

CONNECT

AIM's journal for prayer, reflection and growth

Jesus revealed amazing things about himself and the Father through women and his interactions with them. He still does...



AFRICA
INLAND MISSION



HE CALLS HER 'DAUGHTER'

*"Following prayer and concerted effort, enough people were recruited to go out as the first AIM missionaries to Kenya. Included in this pioneer group were the founder of the Mission, Peter Cameron Scott, and his sister, Margaret Scott. Together with them were three other men, Mr. Fred W. Kreiger, Mr. Lester Severn, and Mr. Willis R. Hotchkiss, as well as two other ladies, Miss Minnie Lindberg, and Miss Bertha Reckling."*¹

Women have been a key part of AIM since our very inception. A dig into our archives shows how Margaret Scott was instrumental in leading AIM's first missionary foray alongside her brother Peter. It wasn't long before their band of seven was also joined by Peter's mother, who after burying her son George, decided that the call upon the whole Scott family was to serve sacrificially in Africa. Our history is marked by the actions of remarkable women, who at great cost to themselves have pursued God's commands to take the gospel to those in Africa who have yet to hear it.

A COUNTER-CULTURAL APPROACH

A casual flick through the Gospels demonstrates that we shouldn't be surprised about the centrality and the importance of women in mission and in ministry. As we sat down to plan and discuss the Bible study columns that you'll find dotted through this issue of Connect, our problem was not around which women to include, but which of the many stories to leave out. We were also struck once again by the counter-cultural way in which Jesus interacted with the women he encountered. James B. Hurley, in his book *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* comments that, 'the foundation-stone of Jesus' attitude toward women was his vision of them as persons to whom and for whom he had come. He did not perceive them primarily in terms of their sex, age, or marital status; he seems to have considered them in terms of their relation (or lack of one) to God.' That is why Jesus' interactions with women in the Bible shouldn't be seen as 'stories about women, for women'. But rather as parts that make up the whole story of Jesus' love for and redemption plan for humankind. Men, the story of the bleeding woman is included for you too. ➔

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Lindsey Gray asks why there are so few single men in mission?



🕒 That story appears in all three of the synoptic gospels. In Mark and Luke's accounts, after the woman has touched Jesus' robe and has been healed, he stops because he wants to know her. He wants to know the woman who has desperately reached out from the fringes of society, crushed by her years of shame and invisibility. Jesus stops, and in that action he demonstrates the depth of his love for those the world does not see and those the world dares not touch. And he calls her 'daughter'.

REVELATION AND RESTORATION

In the account of Lazarus' death and resurrection in John 11-12, Mary confronted Jesus for not being there to save her brother. She then returned to her mourning. Mary, who sat at the feet of the Master and was commended for choosing the better thing, didn't grasp the true extent of Jesus' power and sovereignty.

But then, she witnessed the miracle of Lazarus' resurrection.

Mary responded by coming once again to kneel at the feet of Jesus, this time with understanding of who he truly was. In a beautiful act of faith, she broke a costly jar of perfume and anointed Jesus. In an expression of humility, she cried at his feet and dried his feet with her own hair.

Jesus' compassion and love are clear, but as you go through the Bible studies in this edition, you will also see in his interactions that he did not gloss over sin in women's lives. It was not condoned, but confronted. Each had the personal freedom and measure of self-determination to deal with the issues of sin, repentance, and forgiveness.

GO TO THEM

Women in Jesus' day were outsiders: marginalised and undervalued. Many in Africa still are today. Held back by oppressive regimes. Controlled by false religion. Slaves to poverty. But Jesus loves them in the same way that he loves the women he encountered in the Gospels. For themselves,



THE WOMAN AT THE WELL: THE FIRST PERSON JESUS OPENLY TOLD HE WAS THE MESSIAH

Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well is longer than any other conversation recorded in the Gospels. He has a deep conversation with her about theological (and political) matters - the nature of true worship. As a result of this conversation, she is the first person Jesus openly reveals his true identity as the Messiah to in the gospel of John, and the first person to go away and tells others about him. As a result of her testimony, many people became believers.



Read John 4:1-30. Why do you think Jesus chose to reveal himself to this woman who would, on several counts, have been viewed by many as an 'outsider'?

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Read John 4:39-42.

How does the woman at the well respond to Jesus? Are there any differences in how other people responded to him?

What are the implications of the things Jesus says to her about true worship being in spirit and truth?

How do you feel about this conversation and the woman's responses?

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as self-determining people able to choose him independently, regardless of what their culture tells them. In this edition, we've included stories from Tanzania, Kenya, the Indian Ocean Islands and Rwanda, illustrating how women are sharing the gospel and supporting other women in doing so.

But we also need men. In her article, AIM Air's Chief Pilot shares some stark truths about the lack of single men in mission.

Mary knelt at Jesus' feet. He spoke to her but she didn't truly listen. It was only after the death and resurrection of Lazarus that she really responded to who Jesus was. How many is Jesus speaking to now and calling them to follow his commands? Pray they will respond to who Jesus is, and who he loves. And go.

LINDSEY DAVIES

Communications Manager

¹ Omulokoli, Watson A.O., *Foundational History of the Africa Inland Church, 1895-1903*, accessed from https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ajet/14-2_045.pdf.

GOING BACK

For many missionaries, the call to the mission field involves crossing borders, cultures and languages. But Rosina Ferdinand's story is a bit different. Now AIM's country leader for Madagascar, she is a missionary living and working to share the gospel among her own people, the Sakalava, on the very island she grew up on.

Rosina Ferdinand grew up in the traditional Sakalava way—farming and fishing in an island village on Nosy Be off the north coast of Madagascar, believing in cultural taboos and engaging in ancestral worship. Her mother was a famous medium, and people in the area highly respected her gift of communicating with the spirit world. But even at a young age and especially after watching her parents' marriage disintegrate, Rosina suspected that something was missing in her life and was searching for the truth.

