

MISSIONARY **HERALD**  
*mb.*

January 1995

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Albania p12



A Clear Vision,  
BMS STRATEGY  
Reg Harvey p6



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# *mh.* editorial

## ***mh.* Missionary Herald**

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Missionary Society, PO Box 49,  
Baptist House, Didcot Oxon OX11 8XA  
Registered charity No.233782  
Telephone 01235 512077  
Fax 01235 511265

## **General Director**

Reg Harvey

## **Editor**

David Pountain

## **Design**

Anthony Viney

Enquires about service overseas to

## **Director for missionaries**

Sian Williams

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**W**elcome to the first issue of *mh.* in 1995. We hope you like the changes. They are in response to your letters and to the questionnaire which so many of you kindly filled in. We're sorry that the price has gone up. However, at £5 a year (50p an issue) it is still good value, especially when you realise that it costs £8.50 a year to produce. Anyway, £5 was the price most respondents to the questionnaire felt to be reasonable. We're sorry too that we were not able to signal this in the last issue of *mh.* The decision to increase the price was made at the meetings of the BMS General Committee on 21/22 October by which time the November/December *mh.* had been printed and was already being dispatched.

This month we begin, where we left off at the end of last year, with the story of a Christian woman in the south of Brazil. After all she is what mission is about, a representative of all those whose lives are being touched and transformed by the living Christ. With all the talk in BMS about developing a mission strategy let us never forget that, as the disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called into his caring ministry of love for women and men the world over.

Then Yvonne Wheeler's article about bread is a timely reminder of how Christ's love concerns the whole of a person. Loaves of bread are able to satisfy the need of the body for nourishment but we cannot live by bread alone. People also need that "heavenly food" to satisfy a deeper spiritual hunger.

We are also picking up the debate about mission strategy which began at the October meetings of BMS General Committee. The "vision for mission" theme will be explored throughout this year and will stimulate, we hope, your thinking as the BMS looks to churches and associations to join the debate. You don't have to wait of course. The letters page is open for you to participate in the discussion now. But please, don't make your letters too long!



**COVER PHOTO**  
The young face of  
mission in Thailand



# Margarete Da Silva Pieczarka

A saint in life and lip who prayed for a missionary to come and help the congregation at Parque Marinha.



**Above: Margarete speaking at the Parque Marinha Church, Rio Grande.**

people

The request for a prayer of thanksgiving was met by a response that was a mixture of weeping and praying in thankfulness and joy. This was Margarete pouring out her Brazilian heart with gratitude to God for the arrival in the midst of the congregation of a Brazilian Navy couple from Rio de Janeiro who were able and willing to help with the music in worship which had always been an area of weakness in the congregation.

Margarete has been a widow for four years. Her husband died suddenly from a brain tumour. She was left to bring up two children, now aged 16 and 13, on a government pension (£220 per month).

She was converted in 1982, just two years before Roger Collinson retired from the Royal Navy and started to prepare for Baptist Ministry.

She was from a spiritist family and her mother was a medium for many years. She was never deeply involved in the spiritist activities and when her sister was converted to Christianity she began to attend a housegroup in order to discover what had led to the evident change in lifestyle in her sister.

After about five months of contact with the church and the housegroup

she put her trust in Jesus Christ as her Saviour at a meeting in her sister's home. Following her conversion she waited for four years before being baptised in order to be sure that her faith was secure.

From that moment (1986) she began to pray for a missionary to come and help them on the Parque Marinha estate. She hoped someone might come from Porto Alegre, the state capital about 200 miles away or even Rio de Janeiro, over 1000 miles to the north. Imagine her surprise when Angela and Roger arrived in 1990 from the other side of the world.

Margarete is now the Vice-president of the congregation and the Treasurer. More importantly she is a saint in life and lip and greatly loved and respected by all who come into contact with her, the sort of person it's a joy to work with.

When Angela and Roger return to the UK in April 1995 it is on this lady's shoulders that much of the responsibility for the work on the Parque Marinha estate will rest.

Margarete's faith has grown and matured enormously during these past twelve years and will certainly uphold her as she takes on even greater challenges during 1995. This lady of faith needs and deserves your prayers, don't fail her. ●





**Left: View of the naval dockyard from the Collinsons' apartment in Rio Grande. Just right for two ex-Royal Navy officers!**

The Parque Marinha estate of around 15,000 people is situated in Rio Grande in the very south of Brazil's most southern state of Rio Grande do Sul.

**Roger and Angela Collinson** have been working there since the end of 1990, looking after the Parque Marinha congregation which has been meeting in a local school.

**Below and right: Pastor Paulo and his wife from the mother church in Rio Grande.**



## BMS FUND FOR THE FUTURE

Money from the BMS Fund for the Future has been used to construct a new building at Parque Marinha and in September 1994 Roger and Angela reported that the "rooms are virtually completed. There is still some tidying up to do and painting but they are fully functioning and so useful."

The chapel was also on the way to being completed and they were looking forward to a formal inauguration on 29 October.

"Do pray that the complex will be a means of rich blessing to the community in every possible way; a source of light, comfort, hope, renewal, peace, joy and practical help.

"Our numbers are growing slowly but steadily and we hope to have our first baptisms in November or December (1994). In the past these have been held in the mother church but now that we have our own facilities our new folk will be able to make this act of faith and witness in the midst of their own people.

"These are exciting days for the Baptist family in Parque Marinha who have stood with us so faithfully during the past four years as we have dreamed and prayed and planned and struggled. Now we see the fruits." ●

**Following her conversion she waited for four years before being baptised in order to be sure that her faith was secure.**



# Seeking a Clear Vision

Reg Harvey, BMS General Director, outlines a future strategy for the Society firmly rooted in the missionary task of sharing the good news of the kingdom.

**T**he BMS is a missionary society. Does anyone doubt it? After all, we are the Baptist *Missionary* Society.

However, it appears that some people are not too sure what BMS stands for. "There is no clear vision," they say. So, BMS intends to put it right.

The process started at the end of October 1994 when Reg Harvey, BMS General Director, outlined a future strategy for the Society firmly rooted in the missionary task of sharing the good news of the kingdom.

Addressing the BMS General Committee he said: "This is the purpose and promise of God, that women and men in their sin and falling short of the glory for which they were made shall find forgiveness and renewal through faith in the dying and risen Saviour God.

"This was and remains at the heart of the vision for the

Baptist Missionary Society.

"The vision of the Society is that all humankind and the whole of creation recognise and accept God's reign of love, joy, righteousness and peace, revealed supremely in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit."

## THE CONTEXT OF MISSION

Reg Harvey spoke of the context of mission in the modern world. He looked at population growth, poverty, the place of women, urbanisation, people movements and refugees, and in each case recognised a need for evangelism and proclamation of the gospel alongside such things as literacy work, political action, and education, development, relief, and health work.

He looked at the growth of the World Church alongside resurgent Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism.

"A tidal wave of new religions is sweeping across all continents. To the Society

(BMS), committed to the view that women and men find salvation and forgiveness uniquely in Jesus Christ, this emphasises the need for commitment to the proclamation and the demonstration of the gospel.

"At the same time, the task is not one for British Baptists alone. The world church has grown and the two-thirds-world church is particularly lively and the fastest growing both numerically and in terms of missionary outreach."

