



# link

In this issue

## People and Places

— The training culture  
every church needs

— Why Italian students  
need the gospel

# Summer Celebration and AGM – save the date!

Each year we gather to thank God for all he is doing through Crosslinks, hear from some of our mission partners about their ministry, and pray for the year ahead. It's always an inspiring and uplifting time, combined with a short AGM giving you a peek behind the curtain of the society. This year's celebration will be on Tuesday 23 June. Please save the date – we'd love for you to join us, either in person or online. More details to follow.



## Join us in prayer

Join us at our online prayer meetings. We meet in the evening on Zoom with supporters to hear from and pray for Crosslinks mission partners. Sign up at [pletters@crosslinks.org](mailto:pletters@crosslinks.org) to have the Zoom details sent to you each month.

### 2 March, 7:30pm

with Trevor and Andrea Watson, serving in Sweden



### 16 March, 7pm

with Charles and Frances de Roemer, serving in Belgium



### 20 April, 7pm

with Alexis Pérez from Prédica Fiel, project partner in Cuba



### 18 May, 7pm

with Chris and Lotta Strajnic, serving in Sweden

### 11 May, 7:30pm

with Alastair and Elise Donaldson, serving in Ireland



**12** Coming of age



**4** God's word to God's world



**8** The training culture every church needs

#### In this issue

- 4** God's word to God's world  
Leadership team
- 8** The training culture every church needs  
Feature
- 12** Coming of age  
East Africa
- 18** Why Italian students need the gospel  
Italy
- 26** We would never treat others this way  
Member care

#### Mission personnel:

- 6** South America
- 7** Asia and Australasia
- 10** Africa
- 13** Short term volunteers
- 14** Europe
- 17** Sensitive ministries
- 20** Project partners
- 22** Training local Christians (BEST)
- 23** Associate mission partners
- 23** Schools of Biblical Training
- 24** Crosslinks office teams

Editor: Dan Reid,  
[dreid@crosslinks.org](mailto:dreid@crosslinks.org)

Print: Yeomans

Design: Tiger Finch Creatives

Crosslinks:  
116-118 Walworth Road  
London SE17 1JL  
+44 (0)20 8691 6111  
[contact@crosslinks.org](mailto:contact@crosslinks.org)

Crosslinks in Ireland:  
14 Glencregagh Court,  
Belfast BT6 0PA  
+44 (0) 28 9079 6028  
[ireland@crosslinks.org](mailto:ireland@crosslinks.org)

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# God's word to God's world

**What is Crosslinks all about? Is there really still a need for gospel workers to go overseas? Hear from our Mission Director, John McLernon.**

**G**od's word to God's world is the Crosslinks strapline. It is the rallying cry that you will see attached to pretty much everything that we produce from magazines and websites through to banners and promotional pens. Five words to describe what we do and why.

*God's world* speaks to the sovereignty of God, and therefore the worship that is due from all who have been created by him. And *God's word*, the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14), was the means by which God wonderfully planned, from the beginning, to reconcile his sinful people to himself. God's word came to God's world.

However, if these five words speak of that gracious initiative of our sovereign God, they also remind us of the part we now play as Jesus' followers. His command is to *'...make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.'* (Matthew 28:19-20) It is up to us, the church in this generation, to continue the work of those before us to take God's word to God's world.

In practice, Crosslinks fulfils that through our two priorities: firstly, proclaiming the gospel of the Lord Jesus and, secondly,

equipping and enabling those whom the Lord has called to proclaim the gospel. And as you browse through this edition of *People and Places*, you will see that is how Crosslinks mission partners serve across the world.

It is surprising how many times we are asked if there is still a need to send mission workers to other parts of the world. After all, 'this is a new era', 'the world is coming to us now' and 'isn't it cheaper to support local ministers rather than sending missionaries?' And those statements are all true, so it is important that churches are well informed to send men and women, who are both willing, gifted and qualified to serve, where they are really needed. But make no mistake, there is still a need.

**... it might mean teaching English or taking another role in order to live in that country ...**

There are places across the world right now where the church is yet to be fully established and it doesn't yet have the people and resources to start new churches where there is little or no gospel witness. Partnership with the local church in those places looks like establishing new churches and being committed to raising up local Christians to lead them. It can also look like supporting students in their witness to the Lord Jesus to other students by working with the national Christian student movement. In other places, some of the locations we don't talk

about publicly, it might mean teaching English or taking another role in order to live in that country, but going with the intentionality of making disciples of Jesus.

