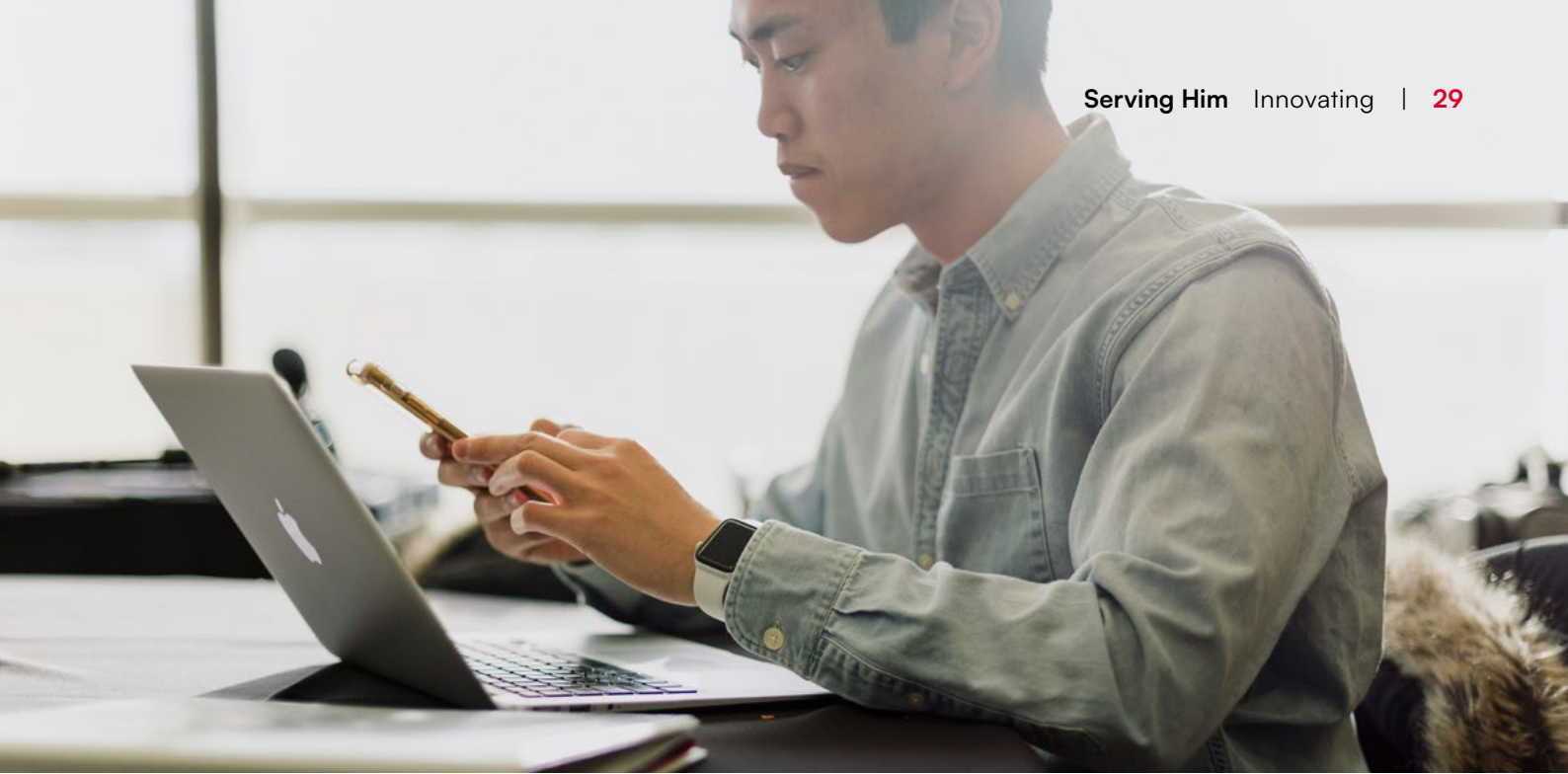
“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”
Genesis 50:20

The training of new leaders for the church is an obvious priority. But because Central Asian church pastors have so many other pressing matters to attend to, they have tended to use available Russian-language ministry resources rather than develop their own national-language training material. They don't have the time or the resources to prepare material from scratch themselves.

In the absence of indigenous-language ministry training material, keen converts with leadership potential and a willingness to train have turned to Russian-language training courses in-country or abroad. This severely limited the accessibility of ministry training to those with sufficient education and funding to access such courses and programmes.

The war in Ukraine has been a factor in changing the willingness of Central Asian church leaders to pursue the setting up of national-language ministry training schemes. Since the war started, Central Asian nations have been quietly pursuing more independence of Russia at a political level. There's been an increasing commitment throughout the region to use national languages instead of Russian — in all areas of life.

This is a good development for the churches, as national-language ministry training can be accessed by all church members, not just by those with sufficient education to train in the Russian language.