## RICH AND POOR

Reg Harvey pointed to the economic and political state of the world suggesting that the BMS had a role, together with its partners "and with governments to endeavour to redress the balance between the rich and the poor."

He looked at the 40 wars currently being waged around the world and the number of countries "struggling" towards democracy.



The world population is growing, is





“The vision of the Society is that all humankind and the whole of creation recognise and accept God’s reign of love, joy, righteousness and peace, revealed supremely in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.”



very young and is moving to the cities.

He saw this as leading BMS and its partner churches towards a ministry of reconciliation, first of all at the personal level of reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ and then in reconciliation with one another “as equally loved children of God.”

The British scene was examined. Materialism, the multi-faith nature of Britain, the recession and the relative weakness of the churches were all scrutinised.

“This,” he said, “argues for the churches to hold clearly to their faith in a Saviour God and proclaim the good news of life which is found fully in the one who is the bread from heaven.”

#### NEW STRATEGY

Reg Harvey outlined the beginnings of a strategy which involves inviting churches to focus prayer upon the work of mission and upon particular places or tasks; mission to unreached

people; targeted tasks like work amongst women or urban ministries; associated ministries with overseas partners in areas like healing and health promotion, development, education and human rights; increasing cooperation with overseas partners; and feeding back into the churches of the British Isles lessons being learned from overseas so that the gospel can be made known effectively.

The BMS strategy for the future is to be worked out more fully by the BMS Board of Directors and discussed at the March General Committee. The intention is then to involve Baptist churches and associations in wider discussions before the strategy is finalised. ●

**Reg Harvey** is the BMS General Director. He served as General Secretary from 1982 until the of 1993 when the new BMS structures came into place.

#### THE OBJECT OF THE BMS

The object of the Society is to enable the Baptist Churches in the British Isles to respond to the call of God by sharing with all God’s people in making known the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world, principally beyond the British Isles. ●





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**I** was dreaming of a quiet Christmas, not like the one we had last year. Relax, I'm only kidding! It was a very good Christmas, in fact, though rather busy and not very traditional in the British manner. For a start, it's the middle of the hot season. Then, with no family or BMS colleagues here, the pull was in a different direction, and we went with the flow. It was very much a church festival, which may possibly have been the original idea.

The previous days had been busy with a district trip and various church events. On Christmas Eve, the Friday, we helped Pastor Lukombo baptise several candidates in the Tshwenge stream, not far off the end of the airport runway. Fortunately it's not as busy as Heathrow! On Christmas Day, we had a lengthy service at Kingasani and were invited by American friends for the rest of the day.

Next day, the last Sunday of the year, another long service at Kingasani was followed by a meal at the church, from where we went on to a daughter church at Masina for an afternoon service. Very hot and sticky all the while!

We got home shattered and thought, "That was Christmas, that was!" It was partly the way the calendar cookie crumbled. This year should be quieter because it'll be a two-day Christmas.

Some folks, of course, celebrate right through the night from Christmas Eve. Plenty of music from the choirs, and drama. The Christmas play is the theatrical event of the year. Since there's plenty of time between midnight and dawn it tends to be long. Some producers begin at creation, whereas others only pick up the story at Ruth and Boaz. They all like to set the scene well before Elizabeth, Mary and the Shepherds. Put it in context! The storyline, of course, is

**Dreaming  
of a quiet  
christmas**



**Pounding manioc in a Zairian village**

well known. It's the interpretation that depends on those who perform it this year - the women's meeting, the Sunday School teachers or an ad hoc group.

One memorable year at Kimpese it was the Bible School students' turn. From some reason none of their wives would take part and only Ludembo volunteered to be cast as Mary. You could say, "mis-cast." He looked a little too robust for my taste, and not quite the right shape, even with the usual cushion in place. By going into labour, however, I felt that he went beyond the requirements of the script. His realistic performance nearly brought the house down. You will gather that the softly-softly approach



to the dramatic presentation of scripture is not in vogue here. They seem to get the message across effectively nonetheless.

When it's the women's turn you have the reverse problem of portraying Herod and his henchmen. These roles are reserved, of course, for the beefiest of the ladies. This is fine until they try to squeeze themselves into their husband's trousers. Not a pretty sight! but they do a good take off of the local military, which is greatly appreciated by the audience. The other traditional area which every ham actor sees as his big chance is the census. You know: "When Quirinius was governor of Syria..." The motley crowd of the halt, blind and the lame who stagger, crawl or hop to the control desk in Bethlehem like to major on realism rather than sensitivity.

This year we have BMS colleagues, so perhaps we'll go for a traditional Christmas. If it looks like being too quiet we could always stay for the all-night play! Our Zairian friends make much more of the New Year as a time of general celebration. Not that their feasting goes beyond buying a bit of pork or beef, if they can, for the family. What they give thanks for, and it is genuinely heartfelt, is that they're still here at the end of another year, sound of mind and limb. They'll look back and remember family and friends who didn't make it this time round. ●

**Owen and Deanna Clark** have served in Zaire since 1961 apart from a short break in 1991-93 following the emergency in Zaire during which time Owen was BMS BiCentenary Secretary.

# 28:19 THE 28:19 EXPERIENCE

**What are the new BMS 28:19 Youth Action Teams "getting up to for God" around the world? Indeed, where are they?**

In September, 17 Action Team members arrived at Didcot for training where they met BMS staff and took part in a variety of sessions ranging from drama workshops to health and hygiene. Then they moved to St Andrew's Hall Missionary College in Birmingham for two weeks. This was followed by a church placement where they worked together getting involved in many aspects of church life. At this point the Belgium team left for language training in Paris.

The teams then went home to say their goodbyes before leaving the country - that is, all but four. The Zimbabwe team - Graham, Eleanor, Marc and Marianne - were all set, passports, airline tickets and numerous painful injections, six months' supply of suntan lotion, but unfortunately no visas. And so they had to learn one of the first missionary virtues, patience. They waited. After expecting sun, heat and mud huts, they found themselves in Birmingham. Glebe Farm Baptist Church in Stechford allowed the team to work with them for a fortnight. They became involved in pastoral visits, prayer walking, youth clubs and organising an "open house party" as well as Sunday services.

When, two weeks later, the visas had still not arrived they went to South Wales where they helped in the preparation of a new church soon to open.

Fortunately, after a lot of prayer the team were able to leave on 4 November. They have arrived safely in Zimbabwe and are already working in the shanty towns of Bulawayo.

It was a difficult and frustrating start to their "28:19 experience" but they saw it all as part of God's plan for them because they were blessed by the support they received and the work they did in Birmingham and Wales.

This is just one of many examples of how 28:19 is such a rich learning experience for young Christians who simply want to go out for God and put what they believe into action.

**Steve Woolcock**

*Steve Woolcock was a member of the 28:19 Youth Action Team in Lille, France, 1983/94. He is spending a further year, based at Didcot, as the 28:19 Action Team Co-ordinator.*

## 28:19 ACTION TEAMS

What are you doing with your life? Unsure of the next step to take, we may have the answer:

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Return to: **Steve Woolcock**, Baptist Missionary Society, PO Box 49, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8XA





# les groupes



(Hospital Christian Fellowship) **By Dr Richard Matendo**

The HCFI is an interdenominational organisation which seeks to follow Christ's instruction in John 20:21,

**I**n 1947 two brothers, Francis and Carl Grim, when visiting their father who was ill in hospital in South Africa, were struck by the spiritual needs of the nursing and medical personnel. They realised that if the medical and nursing personnel were won for Christ, God would, through them, be able to express His love and concern for the patients.

