

# CONNECT

*AIM's journal for prayer, reflection and growth*



Praying for God to raise up workers for the harvest field  
and grow our love for those unreached with the gospel.



**AFRICA**  
INLAND MISSION





Ask the Lord of the harvest,  
therefore, to send out workers  
into his harvest field.

Matthew 9:38

## OUR MISSION

AIM serves and equips churches and Christians as they share the gospel, make disciples, and plant new churches among African peoples with the least opportunity to hear the gospel.

We do this by:

- inspiring you and your church to prayerfully respond to the Great Commission
- equipping you and others to serve among African people
- partnering with local churches and ministries in Africa to multiply the impact of your acts of service, your gifts and your prayers

*If you would like to receive our weekly prayer email with seven daily prayer points, designed to provide you with up to date prayer and praise items, you can sign up at: [eu.aimint.org/pray](http://eu.aimint.org/pray)*



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| Stephen Bazely

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# WORKING WITH AFRICAN PARTNERS IN HARD TO REACH PLACES



Phillip is from Ghana and has been serving in North Africa with his wife, Denise, for the last 20 years. They have recently become AIM members and will continue to serve in this challenging and sensitive location with our support.

## PHILLIP, HOW WERE YOU AND DENISE CALLED TO NORTH AFRICA?

Our call to North Africa was divinely orchestrated by God. After my conversion, I was immediately enrolled into a discipleship class. After a long period of waiting upon God to know his will, he gave me a deep conviction for mission work. I attended seminars, conventions, training and Bible studies at the International Bible Training Centre (IBTC) in Lagos, Nigeria. The leadership of the church noticed the grace of God in my life and I was called to serve in the local church. A further call came when I was asked to assist a mission pastor in North Africa a few years later and I took over from him as the mission pastor.

## HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SUPPORTED IN YOUR ROLE?

My church was involved in every aspect: in training, preparing, and financial and spiritual support. Most of my friends are brethren from the church who gave me moral and spiritual support, and my family were happy for me.

## WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THAT KIND OF SUPPORT MAKE?

Prayer and financial support are a big deal, especially serving in North Africa. It helps you as a Christian worker to focus on making ministry the main thing and means that we can take care of the physical and material needs of our family.

## HOW HAS YOUR SUPPORT CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

Our church supports us in prayer and through leadership training. However, our denomination brought in a policy which means that financial support for missionaries ends after 15 years on the field. So the finances we relied on, which contributed to the kingdom advances we were a part of, were withdrawn several years ago. Given the peculiarities of our mission field, this has been a real challenge. Many sending churches in Africa seem to underestimate the impact that a lack of financial support has on missionary morale - indeed upon the progress of the work itself.

## HOW DO YOU SEE GOD AT WORK?

The truth is that we experience God's protection every day. One example is when the police were given details of a network of house churches in our city. The secret service had discovered five locations, one of which was where I taught every Sunday morning. So, one Sunday during Ramadan, the police went from one house church to another arresting everyone: men, women, and children. On that day we had four local believers among us. If they had been found it would've been extremely serious, but God was so good to us. Without knowing what was going on, we closed our meeting earlier than usual, so that when the police arrived, everyone had gone home. There was no one in the building, so they left. The Lord miraculously delivered us!

## HOW HAS GOD OPENED DOORS?

In a country like this one it is extremely difficult to reach out, except when the Lord opens doors. You can labour for a long time but not see any genuine fruit. It was only when we began seriously seeking God through prayer and fasting

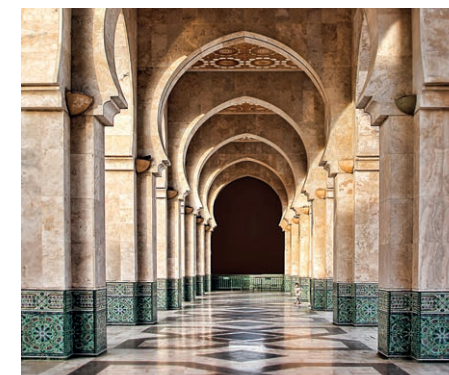
that he began to open doors. It was during this time that I received a call from an unknown local lady asking me for a French Bible. She became the first genuine convert we had in the country and through her the Lord opened other doors, enabling us to reach many other people.

## WHAT OTHER FRUIT HAVE YOU SEEN?

We saw real fruit when the Lord opened a woman's heart; she had a powerful experience of the Holy Spirit. Her conversion was so sound and genuine that she became an example among the expatriate and the local believers. It wasn't long before her two children, a boy of 18 and a girl of 16, accepted the Lord and were saved. Her children were students but after finishing their studies, they have gone on to be instrumental in reaching out to many other local people.

## WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE?

Our hopes are to reach out to as many souls as the Lord enables us, training them to be well established in the faith, helping them to become leaders and soul winners themselves.



**SUPPORT AIM'S WORK  
IN NORTH AFRICA**

[eu.aimint.org/reachmalika](http://eu.aimint.org/reachmalika)



# WHAT IS MOBILISING?

Our heart is to see Christ-centred churches among all African peoples and our priority is to go to the people groups still unreached with the gospel. Tim Matthews, our Mobilisation Director, introduces us to what mobilisation looks like in the local church.



## HOW CAN CHURCHES MOVE TOWARDS MOBILISING PEOPLE?

As we teach through the Bible, God's heart for his glory and his desire to save people from every nation becomes clear. Then it becomes natural to pray for and share the needs of those who are unreached. Once a church is passionate and informed, they might start praying for and strategically supporting those already engaged in mission. When these things are in place, they can begin to equip and send workers themselves for short or long term global mission.

## HOW DOES AIM HELP CHURCHES?

We have resources (Bible studies, Sunday school materials, service outlines and more) to help busy church leaders equip their congregations and church members. Our friendly Mission Advisors can also help provide a focus and emphasis on global mission. They can help churches develop mission plans and strategies. They also act as mentors and encouragers for those considering serving as missionaries themselves.

