

M I S S I O N A R Y

HERALD

N O V / D E C 9 4

"THE SAINTS OF GOD"

MAYA, ALICE, VALERIE, PASCAL, FREDERIC, MARTHA, RENALDO, JORIS, STORIES OF CHRISTIANS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES BUT UNITED IN CHRIST

News...

NEW CHURCH AT PONTA NEGRA



PLUS DOUBLE TAKE ACTION PULL OUT

C
O
N
T
E
N
T
S



Cover photograph: see story on page 24.

H E R A L D

A HEROINE WHO SURVIVED <i>When caste was put aside</i>	3
SISTER ALICE <i>Testimony from Zaire</i>	6
A YOUNG PASTOR <i>Peter and Sheila Brewer tell Reynaldo's story</i>	7
"FREEDOM" FOR A SLAVE TO SIN <i>Nkoso Mongo waits on God</i>	8
JORIS <i>Through refining fires</i>	9
THREE SAINTS FROM VERSAILLES <i>Valerie Poulain, Pascal Carton and Frédéric Maussy</i>	10
MONGELKAN'S TESTIMONY <i>Another story from Zaire</i>	12
A CHRISTMAS PLAY & A CHRISTMAS GAME <i>by Helen Matthews</i>	13
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN QUIET <i>Another instalment from Owen Clark, our special correspondent</i>	17
THE EXAMPLE OF MAYA <i>Becoming a Christian in the face of difficulty</i>	18
CALL TO PRAYER <i>Updating the Prayer Guide</i>	20
IN VIEW <i>News from home and overseas</i>	24
MAKING WAVES <i>Ele Clay extols the virtues of ordinary saints</i>	27

The BMS shares in mission with:

Albania	Angola	Bangladesh	Belgium	Brazil	Bulgaria	El Salvador
France	Hungary	India	Indonesia	Italy	Jamaica	Nepal
Nicaragua	Portugal	Sri Lanka	Thailand	Trinidad	Zaire	Zimbabwe

HERALD PRICES 1994

Bulk Church Orders
If you order the Missionary Herald through your church magazine secretary, the cost of a year's subscription (which is ten issues) is £3.70.

Individual Orders
If you order the Missionary Herald directly from BMS you also pay for postage and packing, and the cost of a year's subscription (which is ten issues) is £7.40.

Overseas subscribers pay the postage and packing rate applicable to their location.

MISSIONARY HERALD *The Magazine of the Baptist Missionary Society, PO Box 49, Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8XA Registered Charity No. 233782*
Telephone: 01235 512077 Fax: 01235 511265 Telex: 94070435 BMSB G

GENERAL DIRECTOR Revd Reg Harvey

EDITOR Revd David Pountain **DESIGN** Anthony Viney

Enquiries about service overseas to: **DIRECTOR FOR MISSIONARIES** Sian Williams.

COPYRIGHT 1994 Baptist Missionary Society

Printed by Stanley L Hunt (Printers) Ltd, Rushden, Northamptonshire

ISSN 0264-1372

HERALD

BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Mission is about people. Mission is not primarily about organisations or institutions although we know their purpose is to meet the needs of people. Mission is about ordinary, committed Christian women and men caring enough about the lives of other men and women to reach out to share the wholeness of their faith in Jesus Christ with them.

So BMS is about people too. It is about enabling members of our Baptist churches in Britain to do just that. However, although we know all of our missionary activity is helping people to experience Christ in life-changing ways, we can't possibly meet and know all of these people ourselves.

That's why, this month, we have decided to tell the story of some ordinary saints of God in several of our partner countries. They are different. Their stories are different, but they each have a valid account of their personal experience of Christ and of how he is helping them to face sometimes very difficult lives. They don't normally hit the headlines but these are the real saints we should be remembering on All Saints Day, that is if Baptists take any notice of such dates in the calendar.

Normally we have a Double Take section which examines the main theme of the magazine, but since this is a two month magazine, and we didn't want to miss out Christmas - what greater missionary event is there than the coming of God's own Son into the world of human beings - we decided instead to include a Christmas drama and a fun mission game for you to play when you're tired of some of the traditional party games. The game comes out of our BMS Bubble and Squeak resource for children's work. ■



Young Nepali children

A Heroine Who Survived

by *Jenny Dorman*

Martha stands less than five feet tall. From behind her tinted glasses her eyes sparkle with life and love. She has a warm smile which easily melts into laughter. Her movements are quick yet dignified. Coming from a Brahmin family in the Gorka district of Nepal she wears a sari but there is no tikka spot on her forehead.

She is a natural communicator, one who speaks from the heart with an endearing modesty. Many would regard her as a heroine for she has survived dire persecution. Her story as she tells it, however, gives no glory to herself. As a group of new missionaries with the United Mission to Nepal we listened spellbound and profoundly challenged. We were being ministered to by a local Christian whose faith far outshone ours. Any experience or expertise we had imagined we might offer the Nepali church seemed irrelevant.

I was orphaned at an early age and so I received very little love as a child. I used to go out into the fields alone and play. I knew there must be a God somewhere, so I used to worship the sun. One day there was an eclipse. I didn't understand what was happening but I just gazed and gazed as the light of the sun was overshadowed by the moon passing over it. When I turned away I realised that my vision had gone. I stumbled home and collapsed on the bed. What sort of a god was this who in return for my worship took away my sight? I could never again trust such a god. I must search for another who understood my needs.

With hindsight I now realise that the God of love had also been looking for me, overruling in all that had happened to me. Slowly, my vision

Continues
on page 4

A Heroine Who Survived

Continued
from page 3



“ We need your prayers and your help in understanding the Bible, although we view it from a different cultural perspective ”

improved and when some three years later I was given a copy of St Matthew's Gospel by someone who was working in a missionary household, I was able to read it. The message was rivetting. Here was God who spoke directly and unconditionally. Jesus really cared about people and invited them to trust him.

“Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

Jesus reached out to all people in need; he was not concerned with caste or with observing strict dietary rules. He didn't avoid contact with untouchables, lepers were healed by him.

As I felt the love of Jesus pouring into my heart, I knew I must share it with others. One day, I was watching the low caste woman who was cutting grass for our animals to eat. I just had to hug her and let her know that I cared about her. This was too much for my brothers, who demanded that I obey them and distance myself from servants.

“But why?” I cried, “if I cut my finger the blood that flows out is exactly the same as that of a servant. We are both capable of bearing children in the same way.”

For some months I continued to defy my brothers, instead practising my new faith with great zeal. I refused to make offerings to the Hindu gods in our puga room. I read the bible and every tract I could get hold of voraciously. If these were found in my room they were promptly burnt. I had to bury my precious bible secretly in the garden. Eventually my eldest

brother compelled me to leave home.

“You've gone completely mad. We can no longer consider you part of this family.”

With that, he closed the door on me and I was left to find my own food and shelter. The season was cold and so I had to curl up in a pile of hay. A friend offered me a tomato and a handful of dry rice. I ate the tomato hungrily, but I had no means of cooking the rice.”

It was not safe for me to stay in the area, for at that time in the 1970s Christians could be imprisoned for their faith. Missionaries who had a visa for medical work, could pray and cautiously encourage Nepali Christians but they too were at risk. Not knowing where else to turn, I fled to the mission hospital at Amp Pipal, but the police followed me and I was arrested.

“We must take responsibility for this,” said the missionaries, “for we gave Marta a bible.”

“Not so,” said the policeman, “she can go free if she will sign a paper to say she renounces her belief but otherwise she must stand trial.”

I could not do that and so I was given a six month sentence. From time to time my friends visited me. Time passed slowly but prayer was offered steadily and one day a letter was received from America. Inside was a sum of money with the request that it should be used for persecuted Nepali Christians. This secured my release on condition that I reported to the police station each month. Whenever I made the wearisome journey I would write texts from the Bible and place these under stones along the way. ■



Top: street vendors in Kathmandu.

Below: meal time in a Kathmandu home.

“ One day, I was watching the low caste woman who was cutting grass for our animals to eat. I just had to hug her and let her know that I cared about her. This was too much for my brothers, who demanded that I obey them and distance myself from servants. ”

The Story Continues

Marta's remarkable story continues with her going to Bible School in Darjeeling. There were big gaps in her formal education but she was a quick learner. When she returned to Nepal she was accepted for training as a nurse and for more than ten years she has been training midwives and developing community health programmes.