Their father died soon after. Following that Francis Grim devoted all his time and energy in communicating this vision to other hospitals in South Africa and other countries. He made many trips throughout the world which culminated in the creation of the Hospital Christian Fellowship International.

## THE VISION

The HCFI is an interdenominational organisation which seeks to follow Christ's instruction in John 20:21, "As the Father has sent me so I send you." It is not a church. Its aim is to group together health professionals in a framework where they can practise integrated health care, treating the whole person, body, mind and spirit. The HCFI considers the hospital a great field of evangelisation for "more people pass through hospitals than through churches."

Also during times of war or unrest churches and markets may close but



hospitals remain open. Lastly, a person who is sick is more receptive to the word of God than when he is in good health. It is in this way that the HCFI has the aim of building the kingdom of God in the health service through strategies of prayer, evangelism and the training of disciples.

## THE HISTORY OF HCFI IN ZAIRE

The HCFI has come a long way since its birth. It exists in many countries. Although Francis Grim visited Kimpese in 1953, things did not start

until 1977 at the same hospital. Initially the HCFI existed under the cover of the Scripture Union. It was only in 1991 that it was formally recognised by the State. Mlle Danielle

Bolay from Switzerland pioneered the work from 1977 until 1988. Together with a team of Zairian brothers and sisters she organised the work and visited many health institutions throughout Zaire. Thus men and

women were challenged to be involved in the full time ministry with Danielle. The training centre for French-speaking Africa was opened at IME, Kimpese in September 1988 under the leadership of Beyo and Noâlle Madituka (formerly nurses at IME/Kivuvu) who were trained in Switzerland.

At the present time the HCF/Zaire has ten trained workers of whom four are full time. Each two years they organise a national congress. The first in 1983 gathered 43 participants whereas the 7th in 1994 gathered over 120 coming from the majority of the regions of Zaire. During the conference the General Assembly, which is composed of 48 members, is held where general decisions are made concerning the direction of the HCF. The National Action Team comprised six members, led by Dr Tshilumba, a full-time worker and former surgeon. ●

**Dr Richard Matendo** (photo above) is Resident Doctor in Paediatrics at IME, Kimpese (photo below) and a Deacon and Treasurer of the IME church. He is a leader of the Music group and a member of the National Committee of the Hospital Christian Fellowship in Zaire.



## Please pray for us:

1. Pray that many hospitals and health centres will be contacted; that they will grasp the vision of HCFI and apply it.
2. Pray for those already engaged in the work that they may remain firm and bear much fruit.
3. Pray that God will meet the material and financial needs for the work to continue both in the central organisation and in the training centre.





## Return to Kimpese

**Dr Stephen Rigden Green**, former missionary paediatrician at IME Kimpese, Zaire from 1981-1992 was to speak at the National conference of the Hospital Christian Fellowship in August 1994.

**D**r Stephen Rigden Green, former missionary paediatrician at IME Kimpese, Zaire from 1981-1992 was invited as the main speaker to the National conference of the Hospital Christian Fellowship in August 1994. During the same trip he was able to visit the hospital at Kimpese to evaluate the research programmes that have continued in his absence.

"I had a lot of misgivings about what I would find after all the problems of the past two years," he said. "I was greatly encouraged by my visit, not only by the tremendous enthusiasm of the Christians at the conference but also by my trip to IME. There I was pleased to find people carrying on the work despite the problems.

"Dr Mbala, my replacement, was directing the department well and taking responsibility within the hospital as Head of medical staff. He was trained in paediatrics at the University of Kinshasa through a grant from TEAR Fund after working as a student and then a resident at IME.

"I was encouraged to find colleagues who I had worked with and trained really going on with the Lord and maturing in their leader-

ship roles. Surely this is what mission is all about. Winning souls for Christ, training and enabling.

"I was pleased to find the research project continuing under the direction of John Mokili. He has now come to Edinburgh to complete a PhD over the next two years. Johnny Bopopi has taken over responsibility, helped by Gwen Hunter, pharmacist.

"Over the next few months we are hoping to start various projects which will tackle such subjects as why the seroprevalence of HIV is stable in the area (an anthropological study), educational projects, training counsellors for tackling the AIDS problem, targeting prostitutes with appropriate help and counselling. We hope these will be financed by various charitable agencies involved in the AIDS problem. Each of these studies carries a large service component, i.e. research that brings appropriate medical help to those involved in the study.

"During the weekend I was at Kimpese, there was a series of revival meetings at the local CEZ church to which over 6000 came. Many came forward to receive Christ and many others came to renounce their involvement in witchcraft." ●

**20** vision  
vision **20**

WML  
BMS TEAM EVENTS  
1995

So often our view of the world is limited. We look out and the images we see are blurred, lost in the mist, or even warped. We need clear vision to enable us to see the needs, joys and challenges of our world.

The 1995 Team Events have as their theme "20/20 Vision". Through a variety of activities the theme is explored enabling people to see:

- what is happening in the world;
- what BMS is involved with in Asia; Africa, Europe, Central and Southern America;
- how everyone can do something for world mission.

The programme is flexible to suit the needs of each venue. Local churches plan what they wish to be included. All ages are catered for - children, teenagers, young adults, older folk. It is an event for those committed to the work of world mission through BMS and also for those who know little about BMS.

From children's programme to multimedia presentation; from experiencing life in other cultures to taking part in seminars; from meeting missionaries to listening to those from other countries studying with us; in these and other ways the mission vision is shared.

In February there is a 20/20 Vision event in Reading; in March there will be events in Sheffield and Romford.

Ask the BMS Co-ordinator for your area (formerly known as National or Area Representative) for more details. Book the date in your church diary and indeed in your own diary.

Come and improve your vision. We look forward to seeing you. ●



# Bread

“What’s the bread queue going to be like this morning?” wonders **Yvonne Wheeler**, steeling herself to get out of bed to face a new Albanian day. “Shall I take some bibles with me for those hungry for heavenly bread as well?”



## ALBANIA

Albania was a communist country for 40 years after the second world war and, from 1967 until 1990, all religious institutions were closed by the government. Before 1967, about 70 per cent of the population were Muslim, 20 per cent were Orthodox Christians, and 10 per cent were Roman Catholic. Government figures now suggest that 55 per cent of the people are non-religious.

Baptist work in Albania, which began in 1992, is sponsored by the European Baptist Federation. BMS missionaries, Drs Chris and Mairi Burnett, first of all opened an “office” in Tirana, the capital. Today, after several baptismal services, there are around 40 Albanian Christians in the Albanian Baptist Fellowship based in Tirana and Bregu i Lumit.

There are more missionaries too, from Italy, the United States as well as the UK. They are involved in evangelism and church planting, agriculture and development, education, health work and administration.

mission

I must get up early this morning and try the new shop which has just opened. Perhaps the queue won’t be so long. The waiting is tedious but then I shall miss a chance to talk to some of the other people in the queue and practise my Albanian!