## WHAT COURSE COULD A CHURCH USE TO RAISE THE PROFILE OF GLOBAL MISSION?

'Momentum Yes' is a six part interactive course to help churches understand what God is doing in the world and how to get involved. It can be done individually

or, even better, in a small group - we run sessions online and in churches.

## WHAT STEPS ARE INVOLVED IN SENDING PEOPLE?

If an individual, couple or family senses God's call to missions, the first step is for them to discuss it with their church leaders. It is also wise to pray intentionally with a small group of trusted Christian friends. Agencies like AIM can help by speaking into the discernment process, providing information on ministry opportunities and approaches to mission. Both the enquiry and application process are about discerning if God is truly calling the candidates to mission service. Once that is established, the focus turns to making sure they are suitably equipped and directed to the appropriate ministry for them to be a part of.

*Both the enquiry and application process are about discerning if God is truly calling candidates to mission service.*

## WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO PREPARE TO GO?

There is no 'one size fits all' model to prepare new workers for the harvest field, as everyone is different and at different stages in their lives, biblical understanding, spiritual maturity,

professional training and skills. Working together with church leaders and candidates, we consider a range of options such as Bible college, online Bible training or studying at your church. AIM also has a range of required courses to help candidates prepare to live simply in cross-cultural settings.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

As part of their equipping and preparation, new members attend European Based Orientation (EBO) before they leave for their first assignment. EBO is a four day programme covering

a range of practical, security and spiritual issues that are necessary as the time to actually go approaches.

Africa Based Orientation (ABO) is an invaluable three week programme in Kenya for all new AIM missionaries, right at the start of their assignment. ABO is led by experienced missionaries from Africa and other settings, with experience and cultural and theological insight. Lifelong learning is a key value at AIM, as there is always more to learn as we serve one another.



**Attend a Momentum Yes course or hold one at your church.  
Email Dudley to find out more at [director.eu@aimint.org](mailto:director.eu@aimint.org)**







# THEY NEED PEOPLE LIKE YOU TO GO!

Mike Smailes is a local church pastor, passionate about the Lord's Great Commission. Here, Mike shares some of the questions he has had about traditional mission work.

Nations are now 'on our doorstep'. Partnership with indigenous churches across the world is bearing fruit. God is humbling us in sending many 'missionaries' to our own shores and in highlighting the harm that sometimes well-meaning missionaries from these shores have done.

## SHOULD WE STILL SERVE AS SENDERS?

With my Bible open, I could never doubt the Lord's priority in sending us into the world to make disciples. But whom should we be expecting the Lord to send? Is the plight of lost people in unreached people groups mainly dependent on those who live nearest to them? So then, are we

better resourcing and encouraging those 'on the ground' instead?

Or, if we are serious about pioneering work among unreached peoples, where do we start? I want to see our church connecting with local churches on the ground – but what if there aren't any yet? As you can see, I had a lot of questions!

## CHALLENGING MY MINDSET

I was still grappling with these questions when I was invited to partner with others in an exploratory trip to an unreached people group in West Africa. Though months in the planning, it was within just hours of my arrival that my presuppositions were vigorously challenged. It's hard to describe how

it feels being in a country with so very few who know Jesus. As you cast your eyes across a city whose millions have no opportunity to hear even the simplest explanation of the gospel, it does something to you.

Whilst on the two leg journey out there, our leader was contacted by a long lost acquaintance. She doesn't yet know the Lord but she'd been profoundly touched by contact with him many years before in another country. She grew up in the city we were visiting and her uncle wanted to meet us. Our first evening would be in their home. Our leader tried to prepare us as best he could. This was a high caste man and our visit was not without risk. With a very small number of 'workers' in this city, it was imperative that our visit didn't hamper their long term mission work in any way. We all had so many questions. How shall we explain our strange presence here? What of our supposed tourist agenda? Most of us were pastors for one thing! Do we answer questions about faith? Perhaps this nervousness would have been less marked if we could have predicted the warmth with which we were welcomed.

## AN OPEN DOOR

We sat in a crowded front room, surrounded by government officials who couldn't have been more delighted by our presence. By the end, it felt like we'd made genuine friends. Our visit was only for a week but another long afternoon and evening was spent with this same group. They were keen to get to know us. Open to heartfelt conversation. Serious about wanting us to consider living and doing business there. In short, I came away with the profound sense that God was

unravelling many of those questions in this one encounter. Here were a number of families who had no contact with Christians, no knowledge of Christ and little access to his word. But here we were – less than 24hrs in the country – and a door was already opening!

*"We sat in a crowded front room, surrounded by government officials who couldn't have been more delighted by our presence."*

Please don't misunderstand me – this is not an easy mission field. The ground is hard. Those working there are often discouraged, lonely and in some cases feel unsupported. But here was the message I couldn't miss. These people need people like us to go and live among them!

There is still an aching need for us (yes those of us in the UK) to send people. The harvest is ripe. The opportunities vast. The need urgent. We need to pray for God to send people from our churches here. God is still in the business of sending people. Spending time with those already sent simply confirmed it.



**Would you consider working in North Africa?**  
**Email Tim at [mobilisationdirector.eu@aimint.org](mailto:mobilisationdirector.eu@aimint.org)**





Tim Matthews, our Mobilisation Director, carried out a survey with local church leaders to find out what has helped them mobilise people for mission.

It's been said that "the sign of a great church is not its seating capacity but its sending capacity" (Mike Stachura, Operation Mobilisation). Do you agree? For me, this quote echoes the Abrahamic covenant, that God has blessed us so that we might be a blessing to others throughout the earth. As church leaders and members, what are our aspirations for the church?

### AN ONGOING WORK

Mobilising workers for cross-cultural mission is not a one-off exercise. It is more likely to happen when a church and its members share a vision and interest in serving others both locally and globally. The mission of God is to see people from every language and nation redeemed for

his glory. The calling of the church is to partner with God in his mission. We see this in many of the ways we 'do church' and 'shepherd the flock' but our primary call, to be his witnesses and make disciples to the ends of the earth, must not be forgotten. That means our churches have a role to play both locally and globally.

