

MISSIONARY

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AUTHORITY
in Mission p14

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mh. editorial

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For most of our families in the UK it happened some time ago. We are several generations removed from the time when the population moved from the rural areas - never as idyllic as folk memory would have us believe - to the towns and cities, which were expanding rapidly on the back of the industrial revolution. The novels of Dickens give a picture of what it was perhaps like for some of the people involved. But that was yesterday and we've grown used to urban living. Even with the problems of unemployment and homelessness on our doorsteps, it is hard to imagine and to understand what it is like in some of the fast expanding cities of the two-thirds world. Yet, as Christians, we must face what is a major missionary challenge as we move into the next century.

We are living in the midst of an urban revolution "which has seen a people movement greater than any other known in history," said Reg Harvey when he addressed the October meeting of BMS General Committee. "Four hundred million people have moved into cities within the last 50 years and another 700 million are expected to move into the major conurbations by the year 2000."

For some people the move appears to be undoubtedly good. Living in the cities, with their factories and offices, shopping malls and sports centres, offers a variety of educational opportunities and employment and gives them new freedom away from the strict traditions and morality of the rural village. For others though it is merely the exchange of drudgery in the fields for bondage in a dark and gloomy factory, or even for no work, shattered dreams, and a desperate existence on the edge of society. In São Paulo, Calcutta, or Bangkok the vast contrasts between rich and poor are there for all to see.

These present us with an enormous missionary task. It is estimated that, when people pull up their roots to move to a new situation, they are open to the gospel for about two years before they settle down into a new way of life. So BMS and its partner churches need to recruit and train "those particularly led to urban evangelism." And in the deprived areas of the mega-cities this must necessarily mean a caring ministry involving some kind of social action.

In October Reg Harvey talked about "an enhancement of the Society's commitment to urban ministries, especially co-operating with Partners in mission in the world's mega cities." If this is right, and the churches in the UK share this understanding with the Society, where are those prepared to commit themselves to this specialised ministry? On the back cover of this magazine there is an appeal for people to serve in Bangkok and in the inner-city areas of Brazil, an advertisement that we have repeated on several occasions. Is anyone out there concerned and committed enough to take the next step? ●



COVER PHOTO Young Italians on the move to the towns.



It is cold. June is right-handed and Nuna is left-handed. They sit side by side to share body warmth and each wears a glove leaving the dominant hand free to write and warming the unused hand with the shared pair of gloves.”

This account of Dr Keith Fleshman describes his wife tutoring a former patient. But it tells a bigger story, the story of Nuna Kumari’s determination paired with the care and dedication of a surgeon and his wife.

Nuna Kumari was severely burned at the age of six months when she rolled into the open fire on which her

Nuna’s Story



I have nothing but suffering in this life. Everyone but you holds me in scorn. Do you think it will be better for me in the next life?

mother was cooking. Even after the scar tissue and adhesions from the extensive burns on both of her legs had healed Nuna was unable to walk, a serious handicap to have in the high mountains of western Nepal, where walking is about the only way to get around and where society values women for their strength and ability



For most women in Nepal life is full of drudgery and hard work - like these women laying a pipeline at Gurja.

So Nuna was determined to get a good education and better herself.

to work. Nuna was considered a burden to her family and left to fend for herself.

Providing her with schooling was not a priority for her family, but Nuna was determined to get an education anyway. Each day for nine years she crawled the one mile to school and back home again, enduring not only the physical exertion and pain of the journey, but also the teasing of her peers.

As she grew older Nuna desperately started to search for ways of becoming more independent. When she was about 17 years old she came, on her own, to Tansen Hospital. There, her determination was matched by the skill and care of Dr Fleshman and his medical team. In a very difficult and painful series of operations over a period of six months, the scar tissue and adhesions on her legs were separated, healthy skin grafted in place and her left leg reconstructed in order for a prosthesis to be fitted.

Nuna's hospitalisation cost a total of Rs.10,000 (\$204). Because she was unable to pay the bill herself it was borne by Tansen Hospital's Medical Assistance Fund, which was established for the specific purpose of assisting poor patients like Nuna who are unable to pay for their own treat-

ment.

But Nuna's story does not end there! Nuna is determined to graduate from high-school. She is currently studying with 500 other students at the Palpa Awasiya Secondary School. Despite her determination to succeed, adjustment to this English medium school has not been easy for Nuna. But the "other glove" has been there in the person of June Fleshman tutoring her in English, as well as providing the loving care and support which are so essential to full healing.

Keith and June Fleshman have "bloomed where they are planted" during their seven years with UMN's Tansen Hospital. Keith's specialised skills have been put to good use in a hospital which sees about 35 surgical outpatients daily and averages 3000 inpatient and 3000 outpatient procedures a year.

But June has been very active as a "generalist" as well, teaching keyboard to Nepalis and missionary children. One of her students is now earning a living as a musician in Kathmandu. She has taught computer skills too and serves as a "go-between" for a project that generates income for need people from the sale of their crafts. ●

Printed with the permission of the United Mission to Nepal. Photo of Nuna, UMN/Seefeldt

WORLD MISSION LINK

Choosing a Link-Up missionary!

Your Link-Up group is looking for a Link-Up missionary. When you contact the WML desk what will you say? And what will you really mean?

We want someone doing real missionary work

We don't want someone involved in administration or doing theological education.

We want someone we can really get to know and depend on.

We don't want someone on short term service.

We have lots of families in our church.

We don't want a single person.

We have active children's work.

We only want a couple with young children.

We want someone from a real mission field.

We don't want someone from Europe.

We want someone exciting.

We are definitely not interested in anyone over 50.

Missionaries come in all shapes and sizes - single and married; under 35 and in their late 50's; with young children, with no children and with grandchildren. Some will be working overseas for just a few years whilst others are looking forward to many years of service. They will be working in Europe, Asia, Africa or the Americas. Some will be in great urban conurbations with all the "mod cons" and others will be in isolated rural communities where basic living is the norm.

Wherever they are, whatever their job they have one thing in common - they are all missionaries.