“Are we Christians from overseas really in a position to help you?” I asked her.

“Yes,” she said, “we need your prayers and your help in understanding the Bible, although we view it from a different cultural perspective.” ■



Sister Alice, the name by which she is known to Bible Group attenders has seven children. She maintains a vivid testimony in spite of the stresses that come from her still unsaved husband. She is an inspiration to other believers.



Sister Alice

HER TESTIMONY

Life before conversion As a child I was ill all the time – in fact this continued after that. I stayed in my parents' care for a long time. They took me to hospitals continually. I suffered much from dehydration and anaemia. They took me to see doctors and also witch doctors, but I was never well.

When I was old enough, I married, but then I was ill nine years in my bones, headaches, stomach trouble and I kept seeing the spirits of dead people who would give me "another husband" at night. Even so, I was very quick to anger, fights, hatred and arguments.

In 1969 I came to CBFZ for baptism although all my bad traits and habits were still active. In my mind I believed that if I died I would see God because I'd been baptised in water – but it isn't like that of course. Near to the end of 1989, on a Wednesday at 3.00pm I heard the church bell ring for the Bible Group meeting. It troubled me at heart to hear it as though I had a problem, yet I couldn't understand what it was about. I began to look for somewhere to hear the Word of God. I'd been to school for six years, I'd been married for four years – ten years altogether in the church of the CBFZ at Mushie. I heard the Word of God all the time in Sunday services but it was finding no place in my life. There was the tragedy of my unregenerate life, for I was spiritually dead before God.

Conversion I had no peace in my heart. On Sunday I went to church and heard that on Wednesday there would be a meeting for Bible study. I was very troubled at heart, as though I was in a dispute, but the one I was in dispute with was unknown to me. That Wednesday at 3pm, I heard the bell and I went to the Bible Group meeting. The following February – 1990 – some brethren from the Lediba Bible Group (40 miles away) came to lead a seminar. The theme was: 'The Carnal Christian and the Christian in the Spirit'.

When they spoke I heard clearly that there is no such thing as a carnal Christian; a Christian is someone who is indwelt by Christ. It gave me heart pain to realise this and it bothered me so much that I began to weep to the point where I began to confess all the bad things that I bore about with me in my pagan life – I decided to give it all up and receive Jesus into my life as my Lord and Saviour.

From the day that I converted, I stopped having to be hospitalised with ill-health; the fightings, disputing, anger and nightmares ended and I began to go to places like the hospital to preach. Jesus is doing great things in my life and I see the goodness of God and His perfect will. It is wonderful joy to be a child of God, for we are redeemed by the blood of His Son, Jesus in our midst, the hope of glory. Amen. ■



Reynaldo Acuna is both a pastor and a student at the Baptist Seminary in Managua. This is normal. Many students study at the same time as working in their churches and churches often "grow their own pastors."

Reynaldo was church secretary, president of the church programme, Sunday School teacher, responsible for the music (he plays guitar), and youth leader – all before being elected pastor. He regards this as natural. No doubt it was, for when he was elected pastor, there were only five members in his little rural church. God used the other members to propose him for the office.

At 22 he is unusually young for a pastor, even by the standards of Nicaragua. But in less than two years the church has grown to 25 members, the result of intense visitation, evangelistic campaigns, vigils, retreats and seminars.

Reynaldo works with slender resources. His church cannot support him, although he gets a scholarship from the Convention to attend the Seminary. For the next three years he will make the five hour journey home each weekend to preach in the church at Pueblo Nuevo, then back on Monday. That is the time it will take to complete his "bachillerato" course. Later he hopes to study for a higher qualification, the "licenciatura" (something approaching degree level). If the ambition is fulfilled, it will add up to a long period of study

A Young Pastor

BY PETER AND SHEILA BREWER

while serving a little congregation.

Reynaldo first took up pastoral training in the Extension Programme, at Ocotal, near the northern border of Nicaragua with Honduras. There a small group of students from the remote northern churches meet for two days, a Monday and Tuesday, each month. It was there we first met him, when giving classes there.

This enthusiastic young pastor has many obstacles to overcome. He works in conditions of poverty, in a community of about 3,000 people, who make what they can from the production of coffee, beans, maize and garden produce.

Unemployment is about 80 per cent. Reynaldo describes his family as "campesino" (peasant). Of nine brothers and sisters, only one is employed, as a carpenter. During the civil war,

three brothers did military service and one of them is disabled. Eighteen people still live in the family home.

He tells of his conversion, at an evangelistic campaign in 1989, under the preaching of Othoniel Rizo, then the Convention's director of evangelism, and his baptism by the American missionary Stephen Heneise. He is the first of the family to join the Baptist church, his parents became Christians after him. He recalls, in his early days as a Christian, being reprovved for playing baseball (Nicaragua's national sport or religion). Church members feared his devotion to baseball would become idolatry. Probably it was never quite that bad and the criticism is now a joke to him.

He is not alone in his struggle to get a theological and pastoral training, and maintain a ministry in a remote spot. He needs all the help he can get and appreciates all he does. He most enjoys, of the Seminary courses, Interpretation of the Bible, Teaching Methods, Preaching and Pastoral Psychology.

We consolidate the bonds between our Christian communities as we remember the Baptists of Nicaragua in prayer and in support of their struggles in the face of poverty. Reynaldo asks Baptists in Britain to remember the poor of Nicaragua and hopes the ties between us may be strengthened. ■

A group of students taking part in the lay-training programme in Nicaragua

“FREEDOM”

FOR A SLAVE TO SIN



“From the time I received the blessing of the Lord I have served him with the love and grace that he alone gives.”

MUSHIE, NKOSO MONGO

From childhood I went to church and in 1982 I was baptised in the CBFZ (Baptist Community of the River Zaire) Baptist Church here. Even so, I was a slave to sin. Other church members thought me a quiet, respectful young man, but I was a deceiver in the eyes of God. Satan held me fast and deceived my eyes and understanding.

I sang in one of the church choirs, but even in that choir I was having an affair with one of the girl choristers. The two of us were gripped so fast by it there was no way of giving up. Whenever I heard the word of God, my heart condemned me but as I was a prisoner of Satan I had no means of coming out of it. I remained in slavery until Sunday 11 July 1987. Some Christians came from Kinshasa

to conduct a seminar and they taught about slavery to sin and how to be freed from it. I made a decision and went to the front of the chapel. They prayed for me and I was freed.

From that day forth, a wonderful joy came from God and filled my heart and I began to give myself to prayer, seeking the face of the Lord.

One evening at 8 pm I was in my room praying when I was overtaken by such a wonderful joy that I couldn't express it. I felt the power of God grip me in a way that I had never known before. I began to praise God in words that I myself didn't understand. The lady in whose yard I was living came outside, she was scared stiff that I had gone mad because she heard me shouting with joy, praising God. She beat the door of my room but I was still speaking in this unknown tongue. That lasted until 11 pm. Alleluia! God be praised! From the time I received the blessing of the Lord I have served him with the love and grace that he alone gives.

John and Rena Mellor

Nkoso's parents separated when he was quite young and he has little immediate family, here. His mother has died and his father lives about two days paddling away, if you paddle hard! He is in his 20's and from reading 'TALA', the frontiers' missions bulletin that we duplicate in Lingala, believes God to be calling him as a missionary. He is waiting on God for the means of paying his way through theological education and/or missionary training and also that the CBFZ will set up the requisite structure or missionary society/department for this to be made possible. We're trusting God with him along these lines ■



Occasionally the Lord puts into our lives folk who are a source of encouragement. Usually they are “ordinary” or “contemptible” by the world’s standards yet they have often been through the fires of refining. Such a person is Joris.

Now in his late 30s, Joris became a Christian as a teenager. His family background was non-practising Catholic.

Coming from a large family he was influenced by several of his brothers who themselves found Christ. Joris found a little group of believers and soon became an active member. His skills as a carpenter meant that people were always asking his help, which he gave willingly.

He was married 15 years ago and has two sons, twelve year old David and ten year old Manuel. To see the deep love these two boys have for their father is a testimony to this very unusual man.

Last year his wife left him for another man taking the boys with her and forcing him to sell his house to maintain his children and to give her a share. Through it all Joris has not lost his sense of humour, the twinkle in his eye, or the deep peace that seems to flow from him to others.