I KNEW JESUS WAS THE SAVIOUR

Rosina, along with her father and her siblings, left for the mainland, and attended high school there. “In that time, I was searching,” she recalls. “Students from the university came down to my city with the gospel and invited all students to come to a meeting. I went to that meeting and there my mind was open when they talked about Jesus, about the Bible. I knew that Jesus was the Saviour. I could be friends with him. I could trust him.” ☺







🕒 The preaching and Bible studies continued for a whole week before they asked the life-changing question. “I was torn and trembling,” Rosina remembers, “but I stood up and said, ‘I want to give my life to Jesus.’”

After graduating from university, it was clear that God was leading Rosina to join that same student ministry. But her mother wanted her to take a job she had been offered, teaching at the university – a job that would pay back the investment her family had made in sending her to university. “It was hard to go back to my community as a Christian. I was so misunderstood, and was under a huge amount of pressure from my family, because even though I tried to help and did my best, it was never enough.”

CHOOSING A DIFFERENT PATH

She knew how far away from God she had been, how she had been trapped by the fear of taboos and unappeased ancestors. Her whole community still lived in that bondage and this weighed heavily on her heart. “I did have the desire to come back to Nosy Be, so that they would be freed and know salvation,” she says, “but I did not have the courage. I dreamt of

going back to my village and being part of the family there, living there with them so that through me they may see Jesus and see the gospel. That was my dream, but I didn’t know where to start or how to do it.”

Whilst Rosina served in student ministry, her family could not understand her choice, or why she had not married and had children. Rosina’s mother, the famous spirit medium, became possessed by the spirit of their dead king. But, through God’s providence, she then discovered Christ. The villagers were upset, believing the kingdom of their ancestors was broken. They put a death curse on her mother, who, nevertheless, lived many more years to the age of 76. Rosina marvels at God’s miracles: “I thought my mother would be the last one,” she says, “but she was the first. If the Lord was able to touch my mother’s life, and she became a believer, putting behind all those ancestral worships, I can be sure that the Lord will do some more great things in other people’s lives... Salvation has come right here in the middle of Sakalava people.”

Eventually, God sent Rosina to All Nations Christian College in the UK. She says, “Going



to the UK was a challenge... but I knew with all my heart that it was the door God had opened for me.”

While there, a local church who had a prayer focus on the Sakalava people invited her to visit, then promised to support her when she returned to minister to her people.

RETURNING HOME

Now, Rosina sits outside her thatch-roofed house in the village she grew up in. She’s served as an AIM missionary here for eight years, has led a TIMO (Training in Ministry Outreach) team, and disciples the newest believers at the Sakalava church plant. One of those young men, the leader of the worship band, recently expressed a desire to become a pastor. “This is not something I could have done by myself,” she says. She is so grateful for the people who have been praying for her and her ministry among the Sakalava people.

There are a lot of churches across Madagascar, and many people attend these churches. But this is not the case for most Sakalava people. Many Sakalava don’t understand what church is about, and often

they don’t speak the dialect spoken in the churches. Their history adds another layer of complexity, as traditionally the Sakalava have been oppressed by other Malagasies, and this sense is very present still, which means that it is hard for them to see themselves as part of those churches.

“I just wanted to be with my people,” Rosina explains, “sitting down in the village, being with them so maybe they would see the transformation in my life and see that there is something magnificent in that, and they would know Jesus as well. God loves my people. He wants to raise up Sakalava people to believe in him and to be set free from the bondage of the fear of the ancestors. The Lord has put me here to oversee the work of raising up Sakalava believers and Malagasy believers for mission. It is quite amazing to me that the Lord put me right back in the middle of my people.”



ROSINA FERDINAND is AIM’s country leader for Madagascar. A member of the Sakalava people, Rosina is seeking to reach more Malagasy with the gospel.



PRAY FOR THE SAKALAVA

WHO ARE THE SAKALAVA PEOPLE?

The Sakalava live in the west and northwest of Madagascar. They are a minority ethnic group, making up about 6.2% of the population. Related to the Antakarana, they are semi-nomadic agriculturalists and fishermen, and also keep cattle as a sign of wealth and for sacrifices. Sakalava identity focuses on respecting, honouring and working for both the living and the dead Sakalava royalty. They have a caste system which includes the descendants of royalty, then nobles, commoners and slaves – everyone knows their position in society.

WHAT DO THEY BELIEVE?

They believe in a remote, creator god, who was the first ancestor. He can be reached through ancestral spirits and human mediums. People seek spirit possession, often amid much drunkenness, and sorcery and witchcraft are common. Fear is a constant companion: fear of punishment, of displeasing ancestors, and of death. Taboos are observed in almost everything to do with

“Sakalava are listening to the gospel of Matthew and songs in their own language...”

their daily life. Everything is geared towards pleasing the royal ancestors.

WHAT IS BEING DONE TO REACH THEM WITH THE GOSPEL?

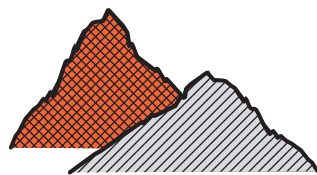
A TIMO (Training in Ministry Outreach) team served among the Sakalava from 2013–2015, and they saw several people come to Christ. Among these were ‘The Band’, a group of musicians who have been writing Bible songs in the Sakalava language. Rosina Ferdinand, the TIMO team leader, continued to minister to the Sakalava, together with one family from the TIMO team. Last year the Ramangalahy family from France joined this team and four Sakalava couples, who are new believers, have received biblical training to equip them to evangelise their own people.

WHAT CAN WE PRAY FOR?

The island of Nosy Be depends heavily on tourism but Madagascar's Covid-19 response means that borders have been closed indefinitely, meaning that tourism as a source of income has completely gone. Many people pick ylang-ylang flowers and sell them to a factory to be turned into oil. But the price per kilo is one fifth of what it was last year. People are struggling to pay back loans and feed their families. Pray that the church would come together to help people. Pray that God would show himself to them as the great provider.

