

# Serving Him

**SIM**  
Serving In Mission UK

Autumn 2020

## The power of a child's prayer

P13



© Charu Chaturvedi

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

TODAY THERE ARE  
**40 MILLION**  
PEOPLE IN  
**SLAVERY**  
MORE THAN AT ANY OTHER  
TIME IN HISTORY

**10 MILLION**  
ARE CHILDREN

FORCED LABOUR **50%**

FORCED MARRIAGE **38%**

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION **12%**



# Let your light shine

**I**f you'd asked me 12 months ago whether the world would be gripped by a global pandemic, or whether the ethnic divisions in our nation would be further exposed, I would have believed the latter, but not the former.

It's at times such as these that Jesus' words resonate all the more true: 'You are the light of the world...let your light shine before others, so that they see your good deeds and glorify your Father on the day he visits us' (Matthew 5: 14, 16).

Jesus, the one true light of the world, comes to people living under the darkness of death and gives the light of life to his followers, who are to take his light of resurrection hope throughout the world. This is why faithful churches pray for, come alongside, love, and reach people for Christ across the barriers in the multicultural communities around us.

It's also why Serving In Mission is working hand-in-hand with evangelical churches

to send and receive gospel workers in, to, and from the UK.

We are passionately committed to enabling churches of all shapes and sizes to go as Jesus' lights and live amongst communities where Christ is least known. Turn to Page 10 to read the initial findings of SIM UK's research designed to map intercultural ministry in the UK and in response to the request of churches to be more informed in relation to global and local mission in their own communities.

The growing need for resourcing local mission must never eclipse the global Great-Commission task God calls us to and why this issue also features encouraging stories about what he is doing through our workers living in the Middle East, Europe and Africa.

We're also delighted to highlight our new prayer resources for children on

Page 13 to help every generation join the movement of prayer for global mission. You can find out more about SIMpray Kids and other helpful resources on our new-

look website [www.sim.co.uk](http://www.sim.co.uk)

God is pleased to do his work through his praying, church-making disciples amongst the nations.

Wherever the seed of the gospel is planted and received with humility, God is bringing new birth to people and their communities.

More than ever, our world needs this message of hope in the face of death. Let your light shine!



Steve Smith  
UK Director

**P.S. I'd love you to sign up to our weekly prayer email, SIMpray. Just go to [sim.co.uk/simpray](http://sim.co.uk/simpray) or email [linda@sim.co.uk](mailto:linda@sim.co.uk) to subscribe.**

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# Gospel lens can fix our cultural blindness

The UK churches I visit as a Serving In Mission member are all committed to global mission. They exuberantly preach a gospel that proclaims salvation for people of all nations. They seek to practise ‘every member ministry’ and celebrate diversity of gifts.

Until very recently, such churches typically considered themselves to be inclusive, and church leaders often described themselves as ‘colour-blind’ to race. However, recent public expressions of passionate anger give voice to deep divisions present in our society. We are beginning to ask, do churches unwittingly contribute to these divisions?

Demonstrations in the USA over Black Lives Matter; a strident social media backlash in the UK – surely the dynamics driving this ugly clash are not present in churches committed to global mission? Or could we just be blind to them? asks *Tim McMahon*

One thing that is clear is that the ethnic and socio-economic make-up of mission-supporting churches – even those in multicultural cities – is overwhelmingly mono-cultural. Why in practice, are Bible-believing, gospel-proclaiming churches in the UK far from diverse? Recent church survey results in Manchester and Leeds shed light on the characteristics of ministries that break the mono-cultural mould.

Christian communities that engage people from many different cultures say inclusiveness is the most important factor contributing to their ‘success’. However, real inclusiveness means more than just being welcoming and friendly. It requires significant

investment, personal sacrifice, and courageous leadership.

Churches with growing intercultural communities intentionally invest in the lives of people in the different cultural groups around them.

They ensure their activities and meetings are accessible and visible to local ethnic minorities by providing signs in multiple languages.

They don’t just teach their membership about the cultures of the communities they seek to reach; they encourage them to share and learn from others’ cultures.

Members from different cultural groupings need to be visible and active in the leadership of a ministry. They need to have a real voice, affecting how disciple-making and training-up of

church members is done.

This needs to take account of the cultural context and communities within which the church resides.

The leaders of genuinely intercultural churches lead by example. Not necessarily by being adept at cross-cultural work, but by being willing to go out of their comfort zone to deeply engage in the lives of those from different cultural backgrounds around them.

A willingness to be vulnerable – even to embrace weakness – is key. When people from a majority culture do this, they are often surprised to find that by grace, allowances are made among the minority groups they seek to serve. Repeated cultural *faux pas* are forgiven. Genuine effort to humbly serve those who are obviously different

is met with openness and interest. The gospel makes its way into communities previously considered ‘closed’.

God loves to turn human order on its head. His power is revealed through his people’s weakness. When we are willing to sacrifice ourselves for the sake of others, we find life and build

A video of 50 countries singing *Amazing Grace* went viral during COVID-19



joyful relationships. When we are willing to humble ourselves and learn from other cultures, we find that those from other cultures are willing to listen to what we have to say. The gospel gains a hearing. After initial discomfort, we experience profound belonging when we embrace those from cultures very different to our own.

An intercultural church community provides an earthly foretaste of the heavenly gathering in which all God’s people will one day participate. But we will only experience this if we are willing to lay down our own lives – to humble ourselves, to expect discomfort, to cede control to others and to reach out in loving service to those from cultures very different to our own.