**... churches also ask for experienced Christians, who are not ordained, to support their work for a season ...**

There are also parts of the world where the church has already been established, and they are reaching out to us and others for support in strategic ways. For many years that has meant supporting national churches by enabling churches here to send theological educators to serve in universities and bible colleges. Other national churches have asked us for ministers to serve in local churches or in senior positions. Sometimes we support the church by sending teams of ministers to run short courses over a number of years. But supporting the church isn't only about lecturers and ministers – churches also ask for experienced Christians, who are not ordained, to support their work for a season, and that has been a real blessing to those ministries.

There is still a clear and compelling need to take God's word to God's world, and until the Lord returns that is likely to remain so. Let us pray then, that the church will raise up men and women to fulfil the Lord's charge to us in this generation and the next.

*John McLernon is the Mission Director*

# Mission personnel

All of us have a part to play in God's global mission. Crosslinks exists to help you join in, enabling churches and individuals in the UK and Ireland to establish gospel partnerships with mission personnel all over the world.

At any one time, 100 or so mission partners will be serving long-term in more than 25 countries. They are passionate about making Jesus known by teaching God's word in God's world. Their placement isn't dictated by geography, but by the needs for Bible-based ministry. Sent by their local church and supported by a wider team of churches and individuals, they serve by training leaders, in church planting and strengthening, and in frontline evangelism.

Crosslinks also provides short-term opportunities for teams and individuals to serve alongside these long-term mission partners, giving them a taste of cross-cultural mission. Alongside this, we support local project partners engaged in evangelism or training, and the training of pastor-teachers, evangelists and gospel workers in less well-off

## South America mission partners



**Matt and Helen Pope** (with Eva and Judah) work with, train and mentor pastors from different denominations in Chile and other Latin American countries.

**Andrew and Bethanie Walker** (with Maia, Emilio, Lucy and Noah) lead the Anglican Church of Mendoza, Argentina.



countries through the BEST bursary programme.

Read on to discover how and where our 87 mission partners serve. (Mission partners in sensitive locations are not included.)

'Brothers and sisters, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honoured.'  
2 Thessalonians 3:1

## Asia and Australasia mission partners



**John and Gillian Robinson** (with Leah, Natalie and Joel) run The Place of Grace Learning Centre for children in the needy communities of Bangkok, Thailand.

**David and Rachel Williams** are seconded to the Church Missionary Society of Australia (CMS-A) to train, equip and mentor new mission partners in Melbourne, Australia.



**Neil and Sharon Watkinson** (with Anna) are based in Sydney, Australia. Neil works part-time as the assistant minister of St Luke's Anglican Church and runs Schools of Biblical Training predominantly in SE Asia.



# The training culture every church needs

**Where will the church leaders of tomorrow come from? Matt Pope suggests a simple question to kickstart a training culture in your local church.**

One of the great privileges of my role in Chile and across Latin America is helping pastors and leaders build a culture in their churches that multiplies leaders. Sadly, that kind of culture is rare. And perhaps that's one reason why it can be so difficult to find small group leaders, elders, children's ministry teachers – or even future pastors. It might even help explain why some theological seminaries have so few students. I'm convinced: the lack of a training culture is a decisive factor.

## A biblical priority

Is this just a personal opinion? Not at all – it's thoroughly biblical. In Matthew 28, Jesus commands us to *'make disciples of all nations.'* In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul tells Timothy to entrust the gospel to faithful people *'who will be able to teach others also.'* And throughout the Bible we see the same pattern again and again.

In Mark 3:13–19, Jesus first calls his disciples to be with him and then to be sent out. We see him teaching them, sharing life with them, sending them to

serve, and even gathering them afterward for feedback and reflection (Mark 6).

The pattern is simple yet powerful: be with, send, repeat. Paul follows the same model with Timothy. And, in a sense, we can trace this all the way back to Adam in the garden – walking with God in fellowship before being sent into the world to bear his image.

## Why doesn't it happen?

I see two main reasons:

1. It's rarely taught. During my own time as an apprentice, as a student in Cornhill, during my years at seminary, no one ever talked about creating a discipling culture as an essential part of a church's ministry. I suspect my experience is more common than we realise.
2. Pastors are busy. The urgent often pushes out the important. Weekly ministry needs can easily consume the time required to train others.

But if discipleship is essential, we must make space for it.

## Where to begin

If the senior pastor doesn't see this as a priority, it likely won't happen. But if he does, here's a simple path forward.

### Step 1

Pray. Start with Jesus' command in Matthew 9:38: *'Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field.'*

### Step 2

Start small. Don't be intimidated by the size of the task. Don't say, 'We have no one ready for seminary' or 'no one mature enough to mentor.' Start with one person. Look for someone with potential – someone walking faithfully with Christ, someone without major personal life crises, someone who you can see could one day lead others.