Pray for Bible translation projects and gospel sharing initiatives going on across the island. Memory cards are being produced that can be used in mobile phones, and through these devices the Sakalava are listening to the Gospel of Matthew and songs in their own language. Thank the Lord for this way of getting the gospel into the homes of the Sakalava people. Please pray that many Sakalava will come to faith in Christ through this outreach ministry.

Recent travel on the island has revealed that three more villages are open to hearing the gospel. The first village has offered to give a plot for missionaries to build a house on. The second village has offered a house for the missionaries to stay in. The third village has openly expressed their desire to have a service held in their village every Sunday. Praise the Lord for these new opportunities of ministry and pray for wisdom for our Malagasy missionaries (Melias, Lebaba, Noel and Jean) as they organise outreach to these villages.



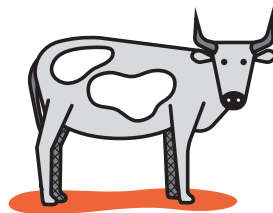
WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Their name means 'people of the long valleys'. 'Sakalava,' as a collective ethnic term, encompasses a diverse array of communities.



SAKALAVA ROYALTY

The Sakalava of the south differ greatly from those in the north. But the true mark of Sakalava identity is that one respects, honours and works for the living and dead Sakalava royalty.



PASTORAL PEOPLE

The Sakalava are a pastoral people, keeping large herds of zebu cattle that outnumber the human population.

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TRUST AND OBEY

Jessica Goldschmidt-Habyarimana talks about ministry as a single woman and how she is trusting in God for the future.

I had the privilege of serving with AIM in Rwanda for eight years, helping in a youth camp ministry (3D Christian Camps) and a programme called WHY WAIT? (Life Skills Curriculum). I started dating Eric (my now husband) after seven years, which means that my experience on the mission field so far has been as a single woman.

I think the first thing I'd like to say is that it's not primarily about being a man or a woman; it's about being where God wants us to be. He calls us to a specific place because he has a plan for us. A verse that spoke to me during a visit to Rwanda before going long term was John 15:16, 'You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.' So, it's not about waiting until we are married or thinking someone else would be better qualified than us (otherwise we might never do anything because there probably is someone better qualified than us). It's about obeying, it's about bearing fruit that will last and it's about knowing that God will equip us, even when we feel we still have so much to learn.

Were there challenges to being a single woman in Rwanda? I think there are other countries where the challenges would be greater, where a woman doesn't have as much say and can only interact with other women for example. I lived in the capital city of a country that is predominantly 'Christian'. I did receive some comments, like being asked about being an *umumasere* (a nun) or whether it wasn't 'cold' (referring to the fact that I was living alone). We are indeed not made for being alone. Even though Western societies are very individualistic, we all have a need to belong, to be able to receive and contribute. There

are many 'one another' commands in the Bible, therefore we need to build relationships. Whether that is within a mission team, the local church (if it already exists), with other nationals or expatriates, we need each other! God blessed me with other AIMers on my team and another missionary who became a dear friend, with whom I could share and pray.

There are ministries both men and women can be involved in but I do think some situations are more appropriate for one or the other. And there are situations where it is an advantage to be single or to be a married couple, hence the importance of having both men and women, singles, couples and families on the mission field! As a woman, I was able to walk through an unwanted pregnancy with a Rwandan friend, for example, or have a girls' Bible study at my house.

I am currently working for the AIM French speaking mobilising office and my husband is studying theology in the Netherlands. Although we don't yet know where God will lead us next, things will be different this time. I am not just making a decision that will affect me (even though, when single, my decision to serve abroad did also affect my family). But this time we are two, and before my husband finishes his studies we will be three. So, our decision as a couple will also influence our child. Which country/context will we raise her in; what influence will that have on her life; will she have a place to consider home as I do; how will finances work out? I don't necessarily have all the answers, but I need to be reminded that it's about obeying, it's about bearing fruit that will last. And that verse in John 15 ends with a beautiful promise, 'Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.' If we go where our Father appoints us, we can also go with the knowledge that our Lord will give us what we need as individuals, what we need as a couple, what our child will need.



JESSICA GOLDSCHMIDT-HABYARIMANA served in Rwanda for eight years. She is now based in the Netherlands serving in the AIM French speaking office.



A person wearing a traditional Alagwa headwrap and a patterned garment is seated in a rural setting. The background features a stone wall, a dirt path, and some green plants. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

OPENING OUR LIVES

Miriam and Owen Pugh are part of a team living among the Alagwa people in Tanzania. They are involved in an oral translation of the Bible into Alagwaisa, alongside community projects to improve access to water. Miriam shares with us the dynamics of being a woman in the Alagwa community, and what really matters when it comes to sharing the gospel.

There are spaces in my community where only women go: ritual spaces, relational spaces, even work spaces. Some of these are dependent not only on gender but on one's stage of life. At first, with my Western presuppositions I found these delineations challenging and restricting. However, I have come not only to see the beauty in some of them but also to understand the depth of connection possible in these spaces. 🕊



☪ REVEALING THE FULLNESS OF GOD'S LOVE

Jesus recognised these spaces in his own community. Some he lived into – choosing the twelve male disciples – and some he purposely defied: sitting with the Samaritan woman at the well, teaching Mary and affirming her as she chooses that over her more expected hosting responsibilities... and so on. He chose to conform to or defy these spaces to reveal more of the fullness of the love and glory of God.

As a woman I have the freedom to enter in and respect, to participate and challenge. To point to the True Light who gives light to the world. This takes a lot of time. And it hurts. Because we are finally beginning to realise that it is the work that God is doing in our own hearts which somehow will bring the fruit we long to see. Not the water tanks or the translation or any other good and

important work. I believe that as we live learning to abide more deeply in the One who is worthy whatever the cost, our obedience will count. Even though it will probably never be seen by people.