**Given that 40% of the world's population are still 'unreached' and only 3% of missionaries work among unreached peoples, we are still 'facing a task unfinished that should drive us to our knees'.**

So, we "Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" Matt 9:38. But what else can we do?

## SEVEN AREAS TO HELP YOUR CHURCH MOBILISE PEOPLE FOR MISSION

Our survey of church leaders whose churches are actively involved in global mission revealed seven things to help our churches move forward.



1. Clarify your understanding of mission.



2. Have a church leadership committed to developing mission.



3. Review and assess where the church is and has been, regarding mission.



4. Formulate a vision, strategy and structure for the whole church.



5. Craft a mission policy to give direction and consistency.



6. Find partnerships that fit with your strategic aims.



7. Involve the whole church as it grows into mission.

### RESOURCE YOUR CHURCH

There are many resources to help give focus and encourage a greater engagement with mission. Here are some suggestions to help raise the profile of missions:

- Invite a mission speaker
- Send a short term team to support an existing ministry
- Use small group Bible studies or courses that explore God's heart for the nations
- Find fuel for prayer from those serving in mission situations
- Help your young people to engage in missions in their groups and devotions
- Encourage your church or small group to read a gripping and humbling missionary biography

Visit [eu.aimint.org/resources](http://eu.aimint.org/resources) for resources and ideas to help you and your church.

Maybe you would like to join the AIM Advocates programme, where you can be more fully equipped to share the cause and needs of mission among Africa's unreached peoples in your local church.

If you're a church leader, why not sign up to receive an occasional email which addresses a subject that bridges the world of missions with the contemporary church world. Who knows what fires may start from even a small spark of interest?



Use this link to share this article with your church leader.  
[eu.aimint.org/mobilise](http://eu.aimint.org/mobilise)



# HOW THE LOCAL CHURCH GOES GLOBAL

## THE BOOK I WISH I HAD READ SOONER

Stephen Bazely gives his views on Andy Johnson's book, 'Missions: How the local church goes global'.

### LONGING FOR CLARITY

Having recently joined AIM after leading a local church, I was intrigued when our Director mentioned this book. There are many Christian books that have shaped me and this is one I wish I had read sooner! Even the foreword by David Platt made me stop in my tracks. Platt doesn't pull any punches, immediately highlighting the dire need for missionaries and who needs to act: "It's not primarily the job of mission organisations to address that problem. This is primarily the job of every local church... all toward the ultimate end that the name of Christ might be praised among every group of people on the planet."

### MISSION BELONGS TO US ALL

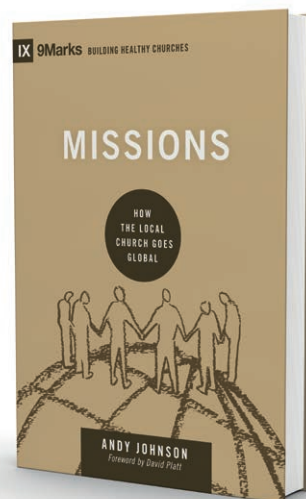
As I look back at my own ministry, I realise that I failed to see this as our primary duty. It is so easy to think that mission is someone else's responsibility, when in truth it belongs to us all. It is so easy to make global mission an add-on to church life, maybe a line in our financial reports. I reminded our church of the need to fulfil the Great Commission, but most of the time even reaching our own community felt like enough of a challenge. So, knowing that global mission ought to be a priority

too might feel like the straw that broke the camel's back. Yet in this book, written for church leaders and members alike, Johnson's aim is to show how simple it can be to go global.

Helpfully, we are pointed to Acts 13 in the foreword, showing us how one church lived up to its responsibility. "[Here] we see the church at Antioch worshiping, fasting, and praying, and in the context of that local church with its leaders, the Spirit sets apart Paul and Barnabas as missionaries. The church prays over them and sends them out, supporting them as they go."

If every church followed this example, imagine how God could transform our local communities and impact the world beyond our borders!

Unfortunately, I suspect that when it comes to global mission, many of our churches are closer to the funny, yet painful parody of mission conversations Johnson presents in his introduction. Describing a fictional mission committee meeting, he introduces us to Beth, a reflective member, who needs a strong coffee to recover, wondering why no one can agree on anything. Then we meet Dave who wants them to focus on evangelism not mission, Olivia who



"suggested it would be so much better (and cheaper) to pay local pastors than to send out Western missionaries."

Other characters have their own angles, none of which complement the other, leaving them all frustrated and no further along. Beth thinks, "Surely God must have given more direction about what the mission is and how we should pursue it. But she couldn't think of where to find that direction or where to start."

### FINDING A BIBLICAL AGENDA

Before coming to AIM I had a rather short-sighted view of global mission too. Andy invites us to, "Imagine a local church where the congregation's mission to the nations is clear and agreed upon. Members see missions as a core ministry of the church, not an occasional short-term project. Relationships with missionaries are deep, serious, and lasting. Joyful giving to missions is a basic part of the church's budget. And members actually value missions enough that some want to uproot their lives and be sent out long-term by the church."

Not convinced? Andy has seen it happen "in numerous churches, large and small. It's not that hard. It all flows primarily from finding one's missions agenda and methods in the Bible."

I wish I had read this book sooner and been part of a church with such a glorious global focus. It is not too late. Andy reminds us that we are Jesus' church, founded by Jesus "to guard the gospel, proclaim the gospel, and disciple those who respond in repentance and faith to the gospel." If we follow this pattern then mission can become a core ministry of the church, not just an add-on.

## REFLECTION

How could you help your church or church leader to have a global focus?

Would your small group or leadership team read this book together?

In an interview about the book, Andy says, "First we need to love what God has done for us in the gospel and then...God glorifying missions flows from our delight in what God has done for us."