### Step 3

Be with and send. Follow Jesus' model. Spend time together in everyday life – meals, errands, conversations – and also with an open Bible. Show them who God is and what he's doing in the world. Apply the word to life. Then ask the key question: 'How would you explain what we just learned to someone else?' Vary the audience: 'How would you explain it to your spouse? A non-Christian friend? A five-year-old?' This question plants the seed of multiplication from day one. It also builds confidence. I've seen people who thought they could never teach realise that they were already doing it – week after week – simply by explaining truth to others.

### Step 4

Send and review. When the person you were discipling begins discipling someone else – perhaps after a couple of months – have a follow-up conversation with them about how it is going, just as Jesus did with his disciples. Ask how it went. Encourage them. Offer correction where needed. Pray together. Once you see that they are training others who in turn train others, begin again with someone new.

## Rethinking what a 'healthy church' means

In many contexts, we measure church health by attendance, giving, or the percentage of people in small groups. Those are not unimportant – but they are incomplete. A truly healthy church should also be known by the number of people regularly coming to faith and the number of homegrown leaders being raised up for full-time gospel ministry.

When we focus on multiplication, not maintenance, we begin to reflect the pattern of the New Testament – ordinary people being equipped to do extraordinary things for the glory of God. With God's help, this simple, biblical pattern can grow into a vibrant, multiplying culture of discipleship in any church. And that's what I long to see across Latin America – churches where everyone is being trained to follow Jesus and to help others do the same.

*Matt and Helen Pope work with, train and mentor pastors in Chile and other Latin American countries*



# Africa

## mission partners



**James and Lucy Buchanan**  
(with Sam, Hannah, Sophie and Rachel) lead Hope Church Auckland Park in Johannesburg, South Africa.

**Alun and Debbie Burt**  
(with Likhona, Ilana, Malachi and Timothy) lead St Thomas Church Heideveld in Cape Town, South Africa.

**Rick and Alanna Creighton**  
(with Asha, Conor and Jack) serve in theological training at Jos ECWA Theological Seminary in Jos, Nigeria.

**Michael Durant** is based in the UK and is starting work with BUILD Partners, resourcing biblical ministry training across East Africa and beyond.

**Josh and Cathy Hooker**  
(with Benjamin, Erin and Matthew) are currently on home assignment in Northern Ireland, preparing to return to pastoral and training ministry in Namibia later this year.

**Jem Hovil** serves the Church of Uganda's BUILD training initiative across East Africa, from the UK.



**John and Jenny Miller**  
(with David, Matthew and Samuel) serve in theological training at Johannesburg Bible College in Johannesburg, South Africa.



**Rachael (and Bernie) Muluuta**  
are studying at Oak Hill Theological College in London as they prepare to return to Uganda, where Rachael previously served with Word of Life in Kampala, teaching and preparing ministry training materials for women, children, youth and their leaders.



**Gerald and Louise Mwangi**  
(with Jeremiah, Daniel and James) train youth workers in Nairobi, Kenya.



**Nat and Helen Schluter**  
(with Miriam, Christopher, Bethany, Isaac and Azola) lead Johannesburg Bible College in Johannesburg, South Africa.

**Andy and Rachel Symons**  
(with Haydn and Daniel) work relationally with church leaders in Mkushi, Zambia, to help them interpret and apply the Bible faithfully in their contexts.

**Alison Talbert** researches nutrition interventions for mothers and infants at Kenya Medical Research Institute in Kilifi, Kenya.



**Adam and Nomfundo Tomalin**  
(with Thandiwe) serve in student ministry with The Bible Talks in Pinetown, South Africa. Nomfundo also provides Christian counselling.

**Janet Webb** serves as a Bible worker at Lighthouse Academy, linked with Villiersdorp Community Church, in the Western Cape, South Africa.

**Portia Yiadom** serves in women's work and student ministry at Relite Africa Ministries in Accra, Ghana.



# Coming of age

**Coming of age ceremonies remain integral to life in East Africa, marking a crucial milestone in people's lives. They invariably include time away and tests of endurance, creating a new sense of identity. With BUILD coming of age, 2025 ended with a retreat in Uganda, where we tested our mission by interacting with an external evaluation and developed a new sense of purpose as a regional organisation.**

**B**UILD (Biblical Understanding for In-service Leadership Development) is a church-based leadership training initiative with its roots in the Church of Uganda. It is now about to turn 21, a significant milestone.

BUILD's steady growth over the years has been organic. It was never the plan to go beyond Uganda, but from the start BUILD brought together individuals not only from across Uganda, but also from within the refugee community.

Studying the Scriptures together created an inter-cultural flavour and impetus, and from 2011 trainers started travelling to Rwanda, Tanzania, Burundi, Kenya and DR Congo in response to invitations to develop BUILD in those countries. Trainee-trainers also came to Uganda from South Sudan, sharing the work back home and in the refugee settlements. Recently, BUILD has seen training rolling out in Ethiopia and Chad and there is interest from further afield: capacity is the limiting factor.