DEFINED BY WHAT IS SEEN

It is largely the external expressions which define religious piety and practice here; what you wear, when you eat and don't eat, how you greet and finally how you are buried. Likewise, it is the pre-Islamic ritual acts which restore harmony between the seen and the unseen world. The deeper ancient world views facilitate the binding of these religious acts together and allow a synchronicity between old and new ways: the witchdoctor and the Islamic teacher, the sacrifices for rain and the mosque.

Two world view values which still dominate Alagwa thinking are the harnessing of divine

power and maintaining communal harmony. This overwhelming drive for harmony leads to a superficial appearance of a community bound together in a common purpose and religion whilst hurt, envy and fear create havoc below the surface.

DEEP CALLS TO DEEP

Jesus has never been satisfied with the externals and appearances. He desires that deep should call to deep. He wants Alagwa hearts and lives, not just external allegiance or even church attendance. For the Alagwa, who judge the effectiveness of religion on results, surrendering to God because he is worthy is a whole new paradigm. When even one Alagwa chooses to trust Jesus even when they do not get the results they are looking for, this is what shakes the spiritual strongholds in our community more than any power encounter. These truths take time for seekers and believers to grasp. They need not so much to be taught as to be lived out slowly and painfully. By us as well as those we are serving.

Jesus is calling us to surrender. He has already shown us what it means for the kingdom to come through the seed that goes into the ground and dies. Owen and I, along with our team mates, are learning more about what it means to die here. To continually die to ourselves, our pride and our own ambitions. As we live in close community with our dear friends and neighbours, often in these gendered spaces where hearts are opened and life is lived, may we also open our lives more to God and to one another. May we lead people to a new understanding of the God who loves them and desires all of them for himself. One day, may there be a community of authentic Alagwa believers whose minds are being renewed and who are discovering new depths of God’s love for them.



OWEN AND MIRIAM PUGH
work in a team among the Alagwa in Tanzania using Bible stories in the mother tongue for evangelism and discipleship.

THE WOMAN WITH THE PERFUME: THE FIRST FOLLOWER OF CHRIST TO ACKNOWLEDGE HIS IMPENDING DEATH

The story of the woman anointing Jesus with perfume appears in all the Gospels and the event is clearly significant to the Gospel writers. Through her actions she became the first follower of Christ to acknowledge his impending death. Whether or not the woman was fully aware of the deep meaning behind her actions, she would have known the symbolism of a king being anointed with oil as well as the association between burial and perfumed oil.



Read Matthew 26:6-13. Jesus had repeatedly talked about his death including just before this event. In what ways might the woman’s actions be in response to that?

The woman’s actions recognise Jesus as King. How often do we claim to be disciples of Jesus yet fail to recognise him as our King?

This woman was unashamed in her love and worship of Jesus. How do we feel about acknowledging our worship of Jesus before others?

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Bringing it home: In her adoration, the woman – knowingly or otherwise – declared that Jesus was the Messiah and had come to die. Why not spend some time thinking and praying about how your love for Jesus can abound more in knowledge and depth of insight? (Philippians 1:9)



PRAY FOR THE ALAGWA

WHO ARE THE ALAGWA?

The Alagwa live in 15 villages in a geographically remote area in the hills and mountains of central Tanzania. Although the Bubu river runs through the lower lands, the higher regions suffer from lack of water and the Alagwa often walk miles to find water to meet the needs of their families. They are subsistence farmers, growing maize and millet and also some livestock, normally cows, goats and sheep. They are very community oriented, living in houses made of burned brick with roofs of thatched grass. The Alagwa speak both Alagwaisa and Kiswahili.

WHAT DO THEY BELIEVE?

A tribal legend says that some Alagwa once visited Mecca but were rejected by the Muslims for having 'no religion' – only animistic beliefs. They later embraced Islam;

now over 90% are Muslims. However, they seamlessly blend traditional beliefs with Islamic ones. Allah, Mungu and Lala'a are all used to refer to God. Although they call themselves Muslims, their beliefs and practices are strongly steeped in their traditional ways of life.

WHAT IS BEING DONE TO REACH THEM WITH THE GOSPEL?

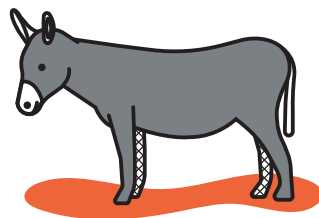
From 2010 to 2013, a multi-cultural TIMO (Training In Ministry Outreach) team lived and worked among the Alagwa, learning their language and culture and helping with a project to provide a reliable community water supply. The TIMO team has ended, but several members have remained and now form a new team, including the Pugh family from the UK. The beginning of a church has been planted among the Alagwa.

WHAT CAN WE PRAY FOR?

Pray for Alagwa believers who are being disciplined to share boldly with their families and neighbours. A number of believers have spouses who are not following Jesus. Please pray that they would have courage to faithfully witness to their partners and that their lives would demonstrate Jesus' love.

Sharing the gospel is not without risks for Alagwa believers. Recently, a disciple was faced with a close family member seeking to put a death curse on her and her children. Whilst initially terrified, she was encouraged by understanding from God's Word that this was a spiritual battle and that God is stronger than Satan! The family member tried two different witchdoctors, and was not able to curse her. The disciple later said that because she belongs to God, she is no longer afraid. May this demonstration of God's power impact many in her community. Please also join her in praying that this family member will come to know and follow Jesus.

Pray for the process of Bible translation as work continues on the Gospel of John. Pray that the Muslim translators would understand who Jesus truly is as they grapple with the work of translation and that the Christian translators would grow in the depth of their understanding of and love for Jesus. Pray too for a project translating the Jesus Film into Alagwa. Recordings were carried out in a nearby town for the voices of Jesus and the narrator, then back in June (2021) the rest of the voices were recorded on location. Pray for the production process and that seeing the whole story of Jesus' life would bring many to trust in him.



WATER CARRYING

Donkeys are kept by the Alagwa and used to carry water up from the river in the lowlands.



ROCK ART

The region of Tanzania where the Alagwa live is well known for rock art. The rock art spans a period of time from at least 3,500 years ago, to 200 years ago.