How can we delight in the gospel and what Jesus has done for us more?

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Share your thoughts on the book with Stephen at [seniordesigner.eu@aimint.org](mailto:seniordesigner.eu@aimint.org)





# AFRICA ON YOUR DOORSTEP

Simon and Miriam Desborough have been serving with a church in the East Midlands for a year, reaching out with the gospel to people from North Africa on a local council estate.



The church stands as the sole gospel witness, surrounded by ten mosques. It is a true melting pot of people groups and cultures, but Islam is unquestionably the dominant religion on the estate.

The African people groups within the community were quite insular, a product of past fear and the racism they first experienced when they were placed in the East Midlands. However, as we built relationships over time, they softened and warmed to us.

## EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP WORKED!

Alongside our own individual cross-cultural outreach to the community, it was a joy to partner with the local church and help equip them for the work

of evangelism on the estate. We were encouraged by the fact that they had already laid a foundation of relationship with members of the community, especially with those in positions of prominence. Consequently, the church was well regarded by many of the people. Female members of the church ran a women's 'craft and chatter' group and attended a local women's group. The male members of the church visited the cafés on the estate to converse and socialise with the men. Alongside a short term AIM team and individuals from nearby churches, the church held a summer outreach week to bless and serve the community. This week included cross-cultural training for the team, a

children's holiday camp on the weekdays, and a huge Saturday picnic in the local park.

## COULD AIM HELP YOUR CHURCH?

Diaspora ministry is a unique cross-cultural frontier where knowledge of the worldviews of different African countries and people groups is important, but also understanding their migration journey and how they are currently responding to living in a context that is not their own. The people groups on our estate, for example, travelled to the UK through parts of Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Portugal and many more countries. All the while, they are picking up other experiences which shape their diaspora culture. We praise God that his glorious gospel transcends culture and that he is calling local churches to build bridges with the African diaspora in our neighbourhoods to proclaim his wonderful salvation. Perhaps the Lord is calling your church to the same work?

## DID YOU KNOW?

The UK is home to the largest Somali community in Europe? With estimates ranging between 100-400,000 people. Most of whom speak Somali, Arabic or both.

99.8% of the population of Somalia is Muslim and most will never meet a Christian there. Here in the UK, Somalis have the opportunity to meet Christians and hear about Jesus. However, Somalis in Britain might still feel pressured to remain Muslim, as their faith is entwined with their culture and identity.



If you have an African community in your area, email Simon at [Borderless simon.french@aimint.org](mailto:simon.french@aimint.org)





# WHEN GOD CALLS

One day in the mid-1890s in Westminster Abbey, London, crowds of visitors were admiring this beautiful place of worship. Among them was a pale young man called Peter Scott who was recovering from an illness he had contracted on a recent trip to Africa. Suddenly, his eyes caught the name David Livingston cut in a slab on the floor. Under it, he deciphered the words, 'Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring.' Oblivious of the crowds, he knelt on the floor and prayed for Africa, wondering again what God might require of him.<sup>1</sup>

What happened next is described in detail in Dick Anderson's history of AIM, 'We felt like Grasshoppers'. In the book, Anderson describes how on that day Peter Scott felt God show him a vision of a line of mission stations from East Africa to the Sahara. A few years later, aged just 29, Peter died in East Africa while seeking to make that vision a reality. Before he died, Peter and a group of missionary enthusiasts had founded Africa Inland Mission in 1895.<sup>2</sup>

## BIBLE STUDY: CALLING



### Read John 10:7-16

Are there still sheep today who are outside the pen? If so, who are they?



### Reflection:

Has God used a particular verse or Bible passage to call you to a particular task or act of service? If so, why not spend some time reflecting on it. Alternatively, you could spend some time reflecting as Peter Scott did, on John 10:16.



### Pray:

Read Romans 10:14-15, then give thanks for the millions of people who have heard about Jesus as a result of AIM's work since 1895.

In his book *The Missionary Call* (2008) David Sills shares a memory from his time at Bible school: *I remember some students from when I was in seminary who would not go to chapel on "missions day" for fear that God might call them to missions. They already had their life planned out, and their plan did not include missions.*<sup>3</sup>

Sadly, some people may never answer God's call to missions because of their reluctance to listen to him.



### Read Luke: 9:57-62

What do you think may have been the issues preventing these apparently willing followers of Jesus from answering his call?



### Read Mark 1:14-20

How did Jesus' first disciples differ in their response to his calling from the men we read about in Luke chapter 9?



### Point for reflection:

What do you think a 21st century missionary from the UK might need to give up when they decide to serve in Africa?



### Pray

That God will lead missionary applicants to AIM who have the same attitude as the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 6:8).

<sup>1</sup> Dick Andersen *We felt like Grasshoppers* (Crossway Books 1984), 17

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 19

<sup>3</sup> M David Sills *The Missionary Call* (Moody 2008), 27



# DELIGHTING IN THE LORD

In his book *The Missionary Call* (2008, p.27) David Sills shares a memory from his time at Bible school when a fellow student told him how much he admired the selfless sacrifice he was making by going on the mission field. Sills writes the following; 'I told him he had it all wrong. I was so excited about getting to be a missionary that for me the greatest sacrifice and hardship would be if the mission board turned us down and said that we could not be missionaries. When God calls his child to live the life of a missionary, he gives him the desire with the calling.'

## BIBLE STUDY: WHERE DO YOU FIND JOY?



### Read Psalm 37: 4-6

What do you think the Psalmist means when he says, 'Delight yourself in the Lord'?



### Point for reflection:

Have you ever experienced a sense of 'joy' in carrying out a task which you felt God had called you to do?

The Apostle Paul often used the word joy when he wrote letters to the churches which had been planted on his missionary journeys.



### Read Philippians 2:1-5

What is it that Paul says gives him joy?



### Pray

Choose one of the people groups mentioned in this edition of Connect and pray for AIM workers called to serve among them, that they may experience the joy which Paul mentioned in their ministry.

