

July 2017

Dear Friends and Ministry Partners,

The familiar biblical narrative found in Genesis 12, finds Abraham being called by God to *“Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.”* So Abram left, as the Lord told him. He and his wife Sarah were not young. They were established and content. But God interrupted, they trusted Him, and left on an *unexpected journey*. God was faithful to his promise to them, and ultimately to the whole world through Abraham’s descendant, Jesus Christ.



Over the past seven years, we have had a growing love for Ireland and the Irish people. A longing for revival in that once spiritually vibrant land emerged in us. This *unexpected* attachment to this land and its people periodically caused us to ask the Lord, and ourselves “Is there any way we could live and minister in Ireland? What would that ministry look like?”

Last fall, we sensed God’s interruption into our established and content lives. InterVarsity entered a season of corporate reorganization, which altered the nature of the ministry Chuck was doing. At nearly 60 years old we began to ask, “What do we really want to do for the last 10 years of our working lives?” Our pastor began a sermon series on the life of Abraham, entitled, *“Unexpected, The Journey of Faith”*. Each week on the way home from church, we were amazed at how we felt the message was directed at us and a sense that God was telling us to *“Leave your country..... and go to the land”, not that I will show you, but to the land I have already shown you.* This was an *unexpected* word from God.

And so, we began to look for a ministry opportunity in Ireland. A former InterVarsity Regional Director now lives and works in Ireland with a ministry called Serge (formally World Harvest Mission). Might we be of help with the ministry they are engaged in? He was immediately interested and urged us to apply. We began to share these stirrings with our pastor, family, close friends, small group members, and spiritual mentors. We asked them to pray with us about this *unexpected* possibility. There has been an overwhelming affirmation from them that the Lord is in this. We have continued to hear from Scripture, the Holy Spirit, and our Christian community that we should pursue ministry in Ireland.



The story of St. Patrick bringing the gospel to Ireland is well known. Ireland is often called the land of Saints and Scholars. But like the rest of Western Europe, it has become a land of Secularism and Cynicism. Hundreds of thousands have turned their back on their Catholic roots. The most recent census of Ireland revealed that the second largest *religious* group describes themselves as *nothing*. A large spiritual vacuum has developed in Ireland, opening up an opportunity to bring the gospel once again.

There are very few Bible centered churches in Ireland. And those few are small and isolated. Through the mission of Serge, we will join a team of nearly 20 others to start new churches and work toward growth in existing ones. We will assist with strategy, planning, training, and

discipling Irish that have a calling and passion for a fresh wave of God's redeeming work. As we come along side pastors and church leaders in mentoring relationships, we will network Bible centered churches. We will work with them to identify where God is already preparing a town for a new church, and provide training, support, and spiritual mentoring for the church planters. This is an *unexpected* calling at an *unexpected* time in our lives but it is one we are embracing with joy.



You might be asking, "What about your current ministry with InterVarsity? How do they feel about this?" From the beginning we've included the leadership of InterVarsity in this process seeking their wisdom. The support and encouragement we've received from them has been a tremendous gift. They have prayed with us and have blessed us to pursue this new adventure.

"When will you be moving to Ireland?" As soon as we can secure the financial support we need. We are praying that we will have this secured before January, just a few months from now. Until we have raised the support we need, Chuck will continue his work with InterVarsity.

"How long will you be in Ireland?" Serge appoints missionaries to five-year renewable terms. Our hope and desire is to spend two terms (10 years) there. We would be 70 at the end of that time.

We realize that many who support our work with InterVarsity will want to continue supporting us as we begin to minister with Serge. Others will want to continue supporting the mission of InterVarsity. And finally some will consider this a good time to redirect their giving in new directions. We will need prayer partners for the many *unexpected* aspects of leaving the US, moving to Ireland, and the beginnings of sharing the gospel in Ireland.

Would you consider shifting your financial support to the new ministry that we will be doing for the next five years? In a few days, we'll be sending you a letter with instructions for how to shift your giving from InterVarsity to Serge. For those who want to continue supporting InterVarsity we'll help you find someone to support in our place. We'll also try to reach you by phone to answer questions and share more about our *unexpected* journey.

Until then, we are grateful for you and the partnership in the gospel that we enjoy.

Joyfully,

Chuck and Kathy