BUILD leaders gathering in Entebbe, Uganda, with new Crosslinks partner, Michael Durant

As a result, BUILD has created an informal network of individuals from across the region, with Ugandans, Tanzanians, Rwandans, and Congolese serving alongside one another. Our meeting formalised this in the form of the BUILD Training Network, which represents a natural progression towards more structured coordination, collaboration and accountability.

While BUILD was originally designed for multi-congregation parishes in areas

of dense church presence, it has been embraced by those leading churches who are particularly neglected and suffer from limited access to training, including those on the margins and the displaced.

**... he had seen 'visible growth in the soundness and doctrinal clarity of sermons.'**

As one BUILD trainee interviewed for the evaluation said, 'Over 70% of pastors in South Sudan, where most of the refugees come from, do not get formal theological training. BUILD gave us the opportunity: five of us were trained and now four are actively impacting the settlement and one has returned to South Sudan.'

From others, it was encouraging to hear about the direct impact. A Tanzanian bishop spoke of how he had seen 'visible growth in the soundness and doctrinal clarity of sermons.' And as one respondent summarised, 'The programme has helped change the way ministry is done, it has made the word clearer, teaching stronger, and churches more united.'

How encouraging to be a little more grown up and to be entering a new stage of life. Please pray for us in all the challenges that lie ahead.

*Jem Hovil serves with BUILD from the UK*

## Short-term volunteers

Could you consider short-term mission? There are many opportunities to serve God overseas — as an individual, as a couple, a church group or a gap year team leader or member. You could go for anything from two weeks to a year, working alongside established mission partners, projects or national church leaders.

**'It was so encouraging to see how God is working in other parts of the world and to hear teenagers be taught the incredible news of Jesus.'**

**Kathryn Johnston** served alongside Chris and Lizzie Brown on a summer camp in Bologna, Italy.

**'It was incredible to see the ways God is at work to bring his children back to him.'**

**Katie Russell** spent six months of her gap year serving alongside Julian and Nicky Milson in Valencia, Spain.

Read about current opportunities at [crosslinks.org/short-term](https://crosslinks.org/short-term) and talk to us about how you would like to serve.

# Europe

## mission partners



### JP and Sue Aranzulla

lead Forte Torre Church and the Applicazione ministry training course in Bologna, Italy.



### Robbie and Lizzie Bellis

(with Lola, Caleb, Mia and Zoe) lead the Eglise Protestante Evangélique de Louvain-la-Neuve, in Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium.



### Chris and Lizzie Brown

(with Shona and Pietro) serve in student ministry with Gruppi Biblici Universitari in Bologna, Italy.



### James and Lou Clark

(with Max, Julia, Samuel, Reuben and Susannah) serve in student ministry at the Eglise Protestante Evangélique de Louvain-la-Neuve, in Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium.



**Joe and Rachel Clarke** (with Beth, Hannah, Joshua and Timothy) lead a church plant, Comunidade da Graça, in Coimbra, Portugal.

\*Associate mission partners serve for between 1 and 3 years, alongside established mission partners, projects or national church leaders to help as they prayerfully consider committing themselves to longer-term mission (read more on page 23).



### Charles and Frances de Roemer

lead the Eglise Protestante Evangélique de Binche, in Binche, Belgium.



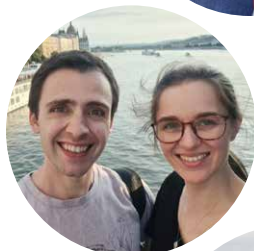
### Alastair and Elise Donaldson

Alastair and Elise Donaldson (with Josiah and Edith) currently serve in Calvary Church Loughrea, County Galway, Ireland. They also lead a Bible study ministry in the local town of Gort.



### Simon and Abigail Donohoe

are church planting in Cherrywood, a new fast-growing suburb currently without a church presence in south Dublin, Ireland.



### Matt and Sarah Gurtler

are associate mission partners\* and serve at Sfântă Treime (Holy Trinity) Church in Nisporeni, Moldova. They are making the transition to full mission partners in 2026.



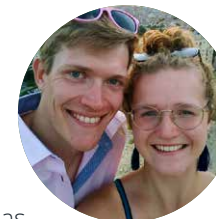
### Graeme and Bequi Innes

(with Iona, Joshua and Ella) serve at Providenta Church and lead Moldova's Reformed Evangelical Alliance in Chişinău, Moldova.



### Jirka and Keira Kralovi

(with Jochebed, Simeon, Barnabus and Anezka) serve in student ministry, train Christianity Explored leaders and are involved in a church plant in Olomouc, the Czech Republic.