They are BMS missionaries who are able to become your Link-Up missionary; missionaries, who whatever their job, or age, or family status, need your support in the work they are doing. ●

Altamura

David and Ann MacFarlane have finished their formal language training and have moved to the southern Italian town of Altamura. There they will continue language study through conversation, getting to know the Italian people and culture and, of course, the Baptist way of life in the south of Italy.

The Baptist scene in Italy is very different from what we knew in Britain. In Altamura they are very traditional. To be a Christian, it seems, you only have to be in church once a week for an hour!

But things are changing. There are signs of growth in the area, although they are still caught up in their everyday lives and much more political than folk in Britain. But then Italy is like that.

The people have welcomed us wholeheartedly and we are now at the stage of beginning to work together. Italians, especially in the south, are very warm people, open, demonstrative and volatile. They are realising that we are prepared to work with them to benefit both the fellowship at Altamura and the surrounding area.

Church structures are much like in Britain: church council meetings, the leadership, weekday bible study,



Sunday bible study and services.

We have been assigned to a local pastor, Martin Barra, one of the three ordained Baptist pastors south of Naples. That is one of the reasons why we went to the area. We go to Martin for support and he visits us to check out what we are doing.

This year we are dedicating ourselves to being basic church members and involved in the church at that level. There is not a lot going on in the church at the moment. However, we started our prayer and praise

meeting on a Saturday evening and this is well attended, and even more so now that we have moved it to Sunday afternoon.

We want to involve the churches in the whole of the south of Italy for our mission in September when we're hoping to work with a group of new Christians coming from Albania. For a whole month we hope that the team will be evangelising in the south of Italy. There are several "Albanian" speaking villages in the south where 500 years ago Albanians, escaping from the Turkish inva-





Top:
David
Mac-
Farlane
leading
singing
Left:
Typical
south-
ern
Italian
town.



sion, settled.

In Scotland, in the local ministers' fraternal, there were two nuns and three Roman Catholic priests. We worked and we prayed together. In Italy it is much the same. The Italian Baptist Union is committed to recognising and working alongside the Roman Catholic church in various areas. So there is mutual respect throughout the whole of Italy.

Some people might think we are there to "poach" members of the Catholic Church. But most people

that come into the Baptist Church and receive salvation are untouched people.

With us in Italy are three of our children, Diane who is 18, David who is 17 and Elizabeth who is almost 14. They have settled very well in Altamura but they are sometimes discouraged. There aren't any other young people in the fellowship and they don't have much opportunity to meet with other young Christians.

The young people of the area try to find a way to leave this very traditional rural area. There are not many job prospects other than working on the land. So they do all they can to get places in colleges and universities so that they can escape to the towns and cities. This is one of the challenges we have to face.

The other side of urbanisation are deprived rural areas where young people have left behind a community of the young, the middle-aged and the elderly. ●

28:19 IN JAMAICA

Steve Woolcock, 28:19 Action Team Co-ordinator, introduces the Jamaica Team

The very first 28:19 Action Team, in 1990, was the "Jamaica Six". In 1994 Robert, Rhodri, Jo, Brian, Andrea and Hazel followed in their footsteps - the third Team BMS has sent to work alongside the Jamaica Baptist Union.

For some reason, the current team call themselves "The Nomadic, Nurturing Bunnies." (Don't ask why). They left the UK last October and on arrival split into three pairs to work in different areas of this idyllic Caribbean Island. It's a hard life!

Robert and Rhodri spent their first two months in the capital, Kingston, working in the Hannover Street Circuit, which consists of two churches. The area is a bit on the rough side but it doesn't seem to bother them too much. Hannover Street Baptist Church has a social outreach programme which includes a clinic, basic school and sewing project. Robert, sometimes known as Uncle Robert, worked with 25 three to five year olds of the cute, adorable variety! From time to time he looked after the whole school - all 45 of them. Rhodri on the other hand worked in the clinic reorganising the immunisation records for the past two years. He has also been involved in administration.

Brian and Jo spent their first placement in the rural

area of Westmoreland. They lived and worked in the Robbins River community, "a road with 30 houses, a shop and a men only drinking hut." The church is newly planted and when they arrived the building just consisted of rubble foundation. However God was really working there. Within weeks the materials arrived and before they left the roof was on. They were also teaching in a school which was set up at the same time as the church. In contrast to bustling Kingston, Robbins River is a two-and-a-half mile walk to the main road, then you have to wait for a bus.

Andrea and Hazel were working at Port Maria on the north coast, based at Emmanuel Baptist Church and involved in revitalising the counselling clinic. They produced posters and distributed them in schools and churches. They have both been working as counsellors. They have also been working alongside the many young people in the church and at the local basic school.

The three pairs moved on to new placements at the end of the year. Jamaica is a great place to spend six months but the team see great suffering and poverty every day. They went out to make a difference, to help change things. I have no doubt that they are. ●

Paddy fields and saffron robes are no longer the reality for Thailand's urban population.

Religion

FROM THE WEST

A constant source of surprise and amazement to visitors from the UK are the shopping centres in Bangkok. These are not limited to the centre of the city because in the last few years impressive complexes have been built in many locations around the perimeter. We live out on the south-eastern edge and within ten minutes drive we now have four such buildings. All of them sell a wide range of consumer goods and include such non-oriental houses as McDonald's and Pizza Hut!

The most recent claims to be the fifth largest shopping centre in the world. It boasts an impressive indoor fun-fair and a 14 screen cinema. One of the others will soon be opening its own even larger amusement and swimming park, filling the outdoor roof space. The centres themselves are very ostentatious and contain many stores specialising

Top right: Modern city scene in Bangkok

in luxury goods of various kinds from ride-on lawn-mowers to designer furniture and clothes.

At weekends these places are packed and their vast car-parks filled to capacity. Promotional shows are regularly held in their indoor air-con-

ditioned plazas. These centres have become *the* place to go.

The Principal of the Bangkok Institute of Theology recently remarked with some disgust: "All Thais want to do these days is go shopping." For many it will be window shopping but equally there is no shortage of affluent buyers and, with special offers and

sales on all sides, no one is likely to return home empty-handed. Buddhist Thailand appears finally to have succumbed to a new religion from the West - consumerism.