Joris’ story is perhaps common to many churches but what makes him different is that he was born deaf and dumb. Although he hears nothing and can say nothing, he never misses a Bible study or service. The highlight of his week is the prayer meeting.

Others may give up but Joris continues and reminds us of the many blessings that we so often take for granted.

“Lord, give us more folk like Joris and thank you for the privilege and the encouragement of knowing him.” ■

Joyce and Stuart Filby



JORIS



Others may give up, but Joris, who is deaf, continues and reminds us of the many blessings that we, in Belgium, often take for granted.

Three Saints From Versailles



VALERIE POULAIN

Shortly after we arrived to work in the Parisian suburb of Versailles we received a phone call from Valérie. She had been recently converted and was looking for a church near her home. We were able to tell her that we were starting a new house group only a couple of hundred yards from where she lives!

Valérie immediately became fully involved in every aspect of the church.

In her role as keeper of the church library, she became an enthusiastic publicist for "Pilgrim's Progress". No doubt if she had been around in John Bunyan's day it might have been an even bigger success than it was.

For a little while, after she began evening classes at Nogent Bible Institute in the Paris suburbs, we explored together the idea of full-time Christian work.

We even considered trying to find a place in England since Valérie speaks very good English.

However, it became clear that God had other ideas for Valérie.

In July 1993 Deepak, a young Mauritian member of the church fell ill with cancer.

In this desperate situation it became obvious that Valérie's presence with Deepak's family was of the greatest importance. She became a sort of co-pastor.

"Reader, she married him!" I'm talking about Deepak's elder brother Raj. He and Valérie are shortly to be married.

Valérie has just been elected to the Church Council and because of her presence in the family there is a theologically and pastorally aware presence in a large extended Mauritian family, many of whose members are either new Christians or not far away.

All this in only four years. Phew! ■

PASCAL CARTON

When we arrived at the church Pascal was a mysterious, tall, dark stranger on the fringes of the church. A brooding, silent presence.

He was converted through the regular teaching ministry of the church, Wednesday by Wednesday, Sunday by Sunday. At least that's what we discovered when, for the first time, we heard him speak at length during his baptismal service a few months into our ministry. He gave a testimony of quite unusual spiritual depth.

But that left him with the problems of his everyday life to sort out: in his mid-20s with no education, a dead end job stacking shelves and no future.

What gifts he had Pascal put at God's service. One of his workmates was converted and is now a big encouragement to the church. Pascal started to work with the children. What's more, he is a powerfully good

Clockwise starting from the top: Frédéric, Valerie and Pascal.



artist and was soon producing work which bore witness to his new faith. I have above my desk an engraving he made called "Pardon" (forgiveness). It sums up that period of Pascal's life for me. It is a dark picture but with the cross illuminated and beating down serpents.

This work was part of an exhibition Pascal organised involving Christian artists from Baptist churches in Paris.

Four years ago Pascal had no education, a dead end job stacking shelves, and no future. Today, he is near the end of his first year of studies at Nogent Bible Institute in the Paris suburbs. He is discovering intellectual possibilities he never suspected – including the study of New Testament Greek. Hebrew will have to wait until next year. At the moment it looks as though the future may include service with the European Baptist Mission in Africa. But that is still a few years ahead and so many things could change before then! ■

FREDERIC MAUSSY

Frédéric has a good job working with onboard computers for airliners. When we arrived at Versailles, he was leading Sunday services but we felt was a little unsure of himself. It didn't seem to be his niche. Then he took on the leadership of the youth group and little by little his organisational skills became obvious.

Since then, he has become a member of the church council and has become concerned to

talk with others about his faith and to ensure that the church provides a good variety of meeting points for this to happen.

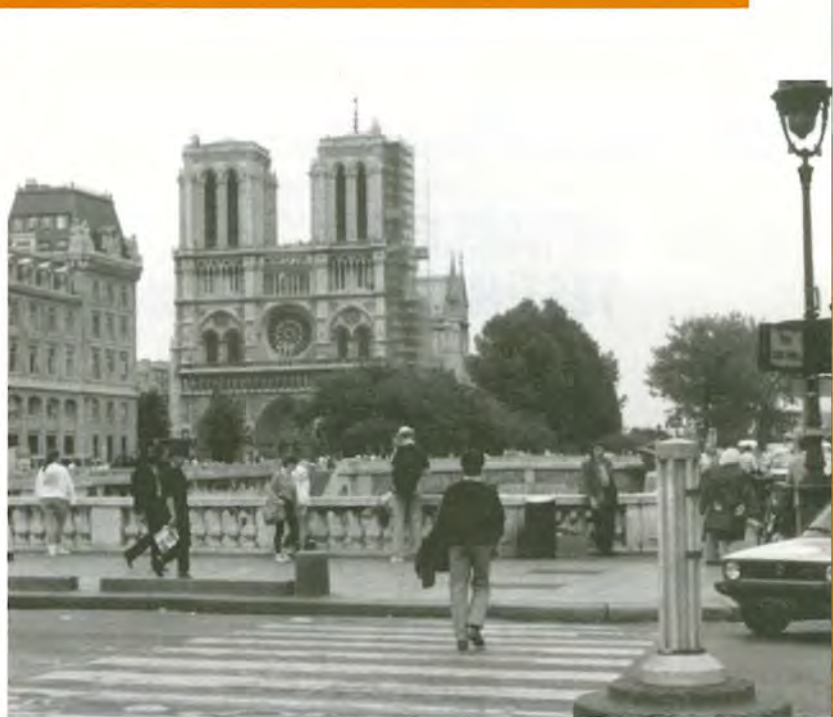
This concern makes Frédéric a leading figure in contact between the youth groups of the Paris churches.

Frédéric has learned to succeed. He has recently played an important role in organising a vastly successful youth congress for the Paris area and a pancake evening at the church where 70 people turned up and stretched the frying pans to the limit. For the next social event he organised, Frédéric had to limit the number of places – something unheard of. I teased him that he would have to write an apologetic letter to all the Paris churches begging them not to come! What's more, Frédéric recently won a Christians in Sport table tennis tournament.

He says that this trophy means more to him than any of his others – and there are quite a few.

Voilà! Frédéric has increased in confidence in himself and in God. Now around 30, it seems that he will be a key person in the Versailles church for many years to come. He still sometimes leads services but he sees clearly that this is only a tiny part of his Christian service.

Only one thing could put an



end to this contribution to the Versailles church (short of serious illness). Until recently it looked as though Fred would never follow Pascal, our Bible college student, into full-time Christian work. He confounds us by enrolling in the evening classes at Nogent Bible Institute where Pascal studies.

"So what?" you ask. Well, that's exactly how Pascal started... ■

by Robert Atkins



MONGELKAN'S TESTIMONY

I am the Assistant Director of Nursing at IME hospital at Kimpese, Zaire, where I am responsible for in-service training and student supervision. Two months ago Noëlle, the head nurse of the Dispensary, invited me to the Hospital Christian Fellowship national conference in August. She said that another hospital had sent its nursing director so why didn't I think of coming? She gave me a form which I slipped under the papers on my desk. Besides where was I going to get the \$60 for the fees?

I had forgotten all about it when Dr Matendo came to see me and said he had received \$60 for me to go to the conference and could I go? I had no excuse except to persuade the hospital to let me go at short notice. Most of the others had already gone and so they were very surprised to see me turning up at the conference centre in Kinshasa.

There were over 120 people there from all over Zaire. Some had had to make a great sacrifice to get there. I sought out the Nursing Director from Vanga hospital to talk about nursing problems but he just wanted to talk to me about the Lord.

I realised there was something about this man that was different and that I liked. I also realised that there was something missing in my own life.

As the week went by and we were challenged about the life of Nehemiah I realised that I was missing Jesus in my life. When we were challenged to lead a dynamic life with the Lord I decided to go forward and acknowledge openly before my friends my need of Christ as my Saviour.

My friends have been very encouraging and I am so thrilled to have a new dimension to my life. I realise that I now have to live for the Lord. I am very grateful to God for the miraculous way in which He got me to the conference so that I could receive Him into my life. ■

I realised that I was missing Jesus in my life. I decided to acknowledge openly before my friends my need of Christ as my Saviour.

A Christmas Play

by Helen Matthews

DOUBLE TAKE?

Double Take is different this month.

We have decided to include a Christmas drama based on actual work in Rio de Janeiro Brazil.