ORAL LANGUAGE

The language of the Alagwa, Alagwa, is not a written language. Instead it is learnt orally.

You can download our prayer PDFs from: eu.aimint.org/resources.



OPEN DOORS

Tanzania is a beautiful country with beautiful people. Tanzanians are known as calm, friendly, and welcoming. In general, they pride themselves on being a peaceful country and tend to stress being a ‘Tanzanian’ over being from a certain people group. Because of Tanzania’s emphasis on keeping the peace, spiritual conversations can start with a bit of a pluralistic bent, “There is one God, many ways to the same God, etc.” But when you dig down further, there are still deep spiritual needs that are not being met. There are many Christians in name, many Muslims in name, but still a sense of lostness or striving for a salvation through works rather than faith in Jesus. In many churches, the Lord is working in mighty ways. In other places we see the idolatry of the prosperity gospel and the love of money and power robbing people of putting the Lord first in their lives.

Join us in praising the Lord for some of the indigenous church planting movements we’re seeing among certain people groups like the Sandawe and the Datooga, and training going on for lay leaders among unreached people groups. We also thank the Lord for

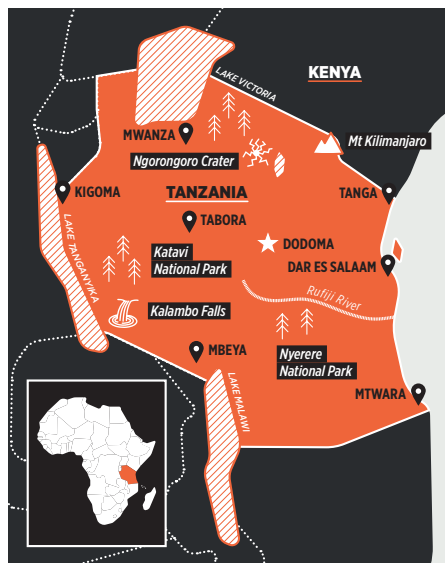
some interdenominational unity and the partnerships we’re seeing on the Muslim coast between evangelical churches and AIM missionaries working in Kilwa. Pray for the Tanzanian church to continue to catch a vision for mission and church planting, that more and more Tanzanian missionaries would be mobilised to reach the unreached. Pray for solid Bible training and discipleship among new church plants.

We’re also praising the Lord for a very real change we’re starting to see in the Labour and Immigration offices towards welcoming foreign missionaries. In the last few months, hoops in the process have been removed, some of the process has been streamlined, and many more work permits are being issued instead of rejected. Continue to pray that this would remain an open door that no one can shut for expat missionaries to come to serve here. Many Tanzanians love Jesus and are following him, but there are many who are still held in bondage to sin, evil spirits, ancestor worship, and Islam. The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few: pray to the Lord of the harvest to send more workers!

WHAT'S GOING ON IN TANZANIA?

There are a couple of big issues that Tanzania is currently facing. One of them is recovering from the shock of losing President Magufuli this year. What that means practically is the new president, President Samia, is working to earn the respect she deserves and to take the country towards a more internationally cooperative posture, but at the same time to honour the work and legacy of the previous president. So far in my estimation, she's been doing a great job walking that tightrope by instituting changes that will continue to help the country progress and develop more international partnerships, yet at the same time also building on certain Magufuli projects.

Another big issue is the government's changing approach to Covid-19, and its work to keep variants from sweeping through the country. Some of the change in attitude can be seen in new testing policies for people arriving into Tanzania, and also a move to accepting vaccines. Recently it was announced that foreign companies and embassies would



be allowed to import Covid-19 vaccines for their staff. It is likely that we will see more changes in the next six months; for example, Tanzania has signed up to become one of the countries requesting vaccine supplies through the Covax initiative after a Covid-19 committee appointed by the new president recommended this course of action.



JON EAGER is AIM's country leader for west and central Tanzania and is a family doctor. He and Melissa serve among the Sandawe people group in central Tanzania.





IN HIS TIMING

Margot Knight shares how God called her to himself, and prepared her to serve him: “God used my love for Africa, media and Jesus to get me where I am today.”

Growing up in South Africa, I dreamt of being a travel writer. In 2004, I began studying journalism and received my degree four years later. Afterwards, not quite ready to ‘settle down’, I left for New York as an au pair. It was during my year in the States that I began reflecting on recent years and felt depressed about the direction my life had taken. I had partied hard, pushed the limits and subsequently pushed people away. Determined to change things, I took steps to try and turn my life around and, when I returned to South Africa in 2009, I felt pretty good about myself. However, a wild night of returning to old habits brought me to my lowest low. I was trying so hard; why did I keep on failing?

One evening that year, I discovered my Bible from school days and curiously thumbed through it. I landed on 1 Corinthians 15 and the words came to life. By God’s grace, I finally realised I was in desperate need of a Saviour. I knelt at my bed that night, crying as I confessed my sins to God and asking him for forgiveness through Jesus.

REPEATED REJECTION

In 2010, I moved to Cape Town and joined St Stephen’s church, where I heard about AIM through a former AIM missionary, Loots Lambrecht. I was particularly interested in AIM’s media team in Africa, On Field Media, thinking this could be it – my future career could combine both my love for media and my love for Jesus. But, On Field Media rejected me not once, but twice. Looking back, God’s sovereignty in that situation is so clear. I would have probably done more harm for the gospel than good!

In 2011, I moved to London, UK, and joined the Co-Mission Initiative, first at Dundonald Church and, a year later, the plant in Earlsfield, now known as Christ Church at All Saints Wandsworth (my

sending church). A couple of years later, I applied for Bible training but I wasn't accepted. Again, I had to trust that it wasn't God's plan for me at the time.

FALLING INTO PLACE

But things started changing in 2017. Everything started falling into place with little or no effort from me! I studied at The Proclamation Trust for two years and, in 2019, joined the staff team at a multi-cultural church, The Bridge, in Battersea. I also worked with mission organisations to figure out how God wanted me to serve him.