Yet most Thai people still live in the countryside. Only 25 per cent of the 59 million population live in towns and the vast majority are con-



gregated in Bangkok. Life in the Thai countryside is totally different amounting to subsistence farming supplemented by the income of those who are continuously drawn for a while to Bangkok. There, along with many others, they work in factories or on building sites for a daily wage of between £3 and £4.

There is nothing new in the vast gap between rich and poor. What is new is the upsurge of a large middle-band of city-dwellers who are not truly rich but who have enough spending power to act as if they are. That is an observation not a judgement. It would scarcely be appropriate for westerners, who are used to many possessions, to be critical of such behaviour simply because it is a novelty here, or because the poor are a



bit nearer home.

So why speak about it? If people in the UK are to pray meaningfully for the Church's mission in Thailand they need to have an accurate understanding of the society in which that mission is taking place. A mental image of paddy fields with saffron-clad monks passing by may seem a suitable backcloth, but the reality is that for many people rice fields and Buddhism no longer feature in their immediate experience, although these remain an influential part of their folk tradition.

Also people are praying for us and this is the environment in which we



Above:
traditional
rural
activity in
Thai coun-
tryside

now live. It would be hypocritical to pretend that we are not grateful for such a wide range of western facilities on our doorstep. Yet this is not without its difficulties, not least the problem of feeling we do not readily fit with either group in Thai society. On one hand unbridled consumerism is not our interest; on the other hand it seems impossible for westerners to relate naturally to the poor, to whom we rightly appear rich.

Of course bridges can be built but, as we are increasingly realising, Thai culture makes it hard even for Thais to get close to one another outside the family unit.

So it is not surprising that the relationships we have, and therefore the ministry we exercise, are almost entirely within the Christian community. This is inevitable due to our job allocation - teaching Christians preparing for the full-time ministry. It also reflects that within the church there is at least an attempt to live a life that recognises the truth of Jesus that "a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

As in the west, the living out of this truth in the midst of a consumerist society is far from easy but it does at least provide a true foundation for fellowship with rich and poor alike. Consequently, though it is difficult to get really close to people, we do rejoice in the warmth with which Thai Christians welcome and accept us, be they wealthy business people or poor students from remote hill-tribe villages. ●

Geoff and Christine Bland are based in Bangkok where Geoff teaches in the theological seminary.

Owen Clark reflects on the way people are coping with life in Zaire's capital, Kinshasa, where anarchy reigns.

Undoubtedly QUIET

It's no doubt been a quiet week on the CBFZ compound. For all I know war could have broken out. I've been stuck in front of the computer. Oblivious! Not so long ago I was computer illiterate. My time was my own then. I'd bash out a piece of work on the old typewriter. Slosh a bit of tippex here and there. All over in 30 minutes! Carbon copy and all.

Not any more. Now I'm only semi-illiterate. I can spend a whole morning at the key-board and screen and not even know that it's gone lunchtime.

That's progress!

"Is that what you really want? Yes or No?" it asks.

I feel like saying, "I'll think about it and let you know."

But it's better to plump for one or t'other and move on. It does have its advantages, though. Prints out nice-looking copies. Those who missed a class can go through it at home.

Actually I'm pretty confident that war has not broken out in the meantime. What we're living in is more like benign anarchy. Mostly benign, though not always. Not when people are stopped in the streets by armed men, at night, and relieved of what little they possess. Highway robbery, modern version - unpaid military and their friends. Anarchy, because things function not on the basis of rules or

principles but by arrangement.

Take transport. Mostly lorries, minibuses and old bangers not fit for stock-car racing, let alone as taxis on the public highways. Many have paid neither road tax nor insurance and they cram passengers in like sardines. But the ubiquitous groups of *gendarmes* turn a blind eye - for a consideration. An arrangement that suits all concerned.

On the road itself it's, "*Chacun pour soi!*" Slow stuff meanders up the outer lane, the faster weaving its way through. Blocked traffic is a test of ingenuity and determination. Inside, outside, off the road, through the trees. Wherever! Nothing's sacred. Kerbs are few, but watch out for the holes! Pedestrians to the wall! But it's all pretty even-tempered. No one gets upset.

Education's a lottery. Last time salaries were paid, months ago, it was still at about 50p a month for an experienced teacher. So where they teach at all it's by arrangement between parents and school. so long as enough parents come up with the agreed amount per child, the school functions. Higher education is the same. All a bit patch.

Health? Forget it! Without cash in hand you won't be seen. Certainly the doctor won't operate and you may have to supply bandages, hypodermic, plaster of Paris - even anaesthetic. By

arrangement! Medicines are expensive and undernourishment is widespread. No wonder mortality's a bit high.

In order to eat at all people make do. Grass verges have been turned into manioc fields. Where a new water main was laid, and the soil replaced, a day later it was planted with manioc. Opposite the former Parliament there's a fine, well laid-out square. A vacant lot in one corner is now a field of maize, with a large, smoking earth mound in the middle and the smell of charcoal in the air. It sells well as a fuel for cooking. No one seems to mind these arrangements.

Jean (as in French), the odd-job man, is a typical benign anarchist. He lives in an old lorry on someone's plot. He says that they've tried to turn him out, but adds with a sly grin that they haven't succeeded yet. When the owner died he attended his funeral out of respect. His wardrobe varies a lot, but is always scruffy.

"Where do you keep your clothes?" I asked.

"In the lorry," he said.

"Is that safe?"

"Well, if they get pinched, who can I complain to?" he asked.

Sadly, that question is in the minds of a lot of people making their own arrangements. To whom can I complain? The answer is already known. No one! ●



Simon Smith, right, talking to one of Lille's down-and-outs.

Simon Smith, a member of the 28:19 Lille Action Team, looks at how the 'Christian Community of Reconciliation' is responding to inner city life

In 1975, whilst strolling through the pedestrian area of Lille (population one million) in northern France, David Berly, then a trainee pastor of a Baptist church in nearby Roubaix, was struck by the number of flourishing sects in the streets of his native city. They were accosting people at every opportunity yet Christians were particularly conspicuous by their absence.