In many nations in Central Asia, Christian organisations are not permitted to operate. If a believer wanted to undertake formal ministry training, they had to leave their country and enrol in a Russian-language course somewhere else in the region. Only a tiny proportion of those who could benefit from formal ministry training received it — to the church's loss.

Online training is an obvious solution to the problem, but there's been much resistance to this culturally in the region.

Central Asians are very community orientated. The idea of sitting behind a computer screen individually for hours-on-end to receive training — even in an interactive online discussion group — was not at all attractive to Central Asian pastors. Then Covid happened.

The prohibitions against meeting together to manage Covid in 2020 and 2021 changed the attitude of pastors to online meetings.

Albeit reluctantly at first, because there was no alternative, Russian-speaking pastors and other Central Asian church leaders tried online training for the first time. To their surprise, they found training using online interactive discussion groups very effective.

Word spread, and today, there's a demand from church leaders for online ministry training to be provided in the national languages of Central Asian countries. Many first-generation believers, who previously could not access Christian ministry

training because they spoke little or no Russian, are now able and willing to receive such training in their heart language — as soon as the programmes can be set up.

Serving In Mission is involved in facilitating the provision of these programmes throughout the region. A tried-and-tested Russian ministry training programme has been made appropriate for Central Asia and translated into various languages.

Those who have previously done the Russian-language training course and are now serving in Central Asian countries, are further adapting the material to set up new national-language programmes.

This remarkable development has come out of Russia, Covid, and the war in Ukraine. Only God can bring such good out of such dire events!

If you'd like more information about Central Asia Ministry Training (CAMT) projects, please contact info@sim.co.uk

Please pray

Praise God for bringing well-qualified and experienced people together, and the necessary funds, to set up this ministry training.

Pray that native-language training and support can be set up in previously closed Central Asian countries.

Pray for many churches in the UK to partner in this ministry through financial support and prayer.

Will you join with us?

Whether you give money, feel called to serve, or faithfully pray for our mission workers and ministries, you can be part of what God is doing through the work of SIM UK.



Serve

SIM always has hundreds of opportunities around the world for people to use their God-given gifts in service to the Lord. Here (facing page) are some to consider.

Our Forged programme will help you explore how your skills and experience connects with opportunities and needs across the world. Email forged@sim.co.uk to leave an enquiry and to start a conversation with one of our Mission Mobilisers.



Pray

Our motto is 'by prayer' and everything we do is only possible by seeking God and following him. Please sign up to our weekly prayer email that's sent straight to your inbox. Go to: sim.co.uk/SIMpray

And find out how you can come alongside us in praying for ministries in communities where Christ is least known at:

sim.co.uk/support/prayer-resources



Give

Our work is made possible by people who partner with us through their occasional or regular financial gifts. God calls some to give so that others may go.

If you'd like to support our work with a donation, please scan the QR code (below) or you can give online through our secure website: sim.co.uk/respond

Alternatively, you can make a gift to support any of the ministries featured in this issue of Serving Him. Please remember to include the number of the specific project when filling in the form:

Missional Business (SE Asia) — Project 90843

Rural Ministry (Ghana) — Project 94023

For Freedom — Project 99737

Sports Friends — Project 99803

Central Asia Ministry Training — Project 90252



Discipleship intern

PARAGUAY

Around 40 per cent of Paraguay's people live in scattered, rural subsistence communities. This internship is part of the ministry seeking to equip churches and its leaders in the interior of the country.

You will have the opportunity to travel to the various churches, time to listen and develop relationships with church leaders, experience culture, ask questions, and reflect on what it might mean to be a mission worker in Paraguay.

Ultimately, this internship will focus on the learning and development of your understanding of missions as it relates to church development. You will have some Bible/theological training and Spanish is preferred, but not required.

Duration: 3-6 months



Working with human trafficking victims

NORTH AMERICA

SIM envisions that the number of young people facing exploitation and human trafficking in the Canadian sex trade will decline when local churches provide community leadership, healing environments and social supports that promote spiritual, physical and mental health for vulnerable young people.

SIM seeks a frontline worker to minister directly to exploited young women, and work with churches in the Greater Toronto area to build capacity for spiritual care and community support. Applicants should have related experience and/or education, but additional training will be provided.

Any duration considered



Missional Business

EUROPE

Play a critical role in advancing SIM Czechia's work through sustainable business initiatives that will have a positive impact on the communities where it serves.

As the Business as Mission (BAM) Coordinator, you will be responsible for developing and implementing strategies for using business initiatives to further ministry goals. Using your business experience, this role involves identifying opportunities for creating sustainable businesses that can generate income and support SIM Czechia's work, as well as managing the planning and execution of these business initiatives. English is required and Russian is an advantage.

Any duration considered



Sports Friends

KENYA

Do you have experience in camping ministry or sports ministry?

As Regional Camp Development Coordinator, you will work with our Sports Friends team/region and the International Camp Development Director, to provide training to our workers and partners who run youth sports camps. You will help them develop their camping ministry ability, knowledge and skills and build on the relational disciple-making of local coaches and churches.

Any duration considered



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