Have you recently had a feeling that maybe God is calling you to a particular act of mission or service? Alternatively, have you ever had someone come to you for advice about a calling they have received? If so, maybe you are wondering if you or the person you are advising have the right qualities, skills or character?



### Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Why do you think Samuel may have thought that he would anoint one of Jesse's elder sons and why do you think God told him to anoint David?



### Reflect on verse 7

Do you think that God may act in a similar way when he calls people to the mission field today?

Have you ever felt that God is calling you to do something which you think you are unable to do?



### Read Exodus 4:10-13

What did Moses say was the problem and how did God respond?

Read how Stephen describes Moses in Acts 7:22 when he looks back at his life in his famous speech.



Listen to a podcast by Tony and Cath Swanson, AIM's Eastern Region leaders, talking about the kind of workers they would like to join them.

[eu.aimint.org/who-will-god-send](http://eu.aimint.org/who-will-god-send)



## GLOBAL MOBILISATION

# MOBILISING AND EQUIPPING AFRICAN WORKERS

Joel Wildasin's insights from the African Mobilising Hub and AIM's work in supporting mobilisation in Africa.

### WHAT IS THE AFRICAN MOBILISATION HUB AND HOW DID IT COME INTO EXISTENCE?

The hub is a network of people from different organisations, including AIM, most of whom operate in sub-Saharan Africa, although our partners also work outside of Africa and the Arab world. We send African business professionals from their home churches to work in the Arab world in connection with other organisations. The hub began about five years ago when Tony Swanson and others in AIM saw the need for a ministry that would come alongside African churches, to help them send their own people to other peoples.

### SO WHAT DOES THE HUB DO?

The hub work in three ways: discovery, development, and deployment. The discovery stage involves raising mission awareness for both African churches and individuals.

Developing is done through training, building capacity in local churches, helping them set up their own mission committees, walking with them through these processes.

Finally, deployment, when we send people out. We help the African church send out their own missionaries with a sending agency, by secondment or with a Memorandum of Understanding so that they can join an existing AIM team, or work with another organisation.

### WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

There are lots of challenges. One is simply helping churches to see that mission isn't a job for others, for foreigners. The Great Commission is for the African church too, and God is raising up many African churches to send and African missionaries to go. Other challenges include finances, as most African workers choose a self-supporting model, which requires them to have a job or do business as mission. This is very different from the traditional support model that we have used coming from Western countries.

Another challenge is the training aspect, not Bible schools, but mission training courses enabling people to see beyond their people group and outside of their

country. Another challenge is sharing a vision to reach Muslims with the gospel.

### WHAT ARE THE JOYS?

How strategically positioned the African church is to reach the remaining unreached people groups! There's so much power in the African church, in the African culture. African people are so relational, so flexible, so uniquely positioned to fulfil the Great Commission. So, for me, a big joy is walking with them, in this equipping and empowering role, to help them do this.

*"It's a joy to watch a church suddenly realise the gospel is for their neighbouring people."*

It is a joy to watch a church read through the Scriptures, do a foundational course on church and mission, and suddenly realise that the gospel is for their neighbouring people. They don't need to have more money, or get the support of a Western donor, they can use the resources they already have to be involved in the Great Commission.

### WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE OF THE HUB?

Our hope is to provide a clear pathway for African churches to be able to send people. We can send people to work on AIM teams or through other African agencies or more informally doing business. We want to help connect Africans with jobs and church planters in North Africa and the Arab world. So, deployment is a key focus, but we are also passionate about training and building capacity in African churches too.

### SO HOW CAN WE PRAY FOR YOU IN THE HUB?

Pray for creativity and for God to fan into flame the African church, that he would raise up more missionaries and

missions minded churches to support them. Pray that pastors would preach mission centred messages and pray for prayer warriors to pray for an African missionary movement. Pray for AIM to know what our role is in coming alongside this missionary force. How can we serve, in a small way, in the great mission that God is doing in Africa?

### DO YOU HAVE ANY STORIES YOU CAN SHARE WHERE YOU HAVE SEEN GOD AT WORK?

Over the last couple of years, working in Zambia, God has graciously taught us a lot whilst working with a church and their missionary, highlighting the differences in member care needs for African missionaries and the similarities and difference to the ways we do things in AIM. We have learnt about the importance of communication between the missionary and their sending church, because there is a lot of room for miscommunication. We also learnt the challenges of cross-cultural work, as sometimes when AIM gets involved, we can mess things up if we're not careful.

There are other success stories too, the Burundi Missionary Alliance is one. A mission alliance has formed in one of the poorest landlocked countries in Africa. God is doing a new thing by unifying denominations and creating an alliance that is not only reaching out to Muslims in their country, but also thinking about sending missionaries outside of Burundi into other Francophone countries. Whenever you see churches working together from different denominations you know God is on the move.



Read more stories of Africa's people at [eu.aimint.org/stories](https://eu.aimint.org/stories)



# MEET GILLES AND MYRIAM FROM AIM FRANCE



**Gilles and Myriam Bonvallat studied at Geneva Bible Institute (IBG) from 1995-96 as they prepared to go to Nyankunde, DR Congo with AIM. Now the Institute is part of the French office's mobilising strategy.**

**Geneva Bible Institute** (IBG) started in 1921 as the '**Ecole Biblique de Genève**'. It was created by a Scottish man, Hugh Alexander, who founded the 'Action Biblique', a church denomination. In the 90s, the one-year course developed into a wider partnership with denominations working in France and Switzerland, to offer training for up to four years ([www.ibg.cc](http://www.ibg.cc)). Although it started as a very mission orientated Bible school, the urgent need for pastors in France began to take priority. IBG's vision is to equip students with

practical skills and experience, alongside theological and mission knowledge.