In February of that year, David and his wife Christiane moved into a rented house in Lille with another couple and created what is now the *Communauté Chrétienne de la Réconciliation* (Christian Community of Reconciliation). Two years later the church bearing the same name was founded.

The Community now has four houses situated in some of the most deprived parts of Lille and a farm in the Ardeche valley. The church regularly welcomes 200 or so worshippers and is a member of both the *Fédération des Eglises Evangélique Baptistes* (Federation of Baptist Evangelical Churches) and the *Fédération Protestante de France* (French Protestant Federation).

Evangelism was there at the very conception of the Community and still remains at the heart of its mission today. This evangelism works on two very distinct levels; first of all there is the evangelism that is done through
continued on page 12

Urban EVANGELISM

continued from page 11

the church and then there is the evangelism through the social work in Lille, also set up by the Community.

Evangelism through the church takes many forms. These include twice weekly outreaches into the city centre, annual beach missions to a seaside resort on the north coast, a Scout Group for 7-18 year olds and a bi-monthly church magazine, *Vivre Ensemble*. Much of the church work is based on the four Community houses and life in community. These houses are often used to welcome in homeless people for varying periods of time depending on the need of each individual person.

The church also runs a weekly support group for those suffering with problems associated with alcohol. The Scout Group, "Isla Lille", is based upon the four principle pillars of activity, education, prevention and evangelism.

One of the community houses hosts monthly prayer meetings in one of the most deprived districts of the city.

Outreach takes place from a double-decker bus which goes into the city every Wednesday and Sunday, 4 to 10pm, offering a free coffee-bar service, prayer and discussion. On Sundays dramas, mimes and music

Right:
March for Jesus through the streets of Paris.

are performed in the main pedestrian area.

The Community's social work started in the early 80s. At the beginning of the economic crisis more and more homeless people were coming to the Bus. The challenge to those running the Bus was how could they talk to these people about the love of God when they were not doing anything more to help them? They asked the Lord to provide them with what was necessary to do something more for the ever increasing homeless of Lille.

In 1985 the Bus opened its doors daily to provide food and shelter for those labelled "of no fixed abode." After several months this makeshift homeless centre was recognised and began receiving support from the local, regional and state authorities. Since 1989, ABEJ or *Association Baptiste pour L'Entraide et la Jeunesse* (Baptist Association for Solidarity and the Young), homeless centre has had a more permanent presence in Lille.

There are now two homeless centres, one for the over-25s and one for the under-25s. They now offer services from hot drinks, showers and a hairdresser to medical, social and educational services.

More long-term help is found in a rehousing service, an occupational

therapy workshop, a work retraining workshop and ABEJ's administrative centre which, amongst other things, helps those who have been rehoused to live on a budget.

It is not only those from the Community and the church who work in ABEJ; many Christians in Lille, from all denominations, are sowing the seeds of God's love in a practical way to those who need it most. It is an





example of the way all of God's Church can work together. This co-operation is such that there is no need for the Lille city council to provide help for the homeless, instead it finances a large part of ABEJ's work.

The Community in Lille doesn't claim to have invented anything. Its work is what it is today because of the commitment of its members. It is an unreserved "yes" to the call of God

and God has done the rest.

For the Community, evangelism isn't something to be done, it's a way of life. ●

Simon Smith was a member of the 28:19 Action team which worked in Lille in 1992-3. He has returned to the Community of Reconciliation on several occasions since and when he has completed his studies he hopes to become a permanent member of the Community.

Jeremy Valemberge was born in Lille 22 years ago. He was only two when his parents separated and, because his mother worked as a secretary, he was looked after mainly by his grandmother. Later he discovered that his father was in prison for pimping. "A hard thing to take in at eight years of age," he said. It wasn't long before he got into bad ways. He was often drunk before eight in the morning. Then he entered the hell of drug addiction and a violent life-style which brought him close to suicide.

Fortunately, he came into contact with the work of ABEJ. "I saw faith in practice," he said. Through prayer and care they saw him through the time of withdrawal from drugs. "Deliverance was radical," he said. "My craving for drink, drugs and suicide disappeared and God revealed himself to me." Having come to faith in Jesus Christ, Jeremy is now being nurtured by the Christian Community of Reconciliation at Lille and being helped to recover some of his self-assurance. ●

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All Aout

In the third of his articles based on the Great Commission in Matthew 28 John Wilson helps us to see where true authority lies.

All the emotion and events of the last couple of hours came rushing back to me. I'd forgotten to photocopy a document we needed in order to get our visitor's permit. The woman behind the police desk looked at me with contempt as she had at the long queue of victims who had gone before. She would give me ten minutes whilst she dealt with the necessary forms and if I wasn't back by then we would have to start the process all over again. Sue comforted our two month old baby, as the woman began to sort out the papers.

On my return I knew things had not gone well. Sue had only been learning French for six weeks and her failure to understand some of the questions, meant that the woman had simply increased the volume. As if shouting made comprehension easier!

Now here I was a little while later trying to find some product or other in the ever extending hyper-market and these two girls, barely 16, were laughing at me trying to copy what they had said when I asked them for directions.

"How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" This was the sorrowful question of the Jewish people when they were forced to leave their homeland. There were moments like

this when I wanted to go back home. Home was not yet where we were, but Jeremiah had told those same mournful worshippers to "build houses and live in them, and plant gardens and eat their produce," (Jer:29vs 5 & 28). In short, home was to become the place where God had taken them. Home was to be for us also the place where God had put us.

Jesus stood before his disciples who were to travel to India, Africa, Asia and Europe and told them that all authority had been given to him. Authority because of his obedience, because of his suffering, because he was willing to go to the darkest place of the earth in dying on the cross. The most alien thing to his nature and being, became his home. This was the reason for his authority. The authority behind mission is not power, but humility, an emptying of oneself for the sake of others.