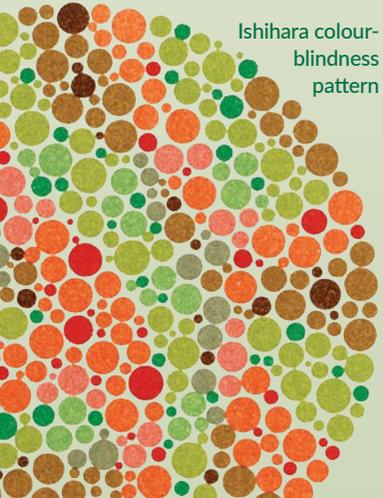
Tim McMahon is a SIM UK mission worker dedicated to ministry training

## Please pray

**Thank God** for the gospel through which he forms a heavenly gathering around Christ by people from every tribe, nation and tongue.

**Pray for our church communities** to be transformed by the gospel of Jesus, to become aware of our ‘cultural blindness’, and to commit to learning from and even celebrating the cultures of other communities around us.

**Pray that cross-cultural missionary training** will help workers share the good news of Jesus throughout the world.



Ishihara colour-blindness pattern

# Six of the best

By Deborah Agnes

The Faithful Witness initiative brings together multicultural workers to share the good news of Jesus Christ in difficult places

**H**ow do you get started in a place where there is no gospel witness? Why are there still ‘forgotten communities’ in today’s world?

They all require the church to count the cost if they are to be reached. But are we willing to send people to places that are risky – because of remoteness; high levels of persecution or kidnapping; laws against local people choosing to follow Christ; or even a global pandemic?

Are we willing to invest for the long term – if multiple

languages need to be learned, hearts are spiritually ‘hard’, or professional qualifications need to be improved in order to secure a visa?

The church is finding all sorts of ways to cross barriers and reach people with God’s spoken word in this digital age. A radio broadcast can be picked up in a remote Eritrean village; a Fulani herdsman

can have God’s word on an SD card that plays through his mobile phone; young people in Indonesia can hear God’s word preached via YouTube.

We can be brought into relationship with one another, through the communication of God’s word across a distance, just as Paul found as he wrote to and prayed for the church in Colossae, whom he had never met.



South Asia



Nigeria



Chad



Mali



North Africa



Thailand

Yet the good news of relationship with God through Jesus is, at its heart, designed to be shared through relationship with his people. God counted the cost and sent the word in human form, that we might know him. He has made the church his body on earth today, to continue to bear witness to Christ in person through relationship; through lives lived out in the power of his Spirit.

Serving In Mission is excited to see that worldwide there are still churches willing to send their best people to hard places to bear witness to Christ through relationship.

Our Faithful Witness in Forgotten Communities initiative started last year to better enable this work.

Recruiting for six specific locations from churches across the globe and

working with partner agencies, means that we are already seeing teams come together.

Each team has no more than two people from any one nation, and each has a mix of skills and experience, with an experienced team leader, sometimes from a partner organisation. We are giving each team member up to one-third of their funding for the first five years, so they can get going and start communicating back what they are seeing and doing – building their support as they go.

We have prayed and listened and tried to



understand what is needed in each place.

**Please join with us in seeking to see communities of Christ-followers**

**established in each of our Faithful Witness locations – Chad, Mali, Nigeria, North**

**Africa, South Asia and Thailand. Maybe your church would like to partner with a specific team? You can find out more information at [sim.org/Faithfulwitness](http://sim.org/Faithfulwitness)**

Deborah Agnes is SIM UK Personnel Director

## Please pray

**For the Lord** to raise up multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-skilled teams to work in this pioneering mission.

**For gospel workers** to raise the resources – financial and other needs – and trust in God’s perfect timing.

**That churches will be led** by the Holy Spirit and guided by his word and his love for all people to support this ministry.

# Raising a family on the mission field

By Kerry Allan

**On any given weekend, Rachel and Joshua take their sons to the desert and visit archaeological ruins where the boys can run around and dig in the sand – exploring a world of imagination that children back in the UK only find in museums and books.**

It's just one of the advantages enjoyed by the family, who have been serving in the Middle East for the past 10 years.

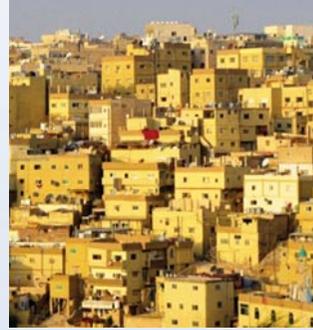
During the week, Joshua travels to the city language school to help mission workers learn Arabic, while Rachel takes care of their three boisterous

boys, Jonathan, six, Sam, five and Tim, two.

“Although I often feel the pressure that I should be doing more outside the house, I also see that the busier I am, the quicker things fall apart in the home,” she admits. “I’ve learnt the hard way that children of all ages need a lot of attention and my primary



role is to take care of my family. The most important thing for our boys is for us to walk closely and genuinely



with the Lord and have daily habits of spending time with him as a family.”

While raising a family halfway across the world can be daunting, Rachel and Joshua, who are sent by a church in Birmingham, say it is a privilege to help their sons follow God as they grow up in an Islamic community.

“As we teach the boys about Jesus, they often ask whether their friends and our neighbours love Jesus too. As a family, we then pray for them to know the Lord.

“Raising our family in a new culture gives great opportunities to talk

to our children about the differences, particularly if the host culture is made up of different religions. Not fitting in is also a reminder that for all believers, our citizenship is in heaven and we are only passing through this life.”

Learning to speak Arabic is also a must for Rachel and the boys: “If the mother and children don’t learn the language, they will feel isolated from the father and his ministry. This makes it hard to immerse into the culture and stay long term.”

It has also helped them build relationships and to show God’s love by inviting schoolfriends and neighbours into the family home.