There is also a light-hearted game with a serious intent to give you something different to enjoy this Christmas. This has been taken from the BMS *Bubble and Squeak* children's resource.

MARTA The sun's coming out, look! It's getting warmer

SYLVIE I'm still cold.

FILIPE I'll never be warm again

Maria snuggles up to Sylvie, who puts her arms around her, trying to warm her up.

Then one of the doors opens. All the children cheer and clap.

CLENIR (Behind doors) Good morning everyone! Happy Christmas! Come in, come in.

Children all rush in, some stopping to hug Clenir. Maria burst into tears.

CLENIR (Putting arms around Maria) Oh dear! Whatever is wrong with Maria today?

MARIA I was so cold in the night. The street was freezing – and those horrible big boys, they stole our blankets.

CLENIR Oh, no! Tonight you will have new blankets; someone from the church will give them to us.

OSWALDO Perhaps it will not be so cold tonight. Come and eat your breakfast anyway.

MIGUEL I'm starving! What's for our Christmas breakfast?

The children all sit down at the table. It is laid with rolls, fruit juice and coffee.

CLENIR Would some of you like your shower first today

Some children jump up and go offstage. They come back in a few minutes rubbing their hair with a towel.

MARIA (Eating a roll) I can't wait

for my shower. Look how dirty I got last night!

(She holds out her arm).

SYLVIE That was scrabbling around in that rotting vegetable heap last night.

MARTA Not that we found much to eat.

FILIPE What a way to live!

While the children are eating, Clenir and Oswaldo are preparing a puppet show.

CLENIR Right everyone! Showers, then a special story from the puppets!

The children cheer and jump down from the table. The children who have not showered run off stage then come back with towels. Meanwhile others are running around in excitement, until they eventually settle down, sitting on the floor in front of the puppets.

PUPPET SHOW

MARY PUPPET Hello everyone! My name is Mary.

JOSEPH PUPPET And my name is Joseph. We are going to have a baby soon.

MARY PUPPET I wish we didn't have to travel so far. I'm very tired.

JOSEPH PUPPET Not long now Mary. Here's a donkey to help you.

DONKEY PUPPET Hello! I'm a...

JOSEPH PUPPET We know who you are. Just behave like a donkey and let Mary sit on you.

continues
on page 16



to Rara

Tiny Bhuddist temple at the top of the mountain

Rara lake

RARA

Guest house

Thousands of flowers here

25
Stop to admire flowers wait 1 go

25

24

23

22

15
Fall some of the way go to 17

17

23
very friendly people go straight to finish

Jiri small village

15

16

18

21

20

20
Bridge collapsed go to back to 16

19

River Tila

START

JUMLA

A Christmas Play

DONKEY PUPPET Sit on me?
That enormous fat lady? No way!

JOSEPH PUPPET Ssh! She's not fat! She's going to have a baby. She needs to rest.

DONKEY PUPPET All right, I suppose so. I hope she's not as heavy as she looks.

MARY PUPPET (*Leaning against Donkey*) Thank you, that's better. How far to Bethlehem now Joe?

JOSEPH PUPPET Here we are in Bethlehem. It's getting late. Let's find somewhere to sleep tonight.

MARY PUPPET A nice warm hotel ...

DONKEY PUPPET A warm stable would be nice. Plenty of straw, lovely animal smell...

MARY PUPPET No thanks! You won't catch me sleeping in a stable.

JOSEPH PUPPET Mary, I don't think you've read the script.

MARY PUPPET What?

JOSEPH PUPPET Well you see, it's like this...

MARY PUPPET Go on, spit it out. You've forgotten to book, haven't you?

JOSEPH PUPPET Not exactly. It's just that it's very busy here (*knocks on 'door'*) Or here (*knocks again*) or here (*more knocking*). It's really not my fault, Mo.

MARY PUPPET But where will we sleep? I can't have my baby out in the street!

DONKEY PUPPET OK, OK, I give in. Follow me. You can share my stable.

MARY PUPPET I've told you, NO STABLES!

JOSEPH PUPPET Mary, I don't think we have any choice. There is nowhere else for us to sleep.

MARY PUPPET All right then. But NO ANIMALS!

Exits

DONKEY PUPPET What? Turn me out of my stable? What cheek - I'm off. You can get back on your own.

Exits

JOSEPH PUPPET Hey, come back! You've got our luggage!

Exits

All the children laugh and clap.

MIGUEL They were like us!

MARIA Only better looking!

MARTA Were Mary and Joseph street kids, too?

CLENIR Well, in a way. They had nowhere to sleep in Bethlehem.

MIGUEL They did have a stable!

FELIPE I wish we had a stable to live in.

OSWALDO They wouldn't have been able to stay there long.

SYLVIE That means baby Jesus was a street kid when he was born - just like us!

CLENIR Jesus understands what it is like to have no home. He knows what being poor is like.

And he loves each one of you.

SYLVIE Even at Christmas?

CLENIR Especially at Christmas! That's why all the people at the church have given a special present to each one of you, which are wrapped up in the next room.

All the children jump up and stampede offstage.

CLENIR (*Laughing*) Now, I wonder where they went?

Exits

HAPPY CHRISTMAS



Another quiet

WEEK

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN QUIET

It would have been another quiet week on the CBFZ (Baptist Community of the River Zaire) compound if it hadn't been for the visitors. These come in various shapes and sizes. Big, small, short-stay, longer-stay, expected, unexpected, welcome, unwelcome and so on. Fortunately they don't all come at the same time but you do tend to get several at once or none at all.

Back in May we had some big ones. David Martin, Derek Rumbol and John Corbett. The A-Team! They probably didn't think they were particularly big, but round here they count as big. It's what they represent. The Mother Mission! Not a concept that is missiologically correct any more. It should be the Sister Mission. We're supposed to be partners!

That idea doesn't seem to have penetrated to the level of a gut feeling yet. Wherever our Intrepid Three went the cry was not, "Howdy Pardner!" It was, "Papa ayei, njala esili!" – "Father has come, the famine's over!" Even though we're growing up fast we hope our "parent" mission will still want to give us a helping hand. It's up to us to make our needs known!

Those three were expected. So are our BMS colleagues, who pass through from time to time, either going to Britain or going up-country. We catch up on their news. They often bring

goodies – fruit from the forest or a bar of chocolate from home. They don't usually want to hang around, but sometimes get stuck, waiting for a flight. Sometimes an unexpected visitor drops in. Someone doing the world by bike, or some organisation's representative checking up on something.

Other visitors are local, some on church business, others personal friends. There are those who come in off the streets. One has to say that they are not always welcome, as we have neither the mandate, the resources or the time to run a social services bureau, which is needed. When I was a youngster our neighbour's gate had a little plaque which said, "No hawkers, beggars or circulars." We get all of those here!

Hawkers include the "veggie ladies", who sell fruit and vegetables from a large enamel bowl carried on the head. There are also wood-carvers and artists, feeling the pinch with so few expatriates around. We have beggars who've been coming for years and others who've only recently discovered us. Whatever tale of woe you've listened to, I'll match it! Some need a temporary helping hand. Some are bone idle and need a kick up the pants! Many are so economical with the truth that you can't tell one from the other. When it comes to circulars I think of Michel. He doesn't lack initiative, but

whatever venture I help him with it always comes back round to the same point. He's broke and there are a number of bills to be paid.

Jean (as in French), the odd-job man, first came in off the streets looking for work. That's better than begging, but there's not a lot of work to be had. I sometimes wish that I had a field somewhere and could say to such folk, "Go, work in my field today, and I will pay you what is just."

By the way, the small unwelcome visitors are those that buzz at you by day and tsssing in your ear at night. When they're around it's not likely to be a quiet week! ■

David Martin, BMS Director for Operations, preaching in Mbanza Ngungu Baptist Church.



From our special correspondent, Owen Clark, in Kinshasa.

The example of MAYA

This is a story of a Christ-centred faith enabling a person to cope in extraneous circumstances. Briefly told it could fill a whole book.

Maya was born in Nepal of high caste parents, but because they were poor, she was married off at the age of twelve to an older man, who already had children by his first wife, and unfortunately had a preference for younger girls. She was taken by him to live in India. Being eager to consume knowledge Maya easily picked up three new languages. And by the age of 18, she had given birth to three daughters.