I won’t miss the naughty children who try to jump the queue but I shall miss the old lady who shuffles along. She doesn’t smile very often but perhaps she doesn’t have much to smile about.

One mum is always very harassed and anxious to get back to the family with the breakfast. She finds it hard to feed them. Her husband is out of work. So many of us standing in the queue waiting for the same thing – bread.

Should I buy two or three loaves? Then I wouldn’t have to come every day for it. But then it wouldn’t be so fresh and no one likes stale bread.

Perhaps that is what God meant

when he told the children of Israel to collect only enough manna for one day; it must be fresh. Now there’s a spiritual lesson! The bread of life must be eaten fresh every day. Which reminds me: where is my bible? Which version shall I read from? RSV, NIV, Good News? Well it’s all good news isn’t it?

I must remember to take some bibles with me to the bakery. It’s a good exchange, bread for bread. No?

I gave the baker one last week. It does seem that people are hungry for the heavenly bread. Last week so many people asked about having a bible. The children’s bible is good and it only costs 70p. It must be subsidised, like white bread in Britain.

The adults are so thrilled to have a copy of the bible. I suppose I take it for granted. How many do I have lying around at home?

How long will this freedom to distribute the scriptures last? The har-





vest is ripe but the labourers are few. Jesus said: "Pray, give, go."

If we can give God's word to people then the promise is that "my word will not return to me void but will accomplish that for which it was sent." (Isa 55:11)

Well I can't say much in Albanian but God can through his word. I must tell the folk at home in the UK. They might like to help me get it distributed.

Time to get up to share the Bread of Life. I guess that's the main reason for being here. Well Lord, Here's to a new day. O for a loaf of granary bread!

**Yvonne and David Wheeler** are former BMS missionaries in Bangladesh. They returned to the service of BMS last year and are now part of the BMS group working on the European Baptist Federation (EBF) project in Albania. David is administrator of EBF work and Yvonne is hoping to develop medical work.

**Top left:** Saverio Guarna (second from left) Italian pastor evangelist in Albania.

**Above:** members of the new Albanian Baptist Church at the EBF Congress in Lillehammer, Norway last year.

**Below** peasant woman leaving the fields.





# 28:19 & CO

The "Great Commission" has been the metronome of much missionary endeavour over the last two centuries. By **John Wilson**

**T**he helicopter lifted up from the dusty soccer pitch, lurched to one side, manoeuvred in the air and flew off over the dense forest. Below dry mud brick houses appeared in a clearing.

"Goodbye daddy!" These are my first recollections of life. Sitting as a three and half year old with my mother, brother and sister in an American airforce helicopter. Other missionary mothers were sitting with their children on the wooden benches that ran round the helicopter hold. The feet of the pilot could just be seen guiding us away from what could have become a war zone in the independence uprisings of the then Belgian Congo.

I would not see my father again for another 13 months.

This was my conscious introduction to missionary life! For many, such a dramatic event might sum it up well: danger, excitement, a world totally different from the one we live in. Paul too is often cited as an example of the danger and excitement of missionary work! But there is a danger that our thinking about mission gets too tied up with the dramatic, exotic and unusual aspects and does not go deep enough. Why are we involved in mission at all? Why are only five per cent of missionaries involved in pioneer situations? Should we be welcoming missionaries

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from other countries to Britain?

The "Great Commission" has been the metronome of much missionary endeavour over the last two centuries. Some shy away from this passage as having been tainted with colonial overtones. I wish to turn to it again to find out what it has to say to me in a cultural setting that does not leave me with any feeling of superiority. French life and culture compete and in many areas surpass that of their British neighbours. Christianity took root here long before it did so in Britain. It was good to be reminded in our first placement in Lyon that 1800 years previously Christians had been martyred in the amphitheatre which overlooked the city.

Matthew finishes his gospel with this commission to remind us that the gospel is mission! This going to others is the acting out of the Beatitudes which introduce Jesus' teaching. The dynamic of the kingdom of heaven leads us into dynamic relationship with other people and peoples. Without him we would remain proud and self-assured. Peace and mercy are ours to share because they are his to give. World mission through the missionary Christ is our beatitude.

I believe that this call to "go" is as imperative as it ever was, but that does not mean that it will always follow the same pattern in every generation. Mission today is changing even



**Above and below: Sue Wilson talking to women within the multi-ethnic community of Bron, a suburb of Lyon, France. Right: Children in Zaire, where John Wilson (below-right) spent the first few years of his life.**





from that which my parents knew.

Thirty-four years after they set sail on a Belgian ship for the equatorial jungle with a six-week-old daughter, Sue and I also set sail with our six-week-old daughter to become missionaries. But there the similarity ends. In contrast our journey was only a matter of hours. My parents had been encouraged to buy pith-helmets and mosquito nets! For Sue and myself our greatest concern was the sale of our house and the transporting of our furniture. Privation and protection against deadly diseases had been replaced in our experience with the isolation and monotony of western materialism. The adventure and reward of struggling against enormous odds, that my parents knew and which I can still recall, has become for us a perseverance in the face of luxury and apathy.

These contrasts may only be superficial, but they indicate a deeper change. The west can no longer pretend to claim the high moral ground. Christianity no longer belongs to us. We need to be receivers as well as givers of the gospel. In recent years BMS has sought to change its methods and structures accordingly. Co-operation with national churches rather than imposition is now the underpinning principle of the Society. The funding of national pastors and projects is preferable to the sending of British Baptists. Greater involvement in decision making by partner churches in the BMS's agenda is being sought after. The move is to a greater humility, indeed as I believe, towards a truer understanding of Jesus' final commission to his disciples.

The "go" of the gospel is an imperative for this generation. But in the complexity of the world in which we live it cannot simply be associated

**The "go" of the gospel is an imperative for this generation. But in the complexity of the world in which we live it cannot simply be associated with travelling abroad.**



with travelling abroad.

Trying to understand and communicate with the world which is at our doorstep is for many the best way to become involved in the task of mission. My college principal reminded me before I took a year out to work with Christian radio in India that if I had never made Jesus Christ real to someone in my own culture I shouldn't think that it would be easier in another. Every Christian should be a missionary practitioner in the context of their everyday situation. It is only the most effective of these who should be sent to climb the face of another culture.

In future issues of the Herald I hope to explore further this mission in which we are all involved. How can we be more taken up into the ringing message of the risen Christ on that Galilean mountain? I think it is time to look again, at the close of the

second millennium of Christian mission, at the command of Christ to his band of disciples and ask what has this to say to the church today. ●

**John and Sue Wilson** went to France in 1988. After language training at Massy, they moved to Bron, a suburb of Lyon, in 1990 to look after a small multi-racial church. At the beginning of 1994 they settled into a church at Morsang-sur-Orge. John was previously minister of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Falmouth.





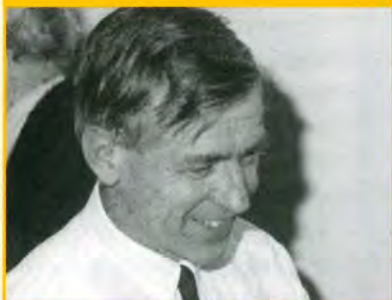
## Generous giving

Baptist Missionary Society personnel both at home and overseas have accepted a freeze on their salaries and allowances to enable the Society to continue its work in the coming year. This includes an increase in the BMS commitment to places like Albania, Nepal and Thailand.