“Middle East culture is very people-centred and spontaneous,” Rachel explains. “Sometimes this means you need to be flexible with your plans, which can be hard if you enjoy routine as visitors can arrive at your door anytime, but it’s



important to show you care by genuinely welcoming them, even if the timing is inconvenient! The Lord has challenged me to see that interruptions are divine appointments and feeling prepared is not as important as being ready to give your time to the person who’s come to spend time with you.

“Arabs love children and our landlady and her extended family who live in the building have become like family to us and we are grateful for the way they have adopted us.”

So what advice does Rachel give families thinking of serving overseas?

“When you live in another culture, you will always be a student: Ask questions, listen and learn. The longer you are there, the more you will realise what you don’t know. It’s easy to be critical and get discouraged by the differences between your culture and the new one, so guard your heart and keep a close, personal walk with the Lord and ask him to keep your heart soft, not hardened by trials, but moulded more to the likeness of his son.”

## Please pray

**For the family’s close neighbours** and others in their building to know the Lord.

**For wisdom** as Rachel and Joshua decide on the next school for their son Jonathan.

**Give thanks** for the internet and the many ways the family can regularly connect with their extended families back home.





# A tale of two cities

By Chloe Blainey

## Mapping intercultural ministry in the UK

**‘Just because we live in a place, doesn’t mean we always know what’s going on,’ admitted one church leader in conversation, early last year.**

He wasn’t alone in wanting a clearer picture of the different challenges and opportunities faced by multicultural churches as they seek to share the gospel in their communities.

Throughout the Bible, salvation is for *all* nations, tongues and tribes. And the UK is an increasingly fitting example of an environment where many ethnicities, cultures, languages and religions can be found in one postcode.

To best serve churches and ministries, we need to identify

and understand their attitudes to intercultural local and global ministry.

In autumn 2019, faith-based research company Eido Research undertook a pilot project, looking at two cities: Leeds and Manchester, to find out where churches are succeeding in embracing and learning from their diversity and how they are praying, coming alongside, and reaching their communities for Christ.

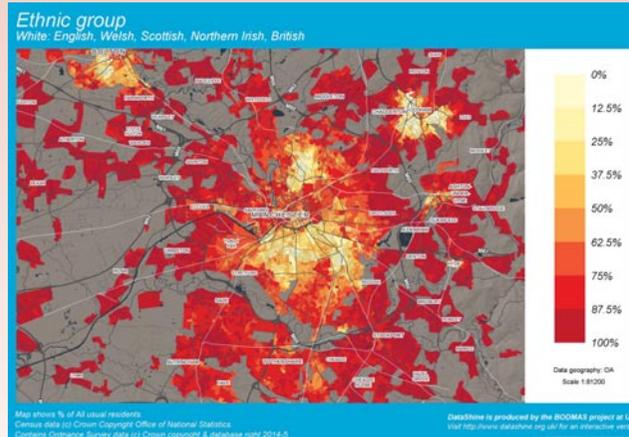
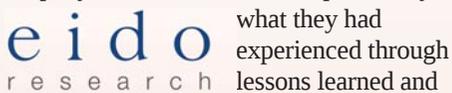
The research was set up by SIM UK in collaboration with AIM Europe, AWM-Pioneers, OMF and London City Mission.

We spoke to 60-70 churches

in each city by phone, or via an online questionnaire. In addition, several churches took part in a ‘hotspot’ interview to share specifically what they had experienced through lessons learned and areas of best practice.

### Some key factors that were identified in successful intercultural ministry included:

- Actively welcoming and listening to diverse voices and perspectives.
- Being present and consistent within diverse communities.
- Training and equipping congregations to understand different cultural, religious or ethnic perspectives.



White British population in Manchester: 0% (yellow)–100% (dark red)

### There were also specific challenges that both cities faced in reaching out interculturally:

- Absence of resources (time, funds, people).
- Lack of confidence or fear of saying the wrong thing to those from a different background.
- Apathy or lack of drive for churches to reach out, resulting in the church becoming inaccessible.

Alongside the written results, we met online (owing to COVID-19) with several pastors and leaders from both cities, as well as guest



speakers from intercultural networks, to reflect and delve deeper into the findings in order to help us look at what SIM UK and the other partner agencies could be doing to serve the churches in these areas.

As a result of both the personal meetings with ministry leaders and the research findings, there was a clear recognition that our hearts must be humbled to address the barriers to Christ-like inclusivity in leadership and fellowship within UK churches.

With a growing number of people who haven’t heard Christ’s message of salvation in our own country, it was also a reminder of the pressing need to train and equip ourselves to meet with, welcome and show hospitality, as we share the gospel with people from all nations.

“As the final written report on the findings of these two cities nears completion, we’re excited to continue building relationships with churches across the UK to see how we can serve hand-in-hand in helping them to equip and mobilise congregations to the great gospel need in our diverse country and overseas,” says Steve Smith, SIM UK Director.

Email [chloe@sim.co.uk](mailto:chloe@sim.co.uk) to get a copy of the research findings.

Chloe Blainey is Executive Assistant to Steve Smith, SIM UK Director

### Please pray

**This research will be used** to inform and inspire intercultural evangelism, discipleship, church-planting and leadership.

**For evangelical churches** in the UK to receive the strength needed to respond to our times as we fulfil the Great Commission in, to, and from intercultural Britain and Europe.

**For hearts to be humbled** to address any barriers to Christ-like inclusivity in leadership and fellowship within our churches.

# Peter takes ministry online

By Kerry Allan

**F**ive years after a wave of refugees and migrants came to Europe fleeing war and economic hardship, the chaos of a global pandemic prompted many to ask about the end times, says Peter Samir, who is joining the #HowWillTheyHear ministry.

“Questions were raised up among churches and Christians as to how to answer their questions during these uncertain times,” he says.