It is this type of authority that will win the day. Jesus tells us that his authority is the supreme authority in heaven and earth. That when all things are weighed and judged before God, it is his type of authority that will stand firm.

Often the task of mission seems weak and insufficient. We want to make a big noise, even manipulate situations so that they fall in our favour.



THE AUTHORITY BEHIND MISSION IS NOT POWER, BUT HUM

Authority



But Christ does not give us that type of authority. His authority is that of the servant.

Reading Brian Stanley's *History of the Baptist Missionary Society* greatly encouraged me, just to find out how in nearly every case new areas of missionary work appeared to be faced with apparent failure. Not only with Carey, but in Africa and China the early years gave little sign of encouragement to both those working with and those supporting the Society.

The French Evangelical Baptist Federation has been a great encouragement and inspiration to us in this respect. Starting to plant their own churches after the Second World War, they have seen the number more than double. The pastors are not well paid and they rely on help from many missionary organisations like the BMS. At times it would seem that the difficulties are insurmountable, but their faith in Christ's humble authority keeps them moving forward.

Recently a person involved in ministry training in England commented to me that in recent years people have been offering for full time Christian service as if it were a second career. Professional status, home ownership, family commitments mean that they have more stipulations for their terms of service than previous generations.

To go wherever and whenever God calls would however seem to be part of the authority within which Christ calls us to serve.

Recently one of the pastors of the Baptist Federation in France appeared on national news. He had asked whether he and his family could look after a prisoner, dying of AIDS, in his home. Unknown to him 400 fellow prisoners wrote a letter to President Mitterand asking him to support this request which was finally attained. The true authority of Christ's service opens up the world to hear of God's love. This is the constant and painful lesson of Mission.

In Matthew, Jesus' resurrection appearance to his disciples is limited to this mountain encounter in Galilee, in order to press home this point. His risen authority will always open up to us a bigger world than the one we know. He is concerned about the people we don't see. His vision is for purposes that we cannot yet perceive. Christ is risen, not simply for us to greet him with song in our churches, but in order that our world may be shaken by his presence. He can break power with humility, he can destroy fear with love, he can turn night into day. This is his purpose for us. This is his purpose for the world because *all* authority belongs to him. ●

QUESTIONS

- 1) What image does the word "authority" usually conjure up for you? In what way do you think Christ's authority is greater?
- 2) What limits do we try to put on Christ's authority? Are Christians in danger of living in some utopian dream? What is your experience?
- 3) If Jesus' authority is the cross, what does it mean for you as his disciple to carry your cross?

ILITY, AN EMPTYING OF ONESELF FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS.



Stuart Christine with toolbox beside the "source of living water."

Pre-School

The pre-school project on São Paulo's favelas is progressing. Stuart and Georgie Christine have written to say that some of the pupils are now moving into the first year of the local schools.

"The teachers and ourselves were pleased with the way the children have progressed. Many were writing. They knew their vowels and consonants and were already reading ba, be, bo, bu etc. Remember Portuguese is a phonetic language."

The aim of the project is to prepare favela children for the state system. Hitherto they have been disadvantaged and have dropped out of school before taking any examinations and so closed the door to any prospects of worthwhile employment.

Stuart and Georgie also report that they hoped to have the pre-school bus on the road early in the year.

"The preschool will then be able to function in very poor small favelas and give us time to find a building to have the preschool and plant a church."

NEWS

Henri Bens

Henri Bens, a long time president of the Belgian Baptist Union, died on 11 January following a heart attack. He was 81.

Henri Bens was pastor of Grace-Hollogne Baptist Church, Liège from 1960 to 1988. He was appointed President of the Union in 1979. When he retired in 1991 the Union named him Honorary President.

Like most Belgian pastors, Henri Bens was bi-vocational. He worked as a book-keeper until his retirement.

As well as preaching most Sundays in Baptist and other evangelical churches he often went out into the streets and parks to preach.

Since his retirement he has worked closely with a Southern Baptist missionary to help a small congregation develop into a full constituted church.

"He was known as 'Mr Available' because he ministered to so many people across Belgium," said one person at his funeral. "He burned himself up in ministry."

Religious Conflict

Intolerance between Protestant and Catholic churches in Latin America has led to "physical aggression and regrettable losses of human life," said the leader of the Latin American council of Churches (CLAI), the Rev Felipe Adolf.

The comment was made in a letter to the region's Catholic bishops, defending a controversial decision by CLAI's board of directors not to invite Catholic observers to its general assembly, an action which has made



Catholic Basilica in Brazil

worse the deteriorating relations among the churches.

The most serious conflicts between Catholics and Protestants have taken place in Chiapas, Mexico, where indigenous people who have converted to Protestantism have been forced to leave their land, sometimes violently with churches set on fire and people killed.

In Argentina and Chile, the Catholic Church wants to impose controls on the legal registration of non-Catholic churches.

According to Adolf, some CLAI member churches are concerned at their declining relationship with the Catholic church. They protest that "the Catholics do not see any difference between the Protestant churches and other religious groups ... plainly, to them all that is non-Catholic is a sect."



Trevor Huddleston, left, talking to Robin Day

Peace Award

Archbishop Trevor Huddleston has received the Indira Ghandi Award for Peace, Development and Disarmament. It was presented at a special ceremony in New Delhi on 27 January. Among those participating in the ceremony was India's President, Dr Shanker Dayal Sharma.

Trevor Huddleston was President of the Anti-Apartheid Movement from 1981 until it was dissolved in 1994. He intends to be based mainly in South Africa in the future.

Pips

Morningside Baptist Church, Edinburgh took on a PIPS (Partners in Projects) scheme for Thailand as part of its Centenary Thanksgiving project last year. The object was to raise £10,000 (100 x 100) with £7,000 for PIPS, £1,500 for the National Bible Society of Scotland for Scripture for Nepal, where two of their members are serving, and £1,500 for new pew Bibles for the church.

In January, John Barclay, the Church Secretary and this year's BU of Scotland President, in sending a cheque to the BMS for £7,000, reported that they'd almost reached their target.

"The money was raised by direct giving and is in addition to our normal giving," he said.