Christopher Hutt, Director for Finance and Administration, pointed this out to the General Committee as he presented the BMS budget for 1995.

At the same time he thanked

**Christopher Hutt**



the churches for their continued generosity in increasing their giving to the BMS by more than the rate of inflation.

"So far the increase in giving this year is just over four per cent," he said. "However it is not the five per cent appealed for."

Mr Hutt estimated that total expenditure for the next year would be £4,696,850 - a £174,250 increase. This reflects an increase in the cost of the work overseas by £211,850 making a total of £3,283,650.

At the same time, the costs of education, promotion and recruitment are reduced by £10,150. Administration costs are also being reduced by £27,450.

The Society is appealing to the churches to increase their giving in the next twelve months

by seven per cent. But even if this is achieved and investment income and legacies come in as expected, the BMS will still have to draw £318,650 from reserves.

"Whilst we can do this now, obviously we cannot draw on reserves like this every year," Mr Hutt said.

## A church in every place

Two visitors from Indonesia shared their vision for mission with the BMS General Committee last month. The Revd Youtie Legoh, President of the Kerapatan Gereja Baptis Indonesia (KGBI), and the Revd Jether Mokodaser, Vice-President and Dean of the Seminary said that their small Baptist convention of 75 churches and 140 mission congregations had a strategy of 1-1-1.

"Our intention is to plant one church in one village or town in one generation," they said.

There are more than 13,000 islands in the Indonesian archipelago. However, initially they intend to make sure that they



**David Martin, BMS Director of Operations, and the Revd Youtie Legoh, President of the Convention of Indonesian Baptists.**

have a presence within each of the country's 27 provinces.

The Revd Jether Mokodaser, who is involved in training leaders explained that newly ordained ministers were expected to go out and plant a church.

"Our greatest challenge is to find ways of communicating to the majority of Muslims within our Indonesian population of 180 million."

The BMS is supporting the work of KGBI, particularly in its vision to minister to the unreached people of North Sumatra in the rural districts south of Medan.

## A change of name

From now on BMS National and Area Representatives are to be known as BMS Co-ordinators. So, for instance, Derek Clark is the BMS Co-ordinator for Scotland and Cath Mawson is the BMS Co-ordinator for the North of England. We don't know how we're going to shorten the names. "Reps" came off the tongue quite easily. "Co-ords" perhaps or even "Cords"? Perhaps not.

## ... and a change of address

Sue Wilson, one of the BMS Co-ordinators for Wales, has now moved house. Her new address is: **Lower Ackhill, Presteigne, Powys, LD8 2ED. Tel: 01544 267456.**

And of course this is also the new address for BMS Vice-President and Honorary Medical Officer, David Wilson!

## Reunion

Will all former BMS missionaries, who are interested in an "All BMS Regions Reunion" in either 1996 or 1997, please contact Neil McVicar, at 30 Kilpatrick Gardens, Clarkston, Glasgow, G76 7RQ, as soon as possible.

## Comparing India and Derbyshire

Four denominations in Derbyshire, Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists and URC, are in partnership with the Church of North India (CNI).

In September 1994 eleven young Indian Christians living as far apart as Gujarat in the east, Assam in the east, Amritsar in the north and Kolhapur in the south spent three weeks in the Derbyshire churches. Nine were students and their leader was Ruly Mohanty from the Diocese of Cuttack which was an area of BMS work. Ruly's father is Bishop of Cuttack and Vice-Moderator of the CNI.

The following is from Ruly's interim report of the visit.

Our visits to schools, universities, hospitals, factories, industry, museums, day care centres for the aged and the homeless helped us to widen our knowledge of British life. This included various social and leisure-time activities like the barbecues, the informal get-togethers with the young people, bowling, ice-skating, boating, hill-walking and a visit to Alton Towers.



English food proved strange, new (fish and chips) and interesting (salt-free). We would have liked more time with our hosts. The programme was a little hectic, but we were never bored.

We belong to the CNI so our knowledge of different churches was limited. However, our visits to churches of different denominations, sizes and styles have increased our understanding. We were impressed by the frequent family services and lively singing.

Although women in England now serve as ordained ministers, they are not fully accepted by congregations, especially by the elderly, and also sometimes by their male colleagues. Although India is a conservative society the CNI did not have any difficulty in ordaining women.

We were disappointed to find little involvement and activity in the churches by young people. They were mostly between the ages of twelve and 17. In India they are older, although we have a gap between Sunday School and youth activities. The few youth activities did not stretch much into society. The young were more concerned about their own activities and career.

We observed little co-operation and planning together between the older members of the congregation and the younger people in church. Older young people could be encouraged to help with the younger ones. This would give them responsibility.

We were impressed by the eagerness and interest of people to know more about us. It was sad to see weak family bonds and very little contact between neighbours. Christianity seems a private affair and there is hesitation in talking about it, especially among the young people.

Teenagers have far more independence and tend to drift away from both the family and the church but all those we met were

polite and most people were punctual, systematic and had a good civic sense. We liked the idea of having hospital and industrial chaplains linking church and secular life.

Twelve young people from Derbyshire go to North India in July and August this year.



Sorting spectacles at Pimu, Zaire.

## Spectacles

For the time being please do not send any more spectacles to the BMS.

For many years Mr Tom Slade, with the help of the local Rotary Club in Hitchin, has received, sorted, classified and sent overseas the thousands of spectacles collected by friends in British Baptist churches. Many people particularly in Africa have cause to be grateful to Tom Slade and his team for this piece of devoted service and we join with them in saying, "Thank you."

However, Mr Slade has reluctantly decided that he can no longer continue to do this work and until we can find someone else to take his place please do not forward any more spectacles to BMS or to Mr Slade in Hitchin.

We are looking for an optometrist, or perhaps more than one, to take up this task. Please write to the BMS Finance and Admin Department at Didcot if you feel this is something you could do.



Members of the Sunday School and Bible Class of Duncan Street Baptist Church handing over stamps and coins to Walter Lumsden.

## Stamping his mark

For more than ten years Walter Lumsden has been sending stamps to the BMS Stamp Bureau. The stamps are collected by Duncan Street Baptist Church Edinburgh, where Walter is a member, and before sending them on he trims and sorts them. On one occasion he travelled by train down to Telford to deliver one batch himself.

Walter, who is in his 80s, used to manage a Christian bookshop in Edinburgh. He has also looked after difficult children at different times as a sort of "uncle" and so exerted some Christian influence over them.

Recently, David Mumford, who is Sunday School Superintendent at Duncan Street Baptist Church, decided to involve the Sunday School and Bible Class in collecting stamps and coins as part of a team competition.

"They have done very well," he said. "It was also a good opportunity to introduce them to the work of BMS and to how they can help. We presented Walter with all the stamps and coins collected over the year on the last day of Sunday School before the summer."