## **FUTURE GENERATIONS**

Since 2016, there has been a new focus on cross cultural missions, introduced through a **Transcultural Mission Training Programme**, to prepare a new generation of French-speaking missionaries. It is a great opportunity for the future pastors at IBG to catch a vision for mission, hearing from passionate and experienced missionaries. We pray that God would use these connections to raise up awareness and increase a vision for

mission among church leaders in France and Switzerland.

## **A SHARED VISION**

We were privileged to be part of a small committee who worked to establish this new Transcultural Mission curriculum. It was a dream that grew in our minds as we were still in Rwanda. When we returned to Geneva at the end of 2013, we found out with great joy that God had put the same vision and burden on a few other peoples' hearts too. Three years later, the first students started their Transcultural Mission training. We have had the joy of teaching a yearly course on Missionary Life, and a course training couples to be mentors.

## **VISIONS REALISED**

IBG developed partnerships with several mission organisations, such as AIM, to help organise on-field internships (six or 18 months). Every year, as a partner, AIM attends a Missions Forum at IBG with the first-year students and other mission organisations, to share our vision and goals. A couple of months later, the students are presented with internship opportunities. This requires a lot of teamwork, with missionaries on the field willing to welcome and mentor interns, and IBG providing a short online course for mentors.

*We are so encouraged by the AIM missionaries willing to take part in the programme, preparing to receive interns, even though no one might come*

We are so encouraged by the AIM missionaries willing to take part in the programme, preparing to receive interns, even though no one might come, as there are always more placements than students! Without their commitment, this programme would be worthless.

## **FROM INTERNS TO MISSIONARIES**

Since 2016, AIM has supported interns in Chad, the Islands, Mayotte, DR Congo and on a Borderless team in Canada. Some of these interns have become AIM long term missionaries as a result. We are so excited to see Francophone volunteers going to Francophone Africa!

In 2023-2024, AIM is offering eight internships. Our prayer is that these internships will catalyse, equip and onboard godly long-term workers for Francophone Africa, helping to establish God's kingdom among every people group in Africa.



# AN AFRICAN BLESSING FOR FRANCE

Gilles and Myriam Bonvallat introduce us to some of those who have recently been sent through the French office.

**Diya\* is a godly, loving and proactive young woman, a great blessing from Africa to France and to the ends of the World, where her friends are taking the gospel!**

When Diya came to spend a week with us, she cooked the most incredible meal - many of her mother's specialties: delicious samosas, butternut chicken, chapatis. She grew up in a Hindu family in Africa and heard the gospel through her Filipino friend at high school, whose parents were missionaries there.

Diya and her whole family were converted together - such an incredible story! But they faced a lot of persecution from extended family.

Diya left her family in Africa to come to France and study. She had to learn French and, after six years, her French is amazing! She also grew in her faith in her first year in France. At the end of her studies, she received a clear call to mission in France. The next few years were not easy, as she struggled with studies, part time jobs and difficulties obtaining a visa.

Despite the challenges, God opened many opportunities for Diya to serve with AIM's Borderless team. Now she is in one of the biggest university cities. She's passionate about loving, serving, and helping these students, many from unreached people groups, to hear the gospel for the very first time. She loves to see God's work in their lives, the transformation he brings and the joy of seeing them return to their own countries with the good news, with many risks ahead.

Diya is familiar with the intensity of the spiritual battle, as the enemy tries to discourage her, using her past, her ancient beliefs and the challenges of ministering in France. From the outside France appears to welcome all spiritualities, all that is except Jesus. There is a superficial tolerance that hides a deep resistance to the gospel, making this pioneering work both painful and costly.

*\*Diya's name has been changed for security reasons.*



## A NEW GENERATION OF DISCIPLES

We met Jessica as she was studying at Geneva Bible Institute (IBG). Whilst her parents came from the Ivory Coast and Togo, Jessica grew up in France. She lived in Benin for two years as a child and visited several countries in Africa.

Jessica grew up in a family with a Christian background, but it was at a youth camp, at the age of 17, where she really understood the gospel and decided to become a disciple of Jesus. She studied law but at the end of her studies, felt called to full time ministry among young people. So, she started theological training at IBG. During her first year, she realised the great need for discipleship in mission, mentoring and teaching. For seven months she worked at a local church in North Africa and seeing the rapid growth in Africa, realised the desperate need for these believers to be taught the Word of God.

Today, Jessica is 29 and working with AIM in Bunia, DR Congo. She's passionate about teaching and discipling the youth, especially young girls and teenagers. Being a French-African missionary in DR Congo, on a multicultural team, working with a local church, has many challenges. In France, teamwork was collaborative, and there was a freedom to speak and make decisions together. As an African, the principles of respect for elders and submitting without question are hard. She wants to honour them but she's not ready to submit blindly either. It's complex! It's a learning experience to work in love with all these differences, and to deal with the fact that she is totally African and totally French, living and working in a multicultural context.

Jessica's dream for the future is to see more young African Christians truly walk as disciples of Christ, engaging with God at a young age and becoming mature in the faith, so that they will not be tossed about by false teaching, but will be a strong force in the church, today and tomorrow. She's passionate about using her gifts and service in Bunia to see this dream become a reality, despite the many cultural challenges!





# A UK CHURCH GOING GLOBAL



**We interviewed Liz Hayden, a member of the staff team at Christ Church Mayfair, to find out what motivates them to be a global church. Christ Church have sent many people, including Dave and Cristyn Wakefield, who are preparing to teach theological education at Moffat Bible College in Kijabe, Kenya.**

## **CAN YOU INTRODUCE YOURSELF AND TELL US ABOUT CHRIST CHURCH?**

Before working at church, I was a missionary myself. For two years I worked in East Asia and later as a Staff worker with Christian Unions in London.

Christ Church Mayfair is an evangelical Anglican church in central London. We are a 'gathered church' as our church family is spread all over the city; not many people can afford to live in Mayfair! We're well suited to those who can reach the church easily for midweek events and find it easier to invite unbelieving friends and colleagues to church in a central location. The church family is mostly British, but with a strong international contingent.