But while the coronavirus crisis closed churches all over the world, God used his people to create thousands of home churches, discipleship groups and Bible studies online and give Christians a new opportunity to point to Jesus.

“Religion is a great aspect in the life of Arab people. The coronavirus crisis has been a blessing as God wants us to use different ways to show all Muslims in Europe looking for hope in their life, that Jesus Christ is their greatest security,” adds Peter, who has been working in Muslim discipleship since 1990.

#HowWillTheyHear mobilises churches to share the gospel with migrants and refugees across Europe. It also trains and sends Christians from overseas to help and support local churches as they reach out to refugees with the gospel and raises leaders from Muslim Background Believers (MBBs).

Within weeks of the onset of COVID-19, Peter launched five online groups, which now number more than 120 participants from Greece, Holland, Turkey, Germany and Sweden. He also provides books and videos online for local churches in Europe to distribute.

“People are more engaged with the online groups because



they can be ‘hidden’ behind a screen and they are going really well. Some have even invited families and friends from their origin countries to attend discipleship groups online.”

Peter is now keen to collaborate with more churches, organisations and Christians to help them reach out to refugees and migrants.

“Do bring your Arabic-speaking believers or seekers to join online discipleship groups and attend some training to equip and prepare them to start a Bible study group among their friends and share the gospel with their family,” says Peter.

For more information, email [mobilisation@howwilltheyhear.net](mailto:mobilisation@howwilltheyhear.net)

## Please pray

**For families** and young Arabic speakers in Europe to find their true way with Jesus.

**Give glory to God** as he uses online meetings for his good purposes.

**For local churches** to collaborate with the #HWTH ministry in reaching out to Arab speakers in Europe.

# The power of a child’s prayer

By Linda Hunt



**I**n the Bible, Josiah was made king at the age of eight and his faith in the Lord had a transformative influence on the nation of Judah.

At Serving In Mission, our motto is ‘By Prayer’ and we recognise the importance of the formative years of a child’s life as we strive to help everyone whatever their age, to pray effectively for communities who have never heard of Jesus.

We do not underestimate the power of a child’s prayer and many of our mission workers testify to the way God put

mission on their hearts from a young age. Inspired by this, we want to open the eyes of primary school-aged children to the gospel needs around the world and encourage a heart for prayer for the nations.

You could be nurturing a future mission worker and we’d love to help you with that through SIMpray Kids, which will feature stories from our own Third Culture Kids (TCK) on what life is like for their families serving across the globe and illustrated with pictures or videos and points for prayer from the children themselves.

We will be travelling through some challenging terrain – from the desert regions of central Africa and south Asia, to the urban landscape of central Asia – and meet families serving

remote communities in South America and even visit a family serving at a mission hospital.

There will also be activities on the SIM UK website for you to try at home – anything from colouring in sheets, to favourite recipes from where the children are currently serving.

Our journey begins in September with a glimpse into the lives of Ellie May and Mim, who serve with their parents at Bingham Academy, a school in urban Ethiopia. Please join us on a journey of prayer around the world through the eyes of our TCKs and sign up to receive SIMpray Kids every month at <https://bit.ly/SIMprayKids>.

**Meet our TCK coordinator Cheryl Gibson – see Page 24**

## Answers to prayer

✓ Give thanks for 18 new staff recruited for Bingham Academy in Ethiopia. Pray for them as they prepare to teach, mentor and disciple their students.

✓ God is raising up people to join Faithful Witness teams in areas where there is currently no gospel witness.

✓ 27 people attended our latest online orientation course. 18 other families and individuals are waiting to go/return overseas as soon as they are able, and ten people are ready to come to the UK to serve as mission workers.

✓ God is using a Facebook group to reach nearly 2,000 tribal people in Papua, Indonesia.

✓ Some ministries forced to move online in south and central Asia have had a very positive response. People who previously opposed Christianity are now joining Bible studies.

✓ One media group operating in the Middle East has seen a significant increase in Bible downloads from its ministry website.

# 'Be our eyes and ears'

How SIM is in a powerful position to respond and protect those left vulnerable as a result of COVID-19



**C**COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on our world, creating a global health crisis affecting millions of people in every community where SIM workers live and serve.

Hospitals and medical systems have been overwhelmed and economists are now signalling a severe global recession, with unprecedented levels of unemployment, pushing more people into extreme poverty than ever before.

But of equal concern is a hidden global crisis triggered by these health and economic catastrophes: the crisis of human trafficking

amongst the world's most vulnerable people.

Taking action to reduce trafficking is a significant spiritual battle and while this may seem overwhelming, the good news is that SIM is able to take steps to stop this crisis happening in our communities.

## WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Human trafficking is the illegal process of trapping people by violence, deception or coercion and exploiting them for financial or personal gain.

Research has shown that people who experience the following are at particular

risk of human trafficking:

- Trauma.
- Conflict, violence, natural disasters or public health emergencies.
- Discrimination.
- Loss of income and livelihoods.
- Family violence.

Victims are also typically those who are orphaned or lack caring, supportive relationships.

Serving In Mission already knows that human traffickers prey on this vulnerability and will flock to where there are crises of any sort.

"Human traffickers lure victims by promising a better life, with the chance of earning

money or receiving an education, of helping their families. They trick, deceive, and sometimes force them into situations of exploitation, abuse and slavery, from which they cannot escape," says Sarah Scott Webb, co-leader of *For Freedom*, SIM's global anti-trafficking ministry.

## AFTERMATH OF COVID-19

"The Ebola outbreak in West Africa was accompanied by spikes in abuse, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, teenage pregnancy, violence against children, child labour, and other forms of human trafficking," says Sarah.

"Prior to COVID-19, an estimated 40 million vulnerable men, women and children had been trafficked into slavery worldwide. This statistic will increase dramatically over the coming months. Loss of livelihoods will leave desperate families extremely vulnerable to false offers of work as they look for ways to survive. We are going to witness a tsunami of trafficking in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic."