## CHECK OUT

### JANUARY 1995

#### ARRIVALS

Heather and Ryder Rogers  
from Albania  
David and Ann MacFarlane  
from Italy

#### DEPARTURES

Peter and Valerie Harwood  
to Nepal  
David and Ann MacFarlane  
to Italy  
John and Norma Clark  
to Brazil  
Keith and Barbara Hodges  
to Brazil

#### VISITS

Sian Williams  
to Thailand and Bangladesh  
Reg Harvey  
to Mizoram and India

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### LEGACIES

Bolton, Mrs Olive M	250.00
Chappell, Mr Philip D	2,000.00
Cheyne, Mrs Violet	2,000.00
Gardiner, Mrs Irene	1,254.00
Gedye, Mrs Hilda G	1,254.00
Hartnell, Mrs Constance M	501.12
Hemmens, Miss Winifred M	1,063.43
Howlett, Miss Barbara M	2,000.00
Jackson, Miss Winifred M	1,063.43
Johnson, Miss Kathleen	8,000.00
Johnson, Mrs Nellie	528.81
Kemp, Mrs Marion	10,100.00
Martin, Miss Margaret	17,718.57
Norris, Mr Louis	5,000.00
Peddar, Mr Edward W	44,695.32
Richards, Ms Lucy M	500.00
Round, Mrs G	1,000.00
Such, Mrs Dorothy F	100.00
Thomas, Mrs Winifred K	14.76
Waite, Miss Rosalie M	2,000.00
Ward, Mrs Irene Mona	4,000.00
Williams, Mrs Joan E	1,000.00

### ANONYMOUS GIFTS

Anon	250.00
Bingley	45.00
Bristo	150.00
Charities Trust	3.70
Glasgow	25.00
Keighley	65.00





Derek Clark, BMS Co-ordinator for Scotland at the Scottish Assembly

## Scottish Baptist Assembly

"A fast-paced and fascinating evening focusing on world mission," was how Stephen Younger, editor of the Scottish Baptist Magazine described the final Public Rally at the Baptist Union of Scotland's Assembly.

The evening was hosted by Derek Clark, BMS Co-ordinator for Scotland, and Sue Wilson, BMS Co-ordinator for Wales. And for the first time at a Scottish Assembly the proceedings included the valedictory service of a BMS missionary, John Clark, returning to serve overseas.

Robert Atkins, BMS missionary in France, was interviewed. "He confessed that at his first prayer group at Spurgeon's College they had been asked to pray for missionaries they knew. Ashamed to admit that he knew no missionary, nor any society, he 'invented' a missionary!" reported Stephen Younger. "He assured the audience he had progressed a long way since then."

"David Meikle, in Sao Paulo, Brazil, was interviewed on a live telephone link by Andy

Stockbridge, BMS Director for Constituency Support. David, a Scot, wryly advised him 'don't make this a long call, BMS is paying for it!' He talked about his work in three favelas and his struggles with language, culture, many broken homes and families, poverty, spiritism and violence. However, he called the favela 'an evangelist's paradise' and spoke of flourishing work amongst street kids.

"Two 19 year-old members of recent BMS 28:19 Action Teams were interviewed: Rachel Stephenson, who had been to Nepal and Thailand and Karen Clark from Brazil. They said it had been a worthwhile experience and that they would love to return and serve again."

The evening came to a climax with an address from the Revd Emmett Dunn, BWA Youth Director. "We have the responsibility as salt and light to go down into the valleys of darkness where the multitude are. As salt affects the flavour of the food (and never the other way around) so we are expected to be salt to the world to change its flavour. God has not called us to be successful but to be faithful and persistent.

"Where people are hungry,

you feed them; where people are voiceless, you become their voices; where people are poor, restore them; where there is confusion, you become the peace-makers; where there is sorrow, give them joy; where there is hopelessness, give them a sense of hope; where there is no degree of self-dignity, you give them self-esteem. Will you commit yourself? Will you get involved? But ultimately will you to spread out and make the world salty?

"The lives of 1.2 billion people are in our hands. We can go out and give them life. We can let them soar with wings as of eagles. We can let them move mountains. But we can also allow them to die.



A Karen child, Thailand

## Justice and peace

The BMS General Committee is calling on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) "to improve their service to those with limited ability to help themselves."

Following the sermon

preached at the Aberdeen General Committee by Trevor Edwards, General Secretary of the Jamaica Baptist Union, when he challenged the BMS to "reassert its advocate role" on behalf of the poorer nations the General Committee approved a resolution presented by the Justice and Peace Working Group.

"Alerted to the effects of international debt by our partners in Jamaica, the Baptist Missionary Society expresses its concern at the failure of Structural and Enhanced Structural Adjustment Programmes over a considerable period of time to improve the quality of life of the poorest peoples and communities in those countries where they have been implemented. We are encouraged by the expressed intention to improve the situation by enlarging and extending the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility for the period 1993-9.

"In the 50th year of the founding of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund we call upon these institutions to improve their service to those with limited ability to help themselves; to review the situation in those countries deemed to be less poor but which are subject to Structural Adjustment Programmes; to act with haste on matters drawn to their attention by contributors such as the United Kingdom and the European Union and to take note of comments made by national and local Christian churches, non-governmental organisations and others concerned to promote international justice and peace."

BMS is urging individual Baptist churches to pursue these issues and reminding them of resources and information available through the Tear Fund Public Affairs Office and the Christian Aid "Who Runs the World" campaign.



# Call to Prayer

Supplementing the BMS 1995 Prayer Guide. Week numbers correspond to those in the Prayer Guide copies of which can be obtained from BMS price £1 (inc p&p).

## WEEK 4

January 22-28

### Albania

We thank God for the small but growing Baptist community in Albania. Glyn and Gill Jones ask us to pray for four problems being faced in Albania.

**1** Political: Greece and Serbia have closed their border with Albania cutting off many necessities of life. The major supply line is now across the Adriatic to Italy. People are nervous of invasion. Pray for peace and normal relations.

**2** Communications: The Baptist Centre office phone is frequently out of action. Without phone or fax they are cut off from BMS in Didcot or EBF in Hamburg. Pray for lines of communication to stay open.

**3** Vehicles: Conditions water and sulphur in the fuel and hard road conditions play havoc with vehicles and spare parts are expensive and difficult to get.

**4** Medical: Cholera has been reported in various parts of the country. It is a third world disease and emphasises how poor the country is. Pray for epidemic to be contained and for missionaries to remain free of the disease.

God who has called you into fellowship with his son Jesus Christ our Lord is faithful.

1 Cor 1:9

Prayer

*Faithful God  
we are filled with joy and  
thanksgiving*

*as we see your saving  
work in Jesus.*

*His love touches and  
transforms lives -*

*victories are won over  
selfishness,*

*divisions are overcome,  
and new communities of  
faith are born.*

*We rejoice as we see this  
in Albania today;*

*may the new Christian  
communities*

*continue to know*

*the faithfulness of your  
love.*



## WEEK 5

January 29 - February 4

### Brazil: Cear and Rio Grande Do Norte

Mary Parsons, working in Fortaleza, says that her day begins at 5.15 am with a short walk followed by a time of Bible reading and prayer. She then tries, at 6.50 to do some hydro-gymnastics but this is often crowded out by "demands such

as getting patients to hospital." From 8.00 until 1.00 she is involved with the antenatal and baby clinics. Afternoons are taken up with visits to needy people and families and also buying rice, beans and other basic foods for pre-natal and postal-natal women who are undernourished. On top of all this is the normal involvement in local church life.

Mark and Suzanna Greenwood have recently settled in Fortaleza and are living and working in one of the favelas doing pastoral and socio-medical work.