Her husband, however, tired of her and secretly married a Western woman. He was found out and jailed for polygamy. Alone and frightened with her three daughters in a country which was not her homeland, Maya did not know which way to turn, or to whom she could go for security and the ability to make a fresh start. Her upbringing was strongly Hindu and so she went to the temples to plead her case by worship and to scatter the appropriate offering. There did not seem to be any answers, but in the emptiness she made up her mind herself: she would go back to Nepal.

But her family who you

would think would be overjoyed to see her shunned her; they did not want to know her or her daughters. Maya had brought further shame on them. After all, what are daughters but a drain on the family purse? Sons would have been acceptable – but not dowry requiring daughters.

There was a glimmer of hope on Maya's horizon. Near to where she settled was a hospital, recently begun by the United Mission to Nepal. The Christians who ran it were keen to use her linguistic abilities and Maya was taken on to teach Nepali to the new doctors and help in translation when patients were being examined.

Meanwhile her determined personality was showing through in lots of little ways; she became fashion conscious; she had her hair cut and was one of the few women in Nepal to wear trousers.

At the age of 21 her divorce came through and, although she had her three daughters to care for, she was fortunate, she had a job. Also her parents had relented a little and allowed her and her daughters to live on the ground floor of their home.

At the hospital she heard for

the first time the good news of Jesus Christ; good news that carried huge risks, for at this time to change religion was a jailable, tortureable offence. But the message of Christ was so appealing, so enticing to her empty, searching life. Could she stand the risks? Her parents would surely throw her out, and she could not afford to pay for a couple of rooms as well as being able to afford to feed, clothe and educate her daughters. And if it led to prison, what then? What would happen to her daughters?

There was another complication; her affections were being sought and Ram would not take 'no' for an answer. He came to live with her and provided for her, along with her daughters, which in itself was remarkable for the age and culture. She could not afford to lose him because then no one would believe she was not to blame in her previous marriage. Ram however would not go along with her growing interest in Christianity.

But the pressure in Maya's spirit to believe in Jesus was so great, so irresistible. She had to step out into a new life. She just had to. She did not look



back; she had been led into a joy and an overwhelming peace, a healing for some of the terrible wounds and an awareness of being clean that previous worship had only been able to hint at. But becoming a Christian also meant beatings, total rejection by her family, colleagues who pulled her life apart by malicious gossip and friends.

Other Christians did not desert her; they stood by, caring for her, and praying for her. Determined as ever, she made up her mind she would be baptised, knowing that this act carried with it a two year prison sentence. Maya stood firm.

Joy of joys; Ram, too, decided to make the stand of becoming a Christian. Suddenly, although life was dangerous and risky, she had also reached the peak of wellbeing. Then everything crumbled. Ram had never been able to control his drinking habits, and in time he pursued this habit again, getting drunk and taking it out on Maya in the form of beatings. The daughters had grown up, and they left home, not with Maya's blessing, but awkwardly under cover of abuse and lies, making marriages out of neces-

sity. The church failed her; it just stood back in judgement and tutted.

How far could she be pushed? Should she have prayed more? Should others have helped more? Maya made the ultimate cry for help. It seemed that everything she had had been shattered.

But some stood with her, cried with her, and prayed with her. She began to pick up the pieces very slowly. And somehow, out of all the mess a new sense of purpose began to take shape.

Her problems did not go away – they were still there. One of her daughters ran into further relationship problems that to a Nepali family were culturally and socially appalling – drugs, drink, and neglected children. Maya carried on doing the only thing she could do, she poured out her heart to the Lord.

Church services in Nepal can last five hours, and time is given over for each one in turn to pray to God, to beseech him and open oneself before him. The situation seemed hopeless; humanly speaking it seemed to have no purpose, but God was doing a great work in Maya's

life. The trimmed hair and trousers were no longer the mark of a rebellious spirit, but were part of a life that was radiating the peace and cleansing of God.

That was some years ago now. Today Ram is a key evangelist in his spare time, which means he often only gets two or three hours sleep a day. Maya was offered the opportunity to study in London, but turned it down to stay in Nepal to witness to her own people. Ram and Maya have had a son of their own. He has been a real blessing to them. Today he is in his early teens studying at a top school in Nepal, where peer pressure and narcotics are real influences. He is really searching to know whether he should become a pastor, or perhaps, learn a trade. The idea that he could start with a trade and move to the former has not yet dawned on him.

But some of the pain is still there. Maya's most beautiful daughter has brought shame to her. Maya has to trust that her story has not ended yet, and like the prodigal in the parable this young woman will return to her and there will be forgiveness and restoration. ■

*BMS
physiotherapist,
Isobel Strang,
working on a
patient at Amp
Pipal Hospital
in Nepal.*

CALL TO PRAYER

My ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. *Isa 55:9*

*Ever wise God,
we thank you
for making yourself
known*

*in creation,
in history,
in Jesus Christ;
by ourselves
we could never have
understood,
we could never have
penetrated
your thoughts
or discovered your nature
of love.*

*Loving God,
make yourself known
today
to those training for
ministry;
give them a vision of
yourself
which they can share with
others.*

WEEK
48

November 27 - December 3
BANGLADESH: MEDICAL WORK

The Chandraghona Christian General Hospital continues to serve the Chittagong Hill Tracts, but there is a dearth of Christian doctors available to serve in the institution. Also the Hospital is experiencing difficulty in administration – through lack of committed Christian personnel. Prayer is requested to address these very crucial staffing problems.

Close to the General Hospital in Chadrachona is the Leprosy Hospital where good patient care is offered long term patients and also those

who stay for shorter periods or come as out-patients. The long term patients continue to worship regularly together with ex-patients in their own church sanctuary.

Phil Commons, a physiotherapist, is at present on leave of absence and tackling further professional study.

WEEK
49

December 4-10

ZAIRE: THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

In spite of the economic problems faced by the Church in Zaire, the CBFZ is maintaining its programme of theological education. Pastors are trained both in CBFZ institutions and, in Kinshasa particularly, with students from other church groups. It is vital that new leaders are trained for the future and that they should have their theological education in Africa, developing a theology a strategy which is relevant to the culture and mind-set of their country.

WEEK
50

December 11-17

INDIA: SHARED MINISTRIES

In West Orissa, the West Utkal Agricultural Centre (WUAC) attracts a clientele from the whole of Orissa State. The farm serves as a demonstration site for farmers from rural areas who come for instruction and advice. The Centre also provides a variety of vocational training programmes designed to enable young people in particular to embark on income generating work on their return home. From the Centre members of the 22 strong staff work in

teams – responding to invitations to go to villages where their advice and on the spot help is requested. The work of WUAC has also extended to Rampur and Harlenga where the projects include health care for the community.

Ann Bothamley is on the nursing staff at Vellore.

WEEK
51

December 18-24

BRAZIL: PARANA

The state of Parana in the south of Brazil is more European in feel than most and there is a progressive feel about it. Communications have improved and towns in the interior of the state now have electrical and water supplies.

Curitiba, the capital continues to grow and has not escaped the movement of people from some of the poorer rural areas of the country into favela communities.

There are the inevitable street children, but Baptists have established special work and are providing houses to provide a home and family life for them.

The leadership of the Parana Baptist Convention has recently changed. The new President is Roberto Silvado, who is coming to the UK next year to visit Baptist colleges, and the General Secretary is Izaias Querion.

Kevin and Linda Donaghy have moved to the Toledo church and will be doing evangelistic work.

Gerry and Johan Myhill continue their boat ministry based at Antonina.

Keith and Barbara Hodges are in Curitiba where Keith is Dean of the Baptist Seminary.

WEEK
52

December 25 -31

CHRISTMAS

Sometimes churches shut out any thinking of mission at this time of the year, yet this is the greatest missionary event of all. Christmas is about God reaching out in love through his Son to touch the lives of men and women throughout the world. Christmas is a reminder to us that in the stark and terrible world of disasters and man-made wars that God cares enough to enter it through the person of Jesus and to share its sufferings in the fullest possible way.

So as we greet our Lord's birth with the customary Christmas services, let us recommit ourselves to enter fully into our Lord's ministry of sacrifice and service.

1995

WEEK
1

January 1-7

ASIA

ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) has adopted a higher profile than previously as resolved by its member bodies – Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and the Philippines. At the same time APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation) has assumed more importance, made up of 15 members including the ASEAN group. The larger grouping is promoting a "community" concept comparable to the EEC. The US and Australia are exploring the

CALL TO PRAYER

1994/5 Prayer Guide Update

(Week numbers correspond with those in Prayer Guide)

issue while ASEAN is negotiating an understanding which does not undermine its regional identity and importance.