## WHO IS AT RISK?

The global enforced lockdown has seen a huge increase in the demand for online pornography. This in turn has driven the demand for sex trafficking of women and children to produce more

content for pornographic sites, and a significant increase in online live streaming of sexual exploitation and abuse.

## 'We are going to witness a tsunami of trafficking in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic'

It has also created an environment where millions of children have had greater unsupervised internet access, leaving them exposed to increasing rates of online sexual exploitation and grooming by sexual predators.

"Severe economic hardship caused by loss of income and livelihoods will lead to an increase of families resorting

to selling their children into situations of child labour and child marriage as a source of income," warns Sarah. "It is predicted that COVID-19 will directly cause more than 4 million girls to be married within the next two years and millions more men, women and children will fall prey to trafficking promising work and decent jobs. Migrants living in camps will also be at particular risk."

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

*For Freedom's* global ministry was launched two years ago to coordinate SIM's response and address the root causes of human trafficking. It provides training, support and strategic guidance to SIM teams, workers, partner ministries and local churches involved in anti-trafficking work.

"Instead of waiting until people have been trafficked (fallen off the cliff) and



our eyes and ears about how we can help them protect vulnerable people in their communities and stop traffickers from maximising the situation. We'd love to help them with practical and protective measures to stop people getting close to the edge of the cliff and being trafficked," adds Sarah.

Sarah says the following steps will help to build layers of protection around vulnerable individuals and communities and make them more resilient to being trafficked:

#### **Build relationships with the vulnerable and connect them to local churches.**

The local church has a key role to play in both building relationships and caring for the vulnerable.

Helping vulnerable people identify a safe person they can talk with, letting them know they are valued and loved as children of God, creating community and fellowship together; all play an important role in building resiliency and resistance to trafficking.

#### **Build practical protective measures around those at risk.**

Ensuring basic needs are being met is a powerful protective step we can take to care for the vulnerable in our communities.



These practical protective measures may include:

- Access to school.
- Providing health care.
- Ensuring enough to eat, providing meals or food parcels.
- A safe place to live.
- Community and fellowship with others.
- Teaching job skills, training opportunities.

#### **Teach trafficking awareness and safety**

Our communities need to know this human trafficking is happening and that they

may be at risk of false job offers and false offers of help. We need to be teaching awareness of:

- How traffickers operate.
- What to do if you think someone is at risk of being trafficked.
- How to migrate safely.
- Keeping safe online.

#### **WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

- Support the work of *For Freedom*, (see response form opposite Page 27).
- Make sure the children and young people in your families and communities are safe online.
- Pass this article on to any mission partners you support and encourage them to contact *For Freedom* for support and guidance.
- Empower your local churches to reach out to the vulnerable in their communities.



Email [intl.forfreedom@sim.org](mailto:intl.forfreedom@sim.org) for more information.

#### **Please pray**

**For Sarah Scott Webb and Karine Woldhuis** as they lead *For Freedom* through this challenging season.

**For those left vulnerable** and desperate in the aftermath of COVID-19.

**For SIM entities and teams** in vulnerable communities, that the Lord will give them wisdom and creativity to see what practical protective measures are needed to keep people safe.

## **The impact of COVID-19 on human trafficking**

### **ONLINE PREDATORS**

Children out of school, likely spending more time on the internet or gaming, are more prone to falling prey to child trafficking criminals.

### **EXPLOITATION**

Irregular workers and undocumented migrants may be left with little or no jobs, and little or no welfare assistance; a fertile ground for exploitation.

### **SUPPLY CHAIN WORKERS**

With the disruption in manufacturing around the world, supply chain workers can be left destitute and forced to search for even more precarious work, exposing themselves to a greater risk of exploitation.

### **NO ESCAPE**

Identifying victims becomes more difficult, as they may be unable to escape abusive circumstances, and behind closed doors may be exposed to more extreme forms of abuse.

### **SOCIAL DISTANCING**

Identifying victims of human trafficking for sexual or forced labour often relies on identification and reporting by the public, which is to become significantly less or fall away completely as social distancing comes into effect.

### **VULNERABLE YOUTH**

Monitoring children and youth in vulnerable communities becomes increasingly difficult when teachers, community leaders, social workers and other points of outreach are also confined indoors.

### **REFUGEE AND MIGRANT CAMPS**

Gangs operating in refugee camps could profit from the chaos to take advantage of the most vulnerable.

### **DOMESTIC SERVITUDE**

Victims of domestic servitude who are shut in with their employers, unable to access police or social services, may be further victimised by physical or sexual abuse.

### **CHILD LABOUR**

As a result of school closures in south-east Asia, the absence of subsidised school meals and the economic damage caused by the pandemic, families may seek alternative forms of income and force their children into child labour or early marriage.

### **EMOTIONAL IMPACT**

Survivors of human trafficking may have a hard time coping with social distancing. Life in lockdown may trigger memories of the physical, emotional, financial, and psychological barriers they have experienced in captivity.



# Knowing where we're going



For the past six years, Keith Walker was Director for Strategic Development as part of SIM's global

leadership team. Having recently stepped back from that role, Keith shares some of the highlights during that time and his views on what lies ahead for mission in today's world.

**SH:** *What have been some of the most significant strategic developments for SIM over the past six years?*

**Keith:** It's been a period of very considerable change.

Let me pick out three developments to illustrate the range of those changes in relation to our sense of purpose, our contexts of ministry and organisational structure.

- Our new Purpose and Mission Statement, which sets out why SIM exists, has made a huge difference. Driven by the biblical conviction that no one should live and die without hearing of Jesus, it expresses the focus of SIM's calling: Christ should be proclaimed in communities where he is not known.