In the neighbouring state of Rio Grande do Norte, Margaret Swires is doing church work in an estate area of Natal. "Many are the social problems in church families," she says. "Pray for God-given wisdom as I am called upon to advise, help and pray."

## WEEK 6

February 5-11

### Scholarships and fellowship visits

It is good to welcome visitors from our overseas partnerships to the UK. They have much to teach us about living the Christian life in today's world. Recently the Revd Patrick Moyo, President of the National Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe, visited Didcot and spoke enthusiastically about church growth. Since 1990, this small convention has grown from four churches to around 25. "That's rapid growth," it was suggested. "More of an explosion," he retorted fully convinced that it was to continue.

As well as visitors, there are a number of people, holding BMS scholarships, who are studying both in the UK and overseas. Pray for them as they prepare to be better leaders within their own churches.

## WEEK 7

February 12-18

### Nepal: UMN engineering and industrial development

One of the large projects being undertaken at the moment is the Khimti Hydropower Project. Such projects provide an alternative fuel to rural families and thus preventing erosion by the cutting down of trees on the hillsides.

"An area of work that I find most rewarding," writes Peter Harwood, "is the involvement in the plans the project has to protect the environment and to mitigate the negative effects that a project the size of Khimti has on local people. I get involved in preparing information to combat some of the international pressure groups that bang their drums so loudly that they do not hear what the local people are requesting and proposing."

Churches in Nepal are small and Christian workers often face opposition. The home of one evangelist was recently stoned by neighbours.

The wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight.

1 Cor 3:19

*Ever wise God,  
how foolish,  
we think,  
to get up and go,  
to a poor and different  
land,  
to work and build,  
design and dig,  
and all in your name;  
but we rejoice  
that you are using all this,  
making your love known,  
and transforming the lives  
of so many ordinary people  
in Nepal.*





## THINGS TO DO...

**A** Do you know who the 'visionaries' are in your church? The ideas people? The people who see the possibilities rather than the problems?

You might like to ask these questions from the pulpit, in a mid-week meeting, or in a housegroup?

### Answer yes or no.

- 1 Do you view every fact that comes your way as a door for a challenge and a possibility?
- 2 Are you drawn to problem solving, either with people or systems?
- 3 Do you see things round the corner, but miss things right under your nose?
- 4 Does fixed physical routine and doing the same things repeatedly bore you?
- 5 Do you like lots of variety?
- 6 Are you dissatisfied unless you have challenging goals?
- 7 Are you more concerned with being someone than having something?
- 8 Are you casual about wealth and possessions, and keeping track of money?
- 9 Do you ignore physical facts and past experiences when making decisions?
- 10 Do you ask why things are as they are, rather than accepting current reality?<sup>1</sup>

If you answered yes to all or the majority of these questions, you are a visionary person.

### **B** Coping with change.

Have two blank pieces of paper. Imagine yourself, and where you're at in your Christian life now, with whatever problems, frustrations or hurdles you face. Draw a picture to illustrate this on one of the pieces of paper. (For example, if you're feeling small and insignificant, perhaps you would draw a mouse at the very bottom corner of the page. If you're feeling strong, draw a sturdy tree, or a lion.) Now take the other piece of paper and draw yourself as you think God sees you. Is there a difference? If you are able, share what you have drawn with someone else.

**C** Write down all the things you hope for and long for – personally, for your family, church, neighbours, country – there are no boundaries to how wide you can set your thinking. Think big. Don't let seeming obstacles and impossibilities stand in your way. Home in on one or two of these and turn them over to God in prayer. Remember: think big. God is able to do far more abundantly than all we can ask or think.

## FACT

75 per cent of the population gather their information through their senses; that is they are people alive to the physical world, sensing types.

25 per cent gather their information intuitively, without the use of rational processes. These are the ideas peoples, the visionaries.<sup>1</sup>



## WORSHIP

### MAKE ME, LORD, A DREAMER (FOR YOUR KINGDOM)

- 1 Make me, Lord, a dreamer for Your kingdom;  
Plant in my heart heavenly desires.  
Grant faith that can say; impossibilities shall be:  
And vision lest a world should perish not knowing Thee.
- 2 Make me, Lord, a dreamer for Your kingdom;  
I would aspire to greater goals in God.  
So cause faith to rise, to motivate each word and deed,  
A faith that's well convinced that Jesus meets every need.
- 3 Make me, Lord, a dreamer for Your kingdom,  
Dreams that will change a world that's lost its way.  
May dreams that first found their birth in Your omnipotence,  
Come alive in me, becoming reality.
- 4 As verse 1.

*Chris Bowater. Copyright 1983 Sovereign Music Ltd, PO Box 356, Leighton Buzzard, Beds.*

*From the latest edition of Songs of Fellowship.*

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

- 1a Do I believe God has a plan for my life? my church? my town? my nation? If not, why not?
- 1b How do I fit into this plan?
- 2 How can I know more about what God wants for me, my church, my town, and my nation?
- 3 Has God already spoken and I/we have deliberately not responded?
- 4 What is preventing me expanding my vision?



## BIBLE BITES

Young men shall see visions  
Do you think visions were only given to  
eccentrics like Ezekiel or contemplatives  
like John?

Take a second look-

Num 24:4

1 Sam 3:1

Prov 29:18

Isa 1:1, Isa 6

Ezek 1, 37

Hos 12:10

Joel 2:28

Lk 1:22, Lk 24:23

Acts 2:16-21, 26:19

2 Cor 12:1

and the whole book of Revelation.

And old men shall dream dreams

Gen 28:12, 31:10, 37:5

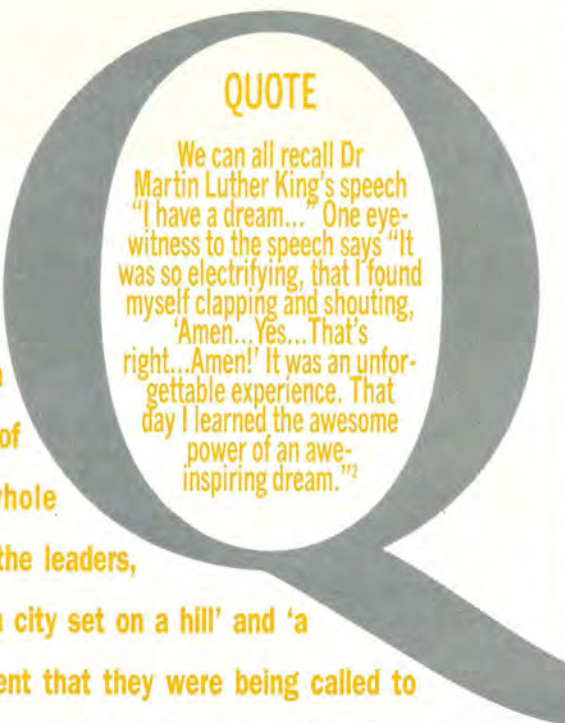
1 Kgs 3:5

Job 33:15

Matt 1:20, 2:12,13

## TRUE STORY

In 1980 members of a local church met for prayer for a renewing work of the Holy Spirit to revitalise the whole church. As a result, through one of the leaders, they had a vision of the church as 'a city set on a hill' and 'a light to the world'. It became apparent that they were being called to face up to the responsibility of reaching unchurched people and to share the life of



### QUOTE

We can all recall Dr Martin Luther King's speech "I have a dream..." One eye-witness to the speech says "It was so electrifying, that I found myself clapping and shouting, 'Amen...Yes...That's right...Amen!' It was an unforgettable experience. That day I learned the awesome power of an awe-inspiring dream."<sup>2</sup>

Jesus with the community in new and challenging ways. They started with an established base of 60 members. Today they have something like 500 members and children, with some members involved in church planting in South America, Africa and the South Pacific. In eight years six congregations have been planted across the town. The vision has grown; it has not been static. Progress constantly has to be reviewed and everyone has to understand that change has come to stay!<sup>3</sup>

### Sources:

1 Taken from Self Esteem Gift from God by Ruth McRoberts Ward, published by Baker Book House and Introduction to Type, a description of the theory and applications of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, distributed by Oxford Psychologists Press.