Mizoram Gospel Centenary

Reg Harvey, BMS General Director, presented a banner from BMS to the Baptist Church of Mizoram (Lushai Hills), north-east India, when he attended the closing celebrations of their Gospel Centenary in January.

The banner, was prepared by the City Road Baptist Church Banner Group, Bristol, one of several groups who have offered their services to the Society.

The final day of the Mizo celebrations started with worship and speeches and included a three hour cultural programme involving dancing and firecrackers.

Reg Harvey was allowed to sound the Gospel Centenary Drum (seven feet high). "The sound of the drum resounded in

the hills symbolising the way the gospel has been heard throughout Mizoram," he reported.

"The gospel has transformed the life of the people of Mizoram. But now the state is beginning to open up and western influence is apparent, particularly among the young people. The Church will need to consider priorities and its response to this western influence," he said.



Ruschlikon

The land and buildings of the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon have been sold to a Swiss insurance underwriting firm for \$20 million. This means that IBTS can now pay for the purchase of its new campus site in Prague, Czech Republic, the renovation of the existing buildings and the cost of transferring the seminary to Prague. A large portion of the money will be invested to provide scholarships for future students. The relocation to Prague should be completed this summer.

The decision to relocate IBTS, which has been in Ruschlikon since 1949, was taken with careful consideration for the strategy of meeting future Baptist needs in Europe.

"Half the Baptists in Europe live in central and eastern Europe," said IBTS president John Hopper explaining the reason for moving to Prague.

"Through the years of communist rule, few Baptist pastors in eastern Europe could obtain the education they needed or wanted. IBTS will move its solid biblically-based theological education to this important part of Europe while continuing our ministry to western Europe and to other areas of the world," he said.

Left, closing ceremony of the Gospel Centenary and (above) leaders of the Mizo Church holding banner.

CHECK OUT

MARCH 1995

ARRIVALS

Suzanne Roberts
from Mozambique

Departures

David and Rachel Quinney-Mee
to El Salvador

Visits

David Martin
to Holland
John Passmore
to Albania
Reg Harvey
to Cyprus

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Legacies

Briggs, Miss EJ	3,800.00
Carl, Miss Bessie	11,098.54
Dunster, Miss Doris	1,000.00
Horland/Cargill, Mr/Mrs	
John/Margery	1,382.30
Jenkins, Miss Annie	352.63
Killingray, Mrs J	1,878.44
Lewis, Mrs Winifred	1,000.00
MacBeath, Mrs E C	1,000.00
McAdams, Miss E	7,472.08
Pitman, Miss KM	13,402.54
Rawlinson, Miss D	1,508.57
Smith, Miss Ethel M	394.14
Springett, Miss M J	25,000.00
Tadgell, Miss May	50.00
Woodcock, Miss E	500.00

TOTAL 69,839.24

ANONYMOUS GIFTS

"DND" Edinburgh	
for Albania	10.00
Anon - Jan 18	22.00
Bristol	50.00
Chelmsford	10.00
Coventry	5.00
For work in Albania	20.50
Guildford	5.00
Hammersmith	15.00
Herne Bay	10.00
Huddersfield	30.00
Milton Keynes	5.00
Nottingham	35.00
OAP Forres	3.00
Rhyl, Clwyd	10.00
Scotland	10.00
Southampton	10.00
Trowbridge	50.00
Watford	4.00
Wisbech	25.00

TOTAL 329.50

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Girls, after worship, outside Baptist Church in Fortaleza, Brazil. Photograph: Sian Williams

ACTION CARD BRIEFING FOR MARCH

The New Life Centre in Chiang Mai, Thailand, is a place where girls can go to live and study. Many of them have been rescued from brothels.

A girl was sold into the brothel by her mother, who is an opium addict. So, at 12 years of age she had to learn to please at least twelve male customers each night. She escaped and ran to people she thought would help. Instead they sold her back into the brothel. There she was beaten and punished for trying to escape. She was finally rescued and found a new home, a refuge shelter, at NLC.

She's 17 now and HIV positive. However, at NLC she has found new life and new hope through a deep faith in God. Her mother, having seen the change in her daughter's life, has asked for forgiveness. She also is seeking God.

In the tourist haunts of Brazil's large cities like São

Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Fortaleza and Recife, there are 500,000 prostitutes under the age of 20. In Thailand the figure is larger - 800,000 under the age of 16. Every year one million children are forced into the sex industry.

Child prostitution thrives on tourism. Germany, Australia, Sweden, Norway and France have laws enabling them to prosecute their citizens for offences committed against children overseas. The USA, Japan, Belgium and New Zealand are considering the introduction of such laws. So far the UK government has not been prepared to act. However, Lord Hylton is introducing a Private Member's bill into the Lords to open the way for UK citizens to be prosecuted for child abuse overseas.

ACTION: Send this month's card to a member of the House of Lords urging them to attend the debate and vote in favour; write to your MP to support legislation when it comes to the Commons or write in support of the Bill to David MacLean the Minister of State at the Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT.

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 12

March 19-24

Brazil: São Paulo

David and Cath Meikle report on the work in Vila Sao Pedro, one of the extensive areas of ad hoc housing which has mushroomed on the outskirts of São Paulo.

"The new congregation is now firmly planted and we are targeting young people and children in particular. We have a club with an average attendance of 170 - we could actually do with more helpers. Thankfully one of the Baptist churches has sent over a group of young people to work with us. We do arts and crafts, hold literary classes, play football. We do have bible study but the emphasis is on getting alongside the young people, showing that they're important, that they mean something to us and are not regarded as rubbish to be kicked about. Children in São Paulo are abused mentally and physically. There is a lot of sex abuse and child prostitution and also involvement with drugs."

WEEK 13

March 26-April 1

India: Administration

We were saddened by the sudden death of Mr Archie Edwards (see In View last month) who was the BMS Property Manager and Secretary/Treasurer of the Baptist Church Trust Association

based in Calcutta. This was a vital, if long and complicated, job as BMS continues to transfer its properties to the Baptist Union of North India, the Bengal Baptist Union and the Church of North India. It is a work which has been hampered over many years by court cases. Mr Madhu Singh, who has been sharing responsibilities with Archie Edwards for a short while, has now taken over full responsibility.