### David and Kathryn-Anne Masters

are joining Crosslinks as mission partners in training, studying theology and French in Brussels, Belgium from September as they discern where they might serve long-term.

### Julian and Nicky Milson

(with Jemima and Theo) lead Comunidad Anglicana Evangélica de Valencia, in Valencia, Spain.

### Andy and Zsófi Oatridge

(with David, Réka and Emily) train Hungarian youth leaders through Acorn Bibliai Képzés in Budapest, Hungary and lead a church plant. Andy also serves part-time as Director of Langham Preaching: Europe and Caribbean.





**Mark and Jane Oden**

(with Sofia, Inez, Luisa and Archie) have been leading Chiesa Evangelica Neapolis in Naples, Italy, and plan to return to the UK in March 2026 to serve at Chalmers Church, Edinburgh.



**Steve and Dawn Orange**

(with Jemima, Max, Zeb and Nelly) lead L'Eglise Protestante Evangélique de Bruxelles-Woluwe in Brussels, Belgium.



**Sena and Jane Ounate-Lare**

(with Joshua, Eloise and Johan) lead the Eglise Le Bon Berger and La Source Network Churches in Caen, France.



**Riste and Tea Micev**

(with Ivona) lead Project Timothy in Serbia, which trains church leaders and translates Christian books into Serbian.



**Gillian Pegler** serves as a prison chaplain and prepares resources for prison ministry through 'Time for Change Ministries' in South Wales, UK.



**Thorsten and Kerstin Prill**

are mission consultants based in Scotland, providing mentoring and counselling for current and future mission personnel.



**Jonny and Ruth Pullar**

are seeking to equip and encourage Italian men and women for gospel ministry through serving at Stupenda Grazia Church in Modena, Italy.



**Brada (and Yatza) Radanovic**

(with Matej and Ilaj) lead Grace Evangelical Church Novi Sad in Novi Sad, Serbia.



**Chris and Rosy Redfearn**

(with Lydia and Santi) serve at Méndez Núñez church in Valencia, Spain, where Chris is the lead elder and Rosy is engaged in discipling women.



**Helen Sheridan**

serves in women and children's ministry at Calvary Church Castlebar, Republic of Ireland.



**Chris and Lotta Strajnic**

lead Emmaus Church Åkersberga and a discipleship training ministry in Stockholm, Sweden.



**Tom and Liz Trump**

(with Lucas and Theo) pastor Emmanuel Etterbeek Church in Brussels, Belgium.



**Trevor and Andrea Watson**

(with Emily, Grace and Alice) serve at Gothenburg International Baptist Church in Sweden and develop training resources through Rotad Equipped.



# Sensitive ministries

In some parts of the world, preaching the gospel publicly and open discipleship are not always possible (which is why this publication doesn't include full names or locations for some mission partners). Wherever they are, all these mission partners are engaged in bringing God's word to people who don't yet know or love him. Many of them have made particularly costly sacrifices to serve where they are, so your prayers for them are greatly valued.

**Give thanks**

- that God's word is not limited by human boundaries.
- for how these mission partners' gifts and circumstances enable them to serve in sensitive locations.

**Pray for**

- wisdom and eternal fruit in the most unlikely of mission fields.
- the Spirit's upholding of these often isolated mission partners.
- perseverance, physical protection and spiritual encouragement.



## Why Italian students need the gospel

**There are many good reasons why Italy needs the gospel. But it's crucial to remember the primary reason for sharing the good news.**

We have worked for many years now with the *Gruppi Biblici Universitari* (GBU), a ministry among students in Italy similar to the Christian Unions. Recently we spent an evening with a group of around a dozen Christian students, some Italian and some from elsewhere in the world, to talk together about the aim of the GBU groups: evangelism in the university.

We began by asking, 'What is Christianity about?' – and how they might answer this if a friend asked them two minutes before a lesson began. Their suggestions were quite a mixture:

- One talked about Jesus as the Son of God, and how we can be saved through believing in him because of his death and resurrection.

- Another spoke of the significance of belonging to God's people and having a personal walk with God in the community of the church.
- A third said they would not immediately talk about Jesus, as it might close down the conversation for many; instead, they would begin with the hope they have, so that if people see its reality in our lives, they may then listen when we speak of Jesus.

We then turned to God's own answer. In the opening verses of Romans, Paul states that the gospel is first and foremost about Jesus: how he became a man, and how the Spirit declared him to be God's Son – particularly 'by his resurrection from the dead.'

We talked about the good news of what this means for us: grace and the obedience of faith among all who are called. But then we looked again. The good news doesn't begin with us! It is the fact that Jesus, who was dead, is now alive – a divine declaration in history of his sovereign power over all.