Asia is on the move in the world scene and the Christian church is challenged to reach out in meaningful response and is doing so, spearheaded by the vision of Christians in South Korea, Indonesia, China, Nagaland, Mizoram and Nepal.

This week all the BMS Asia missionaries are enjoying a time of Retreat together for spiritual renewal and refreshment. Sian Williams, BMS Director for Missionaries and Joy Knapman, BMS Regional Representative for Asia, is based in Sri Lanka will be joining the retreat in Thailand.

WEEK

2

January 8-14

ZAIRE: GENERAL

The problems of Rwanda, with thousands of refugees in the east of the country, have kept Zaire in the news but have overshadowed the desperate situation in Zaire itself. President Mobutu holds on to power whilst the economy is in tatters and hyper-inflation makes day to day life difficult. Much of the country's infrastructure is falling apart. It is a struggle for families to survive.

The Baptist community of the River Zaire (CBFZ) President is the Revd Koli Mandole Molima; CBFZ covers an area stretching for one thousand miles which creates great logistical problems. Travel is not easy nevertheless the different CBFZ regions are determined to hold together. Churches maintain a lively witness, services are full and many

hold two services each Sunday morning to accommodate all the worshippers.

Elizabeth and Stephen Allford are involved in a variety of practical task in servicing the work of CBFZ and looking after the affairs of BMS missionaries.

WEEK

3

January 15-21

NEPAL

Remarkable changes have taken place in Nepal. Released from a rigid Hindu monarchy, Nepalis are adjusting to a democratic style of government. At the same time, the explicit sharing of God's love has brought good news to thousands of Nepalis. In a remarkable manner the Christian Church has been established and is growing rapidly in an exciting way demonstrating that God's Spirit is at work.

The BMS is in partnership with the International Nepal Fellowship (INF) established just over 40 years ago, and also with the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) which is slightly younger. The two Missions work in closely together.

At present Margaret Gibbs together with Denise and Colin Clark (INF) are studying Nepali. Mr and Mrs P Lalringa (Ringa and Diki) from Mizoram, India, are working with the National Church Fellowship. Ringa is an educationist and will be building and establishing a school in Jharlang village. Also from the ZBM is Mr H Lalankima: Tiana is an engineer and involved in the construction of suspension bridges in N Dhading Dist.

David and Catherine

World Mission Link



All kinds of people are involved in world mission.

There are the over 80s...

Agnes thought her time for organising things was well past until she realised that her church was not involved in Link-Up. Two months and three meetings later, the church was part of a Link-Up group and the first letters had been written to their Link-Up missionary.

There are the children...

Brian got the Sunday School to produce a magazine about their town and sent it to the school in which their Link-Up missionary was working.

There are the ministers...

Christine persuaded the Bible Study group to use material produced in a Third World country.

There are the missionary secretaries...

Daphne looked in Power Pack and organised a mission evening based on two of the ideas she found there.

There are the worship leaders...

Eric though the Harvest Service should be about more than food. He organised a group in the church to produce a display about a BMS partner country.

There are the under 30s...

Freda arranged for their Link-Up missionary to spend time in the local school. The headmistress has already booked a return visit... Mandy arranged a live telephone link with their missionary... Stephen got people writing letters about Third World debt... And Zena persuaded the church to support the Nestlé boycott...

All people with an enthusiasm for mission. What stories can you tell? What stories will you be able to tell of 1995? Have you started planning your world-mission programme? It's never too early, or too late, to start doing something for world mission. ■

McLellan live in Kathmandu where David is working at UMN Headquarters. Grace Penney is a Geography teacher at Kathmandu International Study Centre, and both Paul and Jackie Wicks are

involved in teaching the children aged 11-16 years. More recently Debbie and Graham Atkinson have joined the staff of KISC. Graham is teaching PE. Debbie is also the BMS Nepal Correspondent.

Three photographs of newly graduated pastors with their families.



EBT Graduation Bolobo

by Elizabeth Allford

On July 17th 1994 the Bolobo Baptist School of Theology (Ecole Baptiste de Théologie) celebrated its first graduation since changing the level of study and consequently its name.

The first intake of students for the new four year course began their studies in October 1990. Out of the eight students who began the course, seven successfully completed all four years. This included one single lady from the North Equator Region.

Their studies included French and English, as well as the usual variety of theological courses, such as Old and New Testament Studies, Christian doctrine, homiletics, comparative religions etc. Each student's wife also spent a short time studying, in order to prepare for their future role as Pastor's wife. They too received a certificate.

On the day of the Ceremony, the church was packed with church members, well wishers, and representatives of the State. The service was a very enjoyable occasion with several choirs singing in different languages. This included one organised by a student pastor during his time in Bolobo. In addition the graduating students and their wives sang about the work of the church. The students were presented with a Bible Dictionary and a Bible Commentary, a gift from the Scottish Baptists' Men's Movement, to help them in their future ministry.

Laughter filled the church when the first lady received her certificate, as her husband went out to the front of the church and kissed her. A public display of affection is rare in Zaire!! This part of the ceremony was then repeated for all the ladies and for the men as they received their certificates! It almost became a competition between them as to who could make the church laugh the most!! It

was certainly fun and light hearted after the four years of study.

This group of students are particularly noteworthy for the hard physical work that they had to endure in order to provide for their families during their studies. In the past it has been the tradition of missionaries in Bolobo to employ the Bible students as gardeners, or to ask them to fetch bundles of wood for the wood burning stoves. The wives have been known to wash or iron missionaries' clothes, and to help out generally whenever there was a need.

However these students only had help for the first year of studies as the missionaries were evacuated in September 1991, leaving them without employment. Hence, by their own means they had to look elsewhere for ways of earning a living. Although their sending church and region are supposed to send financial help, it is often impossible for the local churches to help their students. The BMS supports the work of the school and pays the staff salaries, but the students rely very much on their families and manual labour between classes to survive. Due to the difficulties in Zaire as a whole there is particular hardship of the student pastors.

When the students were asked to give a report at their graduation ceremony, they thanked the staff of the school, BMS and various individuals who had contributed to their studies in some form or another. However, their report emphasised the physical sufferings that they had undergone in order to complete their training. They said they would never forget the heavy loads of wood and sticks that they had to carry, they had even been jeered and laughed at by people in Bolobo as they returned from the forest.

Despite all their hardships, after four years of study, they have graduated and now merit the title of "Pastor". Please pray for them as they return to their regions to begin their new ministries.

The new Zairian pastors who graduated at Bolob are:



Pastor Bolaya Fataki, his wife Like Lisabe Bolaya and their four children, they will be working in the Parish of Ntondo in the South Equator Region.

Pastor Meko Mengo Missia, his wife Mbombo Meko and their twelve children, they will be working at Yakombo Nkoy in the North Equator Region.



Pastor Mbiashu Ipan-Monshe Mbula, his wife Kevani Bempame Bibane and their four children, they will be working in the Parish of Kwamouth in the Bandundu Region.

Pastor Boika-Nsambi-E-Nzee, his wife Boika Mambe Mola and their three daughters, they will work in the Parish of Ndote/Botende in the South Equator Region.

Mama Pastor Egbolo Gala who has one child of fourteen from a failed youthful marriage, she will be working at Lisala in the North Equator region.

Pastor Kimbeni Bulewn, his wife Kukabula Mvuaka and their four daughters, they will be working in Kinshasa.

Pastor Lokonda Nzanga Nzeke, his wife Mpembe Lokonda and their six daughters, they will be working in the Parish of Mpenge in the Bandundu Region.

Please pray for these new pastors as they begin their work. ■

Clearing up the mess

from a recent letter from Jacqui Wells who helps to co-ordinate women's work in the Thailand Karen Baptist Convention. BMS has made a grant from its Relief Fund (see In View) to help people affected by the floods.



We have been experiencing the heaviest monsoon rains for years. The River Ping, which flows through the centre of Chiang Mai has burst its banks three times and certain parts of the city have been well and truly flooded.

The McKean hospital compound has been flooded so much that you could have travelled to the hospital buildings by boat. Instead most waded through very deep water to go to work and, as they travelled, they kept their eyes open for snakes swimming through the deep water.