The Mission House is a place where many visitors to India, who have to travel through Calcutta, receive a warm welcome. Mrs Nasseem Singh has been appointed hostess and, with her considerable counselling skills, is able to offer a listening ear to her guests.

WEEK 14

April 2-8

Zaire: Education

"Education is one of the casualties of state negligence," writes Janet Claxton from Pimu. "At Pimu it has been agreed that each pupil will pay a certain sum each month so that the teachers may be paid. The more pupils there are the more money there will be - or perhaps the contributions will be less. The teachers won't teach until they've been paid (outstanding since February 94). They won't get paid unless the pupils pay. The pupils won't come, let alone pay, until the

teachers start teaching. It's a vicious circle. And where, in a place like Pimu, will parents find enough money to pay?"

O Lord, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise.
Psalm 51:15

*Saving and forgiving God
in the life of your Church
as we worship and witness
may our mouths declare your
praise.*

*Saving and forgiving God
in the life of the world
amongst suffering and need
may our lives declare your
praise.*

*Saving and forgiving God
in our schools and our homes
teaching children your way
may our love declare your
praise.*

WEEK 15

April: 9-15

Nepal: International Nepal Fellowship

BMS has several missionaries serving with the International Nepal Fellowship, mainly involved in community health programmes. Chris Rudall is an engineer working on water supply problems. Writing in November he said: "Now the monsoon is over the drinking water and sanitation programme is under way again. We are working on constructing school toilets in nine villages. We provide the skilled labour while the local communities dig the pits and carry stone, sand and cement."

Sue Frame, a nurse has returned to Burtibang after a time of ill health where she works on the Community Health Project. "The Burtibang team is in a state

of change. We are going from an expatriate team of six to three," she writes. She also asks us to pray for the small fellowship at Kutabla "that the Nepali Christians will take the step of commitment in baptism."

Some of the pharisees said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out." Luke 19:39-40

*We thank you, Lord
that praise comes in many forms
and as some worship in songs
and some in prayerful words
so others are shouting out your
praises
in dedicated and serving lives
in the ministry of healing in
Nepal today.
Lord, may they never keep quiet.*

WEEK 16

April: 16-22

Southern Africa

As we give thanks to God for the relatively peaceful changes in South Africa, praying that the process may continue and that people from all racial groupings will continue to work together, let us remember Mozambique which has just emerged from a disastrous civil war.

Dr Suzanne Roberts has been working with ACRIS, a community health project organised by the Mozambique government at a place called Milange. "ACRIS feels the project is too far from the capital, Maputo, to manage and is hoping to hand it over to ZOA, a Dutch Christian group. There is the possibility of my working in the ZOA programme, but that is not necessarily the Lord's criterion." She confesses to feeling tired and asks us to pray for strength for her.

TAKE
2

THINGS TO DO

1 Hold a prayer walk around your town, or part of your city. This could be incorporated with a high profile prayer march with banners, singing, handing out leaflets etc. Whatever you do you will need to plan your route beforehand, taking in schools, hospitals, nightclubs, betting shops, estate agents, bus or railways stations as appropriate.

Determine your strategy beforehand if you should come across homeless people sleeping in shop doorways or other people in great need. If it is not practical to actually walk the streets of your city, use a map to pray round the streets.



2 As a church, adopt a policy of welcoming people in your area. Appoint people to be representatives for their street (or groups of streets). Make up a welcome pack with invaluable information for any newcomer like a list of doctors, dentists, schools, childminders, hairdressers, shops and churches. The representatives then have to keep their eyes and ears open ('For Sale' boards are a real giveaway) for anyone new moving in, and they can then offer the welcome pack, and generally befriend any newcomers.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

1 Where is your ideal place to live? Is it a thatched cottage with roses round the door? Or in the heart of a great metropolis with access to many cultures and cultural activities? What is the reason for your choice? Is it true to say that in Britain we venerate life in the country and despise urban living?

2 What are the positive things about cities?

3 Wherever you live how welcoming are you to new people? Does your church take time out to make friends with and welcome newcomers?

URBAN POPULATION IN FIGURES

COUNTRY	URBAN POPULATION		HIGHEST POPULATION DENSITY	
	1990	2000	Major city	Pop./sq km 1980-87
	as a percentage			
Nepal	10	14		
Bangladesh	16	23	Dhaka	9930
Sri Lanka	21	24		
Thailand	23	29	Bangkok	3486
Guinea	26	33	Conakry	6912
India	27	32	Calcutta	88135
Angola	28	36		
Indonesia	31	40		
China	33	47	Beijing	4039
Portugal	34	40	Lisbon	9893
Albania	35	39		
Zaire	39	46		
El Salvador	44	49		
Cent. African Rep	48	55		
Jamaica	52	59		
Nicaragua	60	66		
Italy	69	72	Naples	10342
France	74	77	Paris	20647
Brazil	75	81	Recife	6232
United States	75	77	New York	8722
Japan	77	78	Tokyo	13973
United Kingdom	89	90	Birmingham	4444
Belgium	97	98	Brussels	4160
Singapore	100	100	Singapore	4160

From Third World Guide 93/94 Source PNUD, Desarrollo Humano Informe 1991.

FOOD PRODUCTION

COUNTRY	PER CAPITA INDEX	CEREAL IMPORTS
	(1971 - 1981 = 100) 1990	(1000 metric tons) 1987-88
Albania	93	n/a
Angola	77	313
Bangladesh	99	3010
Belgium	119	4004
Brazil	105	1387
China	137	15517
El Salvador	94	217
France	99	917
India	118	2985
Italy	93	7649
Thailand	100	303
UK	108	2908
United States	96	2147
Zaire	95	415

From Third World Guide 93/94

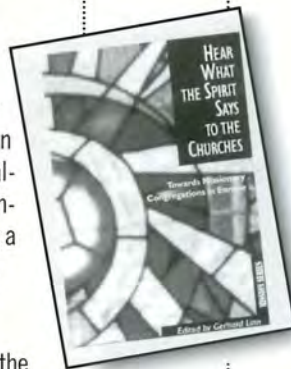


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prayer

*Lord of the city,
where millions crowd and bustle
and life is cheap and crushed
in sudden violence,
you know and name and love
each person; be close then
to those who take up a cross daily
to follow you into dismal shanty alleys
continuing your ministry of love
to those the world would forget.*



FACTS

WORLD FOOD PRODUCTION AND URBANISATION

Traditionally the urban population stood at about 25% and depended on food produced by farmers. Those practising agriculture made up 75% of the population.