- It was this sense of purpose that sat behind our glad engagement with MECO, leading SIM back into the Middle East. We now have a growing ministry led by those who have laboured there for many years, but with SIM's capacity to bring more workers into the harvest field.

- Given our renewed sense of purpose, it became clear that our international leadership structure needed to be refreshed. Two years ago, new people were brought into senior leadership roles to work alongside those with solid experience, as part of a major restructuring.

**SH:** *Where do you see SIM going in the years ahead and how will we take the next generation of potential workers with us?*

**Keith:** As I've stepped back, future direction is for others to decide, but perhaps I can offer a couple of things. I don't believe we need to trade off wise strategic direction in mission against the instincts of the next generation of workers. It isn't always helpful to shape mission according to the preferences of those coming forward to serve, but neither is it necessary. My sense is that younger Christians are looking for authenticity and relevance.

SIM can be authentic by remaining committed in heart and action to our purpose of proclaiming Christ and expressing his love and compassion in communities where he is least known. The older way of prioritising mission sought to identify 'unreached people groups'. That approach led to many places that were, and are, proper places of focus for SIM (not least the Muslim world) but it tends to fail to acknowledge that there are whole communities of indigenous Europeans who are unreached.

As we continue to evaluate where the Lord is calling SIM workers to go; we also need to reassess where the Lord is calling workers from –

including some to come to the UK. And in this country, there are mission-ready Christians of Asian, African and Latin backgrounds whom the Lord has equipped for service here and elsewhere. This is hugely challenging for mission structures and finance, but highly relevant to today's world, and not least to the UK, divided as it is by socio-economic and racial distinctions.

**SH:** *So very briefly, what can our readers do?*

**Keith:** Very briefly? That's a challenge! Be open – think differently about what a mission worker might look and sound like; where they might come from; and where they might go. Then pray, receive and send, go and give.

## Please pray

**For unity, courage and discernment** for members of SIM International's leadership team.

**For the long-term sustainability** of SIM's ministries and projects in the aftermath of COVID-19.

**Give thanks** for Keith's God-given gifts and skills that have helped shape SIM's gospel community's vision, both in the UK and overseas.

# Millennials and mission

By Kerry Allan

The call to share Christ amongst the nations is for every generation and SIM UK is passionate about seeing students and young people mobilised to do so as part of a short-term mission that can often lead to long-term discipleship.



**No generation has been so willing and able to volunteer overseas as the millennial generation.**

For many in their 20s and 30s, it can be a season of

searching and testing the passions that God has given.

There are many opportunities during study, or before entering the workplace, which could be used to serve in

God's global mission and it's an exciting time of getting stretched and saying 'yes' to moving beyond the places that feel comfortable, safe or straightforward.

SIM UK's mobilisers are there to journey through the enquiry and preparation stages for anyone feeling a call to serve in cross-cultural mission by starting with a short-term placement.

Visiting different universities up and down the country is normally a highlight on the team's calendar, but this year, those face-to-face meetings with students were made impossible by COVID-19.

However, the team has not stopped working to inspire and encourage students to engage with gospel need across the nations. Our mobilisers are eager and ready to get the conversation started via a video or phone call and the application process can be done online.

Hannah Boxall, SIM UK's Mobilisation Team Leader says: "SIM UK has several opportunities for students to experience gospel work alongside experienced mission workers, both in the UK and overseas – whether it's a four-week elective; a two-month block placement; a gap year,



**Sarah Dorman took several 'stepping stones' to reach the point where she is now a SIM UK member serving in Ethiopia. She joined a short-term summer team with SIM UK as a teenager; then a summer placement; then our gap programme and finally, an Immerse internship.**

Sent by St Andrew's Church, Oxford, she moved to Mekelle – one of the country's regional capitals and largest cities – in October 2019.

"Moving to Ethiopia has definitely been one of the best decisions in life that I've ever made," says Sarah, 26, who spends most of her time at the Mekelle Youth Centre (MYC), where each day, hundreds of youngsters attend English and computer

or a mentored mission internship for up to two years. Students and young people can also encourage their churches to consider sending a church-led team.

"Sarah's story is an example of the stepping-stones in short-term mission that can be taken and each one can play a part in helping those who serve to open a door for longer-term service.

"Our mobilisers would love to connect with you or someone you know, who wants to discover how best to use their gifts and skills in cross-cultural mission. Our approach is prayerful and relational, seeking

Christ for where he is leading. It might feel daunting, or you may not be sure how you could be used, but please get in touch anyway. We'll do the journey in partnership with your church, so that you're supported and surrounded in each step you take."

## GET INVOLVED

Please contact [hannah@sim.co.uk](mailto:hannah@sim.co.uk) for a 'no-pressure'



chat to explore how God might want you to learn, serve and grow through a short-term mission.

classes, Bible club programmes, play sport and hang out in their spare time.

And despite the disruption of COVID-19, which forced the youth centre to close, Sarah remains positive and took the opportunity of lockdown to spend more time learning Tigrinya – Ethiopia's most widely spoken language.

"The youth centre has now been shut for nearly three months and it's still hard to walk in and not see hundreds of children running around, hanging out and playing sport, but I'm using my time to learn more Tigrinya that will help me in my ministry once it reopens," she says.

Go to our website [www.sim.co.uk](http://www.sim.co.uk) to read Sarah's story in full.



The birds outside Sarah's house each morning

## Please pray

**For SIM UK mobilisers** exploring different digital methods to continue their work in uncertain times.

**For students** who are preparing for the coming academic year and all its unknowns, that they would know God's faithfulness in shaping the path ahead.