Through prayer and conversations with close Christian family, I decided on three requirements for mission – Africa, an unreached people group, and team working. In 2020, I was accepted as a member of AIM. Soon after, I was accepted to join a new TIMO team, to be based in Likawage, Tanzania, where our team will work among unreached Muslims for two and a half years. I'm preparing to leave in November.

TO SEE HIM GLORIFIED

It's been a long journey but I can see how God has used it to prepare me. In particular, how he has turned my selfish desires for mission into a desire to see him glorified among all nations, and how he has provided me with an incredible team of financial supporters, prayer warriors and close Christian family. The closer we get to leaving, the more certain I am that this is God's plan for me and the more excited I become.

While I'm aware of the challenges I will have in Likawage as a single woman, I'm also aware that I'll have more time for language learning, getting to know people and building relationships with them. I also think that women share commonalities that cross cultures and boundaries, such as enjoying long conversations and opening up about our feelings! I pray that my attempts at communicating in the local heart language, getting to know them and trying to love them will be attractive to Likawage women so that they would trust me and want to hear the truth about Jesus.

CALLED LONG TERM

Hannah Jackson's journey with AIM began in 2010 on a coach journey to Switzerland with then AIM mobiliser Steve Lancaster.

I applied as a short termmer with AIM and moved to Korr in northern Kenya for a year, where I taught the children of nomadic camel herders in the only mission secondary school for the Rendille people group. This really whetted my appetite for long term cross cultural missions.

Now I am serving with my church, St Nicholas Sevenoaks, as I prepare to join a TIMO (Training in Ministry Outreach) team in Likawage, Tanzania, in November. We will be half African and half Western. We are moving to a place where people are predominantly Muslim, where Islam blends with traditional African religious practices. There are no Christians from this people group and there's never been a local church. We'll spend a lot of time learning the local language from local people and getting to know and understand the local ways and beliefs. I can picture sharing the good news of Jesus with local women as we tell stories, share recipes, talk of our families; as they share about what is important to them I will be able to share what is important to me. We pray that in time people will come to call on the name of the Lord Jesus and be saved.

Watch this video to hear more of her story: eu.aimint.org/meethannah.



GIVE THANKS AND PRAY

LIKAWAGE TEAM

Give thanks for the Training in Ministry Outreach (TIMO) team in Likawage, south east Tanzania. Pray that God would soften the hearts of the people living there, ready for the team's arrival in November. Pray for a unity among the team that shows Jesus' love and distinctiveness to their community.

MARGOT & HANNAH

Pray for Margot and Hannah as they prepare to join the Likawage team. Pray that they would be able to leave the UK well and that Covid-19 restrictions wouldn't prevent them travelling as planned. Pray for the necessary testing and quarantine, that they would know God's protection, comfort and nearness.



SEEKING TRUTH

Pray that having the Jesus film in their own language would have a powerful impact on the Alagwa, and that many more people will want to discover the truth about Jesus. Pray that Miriam and Owen Pugh and the rest of the team would be able to answer questions and encourage the Alagwa to seek truth.

PRESIDENT SAMIA

Pray for President Samia as she seeks to lead her country well, and has the challenge of honouring the previous president's memory as well as needing to forge ahead with new policies. Pray for wisdom as she navigates the challenges of Covid-19 and seeks to protect and provide for her citizens.

AIM LEADERSHIP

Pray for AIM's leadership team in Tanzania, including country leaders Jon and Melissa Eager and Paul and Virginia Tanner, as they serve in their ministries but also lead and give guidance to missionaries in their region. Give thanks that they are willing to take on these responsibilities.





HE IS ENOUGH

Elle* has recently started serving on the Indian Ocean Islands.

“Hey lady! What’s the news with you?”

“Good, thanks! You?”

“It goes, it goes. Are you married?”

“What?! Oh! No, I’m not married.”

“Really? Why not? Don’t you want a husband? Don’t you want children? I will marry you!”

So starts another conversation on the street with another man I’ve never met. I’m tempted to get angry or to be offended, but I remember how unusual I am here as an older unmarried woman. I’m on an island where marrying and starting a family young is important, especially for women. I’ve not been here long, but it seems a woman’s identity is tied up in whether you’re married and how many children you have. Women with children are often called ‘mother of ...’ instead of their own name, even by their own friends, to their face. There is a lot of shame in not being able to have children.

Instead of getting angry, I try to give praise to the God who really gives me my identity and worth. I never planned to stay single. I knew as a teenager I wanted to be a missionary, and that I would only marry someone who felt the same way, and it just never happened for me. Then, a few years before I joined the field, serious illness took my ability to have children. But I have been blessed with the gift of contentment in singleness and childlessness, and I try not to take that for granted. God has given me a testimony that I can share with women here; that he is enough, and that we are enough in him.

A DEEPER CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

There are other, smaller, nuisances about being a woman here: having to wear several layers so that no-one can make out the shape of your legs, in extreme heat, while you watch your male neighbour happily walking around outside topless. Making sure you’re not smiling too much at men, in case you give them the wrong idea (I do know of female workers in far more restricted locations, who suffer a lot worse). But there are positive things about submitting to this culture’s expectations for women. It allows us to understand a little more of where they’re



coming from, their particular frustrations and joys. We hope and pray that it will give us ways in to telling these women the good news, about a God who is interested in their character and not just their dress, a God who can give them honour that cannot be taken away.

There are also many good things about being a female worker here. A local saying goes, ‘The woman is the guardian of the family’. Women raise the children and manage the home. They may not have much public influence, but they can be key in reaching a family. There are many opportunities to chat over fiddly food preparation and cooking. They tend to get into fewer heated theological debates where the aim is to win the argument, and speak more from the heart.

Of course, men and women, single and married are needed to reach a people group. Our team is mostly single women, and we would love more married women and mothers to model these roles to our fledgling church. We would also love more men, to speak into men’s lives in a way that we cannot. Each of us in our different circumstances will have particular challenges to face, but with them, special opportunities to bless the body, and the world.