The culture in Italy is steeped in Christian tradition, yet even when we meet students – like one recently – who are well versed in theological issues and capable of framing questions about them, it is striking how unfamiliar many are with the actual text of the Bible. After a long conversation about his questions, we invited this student to read a well-known passage from Mark's Gospel.

***Evangelical churches often struggle with internal strife, unhealthy cultures, and a lack of training and resources.***

As he paid attention, he was visibly taken aback by what was written – as if for the first time he truly saw the words on the page. Italians need to hear the gospel! Italy grapples with deep problems of family fracture, social incohesion, and economic deprivation. Evangelical churches often struggle with internal strife, unhealthy cultures, and a lack of training and resources. These are all good reasons for mission in Italy. But the greater motivation is not simply helping people to 'fill a God-shaped hole'. It is that the good news of Jesus' lordship has been declared,

and by his resurrection he has made known his unassailable purpose to call men and women from every nation as witnesses for his name's sake. The greatest need and opportunity for mission is that God should be glorified through the proclamation of this gospel.

We have had the great privilege, as Crosslinks mission partners, to do this for many years now, working with students since we first arrived. We love the opportunity to work at the most foundational things and to see students' lives shaped by them, so that they might go on to serve Christ for a lifetime in the church. This year it seems that more young people – both Italian and international – are coming to the GBU with questions and curiosity than we have ever seen before. It's great, and perhaps it is a quiet revival, or some kind of Gen Z spiritual wave. Whatever it is, we are mindful that God's work is not complete when young people watch Christian content on TikTok, or ask more questions, or vote for parties that speak of 'Christian principles.' It comes to completion when people name Jesus Christ as Lord in the obedience of faith, and a lifetime of service for his name's sake flows from that confession.

Please pray that we might see more and more students established in this faith. *'Those from Italy send you their greetings.'* (Hebrews 13:24) Thank you!

*Chris and Lizzie Brown serve with the GBU in Bologna, Italy*

Photo: Lizzie Brown with students

# Project partners

**Crosslinks supports indigenous partners running gospel projects in their own countries. These projects are all involved in training Bible teachers and church leaders, or in direct evangelism.**

## Prédica Fiel, Cuba

Havana-based Prédica Fiel is run by Alexis Pérez and trains church workers, planters and leaders to faithfully interpret and teach the Bible through weekly training and regional workshops to the 4,000 house churches that have sprung up since the 1990s.

## The Arctic Diocese, Canada

Local clergy serve a population of 55,000 in an area covering four million kilometres. Recently, the youth ministry has grown, new clergy have arrived to serve in remote parishes and the recently opened Bible college has welcomed new students.

## Marsabit Diocese Youth Worker, Kenya

Jomo Nderitu serves 64 churches in a region where Christian teenagers suffer persecution, tribal tensions and radicalisation. Jomo runs evangelistic and discipleship ministries and an annual youth conference.

(Project partners in sensitive places are not included)

## GracePoint Church Youth Worker, Kenya

Serving in Kikuyu, Kenya, Ken Irungu is GracePoint's first dedicated youth worker. He mentors, disciples and teaches the Bible to children, teenagers, students and iServe Africa ministry apprentices.

## St Julian's Centre, Kenya

St Julian's Centre trains men and women in faithful expository preaching and word ministry for serving their local church as clergy, evangelists, lay readers and youth workers.

## Nekemte School for the Deaf, Ethiopia

A community-based rehabilitation programme for children with a range of disabilities in Nekemte offering access to healthcare and education.

## Christ Central Soweto, South Africa

This church, pastored by Musa Ntinga, was planted in Soweto, Johannesburg, South Africa, an area of 29 townships and 13,000 students, with a vision to become an evangelical church-planting hub.



## Word Works, Philippines

Led by Third Caampued, Word Works is a Bible training ministry which equips leaders to faithfully handle and proclaim God's word. They plan to host Cornhill training online, bringing this material to many more Filipinos.



## InterAction Camps, Belgium, France, Germany

Each summer, InterAction runs bilingual holiday camps across Europe packed with sports, games and activities with the aim of explaining the gospel to the next generation.



## Pāradaugava Reformed Church, Latvia

In Riga, around 45,000 people attend church every week – but only a handful of churches prioritise faithful Bible teaching. Led by Mārtiņš Martinson, Pāradaugava Reformed Church reaches out to families and students with the gospel.



## Kantipur Church, Nepal

Christians make up just 4.4% of Nepal's population, where evangelism is prohibited by anti-conversion laws. Pastored by Prem Bhattarai, Kantipur Church was planted in 2000 and is committed to teaching and preaching God's word.