## **WHY IS YOUR CHURCH COMMITTED TO SENDING PEOPLE TO OTHER COUNTRIES?**

Primarily because the gospel is for the nations. Although we have opportunities to share the gospel with people from many countries, cultural and religious backgrounds, there are still so many in our world today who do not have access to the gospel.

Although we've always known that overseas mission is a good idea, our

practical commitment to sending gospel workers overseas has developed over time. When we were first planted 20 years ago, having missionaries seemed like a good idea, so we hastily 'borrowed' some from churches we had connections with! But gradually we have sent more and more missionaries from our own church family.

## **HOW DO YOU DISCERN WHO TO SEND?**

We look for the same things we look for in those we appoint to leadership roles in the church: godly character, knowledge and skills useful for ministry (or a willingness to acquire them). People typically have a desire to serve abroad, an affinity for cross-cultural work and then have a chat with the mission support group or a member of the staff team.

## **HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN A STRONG CONNECTION WITH THE WORKERS YOU SEND?**

We love it when our missionaries visit us and we encourage them to do so as often as they are able. We regularly interview missionaries in our services and prayer meetings and feature them in our prayers each Sunday. Our congregation is quite transitory so every time our missionaries return, the congregation will look very

different to the last time they visited. We are considering connecting our missionaries to a home group, so that they can build deeper relationships with a smaller group of people.

Where we have sent someone from the church, we feel we have a stake in their ministry - the highs and lows, big decisions they are making - and so we like to send a staff member to participate in reviews and debriefs with their mission agency. We also link them with a member of the church who can check in with them pastorally.

## **HOW HAS SENDING PEOPLE, LIKE THE WAKEFIELDS, HELPED AND ENCOURAGED CHRIST CHURCH?**

Sending missionaries is a really healthy thing to do. When people like the Wakefields leave, it's painful, but sending key people overseas keeps us from becoming too comfortable or inward looking. It reminds us of the priority of God's kingdom and keeps us depending on God for our needs here.

Dave and Cristyn's decision to go overseas with a young family has also been a challenge to their peers. It's a stage of life that naturally encourages us to seek stability and familiarity. It's obvious to parents of young children that there is a

cost for Dave and Cristyn. They will be far from home and their support network; they won't be progressing on the property ladder or in their careers. To lots of people, including Christians, that's crazy! But it reminds us of the immense value of the gospel and that it is worth taking risks for, whether we stay at home or go overseas.

## **WHAT IS THE MOST ENCOURAGING THING ABOUT BEING A CHURCH WITH A GLOBAL FOCUS?**

It's encouraging that we can pray for the gospel to progress in places that many of us will never have the chance to visit. We get to hear stories of God working in unexpected ways in some very challenging contexts.

## **WHAT CHALLENGES ARE THERE TO REMAINING COMMITTED TO GLOBAL MISSION?**

The challenge for us is to ensure our missionaries are really known by the congregation, which has a high turnover. Some are with us for the long term; others are here for only three to five years to study or work. This can be hard for our missionaries who won't recognise many faces in the room when they return. However, it is a wonderful opportunity to encourage young Christians to have a global focus.





# PRAYING FOR GLOBAL MISSION

How should we pray for ourselves and others? Every day our staff, and the pastors and missionaries who join us, hear an opening prayer shaped by Luke 10:2. 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.' We shape our prayers around this verse, to help us remain focused on the task we have been called to. Praying through scripture helps us to be shaped by God's heart, to have our eyes opened to his work in the world and to be challenged to see how God has placed us to work out his purposes.

We know that when we pray, God is not only moving our hearts wherever we are, but he is also directing people's lives, shaping cultures, opening doors and equipping those he is calling. God's sovereignty, power and might give us confidence to pray prayers that go beyond our understanding of the means to achieve them, or the cost to individuals and churches to see him fulfil them. Our prayers are to see God raise up people ready to cross cultures and share the good news. So, let us pray through some of Scripture together to help us broaden our prayers, and move from our day-to-day concerns, to praying for God to reach our communities, churches and every nation.

## PRAY FOR A PASSION FOR GOD

In 'Let the Nations Be Glad!' John Piper says his *"hope and prayer remains the same: that people, churches, mission agencies, and social ministries become God-centred, Christ-exalting, Spirit-powered, soul-satisfied, Bible-saturated, missions-mobilising, soul winning, and church- strengthening."* Let us pray for a love and enjoyment of God that overflows and transforms lives.

### DEVOTED

Let us pray for churches that give their all for God, that devote more of their time to loving, praising and worshipping God rather than discussing business, bills or buildings. Deuteronomy 6:5 - 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.'

### CONCERNED

Pray for our churches to be so focused on God's kingdom and name, that they have no concern for their own reputations, but instead long for people to know Jesus. Matthew 6:5-10

### DIFFERENT

Pray for our churches to stand firm and be distinct from the world around them, knowing that we are called to be God's people, strangers in this world, longing for the new creation. Galatians 1:3-5

### DISCERNING

We all make mistakes which is why it is so important to pray for our churches to be discerning and to know what is best. Philippians 1:9-11.

Could you gather a group of people to pray these things for your church and the churches around you?

## A PASSION FOR OTHERS

Out of a love for God, we will naturally have a concern and love for others. However, Jesus calls us to go beyond a love for those that are like us and those we like, to love those who hate us! Matthew 5:44

### GREATER LOVE

As we seek to love others, we cannot settle for the least, or even for 'adequate', we are called to a sacrificial love that reflects Jesus' love for us. John 15:12-13

### HOLDING OUT JESUS

It is not enough to love others. Real love means sharing and offering them the one who is love. Let us pray that Jesus would help us share what he has done. 1 John 4:10

## A PASSION FOR GLOBAL MISSION

In today's Western culture, comfort and convenience are held up among the highest aspirations, yet we are called to daily take up our cross and follow Christ.