I went to help clear a house on the compound, and that was "something else!" The smell and the slimy mud was something I'll remember for quite a while... And the flood has come three times already.

The north of Thailand has taken a battering and the Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai, Phayao, Phrae and Lampang districts have all felt the effects of flooding.

Mae Sariang also has not escaped. Last week I saw a fertile valley, used for the cultivation of rice, which had been destroyed by flooding. The soil and newly planted rice had been swept away on the floods.

In places there's a new river because the river has changed its course and cut another channel. At this time of the year you usually see the valley full of green rice plants...

This year you see the devastation and the aftermath of flood. Sand and rock have now taken the place of fertile soil; bridges have been swept aside just as if they were made out of match-sticks.

Two men, a father and son, were in their paddy fields when they heard the rush of water approaching. They didn't have time to run to safety. Instead, they climbed a tree and sat in the shelter of its branches before they were rescued.

But in it all we've seen good things too. The thing that's impressed me most is how people have been so willing to help others in distress. Even though it's meant getting wet and dirty, people have helped; even though it's been dangerous, folk have forgotten the danger and put themselves at risk to help others.

Communities have wept together as their homes and land have been flooded and then the same people have worked hard and laughed together as they have cleared up the mess. ■



NEW CHURCH GROWTH

COVER STORY

A new Baptist community has grown from nine to 46 members in twelve months and their first baptismal service has taken place (see cover picture).

The Baptist work in the district of Vila Ponta Negra near Natal in the state of Rio Grande do Norte is supported by a BMS PIPS project and completed its first year in May.

Having started as part of a missionary expansion strategy the Revd Lupercio Bezerra and his family were chosen to lead the work which started with nine founder members and an average attendance of 25 persons each service.

During the first nine months Lupercio's garage was used as the base. With the growth of the work a move to larger premises was needed and, thanks to local gov-

ernment permission, were able to use the hall of the Youth Training Centre.

There is now an average attendance of 65 people and a membership of 46 – a growth of 238 per cent in the first year. The Sunday School has 51 members divided into four classes, one of which is a baptismal preparation class of eleven.

Some land has now been obtained for a church building which has encouraged the fellowship. It will enable them to expand the work even more.

Ponta Negra is a beach area that has a large tourist trade. With a moveable population of some 30,000 Ponta Negra receives an influence from all over Brazil and also from foreign countries. Unfortunately this influence is mainly bad with prostitution, AIDS and drugs evident.

Initially the members were fearful. In many of the services visitors fell to the floor possessed. There was much prayer and many were liberated from evil spirits. Two

young girls were converted and are firm in Christ. It was later discovered that all those people were deeply involved in Spiritism.

"I give thanks to the Lord for the support given by my wife and daughters, Patricia, Priscila and Pauline," said Lupercio Bezerra. "They are involved in nearly all the activities of the Church."

"Also a special word of gratitude to our British brothers and sisters for the investment they have made, helping us in the financial challenge and, as is more precious, with their prayers. We pray that the Lord of the harvest will bless you 'With every sort of blessing in heavenly places, in Christ.'

"We have 21 contributing members of which nine are declared 'tithers'. Unemployment and youth directly influence those figures. With our own resources we have been able, during the first year, to purchase ten benches, two microphones, an amplifier and two guitars."

Candidates at the first baptismal service of the new Ponta Negra Church in the state of Rio Grande do Norte in Brazil.

WAKE UP



Participants at the seminar for church members in the Kinshasa and Bas-Fleuve regions of Zaire.

"Wake up, Look, Get Up and Work (do something)" was the theme of a week long seminar for women and men from Kinshasa and Bas-Fleuve regions of the CBFZ.

Everyone was supposed to have booked months ago, so on the basis of that Mama Ditina organised the buying of basic foodstuffs for about 300 people. By train 136 people travelled down from Kinshasa to CECO at Kimpese. The seminar started on the Tuesday – three good conferences a day, plus discussion groups (21 of them).

Each day throughout the week more and more people came until by the end of the week there were well over 500 people sleeping in the girls' dorm and the Bible Institute classrooms. A team of Kinshasa women organised the cooking.

It was a very good seminar and people were very very appreciative. Those who had asked to return to Kinshasa before the end, decided to stay on in spite of cramped cold conditions (the concrete floors are hard!), and the food was dubious in quantity.

Christians facing suffering. Christian faith and the sects, the local church, its members and pastors. The place of the Child today. Baptists – who are we? Christian family life. A Christian and traditional beliefs were some of the subjects discussed.



BAPTIST GROUP DISCOVERED

The European Baptist Federation team in Albania have discovered a Baptist group in the north of the country.

"This was a big surprise to us," said Gill and Glyn Jones, BMS workers in Albania.

The Baptist Centre office had been contacted by two Christians who said they were Baptists from Pukë

"They said there was a small group of believers who wanted informal contact with us. We went to visit them with Pastor Per Ake Wahlstrom, a visitor from Sweden who said that he knew the small Swedish Baptist Church from which the young man who had evangelised Pukë had come two years ago.

"When he started evangelism there he was imprisoned; how things have changed since then! The church at Pukë (they don't think of themselves as a church yet: they feel there must be something else to do first!) has six baptised adults and another un-baptised, plus some of their families.

"They have chosen one of their number to be their honorary pastor and he guides the group in their Friday night worship (this is very simple - they know virtually no songs) and Bible study.

"There is plenty of local opposition: the communists are still strong there. The Swedish couple who took the original evangelist's place returned home some months ago so they are very much on their own now.

"They were probably encouraged after meeting us; it certainly encouraged us to meet them. We won-

der how many more independent Baptist groups are hidden away in Albania?"

RELIEF GRANTS

During September the Baptist Missionary Society responded to calls for help from three continents by making grants totalling £30,000 from its Relief Fund.

Heavy rain and flooding in the northern hill tribe areas of Thailand have caused problems for the Karen, Lahu and Akha people.

The Thailand Baptist Missionary Fellowship (TBMF) were able to find 350,000 baht (about US\$14,000) for immediate relief but that was not enough. In response to a request from TBMF BMS has sent £10,000 to help them continue their relief work.

A further £10,000 has also been sent for Rwanda relief. The BMS has received £25,000 from churches and individual donors which means that, together with a contribution from the BMS Relief Fund, the Society has so far been able to send £35,000.

Then BMS responded to two emergency needs within Europe. In September the members of the EBF Council meeting in Dorfweil were told of problems in Moldova and Serbia which the Baptist communities were trying to face. But they were also made aware that neither Baptist World Aid (BWAid) nor the European Baptist Federation had funds available.

So BMS has given help to the Baptist Union of Moldova where, after a long drought, torrential rains have caused much

damage and severe flooding.

The World Council of Churches has channelled some help through the Orthodox Church. However, the Baptist Union is also engaged in relief operations and has asked for £5,000 to provide blankets and warm clothing and also to help rebuild some homes. The Baptist Union has volunteer workers ready to assist in the reconstruc-



tion work and the BMS grant will help them to buy necessary materials.

The Baptist Union of Serbia, through its two humanitarian organisations, Tabita and Bread of Life, has a team of volunteers distributing food and necessary goods to refugees and displaced persons within Serbia.

The BMS has given £2,500 to both these organisations so that they may be able to continue their work.

"I am pleased that the BMS can respond to these urgent needs on behalf of the worldwide Baptist family," said BWAid Director, Paul Montacute.

CHECK OUT

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1994

ARRIVALS

Jane Andrews
for Kathmandu
Jerry and Ruth Clewett
from Kaandu
Peter and Valerie Harwood
from Kathmandu
David and Ann MacFarlane
from Altamura
Mairi Burnett
from Tirana
Stuart and Joyce Filby
from Ostende
David and Sheila Brown
from Rio de Janeiro
David and Catherine Meikle
from São Bernardo do Campo
David and Rachel Quinney-Mee
from El Salvador
Helen Johnston
from Sierra Leone
Margaret Swires
from Natal
Vincent and Sadie MacDougall
from Joinville

DEPARTURES

Ian and Sally Smith
to Kathmandu
Sue Frame
to Burtibang
Andy and Linda Eaves
to São Paulo

VISITS

Andrew North
to Kathmandu
Derek Rumbol
to Kenya, Tunisia and Zaire

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LEGACIES

Bevan, Miss C	984.60
Bond, Mr Frank C	57.48
De Bruyne, Mrs Audrey	719.97
Evans, Miss E M	117.34
Fisk, Dorothy L	98.55
Heath, Miss Olga R	100.00
Herrington, Mrs Grace	2,107.45
Hey, Miss E M	7,320.00
Jackson, Miss W M	1,000.00
Price, Lottie I	29.26
Wells, Miss E	1,212.16
Thomas, Winifred K	2,750.00

ANOYMOUS GIFTS

CAF Voucher	200.00
Charities Aid GYE	50.00
Charities Trust	23.37
ColchesterFor Rwanda	70.00
Give as You Earn	115.94
Glasgow	20.00
Postal Order	10.00



Simon Smith and Michael Berly loading the trucks at High Wycombe.