**For our churches** to be places where millennials can grow into all God has for them.

# ‘I found a sense of peace’

By Kerry Allan



**During her four-and-a-half years in Madagascar, teacher Naomi Coleman has experienced surprise school closures, random food shortages, temporary ‘don’t go out’ rules, nearby epidemics and sudden relocations.**

But with the arrival of coronavirus, she knew there would be massive implications for herself and her ministry.

Naomi, sent from Cambray Baptist Church in Cheltenham, teaches the children of the only family currently on the team – SIM UK doctors Ted and Rachel Watts, sent from Beeston Free Church, Nottingham, who are working in Mandritsara’s Good News Hospital.

The hospital does great work as a local church-run project that is proclaiming Christ, as well as providing excellent and compassionate medical care to some of the poorest people on the island, who travel for hours or even days, from surrounding villages where there is no Christian witness.

As the first coronavirus cases in Mandritsara were announced and restrictions put in place, Naomi admits

she regularly woke up during the night worried about what the implications of a mass COVID-19 outbreak would be.

“I wasn’t really worried about becoming unwell myself,” she explains, “but I hated the prospect of seeing our hospital overwhelmed as we only have a small number of doctors. Many people don’t have access to running water and they struggle to make ends meet ordinarily, so thinking about the impact of many people getting sick was quite frightening.”

Naomi made a number of changes, including teaching extra lessons to the Watts’ two young children to compensate for local school closures and moving house to be nearer her mission colleagues and cut down on non-essential journeys.

Talking through the ‘what-ifs’ with her team was vitally important, but not easy, she admits. But as contingency plans were made and the ‘new normal’ became more familiar, Naomi was able to trust God was working out his purposes during the global pandemic

“I tried to think much more about the eternal hope we have – not speculating about what the next few months may hold,” she says. “Usually, we’re looking ahead to the next visitor or short-term missionary coming to support the team, or a chance for a holiday or break. I really needed to adjust my mindset at a time when travel was so difficult. Using my time to pray, to worship through song and to study the Bible were really helpful in finding a good perspective and a sense of peace.”

When her local Malagasy church stopped gathering, Naomi tuned into Cambray Church’s new online services. Very soon, friends in the UK became more used to communicating electronically and Naomi says she was encouraged by supporters who were now more available to chat under lockdown.

At the time of writing, cases of COVID-19 were on the rise in Madagascar and it remained to be seen what the effect of the virus on Mandritsara would be.



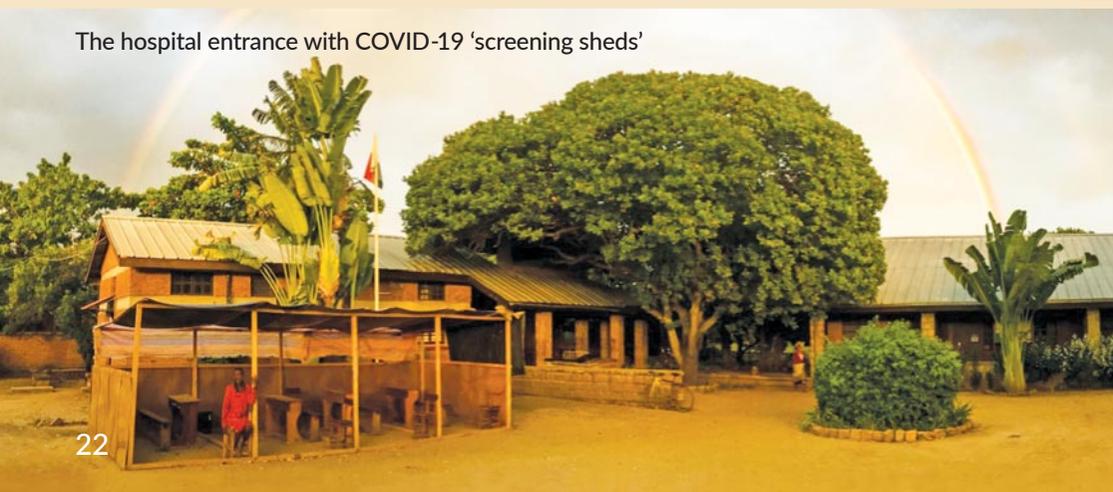
**The Friends of Mandritsara Trust, which supports the work of the Good News Hospital, is building a new theatre complex to bring much-needed additional facilities and establish the long-term sustainability of the hospital and its gospel witness in Mandritsara. Find out more at [www.mandritsara.org.uk](http://www.mandritsara.org.uk)**



Yet by God’s grace, Naomi says it is a huge privilege to be part of a project that seeks to share the gospel, while meeting people’s health needs: “The Good News Hospital does not have the

same kinds of resources and personnel as many British hospitals, but it does have the freedom to share the message of hope and life in Jesus Christ and be a beacon of light during a time of crisis.”

The hospital entrance with COVID-19 ‘screening sheds’



## Please pray

**Praise God** for all the blessings he has given Naomi and more space to reflect on his goodness.

**Pray the hospital** will keep serving and loving the people of Mandritsara as it deals with COVID-19.

**For more doctors and surgeons** to join the hospital, even for a short time, and for the vision to train Malagasy surgeons to be fulfilled.

# Cheryl Gibson Q&A

**SIM UK TCK Coordinator**

**What led you to work with SIM?**

During our 15 years of serving with SIM in Burkina Faso, my children got to experience a variety of educational settings – from home-schooling, local missionary school, boarding school and a few other options in between! A lot of time was spent making sure they got what they needed educationally and emotionally and so I learnt a lot along the way.

On our return to the UK in 2015, there were challenges in helping our children make that huge adjustment to their passport country that was my home, but not theirs.