### SENT

Without others coming to share the good news with us, we would not know God's goodness and salvation. So let us pray that God would send us, that we would be willing to go, whether that is to our next-door neighbour or to a people group far away. Matthew 28:19-20

### EMPOWERED

Let us pray for a reliance on God for his empowering and boldness as his witnesses. Acts 1:8

When we have been moved by God, captivated by Christ and convicted by the Spirit, we will seek his glory to the ends of the earth. As we pray these prayers for ourselves first, let us also pray for our pastors, leaders and fellow church members to truly love Jesus and seek his glory everywhere.





# NEWS AND EVENTS

## THANK YOU FOR HELPING US MAKE NEW TRACKS IN AFRICA

We are sincerely grateful to everyone who prayed and participated in our Step Inland campaign this Lent. The time and dedication of our fundraisers yielded a generous response. Most participants reached their goals and we trust that the funds you raised for us will help us make new tracks for the gospel in Africa. You have been truly amazing!

Thank you to everyone who donated. We believe many will encounter Jesus because of your generosity.



## AIM FRIENDS' AND SUPPORTERS' EVENTS IN SCOTLAND AND IRELAND

We are hosting two events: one on Saturday 13th May at Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh and the other on Saturday 27th May at Great Victoria Street Baptist Church, Belfast. Join us to celebrate what God is doing to establish his church among Africa's least reached, to hear more of the challenges that remain and the part AIM is playing in responding to them.

We will be joined by Rosina Ferdinand, a Malagasy believer who has led AIM's work in Madagascar for several years. She continues as a missionary living and working among her own people, the Sakalava, on the very island she grew up on.

11am – 1pm; coffee available from 10.30am with a light lunch to follow. Contact Sheona Chisolm asap on [sheona.chisolm@aimint.org](mailto:sheona.chisolm@aimint.org) or call 0115 9838 120 to attend.



## TEACHING IN MISSION

Sat 20 May 2023  
10-11am



## DISCOVER HOW YOUR LESSONS COULD IMPACT ETERNITY

The skills and experience you have as a teacher are uniquely valuable. 20% of parents have to leave the mission field due to the educational needs of their children and over 50% of AIM missionaries have children. You could help these young people grow in education and faith, and play a crucial part in enabling the good news to reach peoples that have never heard it before. You will be a good news carrier yourself – to your students and to local people too.

Join our free online event, Saturday 20th of May at 10am, to find out more about the many primary, secondary, EAL and TA teaching opportunities across Africa. From teaching missionary children in large international schools, to teaching in mixed ability home school situations, and with a host of school types in between, there's an opportunity to suit you. Are you willing to Teach in Mission? Could your lessons impact eternity?

Go to [eu.aimint.org/teachers](https://eu.aimint.org/teachers) to attend this free online event.



## AIM EUROPE AUTUMN CONFERENCE



Join us 11–13 September 2023 for worship, fellowship, prayer and refreshment at our autumn conference, spending time hearing from God's word, from missionaries and exploring how we can continue to bring the name of Jesus to African peoples.

Taking place at the Hayes Conference Centre, on the edge of the beautiful Peak District, join us in spiritual encouragement as we taste and see what the Lord is doing through his people across the globe.

Go to [eu.aimint.org/autumn](https://eu.aimint.org/autumn) to book; £225 per person.



# A LIVING LEGACY

## *What matters most to me?*

Every adult should have a will, regardless of age, income or wealth, as it ensures your wishes are met after you pass away.

## *What is a legacy?*

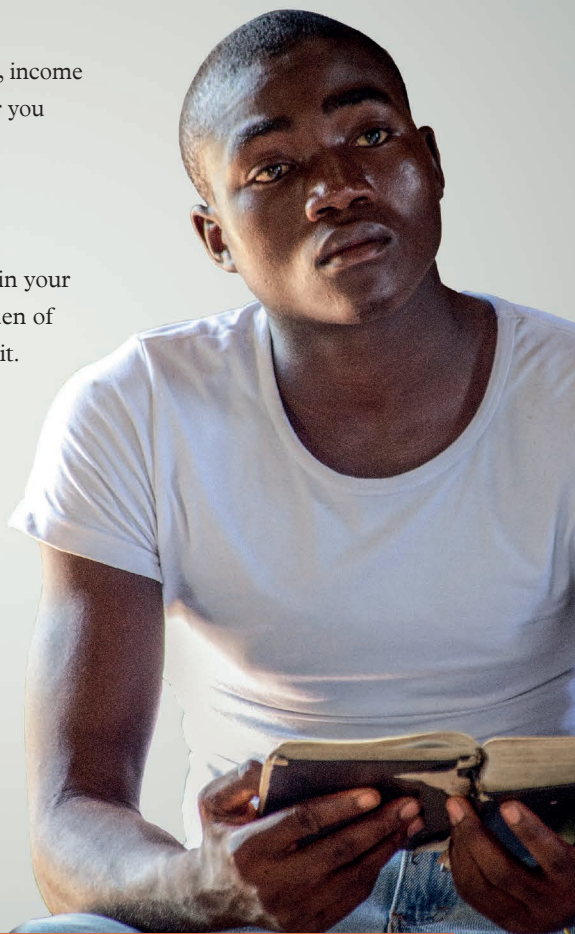
A legacy is a gift of cash or property included in your will. The right kind of legacy can ease the burden of inheritance tax on those who will benefit from it.

If you already have a will, you can update it to include a legacy with a codicil. A codicil is a legal document that dictates modifications or amendments to your will.

Once you've made a will, you and your loved ones can enjoy peace of mind knowing your wishes are clear and will be carried out.

## *Why leave a gift to AIM?*

A legacy gifted to AIM will help to reach unreached people groups with the gospel. Your legacy could make new tracks for the gospel in Africa.



**VISIT OUR WEBSITE  
FOR MORE INFORMATION  
[EU.AIMINT.ORG/LEGACY](https://eu.aimint.org/legacy)**






**SCAN THE  
QR CODE**



*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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**May 2023**

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