***Name has been changed for security reasons.**

MARY MAGDALENE: THE FIRST PERSON TO SEE THE RESURRECTED JESUS

One of at least six Marys who followed Jesus (she has often been confused with other Marys and also with the ‘sinful woman’ in Luke 7), Mary Magdalene’s name is mentioned 12 times in the Gospels, more than most of the apostles. She is often mentioned by Luke in the same context as the 12 disciples. She was most likely from the town of Magdala, which was an affluent town, so could well have had wealth herself.



Read Luke 8:1-3. What is Mary’s response to being healed by Jesus?

How is her life shaped by meeting and knowing Jesus?

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Read Matthew 28:1-10. Mary is one of the first people to hear, and be told to go and share, the gospel story of Jesus’ resurrection. In a society where a woman’s word was not given credibility, why might Jesus have chosen Mary Magdalene to be one of the first people to encounter him in his resurrection?

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IN EVERY SEASON

Queen Basupi talks about the different roles she's played on the mission field.

Being a woman in mission has been an advantage for me, as many of the communities I have worked in perceive females as warm, loving and not necessarily as a threat. The disadvantage though, is that in some communities, a woman is seen to be physically, emotionally and spiritually weak, which makes her vulnerable and sometimes taken advantage of. Her word doesn't carry much weight so women do not necessarily have a 'voice'.

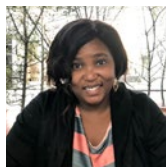
In a Jewish culture where a woman's word did not carry the same weight as a man's, Jesus came and saw women. He recognised them, taught them and healed them. Jesus respected women, they were part of his audience. They too believed in his ministry and appreciated him. They even gave financially to his ministry (Luke 8:1-3). What stands out tremendously for me is that it was women who Jesus first appeared to after his resurrection. They were entrusted with the greatest news. He has risen. Jesus is alive! (Mark 16:1-6)

I have had unique opportunities to share this message of Christ, especially with other women. When I lived in a community among a least-reached group in Malawi, women could talk and visit other women not related to them, but not men. I had access to women whom I would eventually share the stories of the Bible with. I could spend time with their children. This opened up opportunities to present the gospel in ordinary conversations.

I was in Malawi as a single woman when I realised the help of a partner could make a real difference. I felt the ministry I was doing was limited in terms of access to whole families. A couple of years later I got married to a fellow missionary who had the same passion for seeing the lost found, the sick healed and the sheep not yet part of our Father's pen come to the knowledge of Christ. After

marriage we worked together in Botswana training missionaries, hosting short term teams, pioneering and overseeing church planting and mobilising the church. This was a very busy but very fruitful ministry. We maximised each other's strengths. He taught mission history and strategy, I taught mission awareness and mobilisation. Whenever we went to a church to talk about the mission of God, I would demonstrate the state of the harvest through a skit, he would challenge the church through scripture. I would draw up the programmes for the short termers, plan the meals and plan the days. He would organise the location and the logistics. We would conduct orientations together, highlighting the culture of the people group we were to reach out to. Through this teamwork, a new church was planted, many came to our outreach events and a few committed to full time mission work. His role has been mostly logistical and mine to mind the details. This was not without its challenges of course. My creative personality and his research orientated character sometimes would clash. But we know that we are better together.

Over the years I have had different roles in different seasons. In seasons like this where our children are young, travel and other commitments are limited. The most important thing is to understand the season, embrace it and enjoy it. There are wonderful things in each season. At the moment we are adjusting to a new location. I am working part time at the AIM Southern Region office, carefully choosing what to commit to and what to refrain from. I'm building friendships with the local ladies, one who has braided my hair and the other who sells fruit in our community. The opportunities may look different but in every season there is a life I can touch. The women who followed Jesus, followed until the end, that's my encouragement. To follow in every season. To follow until the end.



QUEEN BASUPI has recently moved to Nairobi with her family, where her husband, Tshepang, leads the Southern Region office.





WHO ARE YOU?

Here's a good question: who are you? Defining ourselves is often complex. Most of us have a mental list of our identities. This would be my list: woman, mother, retired police officer, single, British, daughter, missionary... I could go on.

After 30 years working in a predominately male police service, 'woman' is my most dominant descriptor. I have always been passionate about advocating for and empowering women. Exploring the history of women in mission and leadership, we clearly see the courage and confidence of the early women missionaries worldwide. I am inspired by those early female pioneers and those in the years since. That legacy remains today with AIM and other mission agencies having a high percentage of female missionaries.

FACING PARTICULAR RISKS

We also know it is a complex, broken world with inequality for women globally and endemic violence against women and girls. There is much work to do to address these pressing issues. But we live in changing times and it has been encouraging to see movement, progress and a willingness to embrace change. In my role as Risk and Crisis Management Consultant I have the opportunity to prepare and support missionaries in balancing the tension between their ministry calling, often in difficult places, and their need to be aware and respond to insecurity and crisis. God's invitation to risk is complex. As part of AIM's security training programme, I deliver a session specifically related to women and the risk of violence, abuse and harassment in their ministry and location. Navigating these issues needs a good understanding of culture and wise security decision making. These training sessions relate to women but are delivered to both men and women. We all partner in this together.



LYDIA: THE FIRST CONVERT IN GREECE

Lydia was from Thyatira, a town known for its guilds of craftsmen, especially that of the production and sale of purple dye. Lydia was a member of the guild, so we can assume she had some level of wealth, and had established her business in Philippi. She was already a Gentile follower of the Jewish God, but after meeting Paul and Silas, became the first convert to Christianity in Greece, followed by her household. It seemed she played an important role in what was most likely the first church in Philippi, which met in her house.



Read Acts 16:13-15. In what ways did Lydia respond to hearing the message of the gospel? What unique role does she play in the spread of the gospel?

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Read Acts 16:40. Given her standing in society and her business, what might some of the risks have been for Lydia in taking in Paul and Silas after they came out of prison?

