

Dear brothers and sisters,

When our Lord Jesus was about to ascend into heaven, leaving the eleven apostles on earth, he charged them with a set of instructions which we know as the Great Commission. 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing 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) The parallel command in Mark's Gospel reads 'Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to every creature' (Mark 16:15). And Luke records another charge given a little later: 'you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8).

What a heavy load it might seem to set upon these poor disciples, and subsequently upon every generation of the church! Well might they have looked at one another, shaken their heads in disbelief and said 'how are we ever going to manage this, boys?' The ultimate challenge – eleven very ordinary and unlearned men somehow travelling land and sea to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to every people and nation, teaching the people everything that they themselves had been taught! Two thousand years on, the Great Commission continues to be in force. Do we feel ourselves to be any more able to undertake this work than the apostles?

But let's leave idle speculation to one side and see what actually happened. Shortly after Jesus had ascended, we read of the apostles that 'all these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers' (Acts 1:14). Their initial response was not one of strategic planning but of devoted prayer. Why was this? The answer is that the charges Jesus gave them were not bare instructions for the apostles to carry out, because they were shot through with promises of the risen Lord's power and authority. They would be witnesses of Christ having received power when the Holy Spirit had come upon them. And the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20 is both preceded and concluded by the glorious assurance that Christ himself was the author and sustainer of their work. 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me – *therefore* go...'. 'Behold, I am with you always, to the very end of the age'. This promise did not render the early church passive; rather it was – Christ himself was – the one who impelled them into his own work.

Your fellow worker in the Lord Jesus,

Paul Yeulett

[An update on BAFTA \(Books And Films with Talking Afterwards\) from Beth Lush](#)

The first B.A.F.T.A book meeting was held earlier last month and a good number of the 'younger' people in the church met together to begin to look at 'Life In Christ' by Ted Donnelly. The idea for this get-together began when a few of the young people were chatting, after a service, about reading Christian books and how sometimes we can find it a struggle! This led on to thinking about how we could encourage each other to persevere, and so the idea of a book club began. Paul recommended 'Life in Christ' as a good book for us to work through together. We are reading a chapter every two weeks and then meeting together to share about what we have found helpful and encouraging or even what questions might have arisen. Paul is also preparing further discussion points for us from each chapter. In our first session we looked at the great theme of what it means to be 'in Christ' using Romans 5 and there was a good time of sharing and discussion. Our next meeting will be the 7th March, when we hope to look at chapter two, which leads on to the theme of our own personal holiness, being dead to sin and alive in Christ.

## **Missionary News and Prayer Requests**

### The Townsends and Thompsons, Gjirokaster, Albania

*Literature ministry:* A book due to be printed before Easter is "Jesus - Dead or Alive" by John Blanchard. Geoff Townsend already has a tentative order of 1000 copies for two churches. Other John Blanchard titles have been well received.

*Conference:* The annual FJALA conference is due to take place in April with speaker Will Niven, missionary in Fier/Patos. Please pray for the planning and organisation of this.

*Summer Camps:* A planning meeting has already taken place. Please pray about this initial planning and decisions to be made. *Student ministry:* Shirley and Alda continue to hold a Tuesday discipleship Bible study, at present going through Ecclesiastes. Shaun meets with the student lads.

*Women's meetings:* A 'Woman's Day' is to be held in Albania on 6th March so Shirley and Jennifer are taking the opportunity to have a special time around the theme of "New Life - we are a new creation". This will include a morning of a talk, a craft activity, then to be followed by lunch at a local restaurant. Please pray that the church ladies will bring friends along with them.

*Childrens' meetings:* Shaun and Jennifer are running a children's meeting on a Friday lunchtime after school with the children from Joy's class. Two of the Albania ladies hold a Saturday afternoon meeting with the youngsters from the local children's home where they both work. They hope this will develop to other local children wanting to join this.

Geoff and Shirley end their letter as follows: "We trust that this will help you as you pray for us here in Albania. We never tire of letting you know that we appreciate your partnership with us so much. Thank you for praying with and for us."

### Dave, Angela and Josiah Kane, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Guanajuato, Mexico

Some will remember the meeting with Dave Kane held at the Fletcher's home last year. The family is now in the country of Mexico trying to learn Spanish and adapt to the culture too. During February they have moved temporarily to Mitla, Oaxaca to live with a Mexican family to complete part of their cross-cultural living internship (CLI). The fourth week of this period was spent on a trip out to one of the indigenous villages with one of the translation teams. They have found a church in which to worship in Guanajuato where the preaching is generally thematic. They have found having a bilingual Bible very useful, as their comprehension of the preaching is still very limited. Unfortunately, they are finding it difficult to get to know the church people as no-one stays behind afterwards to talk! The linguistic barrier doesn't help either. They ask for prayer that the Lord would help them to know how to build relationships with other believers in the church. Josiah, their two-year old son, has settled well in Mexico and a small nursery which he attends with Dave has given him companionship with local children. He has also met other children at Sunday school and this has given him an interest in hearing the Bible read at home. Please continue to pray for this family.

### Emmanuel and Esther Durand, Jean-Baptiste and Maxime, UFM Worldwide, Brittany, France

Emmanuel led a recent Wednesday meeting where he explained the background of his long standing contact with UFM and his desire to return to France to preach Christ to his

countrymen. He, Esther and their two boys are to go to Guingamp in Brittany where there is a small church pastored by Emmanuel Hartiel, along with his wife, Maria. The inland area of Brittany is largely unevangelised and the few Christians who live there are often scattered over a wide area. Brittany is about the same size as Wales with a similar size of population. Emmanuel and Esther anticipate helping to strengthen the church in Guingamp and to evangelise in the surrounding towns and villages. Please pray for Emmanuel during this month as he is to travel to a few locations in Wales and one in the west of England sharing news of the plans the family has to join this work towards the end of the summer.

**After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.**

**Revelation 7:8-10**