Find out more at [crosslinks.org/project-partners](https://crosslinks.org/project-partners)

# Training local Christians: BEST study partners

Sending mission partners to work cross-culturally is incredibly valuable, but we are also passionate about supporting and enabling local gospel workers to take up church leadership and to be trained to teach the Bible well for themselves.

To this end, Crosslinks offers the BEST (Bursaries Enabling Strategic Training) programme to facilitate the equipping of local ministers in gospel work. Partnering with BEST means supporting a local study partner by helping with theological training fees and making a commitment to pray for them regularly.

This year, we have pledged to support 111 study partners from 25 countries, studying in 35 colleges in 20 countries. They need the prayerful and financial support of gospel partners as they train for ministry. **Could you be one of them?** Explore more at [crosslinks.org/best](https://crosslinks.org/best)

## Meet four of our BEST study partners

### Jean-Davy Frair

Faculté Libre de Théologie Évangélique, Vaux sur Seine, France



### Nonhlanhla Tshabalala

George Whitefield College, Cape Town, South Africa



*'On behalf of the theological students at ECWA Theological College Zaboló, I would like to extend our deepest gratitude for your generous support in providing scholarships to assist our students with their semester fees. Your kindness has made a significant difference in their academic journey, allowing them to continue their studies without the added stress of financial concerns. The impact of your assistance goes beyond just financial support; it encourages these students to stay focused on their studies and to continue their pursuit of knowledge and faith. Your partnership in this mission is invaluable, and we are truly thankful for the role you play in shaping their futures and the growth of the gospel. May God continue to bless your work and mission.'*

Ashiru Ayuba,  
former study partner



### Joaquín Cortes

Centre for Pastoral Studies, Santiago, Chile



### Sonu Chitrakar

Nepal Ebenezer Theological Seminary, Kathmandu, Nepal



## Associate mission partners

Associate mission partners serve for a longer period than a short-term volunteer, anywhere between one and three years. They serve alongside established mission partners, projects or national church leaders, to help as they prayerfully consider committing themselves to longer-term mission.

**Matt and Sarah Gurtler** have been serving at a church in Moldova, strengthening and equipping local believers:

*'From early on in our married life, we were thinking seriously about cross-cultural mission and started having conversations with Crosslinks about an application. Eventually, we decided to go as associate*

*mission partners, as this enabled us to get some experience living cross-culturally in the medium term, while still quite young, before making a longer commitment.*

*We've now been in Moldova for two years and are hoping to stay longer as mission partners, but being associates has been really valuable in the discernment process. Our ministry looks very different to what we expected, and it's been really helpful to be here, in country, while working out what it would look like for us to serve here long-term. Over these two years, God has enabled us to make a lot of progress with learning the language and culture, and has given us a much clearer vision of what's next.'*

## Schools of Biblical Training

Schools of Biblical Training (SBTs) are short conferences over four to five days at the invitation of local church leaders. Their aim is to encourage and equip those attending to teach God's word more faithfully and effectively. SBTs begin with the basic principles of expository preaching and will study several Bible books in-depth, along with key doctrines and approaches to pastoral ministry. The aim is for SBT trainers to return for up to three years so they can build relationships with participants, develop knowledge of the culture and ensure different biblical genres are covered. Recent SBTs have been held in Nigeria,

Egypt, Kenya, Uganda, Thailand (for pastors in Myanmar), and India.

Richard Balmer, our Ireland team leader, recently taught at an SBT in Nigeria: 'As it was in Philippi, so it is in Nigeria. Brothers and sisters are suffering for Jesus but standing firm. We took a group of clergy through Philippians, with a focus on expository preaching, as well as teaching a Bible overview and Titus. Give thanks that God's word is strengthening our gospel partners in Nigeria: "For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him." (Philippians 1:29)

# Crosslinks office teams

Crosslinks has four office teams (three in London and one in Belfast) which work together closely, as well as praying together online twice a week.



## Mission Director

### John McLernon

Working with the Board of Trustees and Senior Leadership Team\*, John oversees Crosslinks at home and around the world.

## Mission Personnel Team

Led by Beth, the Personnel Team send and support Crosslinks mission partners, short-term teams and individual volunteers. They also support evangelistic projects and administer bursaries to enable theological and ministry training around the world.

### Beth Buchanan

Director of Mission Personnel\*

### Dee Hemingway

Mission Personnel Support Manager

### Susie Harker

Mission Personnel Assistant (p/t)

### Ian Marden

BEST Coordinator (p/t)

### Anastasia Gibbs

Short-term Mission and Projects Coordinator



## Mission Partnerships Team

Led by Rupert, the Partnerships Team helps build partnerships between Crosslinks mission partners/projects and churches/individuals in the UK and Ireland.