I appreciated the support and help I'd received over the years and was keen to put my experiences as a mother, who

*"A TCK (Third Culture Kid) is an individual who, having spent a significant part of the developmental years in a culture other than the parent's culture, develops a sense of relationship to all the cultures whilst not having full ownership of any. Elements from each culture are incorporated into the life experience, but the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar experience." David C. Pollock*

had served overseas and as a home-school teacher, to good use. An opportunity came to help the TCK coordinator, mainly with home schooling resources, and then after he moved on, I took on the role.

**What does your role entail?**

As a community committed to supporting families as they take the gospel to the least reached, I work within SIM UK's People Care team to help families make good choices in order to reduce uncertainty and stress in their children's lives.

My aim is to equip and hopefully encourage our families as they leave for their country of service, to provide resources in both education issues and pastoral care and then when returning to their passport country, to be a support for our TCKs. I usually organise the children's Orientation Programme before they head overseas and then a time of debriefing once they return. During these times of COVID-19, we have had to look at doing this online.

**What advantages/benefits do TCKs enjoy?**

Growing up abroad and having a world perspective



gives TCKs a greater maturity and a heightened respect for other cultures. They are also more empathetic and tend to learn languages easily.

**What do TCKs most struggle with?**

The life of a Third Culture Kid is not a simple one. It's wonderful, enriching, colourful, and filled with incredible life-altering experiences, but certainly not neat and tidy. On their return to their passport countries, TCKs look as if they should fit right in – but they don't quite. Differences in experiences and cultural backgrounds keep them from fully fitting to the patterns of their new home and this can give them a nagging sense of rootlessness and restlessness.

**What do you hope to achieve in your role?**

SIM desires to be a loving and caring community that believes in the worth and giftedness of each child, therefore my hope is to try to meet the unique needs of all the TCKs so this can be achieved.

# 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**

**Stephanie Walker**



**Sending church:** Christian Life Church, Birmingham.

**Where are you serving?** Chiang Mai, Thailand.

**What are you doing?** Teaching at Grace International School for

children of missionary families. I will be teaching in the elementary part of the school.

**Pray:** For the practical preparations as I organise moving during COVID-19 and that I will be able to trust God fully in this time. Also, that I will settle into Thai life quickly.

**Mark & Lucy Hinds**



**Sending church:** Christ Church Endcliffe, Sheffield.

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

**What are you doing?** Working at the Good News Hospital and school.

**Pray:** Praise God for his guidance for us as a family. Please pray that we would delight in being part of God's work in Mandritsara. Pray for us, that as we share our plans with friends and the wider church family, we will have a great team of supporters as we plan to head out in January 2021.

**Eloise W.**



**Sending church:** St Andrews, Malvern, Worcs.

**Where are you serving?** Middle East.

**What are you doing?** Helping teach at a school for Syrian refugees, as well as supporting my host family in the church youth work and home life.

**Pray:** That I would have many opportunities to serve in God's strength, not my own. Also, for practical preparations before leaving and that this placement would be a time of real spiritual growth.

**Denise Burton**



**Sending church:** Rotherham Evangelical Church.

**Where are you serving?** In the UK, for SIM International.

**What are you doing?** I am Executive Assistant for Emma Brewster, the Global Directory of Ministry Outreach.

**Pray:** For the Lord to multiply all I do for his glory.

**Kara Baah**



**Sending church:** St Barnabas, north London.

**Where are you serving?** I will be working in northern Ghana.

**What are you doing?** Community health education/evangelism.

**Pray:** For my preparations for raising a prayer and financial support team through relationship-building; integrating into the SIM team and settling into a rural lifestyle and new culture.

# Do you want to serve?

By Kevin Keegan

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

## Peri-urban indigenous Apprenticeship/ Internship

**Bolivia, two years plus**

This position will expose you to life among one of Bolivia's least-reached people groups, the Quechua.



## Nurse

**Creative Access, two years plus**

Would you like the challenge of setting up and managing a mobile medical ministry in a rural area, providing many opportunities to share the good news?



## Sports Friends Senegal Organisational Leader

**Senegal, two years plus**

Make an eternal difference in the lives of Senegalese youth by showing the love of Christ through sport.



## Workers with trafficked women

**Romania, Bulgaria and Greece, one year plus**

A project raising awareness of trafficking and reaching out to vulnerable women living on the streets, needs experienced workers to show and speak of God's love through emotional support, advocacy or training in alternative job skills.



## Disciplers of Francophone Sub-Saharan African International Students for Campus Missions

**Tunisia, two years plus**

Do you have experience in equipping and training international students? If so, this could be a very strategic ministry that impacts both north and west Africa.



## Teacher for Covenant Christian School

**Thailand, two years plus (shorter term also possible)**

We are looking for people with a heart to teach missionary children or teenagers. Use your love of teaching to support Christian families in an international community.



## Youth Worker

**South Sudan, two years plus (shorter term also possible)**

South Sudan has been shattered by years of war where young people have been deprived of opportunities for education of every kind. Here is an opportunity to make a greater impact than you can realise.



## Teachers & Volunteers for an Evangelical School for Boys & Girls

**Middle East, one year plus**

A gap-year volunteer, who could teach primary school maths and English, is needed in a Middle Eastern School. You would be involved in serving the children of refugees in education, ministering Christ's love and the message of the cross as you teach.



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- Faithful Witness in Forgotten Communities – Page 6 (99746)
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Sports Friends has launched a special appeal to care for coaches, the young people on their teams, their families and their communities who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Your support will help to:

- Work with the local church to deliver aid and relief to the most needy.
- Care for 13,000 Sports Friends coaches through prayer, encouragement and support.
- Equip coaches to be the light of Christ in the lives of young people, their families and their communities.



Make a gift at [www.sim.co.uk/give](http://www.sim.co.uk/give) and quote **Sports Friends 99803**