Bottom: John Passmore sorting the computers.



Alex Smith



ALBANIA

Four lorries laden with goods for Albania, including computers donated by British Schools, left High Wycombe at the beginning of October.

It was the biggest ever load organised by the Albania Aid Appeal (AAA). On board were relief goods for various organisations including the work of the European Baptist Federation.

Albania Aid Appeal is the brain-child of Chris Blake who took early retirement some time ago but still wanted to do something constructive with his life. On average he arranges a trip to Albania every three months but normally it involves just one lorry load.

Included in the load this time were the personal effects of BMS missionaries and books for Albanian schools. There were also a large number of computers. These were donated by several UK schools after an appeal from the BMS.

There are very few computers in Albania and in one college teaching computer studies they only had cardboard key-

boards to practise on.

John Passmore, BMS Regional Representative for Europe, learnt through Research Machines that many schools were updating their computer equipment.

An appeal through Research Machines' Bulletin to schools brought a response from schools as far apart as Morrison's Academy in Hamilton, Scotland, the Haberdashers' Aske's School in Borehamwood, Herts, and the Royal Belfast Academical Institute.

In this first shipment there were 40 computers for use in Albania donated by five schools. John Passmore is hoping to take up some of the offers from other schools later.

"The response both to the request for books and

computers has been great and has enabled us to send out this shipment," said John Passmore.

"It will help students learning computing and word-processing who at present are without a computer. The EBF team in Tirana will be giving computer classes in the Baptist Centre and other machines will be given to Albanian schools. There will be a need for more hardware in the future." Simon Smith, a former BMS 28:19 Action member who has been working with the community based at Lille in Northern France, went along to help load the lorries. He was accompanied by Michael Berly, son of David Berly the pastor at Lille Baptist Church.

DEPUTY TREASURER

The BMS has appointed Mr Mervyn Hancock as Deputy Treasurer to take some of the pressure off Arthur Garman, the BMS Honorary Treasurer.

Mr Garman, because of a serious illness, is not able for the time being to play his usual full and active role within the Society.

Mr Hancock, who until recently was Treasurer of East Sussex County Council, is a member of Eastgate Baptist Church Lewes. Previously he was Assistant County Treasurer in Berkshire. He has also worked for local authorities in Chard, Worthing and Coventry.

He was baptised at Worthing Baptist Church and has also been in membership at Queen's Road Baptist Church, Coventry and King's Road (now Abbey) Baptist Church, Reading.

Mr Hancock joins the BMS at a time when the Society is closely examining its finances.

Although giving from the churches is encouraging and up on last year the end of September it was not quite up to target. In a letter to church treasurers, Chris Hutt, BMS Director of Finance and Administration, wrote: "It is important that we achieve the full five per cent increase in giving by the end of October so that the increase we need to ask from the churches next year does not have to exceed that figure."

He warned that, unless legacies were at a much higher level or expenditure is less than anticipated, there is likely to be a significant deficit in the BMS accounts.

"For this year, the deficit can be met from reserves, but obviously, before too long, income



BMS

£

and expenditure must be brought into line."

Mr Hutt reminded church treasurers that many doors have opened in front of the BMS in recent years.

"We are now working in France, Belgium as well as Albania and Thailand. In an endeavour to follow the Lord's will, we have committed ourselves to seeking ministerial couples for Portugal and Bulgaria. But we have now reached the point where it is difficult to commit ourselves to new work, even when the call is strong, unless further funds are made available by the churches."

CHAIN LETTER

A reader from Scotland has sent in a copy of a chain letter expressing great concern. It purports to originate, way back in the 1950s, from a missionary in South America - not a BMS missionary we hasten to add.

The letter warns of dire consequences if 20 copies of the letter are not sent on within four days and tells stories of what happened to those who didn't. Others, who forwarded the letter to others are supposed to have received large sums of money.

We surely do not need to tell our readers to ignore such superstitious nonsense. If it comes your way destroy it. If nothing else, you will have shield susceptible people from emotional blackmail.

MAKING WAVES

VIRTUOUS REALITY by Ele Clay of the Women's Missionary Union, USA.

We're tired of it the murder/arrest/pre-trial drama involving an idolised former US sports figure. For weeks this summer, media executives stepped over each other to satisfy the public lust for gory details. Why was it so easy for us to become the secondary victims of this and other tragedies? We seem content to gorge ourselves continually on every shadowy piece of bait put on display to lead us deeper into the subtle equation: scandalous story and peak ratings - top advertising dollars.



Part of the attraction was the sordid documentary on the "fall of a hero" in which case the first casualty was our dangerously anaesthetised ability to discern between notoriety, heroism, and ordinary frailty. Or maybe our pocket-first rush into progress has made us so weary that we're happy to substitute our own reality for the vicarious life of the television world. Who can say?

If it is true that popular media reflects our tastes and preferences, then we've been short-changed on those images that can influence us to soar with the eagles. In short, we need a 20/20 vision of virtue not a regurgitation of the old showcase of blue-bloods and benefactors posing as the icons of patrician ideals. The unrelenting stream of public figures in personal crisis has effectively demonstrated that noble character cannot be painted onto morally-cracked human nature.

Let's hear the fanfare for those who continue to mediate for peace even when local political agendas have replaced that urgency with the news-gathering crisis of the moment... And the myriad other "occasional saints" who practise routine kindness, bringing food to an elderly friend who's losing touch with reality... making one's home into a ministry to an unexpected guest ... finding time to be a friend to social discards ... dedicating a home telephone line to daily prayer with shut-ins ... discarding two days' income each month for volunteer service ... reaching into one's own pocket to pay for another's extravagance ...

"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom" James 3:13

BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY

GENERAL COMMITTEE
NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the General Committee of the Society for the year 1995/96 can now be made by members of the Society, contributing churches, auxiliaries of the Society, Baptist Unions and Baptist Associations and must be received not later than 31 December 1994.

Please act now and remember that the General Committee needs to be as representative as possible of the Baptist constituency.

Nominations should be made in writing and sent to Michael J Quantick, Administration Manager, Baptist Missionary Society, PO Box 49, Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8XA.



Special Offer - Buy 10 or more Calendars and get a 10% discount, order your prayer Guide before 1st November 94 and save 10%



1995 BMS Calendar and Prayer Guide

1995 Calendar - Available now!



All profits from the sale of this 1995 calendar will go to support a BMS Young People's Summer Action Team in Albania. The cost is only £3.50 including packing and postage. Each month has a

full colour photograph and imaginative illustration of people and places around the world where BMS is working and witnessing alongside national Christians. There's plenty of space for writing in engagements, and a meditative prayer for reflection. Buy one for yourself and another for a friend.

Prayer Guide - Available mid October



The 1995 Prayer Guide helps put World Mission on the agenda both for personal devotions and corporate meetings. In a pocket size booklet, each week's spread will take you to an area of

BMS linked work. Complete with daily prayer topics, names of BMS missionaries, national church leaders, and information and maps of the area of their service, as well as prayers and meditations. A must for all who want to keep in touch with what God is doing worldwide! Costs £1 including p&p.

ORDER FORM FOR 1995 CALENDARS

Name

Address

..... Post Code

Church

I wish to order BMS 1995 Calendars at £3.50
(The price includes P&P. 10% discount on 10 or more Calendars)

I enclose £.....(cheques made payable to BMS)

ORDER FORM FOR 1995 PRAYER GUIDES

Name

Address

..... Post Code

Church

I wish to order BMS 1995 Prayer Guides at £1.00
(The price includes P&P. Order your BMS 1995 Prayer Guide before 1st November 1994 and save 10% - 90p each)

I enclose £.....(cheques made payable to BMS)