The situation started to change in the 18th century when food surpluses were produced and enabled the rapid growth of urban population.

Today in the Third World it is much more difficult to satisfy nutritional needs in areas surrounding large cities than in the countryside.

There has also been a fall in the income derived from cash crops, a reduction in food production and an increase in rural malnutrition.

From Third World Guide 93/94

BIBLE BITES

Take a look at some of the passages in the Bible that talk about cities -

Gen 4:17 Cain built a city

Num 35: 1 - 8 Cities of refuge

Ps 127 : 1 Unless the LORD watches over the city ...

Isa 26 : 1 We have a strong city

Lk 19 : 41 (Jesus) saw the city and wept over it

Heb 11 : 10 (Abraham) looked forward to the city which has foundations

Rev 21 : 2 I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem

In bustling modern Dhaka, Bangladeshi Christians are facing the challenges urbanisation

Rethinking Priorities



welcomingly as we turn into 137e. Home at last, well home for the next seven days at least.

What has caught their eye as they travelled the twelve kilometre road from the airport is the throng of people who overflow the buses, the trains, rickshaws, sidewalks. People pressing on purposefully to work, people lounging aimlessly, people begging desperately. The rapid urbanisation which depletes water reserves, creates astronomical house rents, makes travelling to work a nightmare and finding

employment a desperate struggle for the majority of Dhaka's seven million inhabitants.

The parrots which once squawked in the palm trees have relinquished their places to the strident cawing of crows and chirping of sparrows from grime-covered branches of sad foliage.

Families live in one room with shared facilities hoping grandma will stay to care for the toddler whilst mother works to help pay the rent and contribute to the high cost of educa-

The ancient city of muslin and minarets has become a fascinating conglomeration of old and new. There is immense affluence, produced by mushrooming industrial development alongside crumbling antiquity. This is found amidst desperate poverty for those whose came to the city because their inherited land was lost to avaricious moneylenders.

Bringing another two visitors in from the airport I hear myself explaining: "We are passing the sanitary supermarket with its rows of toilets, tiles, sinks - a useful landmark - and here is the sweetmeat shop with its distinctive red/blue sign. Then behind the autorickshaws is our road..."

Mesmerised by the sights, sounds and smells of Dhaka they fail to notice the narrow lane with its corner pharmacy, the high walls behind which an occasional mango or palm tree nods





Waves

A personal and independent look at urban mission by **Colin Marchant**

We have lived and worked in East London for 30 years. When we moved in during 1965 the docks were closing, industry was shutting and people were moving to the Essex suburbs. One of the heartlands of industrialisation and urbanisation in the UK was sliding into social change.

The Church struggled to maintain ministry. "Religious life" took members away to quieter suburban avenues; the educated automatically moved. Work in the Church felt like a hen laying eggs on a moving escalator!

East London was not alone. Since the industrial revolution first began in this country and as Britain is the most urbanised nation in the world, many other areas shared in the decline and change.

The Anglicans launched "Faith in the City" in 1985, the Methodists began their "Mission Alongside the Poor" and projects, programmes and a new wave of local congregations have sprung up in the inner cities and outlying housing estates. Things are happening in the urban sprawls but it is bigger than we know.

God is stirring up the world - and we see this vividly in East London. Half the 240,000 population of Newham is drawn from 69 nations. We see this in the markets and the schools and we experience it in our churches.

Our Baptist Church in Plaistow shares its buildings with congregations from the Philippines and Africa (Zaire, Ghana, Nigeria). All round us independent churches and new denominations have sprung up. The fastest growing churches are African, then Asian followed by longer established Caribbean. At one level The Empire Strikes Back; at another, world mission is now receiving as well as sending.

In the most deprived borough in the UK we have some signs of hope in the vitality of congregations and diversity of projects. This wave of spirituality includes the other faiths. The Muslim strength in Newham is estimated to be 25,000, one tenth of our population. Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs have their temples and Gurdwaras.

We are living in a "mind-blowing" situation. The world has come to us. Waves of immigration and the flood of refugees have carried the seed of faith into areas and churches where long years of decline and deprivation have marked and hardened white Christianity.

It is not always comfortable. The struggle with poverty and unemployment goes on. Racism is around and the BNP lurks in the shadows. Our church runs a night shelter for the homeless and a NOSH (Newham organised to stop hunger) lunch every Sunday. But something is happening. World mission is a reality here!

Dr Colin Marchant, a former President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, has worked with the West Ham Central Mission since 1965. He has deep understanding of urban issues and particularly of mission in the world's fast growing cities.

tion at one of the "better" kindergartens.

The gathered congregation of the local church struggles to meet the challenges of this new world. Both the cost of transport and having Sunday as a normal working/school day discourages many from regular attendances at services unless they live close to the church. But it has, in fact, enabled some to cross denominational barriers to worship locally, fellowshiping in neighbourhoods, rethinking their priorities.

The churches use national holidays as occasions to have family celebrations, Sunday School camps, women's camps, targeted prayer for the nation. Outreach in the neighbourhood of the church at Christmas can be an effective bridge-building strategy.

Each Easter Sunday the sunrise services held at strategic points around the city attract hundreds of people as well as causing the passing truck driver, rickshaw pullers and pedestrians to pause and ask, "Just what are all these Christians celebrating?" It is a privilege to be able to tell them. ●

Top left: Church service, Dhaka. Left: Bustling Dhaka

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For more information about these situations, please write to:

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