

**“Voices of Hope – 3 Lessons in Mission from UDP”**  
**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020 Bible Reading - Acts 18:1-22**

**Lesson 1: Look for the Positives Acts 18:vv 1-3**

**Aquila and Priscilla –**

2 amazing characters Paul meets when he first arrives in Corinth. They had been homeless refugees from Rome - presumably new Jewish Christians who were victims of Antisemitism, driven out by Emperor Claudius c. AD 49 after Jewish persecution of the new Christian “sect” in the city (this incident is corroborated by Roman historian Suetonius + 2 other ancient sources)

Devastating - Did they give up? No they **Looked for the positives.**

Settled down in Corinth, used their tent-making (and by inference leather-working) skills, offered accommodation to Paul, became his co-workers in the Mission (**v.18, See Romans 16:3-4**)

**Antony and Lucy at UDP**

A Modern-day Aquila and Priscilla!

At the Bible Study Group in George Heaney’s house in 2019 Antony described being driven out of his home when he was just 11 years old, when Government bulldozers demolished their informal settlement. With his mum and 6 brothers and sisters they were made homeless for several months – living on some waste ground. Antony’s comment: “**Lucky enough, it didn’t rain once!**” - he looked for the positives!

**Tujisaidie School**

Moved to Kayole – Lucy **looked for the positives** and helped set up the Tujisaidie “Lets help each other” Community Centre School.

It began as a Nursery and is now a Primary School with over 350 children.

Lucy is a key leader, and like Priscilla, although she lived in an extremely small temporary shack, offered hospitality taking children into her home, along with her own 7 children. Over the years she has fostered over 20 children in this way!

**Questions**

***How do we react when we hit difficulties?***

***Has the Pandemic caused you anxiety or suffering?***

***Have you been hit by unexpected trouble?***

***Is there any way you can look for the positives? Can you reach out to help others?***

*Cf Paul’s teaching (doubtless influenced by his friendship with Priscilla and Aquila): Romans 8:28, 1 Thes. 5:18*

## **Lesson 2: Look for a Team Acts 18: v 5**

Paul, Priscilla & Aquila were soon joined by 2 more - Silas (Jewish Christian prophet from Jerusalem) & Timothy (a Christian whose father was Greek & mother/grandmother God-fearing Jews)

They brought diverse personal giftings + a wider perspective – Timothy had grown up an uncircumcised Gentile, but had good knowledge of the Scriptures (Acts 16:1, 2 Tim 1:5), Silas was a prophet of high standing in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:22, 32).

### **The United Parish is part of the Team**

Financial support – Timothy & Silas presumably brought a financial gift from Ephesus, this enabled Paul to go full time [v. 5b]

UDP began with a Team of 4 extraordinary women – Lucy, Louise, Isabelle and Kathleen

We in the United parish are now also part of the team via CMS Ireland. This allows sharing of resources to benefit everyone.

Antony picked up ideas from his time here in 2019 – eg Baby Basics, which has become “Baby Buckets” in Nairobi – with nappies, toiletries and food being presented to young mothers in a bucket!

He also shared his skills as a football manager at the Ballyclare BB meetings.

The parish has sent financial support via CMSI – Antony has used this to buy books for the Tumaini Centre of Excellence library.

### **Question**

In the Ballyclare/Ballynure context we need a team to succeed – Jonny has great team with Dianne, David, Alan, Select Vestry, Leaders of Organisations, Bible Study Group leaders, but he’s looking for more helpers eg

for Street Pastors – going out on a Saturday night in Ballyclare to counsel teenagers

Francis from CAP is looking for volunteers to be trained as debt counsellors

***Can you be part of the team here? How can you help? Maybe it’s by praying or giving financially?***

### **Lesson 3: Look to God Acts 18: vv 9-11**

Looking for the positives and looking to a Team aren't enough, however. When the going gets tough we need to look to God.

In Corinth things got tough in the Synagogue (v.6) - Opposition, flack, malicious criticism, a court case (vv 12-17)!

It was God who strengthened Paul at this low point through a vision – giving him stickability and resilience.

Paul had learned how to trust God through hard times, and this was through his profound personal prayer life **Cf Phil. 4:12-13, Ephes. 6:10, 18-19**

### **Praying in the UDP**

Prayer is at the core of UDP, Tujuisaidie School children & staff, Lucy, Antony

In the United Parish Jonny begins the year with a week of prayer

CMSI have a monthly "Prayer Room" event by zoom on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday at 1pm (see the CMS Ireland Facebook page for details).

### **Questions**

**How can you strengthen your prayer life? Do you set aside some time each day just to wait on God and to intercede for others?**

**Could you join a Parish prayer or bible study group, or come to the CMSI Prayer Room event?**

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