2 From Living with your Dreams, by David Seamands, published by Scripture Press, pages 14-15

3 Quadrant, September 1994, published by Christian Research Association.



## A GOOD READ

The words of Martin Luther King edited by Coretta Scott King published by Harper Collins publishers price £4.99

"They...proclaim the deep Christian faith of a great man." Expository Times.

With an extensive biographical introduction, this collection is ordered by subject – The Community of man, Racism, Civil Rights, Justice and Freedom, Faith and Religion, Peace. Each section contains extracts from Luther King's speeches and writings.

Coretta Scott King was married to Martin Luther King and is now president of the Martin Luther King Centre for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta, Georgia.



# *mb*

**The report** of the 28:19 Action Teams in October's Missionary Herald, reminded me of the the Sri Lanka Team's visit to Cirencester Baptist Church and of the 'Sri Lanka Evening' we had as a follow up.

We had had a good weekend with the team. By their presentation and enthusiasm they generated a lot of interest in the work of BMS in Sri Lanka.

Just over 40 friends attended the 'Sri Lanka Evening' held about six weeks later. Starting off with pinning the tail on an elephant, the games included a 'tour' of Sri Lanka, giving opportunity to learn about the island's history and geography, activities for the children and a quiz emphasising the missionary involvement and Christian growth. All information was taken from various BMS publications, which had to be scoured for the answers!

Refreshments included pol pani pancakes, coconut drops, curry and vegetable pasties and rainbow sandwiches.

After supper the Revds Paul and Lynda Henstock rounded off the evening with a talk about Sri Lanka illustrated by slides.

This was the first time the Mission Team had arranged such an event but we received so many kind comments that we may be encouraged to repeat the experiment.

I think the 28:19 Action Teams are an excellent idea. Any young person going on such a scheme will not only learn much about the culture and problems of other countries but must have their own faith greatly strengthened. I just wish I were 40 years younger!

Cynthia Dickens  
Cirencester Baptist Church

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**Thank you** for the edition of the 'Missionary Herald' devoted to the work of the Action Teams. There is a lot to be grateful for in these reports and not least from those in France.

However, I was disappointed to see one French team state that as far as commitment to the Roman Catholic church is concerned "a very small percentage, maybe seven or eight per cent, are actually 'practising' in any way."

It is important for any undertaking to have accurate information on those with whom we have to do. Fortunately, as far as details of French religious observance are concerned, we have excellent sources. The French are keen on opinion polls – although I have no statistics to support this statement! There is everything from the monumental *Atlas de la pratique religieuse des catholiques en France* down to frequent magazine surveys and passing notably through the recent *L'Eglise Catholique en France – approches sociologiques* in which Julien Potel popularises the material in the much larger atlas.

From these sources we can glean information on a wide variety of degrees of religious observance

without needing to make a subjective judgement as to whether someone is 'practising in any way'. Statistics classify these findings according to a number of criteria including profession, age and political persuasion of those who took part in surveys. There are wide differences in religious observance according to region within France and differences in religious observance within a variety of cities and towns.

The overall picture of the Roman Catholic church in France is of a numerically-declining body but one which is far from moribund (whatever judgement is made concerning the content of the teachings of the organisation). A 1991 survey gave the combined percentage of those who go to mass every week or once or twice a month as 11.8 per cent with an additional 17.4 per cent attending at the main festivals. A more detailed survey from 1986 gives broadly similar figures overall – 16.8 per cent and 14.6 per cent respectively – but adds that attendance is heavily weighted towards the older age groups.

At the younger end of the range the Catholic church in France has always been very strong. There may



**Sri Lanka  
Evening at  
Cirencester  
Baptist Church**





## Waves

A personal and independent look at BMS mission strategy by **Keith Riglin**

be no compulsory religious education in school, as the *mb.* article pointed out, but the organisation of catechism classes remains an important factor outside school hours. Fewer children are baptised as a matter of course – but still more than 60 per cent. More children are coming to the catechism class not yet baptised but are coming later to baptism (the number of children baptised after the age of seven has more than trebled since 1978).

One fascinating statistic concerns the number of adults in catechism classes preparing for baptism and confirmation: the current handbook of the Catholic church in France gives this annual figure as 5,643 for 1991 and having risen very rapidly. It stood at only 890 in 1976. In comparison, a recent publication on evangelical France gives the total membership of the Fédération des Eglises Evangéliques Baptistes de France, with which we work as missionaries of the BMS, as 4,500.

Thank you for the exciting information on the Action teams but whatever we think of its doctrines and activities, do let us beware of characterising the Catholic church in France as a spent force where only nominalism is to be found.

Robert Atkins

**T**here are few who would find fault with a desire for “the whole creation [to] recognise and accept God’s reign” (from the proposed BMS “vision” – see page 6). However, it is in the working out of such a vision, the development of a strategy, that the debate begins.

We should remember that the Society already has a strategy of sorts. Perhaps we need say no more than, “the Society shall, in consultation with its partner churches, seek to fulfil its object.” To be a responding agency rather than a primarily sending one. However, if more is to be written, the matter of priorities must be addressed.

If a Society wishing to further God’s reign should consider first those areas of the world in greatest deprivation – as was suggested at the last General Committee – questions will arise about our current work. None would deny the existence of poverty in, for example, Belgium and France, as in Great Britain, nor of the existence of a poverty of spirit. Nonetheless, the furtherance of God’s kingdom is not to be identified with numerical church growth, and if evangelism in western Europe is at the expense of mission elsewhere – without limitless resources it must be – discussing strategy will involve deciding priorities. For some, that area of the world known by certain missiologists as the 10-40 window – the “unreached peoples” (sic) – will be the priority, but it may not coincide with the area of greatest deprivation; and even if it does, discovering and sharing in God’s reign amongst the poor (Jesus’ mission and ours) is a different priority from numerical church growth.

Jesus calls his disciples to “strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Matthew 6.33). The BMS is not an aid agency – but should we not now come clean and state that we are neither a narrow evangelistic one? At this year’s conference for the Broad Alliance of Radical Baptists the theologian Jurgen Moltmann reminded his hearers, “forget the church – think about the kingdom of God, seek its justice and righteousness, and then the living church will be added to you, simply of itself” (from *Jesus Christ for Today’s World*). May this be our priority too.

The **Revd Keith Riglin**, minister of Amersham Free Church, is a member of the BMS General Committee. He served with the Society in Jamaica (1987-89) as a lecturer at the United Theological College of the West Indies.



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