### Rupert Shelley

Director of Mission Partnerships\*

### Helen Burns

Church Partnerships Coordinator

### Margaret McGuire

Mission Partnerships Enabler

### Dan Reid

Communications Lead

## Hub Team

Led by Mark, the Hub Team supports the infrastructure and staff team which underpin the work of Crosslinks.

### Mark Hackett

Director of Finance and Operations\*

### Ade Adeoye

Donations Administrator and Data Analyst

### Chris Mukhtar

IT Manager

### Alex Powell

Finance Manager

### Andrew Taylor

Accounts Assistant



## Ireland Team

Led by Richard, the Ireland Team helps churches across Ireland send and support Crosslinks mission partners and projects.

### Richard Balmer

Ireland Team Leader

### Valerie Gibson

Activities & Relationships Coordinator (p/t)

### Pam Smyth

Office Administrator (p/t)



# We would never treat others this way

**What if we listened to our own tiredness with the same attentiveness we give to others? Kerstin Prill offers a pastoral word for mission partners and all those who carry more than they show.**

It would never cross our minds to treat others the way we treat ourselves. We care about people. We are attentive and kind. We choose our words carefully. We encourage one another with Scripture and prayer. We notice when someone seems quieter than usual or looks a little off, and we ask how they're doing. We tell them to rest, to slow down, to be gentle with themselves. We offer practical help. We step in so they don't have to carry everything alone.

And then we come home. We feel annoyed with ourselves for being more tired than we think we should be. We notice aches and pains and dismiss them, hoping they'll disappear if we ignore them long enough. We long for a break from ministry but worry about the consequences for others if we step back. We feel stressed and irritable under the weight of responsibility—and then add to that weight by telling ourselves off for not

being more patient, more gracious, more spiritual.

We would never speak to another person the way we talk to ourselves in these moments. Instead of compassion, we offer ourselves criticism. Instead of curiosity, judgement. Instead of care, pressure. We demand resilience where we would normally be understanding. We expect endurance where we would recommend rest. We push ourselves harder at the very moment we would urge someone else to stop.

For many of us, this feels almost virtuous. After all, isn't ministry about sacrifice? Isn't faith about laying ourselves down? Shouldn't we be able to push through tiredness, discomfort, and strain for the sake of others?

But there is a quiet difference between self-giving and self-neglect. Jesus never asked people to ignore their humanity

nor did he disregard his own. He noticed hunger, fatigue, grief, and fear. He asked his disciples for support when the burden he carried seemed unbearable (Matthew 26:38). He invited people to rest (Mark 6:31). He withdrew to quiet places himself (Luke 5:16).

When we consistently deny ourselves the kindness we extend outward, something begins to fray. Our joy dulls. Our patience thins. The dirty dishes left in the sink by our spouse suddenly become intolerable, triggering a heated argument. Our bodies keep score even when our theology tells us to keep going. And the people we are trying to serve often feel the cost of that, whether we intend them to or not.

What might change if we treated ourselves as someone we care about? What if we listened to our own tiredness with the same attentiveness we give to others? What if aches and limits were not inconveniences to overcome, but signals to honour? What if taking a break were not a failure of faithfulness or a questionable quest for self-indulgence, but an act of trust?

Extending grace inward doesn't imply diminishing our commitment. The compassion we offer ourselves is not a distraction from ministry. Instead, it can be the difference between merely surviving and truly thriving.

Where are you on the spectrum between self-neglect and self-care? Why not take a moment to pause, be curious and notice how you treat yourself? It is never too late to break through old patterns and open yourself to receiving the same kindness you so readily offer to others.

We are not only servants in God's kingdom. We are also sheep who need a shepherd.

*Kerstin Prill is a mission consultant and counsellor who works with Crosslinks mission partners*

## Reflection

- Where do you notice a gap between the kindness you offer others and the kindness you offer yourself?
- What would it look like this week to treat yourself with the same care you would give a friend in your position?

## Prayer

Dear heavenly Father,  
You understand me inside out.  
You see what motivates and what limits me.

You notice my tiredness even when I'm good at hiding it.

You know my limits, even when I don't allow myself to have any.

Help me look at myself through your eyes.

Teach me to receive the grace I am so willing to give to others.

May I learn to rest without guilt, to listen to my body without judgement, and to trust that serving you does not depend entirely on my striving.

Help me notice when I'm in danger of neglecting myself. Teach me what it means to care for myself in a way that honours you and increases my joy and sense of fulfilment in ministry.

Amen.

# God's word to God's world

*'Your word is a lamp for my feet,  
a light on my path.'* Psalm 119:105

**111** study partners  
from 25 nationalities

**87** mission partners  
serving in **25** countries

**7** Schools of  
Biblical Training training **200+**  
local church leaders

**14** project partners

**8** short-term and associate  
mission partners

supported by **18** in our office teams