How do you think Lydia's identity changed when she became a Christian?

How do you define yourself? Where does Jesus fit?

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How has God equipped me? I hear him often, telling me, 'Stay curious, keep seeking, go deeper into understanding the world now'. I accept this challenge through biblical and secular learning, knowing it equips me as I engage with women in our modern mission environment and support them. Knowledge is important but application is essential.

So who am I, really? Woman, mother, retired police officer, single, British, daughter, missionary. Yes, but where does my real identity come from? Ephesians 1:3-4 tells us we are chosen, adopted, redeemed, forgiven, grace-lavished, unconditionally loved and accepted. Wow! My identity is based on how God sees me and so I will accept that, knowing that it allows me to live as a woman freely and confidently in Christ.



CARRIE PITHER is AIM's International Crisis Consultant, ensuring the organisation is aware and prepared in the management of risk, security and crisis.



GIVE THANKS AND PRAY

STARTING SERVICE

Give thanks that, after a long wait, Annette* has finally been able to fly to Kenya to begin service as a long term missionary. Pray for her that she would integrate well with the team she is joining, and quickly understand her role and the task ahead of her.

COVID-19 VACCINES

Pray against the spread of the Delta variant of Covid-19 in Kenya. Pray that Kenya would have access to vaccines to protect its vulnerable population, and that the logistics of getting vaccines into local healthcare clinics would run smoothly.



AIC CHURCH

Give thanks for the strength of the Africa Inland Church in Kenya. Pray that more congregations would capture God's vision for mission and that we would see many Kenyans sent by their churches to unreached groups across Africa.

OFFICE STAFF

Three of AIM's regional offices (Eastern region, Northern region and Southern region) along with AIM Air and other administrative services are based in Nairobi. Pray for the staff of these offices, that they would spur each other on towards love and good deeds.

RIFT VALLEY

Pray for Rift Valley Academy, AIM's boarding school in Kenya. Pray for wisdom for the leadership team and their board as they seek to offer schooling but also protect both students and staff from Covid-19. Pray for God's leading and direction.



IT'S NOT ABOUT ME

Lindsey Gray is Chief Pilot for AIM Air. She flew her first solo flight at the age of seventeen and holds an FAA Commercial single/multi-engine pilot certificate, instructor ratings, and is a certified aeroplane dispatcher.

Statistically, female pilots make up about 7% of the mission workplace, aircraft mechanics only 2%. Female pilot/mechanic, there's not even a statistic for that. But that's no different than the secular workplace. What's unique about the mission workplace you ask? The unique statistic in the mission world is the one we often joke about. The current missionary population is made up of 70% married couples, 30% single women, and the rest are single men. We call single male missionaries 'unicorns'. We've heard they exist, but very few have actually seen one.

It feels like I've written this article a dozen times. What are the advantages and disadvantages to being a female in a male dominated world? This is the most common question I'm asked about my most common descriptors: pilot, mechanic, female, single. I could share all the usual stories, like this tower conversation in South Sudan:

Tower controller: "How many souls on board?"

Me: "One"

Tower controller: "Say souls on board."

Me: "One"

Tower controller: "Madam, say total number of souls on board."

Me: "Sir, only me. Yes, I am flying this airplane alone."

Being a woman aviator has perks, too. Like when I'm the only female on the radio channel and I receive priority routing while all the other male pilots hold.

FINDING A SPOUSE

I once heard a speaker say that the way to find a spouse in ministry is to 'run hard after God, and while you're running, look to your left and right. Those running alongside you in ministry are your potential mates.' But if I'm honest, this looks no different than my college cross-country meets. It's just us girls; there are no guys in this race.

Why are there no single men serving, or why is our body so unbalanced? It's hard to pinpoint. Don't get me wrong, I know well the pioneering single women who have gone before me. Women like Betty Greene and Lottie Moon, who left an eternal footprint on this world. I also know what it's like to spend days preparing a message for a visiting team from a sending church, and at the end of the hour, to be asked by an older gentleman in the back, "Would it be okay if we gathered around and prayed that God would send you a husband?"

ALL IN FOR GOD

If God asks me to serve him forever as a single woman, I'm all in. My concern is not my personal singleness. My concern is why are there no single men serving alongside us? Perhaps this account I read by Elisabeth Elliot sums it up best. Sharing a conversation she had with Gladys Aylward, an early pioneering missionary to China, about her desire for a helpmate, she recalled the following:

'Being a woman of prayer, she prayed a straight forward request that God would call a man from England, send him straight out to China, and have him propose. She leaned toward me on the sofa on which we were sitting, her black eyes snapping, her bony little forefinger jabbing at my face. "Elisabeth," she said, "I believe God answers prayer! He called him," then, in a whisper of keen intensity, "but he never came."



LINDSEY GRAY holds a BSc in Aeronautical Science and a BA in Religious and Philosophical Thought as well as certification as an Airframe and Powerplant mechanic.

LEAVE A LEGACY

Your will may well be the most important document you ever sign – a living testimony to your values and beliefs, your hopes and dreams. It is all about life, and by leaving a legacy in your will, you get to choose who benefits from what you have.

“Pat and I have both left a percentage of our estates to AIM in our respective wills as an ongoing modest help in a cause we have supported financially and in prayer the whole of our married lives. May we encourage others to do likewise please, so that the Lord’s name will be known throughout the continent of Africa.”

Allan Plumpton

“I wanted to leave a legacy for my missionary family and my church, but was also mindful of my duties to my daughter and son and their families, and of the possible need to finance my care in old age. Then I thought about the biblical principle of a tenth for the Lord, so I decided that from whatever is available after my death, a fair proportion will go to my chosen charities. It is now in the Lord’s hands.”

Elizabeth Macaulay



Read more stories and find out how you could leave a legacy:

EU.AIMINT.ORG/LEGACY

Africa Inland Mission serves and partners with churches to fulfil the Great Commission and advance the gospel among Africans who have the least opportunity to hear about Jesus.

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